

CHARLES UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Institute of Political Studies
Department of International Relations

**Reflection of National Identities in Bosnia and
Herzegovina in the Discussion of NATO Membership**

Master's thesis

Author: Bc. Magdaléna Fajtová

Study programme: International Relations

Supervisor: PhDr. Ondřej Žíla, Ph.D.

Year of the defence: 2020

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on 30th of July 2020

Bc. Magdaléna Fajtová

References

FAJTOVÁ, Magdaléna. *Reflection of National Identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Discussion of NATO Membership*. Praha, 2020. 80 pages. Master's thesis (Mgr.). Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Political Studies. Department of International Relations. Supervisor PhDr. Onřej Žíla, Ph.D.

Length of the thesis: 163 286

Abstract

Diploma thesis “Reflection of National Identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Discussion of NATO Membership” is a discourse analysis focusing on the socio-political environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the perspective of discussion over possible accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The first part of the thesis begins by an overview of the history of NATO engagement in the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, followed by a summary of current NATO relations with the countries of Western Balkans, specifically with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Special regard is given to national identities and their role in the conduct of the country’s foreign policy. The second part of the thesis is dedicated to examining the current political debate. It seeks to understand how national identity shapes the discussion over the accession to the organisation. Specifically, through discourse analysis, it aims to identify the tools employed in the political debate and the impact it has on the overall political environment of the country.

Abstrakt

Diplomová práce „Reflexe národních identit v Bosně a Hercegovině v diskusi o členství v NATO“ je diskurzivní analýza zaměřená na sociopolitické prostředí v Bosně a Hercegovině v kontextu diskuse o možném vstupu do Severoatlantické aliance. První část práce začíná přehledem historie zapojení NATO do konfliktů v bývalé Jugoslávii, následuje shrnutím současných vztahů NATO se zeměmi západního Balkánu, konkrétně s Bosnou a Hercegovinou. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována národní identitě a její roli při provádění zahraniční politiky země. Druhá část práce je věnována zkoumání současné politické debaty. Snaží se pochopit, jak národní identita formuje diskusi o přistoupení k organizaci. Konkrétně se prostřednictvím diskurzivní analýzy snaží identifikovat nástroje používané v politické debatě a dopad, který má na celkové politické prostředí země.

Keywords

Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, national identity, foreign policy, nationalism, discourse analysis

Klíčová slova

Bosna a Hercegovina, Severoatlantická aliance, národní identita, zahraniční politika, nacionalismus, diskursivní analýza

Title

Reflection of National Identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Discussion of NATO Membership

Název práce

Národní identita a její promítání do diskuse o vstupu Bosny a Hercegoviny do Severoatlantické aliance

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to PhDr. Ondřej Žíla, Ph.D. for his support, patience and valuable feedback.

Table of Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	8
INTRODUCTION	9
METHODOLOGY	11
Aims of the thesis and Research questions.....	11
Author’s Methodological Reflection.....	12
Primary and secondary sources.....	13
Critical discourse analysis.....	14
Conceptualisation.....	15
POLARISATION OF THE SOCIETY – THE THEORY	17
Historical context.....	19
<i>The Dayton Peace Agreement</i>	20
<i>NATO engagement in the Bosnian war</i>	23
<i>NATO Accession process and BiH</i>	24
<i>Russian relations with the countries of Balkan region</i>	27
<i>Russian engagement in the Yugoslav wars</i>	27
<i>Current Russian relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia</i>	32
Identities and nationalism in BiH.....	32
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	35
<i>Election campaign</i>	35
<i>Speeches after the General election</i>	35
<i>Inauguration</i>	42
<i>MAP activation</i>	45
<i>Vladimir Putin in Belgrade</i>	53
<i>The Name of Republika Srpska</i>	54
<i>Meeting with the European Commission</i>	57
<i>Change of the name of the then Republic of Macedonia to the Republic of North Macedonia and consequent ratification of the NATO Accession Protocol</i>	58
<i>20th anniversary of the NATO bombing campaign in Serbia</i>	61
<i>The Day of Republika Srpska</i>	63
<i>Legislative changes in Republika Srpska</i>	64
<i>Matthew Palmer in BiH</i>	65
<i>Reaching the deal on Cabinet Formation</i>	66
CONCLUSION	69
LIST OF REFERENCES	70

List of abbreviations

BiH - Bosnia and Herzegovina

DPA - Dayton Peace Agreement

EU - European Union

EUFOR - European Union Force

FBiH - Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

FRY - Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

HDZ - Croatian Democratic Union

IFOR - Implementation Force

MAP - Membership Action Plan

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

OHR - Office of High Representative

OSCE - Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

SDA - Party of Democratic Action

SDS - Serbian Democratic Party

SFOR - Stabilisation Force

SNDS - Alliance of Independent Social Democrats

SRBiH - The Socialist Republic of Bosnia

UN - United Nations

UNMiBH - The UN Mission in BiH

USA - United States of America

Introduction

“Bosnia and Herzegovina aspires to join NATO. Support for democratic, institutional, security sector and defence reforms are a key focus of cooperation” (NATO, 2020). This is the official statement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. While the organisation is open to further widening of its structures towards the Western Balkan, in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) the accession to the alliance is by far one of the most problematic and controversial topics of the public debate.

BiH faces difficult political crisis which is reflected on its foreign policy to a significant extent. Majority of Bosnian Serbs, one of the three constituent nations, disagrees with the possibility that the country enters NATO in the future. On the other hand, political representatives of the remaining two nations support the NATO integration of BiH. Consequently, this dispute over NATO accession between the politicians of BiH causes further conflicts and complications. NATO integration serves as leverage for almost every politician in the country; regardless of their stance towards the alliance. Due to the disagreement, the politicians were unable to form a government after the 2018 elections. Two members of the three-member presidential body were conditioning their approval to form a government with the admission of the country’s Annual National Programme to the NATO Headquarters in the Brussels (“Presidency member conditions government formation with progress towards,” 2019; “Šefik Džaferović: Popuštanje Dodiku je put u anarhiju,” 2019). This government crisis lasted for over a year. Apart from final formation of the government, the end of the crisis has not led to any easing of the internal political tension.

The topic deepens the division between geopolitical powers as well: the Western countries, mainly the United States, blame the Russian Federation of interfering in the internal affairs of BiH in order to block the process of Euro-Atlantic integration. Therefore, the US representatives claim BiH should enter the alliance in order to save itself from the threat of Russian interference (“Palmer: Rusija želi blokirati euroatlantske procese u BiH,” 2019). The Russian Federation on the other hand blames the West of misusing its power in the effort to get the countries of Western Balkans on its side (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2018).

Furthermore, the topic uncovers the deeper roots of the division of the country. The political system of BiH itself; specifically the Constitution, contributes to the success of ethnic politics and dependency on the foreign aid and intervention. According to the Constitution of BiH, the people in the country are divided into three constituent nations - Croats, Bosniaks and Serbs. BiH comprises two entities - the Federation of BiH populated mostly by Croats and Bosniaks and Republika Srpska with mostly Serbian population. BiH has three presidents; each of them represents one of the nations. Foreign supervision is technically a part of the executive and judicial branches of the state governance: three out of nine judges of the Constitutional court of BiH are foreigners selected by the president of the European Court of Human Rights. The institution of the Office of High Representative in BiH has a power to veto any law inconsistent with the Constitution or to remove any public official from the office if they violate the legal commitments (Constitution of BiH).

BiH is a fragile country with limited sovereignty which is liable to foreign meddling. In such an environment, where ethnic politics is anchored in the Constitution and the foreign actors are authorised to directly influence, even to change the constitutional order, the debate over the country's future geopolitical course has a significant impact on the internal affairs. In the debate, the politicians often use language tools indicating danger and hostility, creating an atmosphere of fear while referring to the tragedies of the Balkan wars - ethnic cleansing, bomb campaigns etc. They verbally attack each other and blame their opponents of being responsible for the political crisis the country faces. The international actors contribute to the escalated debate by proclaiming their support to one of the sides. Therefore, further efforts to speed up the NATO accession without prior settlement of the domestic issues can cause even more disputes, which is in regard to the fragility of Bosnian society very risky.

Methodology

Aims of the thesis and Research questions

NATO integration has been an important and lately conflicting topic within the political debate in BiH since the 2005 adoption of the new Defence White Paper - the defence strategy doctrine. Despite the fact that the politicians initially adopted more or less approving attitudes, stances of the current political authorities towards the integration are completely contradictory. According to the Constitution of BiH, the country's foreign policy should be conducted by the members of the Presidency. Treaties of BiH are negotiated, denounced and, with the consent of the Parliament, ratified by the Presidency (Constitution of BiH, 1995). The role of the members of the Presidency is thus crucial for the country to enter the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

Nationalism and national identity are important aspects of promoting and conducting foreign policy. As Hansen notes, "foreign policies rely upon representations of identity, but it is also through the formulation of foreign policy that identities are produced and reproduced" (2013: 1). Building on the assumption that identity and foreign policy are interconnected – one affects the other – I argue that it is crucial to study proclamations and political decisions of the actors responsible for the foreign policy of the country to expose how the concept of identity can be used as an instrument to highlight national politics.

The main hypothesis of this research is that the discussion over NATO integration of BiH is driven and affected by nationalist positions of political authorities. At the same time, the nationalist rhetoric contributes to the reinforcement of their political power in the country.

In practice, the reinforcement of the nationalist position can be observed for example on a sharp rhetoric of the politicians stressing the threat that the NATO integration poses to their national group, or, conversely, highlighting how dangerous it can be to remain outside the alliance. As a sharp rhetoric I understand the employment of expressions suggesting endangerment of the speaker's own group. Expressions such as danger, threat, control, interference and meddling suggest that the speaker presents either the NATO integration or the decision to stay outside the alliance as fatal for his or her national group. Every group has its own motivation to lead the country into NATO or to avert the accession.

Accordingly, the topic of the accession has a potential to become a tool for the formal representatives of each national group to distinguish themselves from the others. In

addition, a clear definition of the groups “US” and “THEM”, when articulated by an authority respected by either of these collectives, strengthens the ties among its members.

The hypothesis will be addressed by these research questions:

- What stance do the members of the Presidency of BiH and other relevant political authorities take towards the NATO integration?
- Who are the relevant political authorities?
- In which situations do these authorities mention the topic of the NATO integration?
- In what manner do the authorities operate with the concept of nationality when speaking about NATO?

I will focus on juxtapositions used by the authorities in their statements as well as on the means and tools of expression. I will examine in which situations they refer to the alliance as to a part of their own group “US” and as a member of the enemy group “THEM”. It is further important to take into account whether a political authority has a support of people of the nation he or she formally represents. I will weigh the actual power each authority has among its national group. In cases when the formal representative of the nation is not perceived by the particular nation as a legitimate leader, I will discuss a representative who fits these conditions.

Author’s Methodological Reflection

The statements examined here are taken from interviews, radio and TV speeches, public testimonies and remarks. I will analyse the discussion between relevant political authorities within the period starting with the elections in October 2018 up until the formation of the new government in November 2019. Drawing on the rhetoric of the politicians, I will present several crucial moments of the designated year to show how they use the NATO to support their own argumentation and/or to degrade their political rivals. As the three-member presidential body is responsible for the foreign policy of the country, I will mainly focus on the statements of these three politicians. However, it is necessary to note that the aforementioned three politicians are not the only important actors in the debate. For example, as will be outlined in the contextual part of this thesis, in each group, there can be

found someone far more respected as the legitimate authority than the current member of the Presidency. Relevant authority's position towards the integration must be considered.

I decided to begin the observed period with the presidential and parliament election in October 2018 as its results have brought new politicians to the presidential body. More importantly, soon after the election, the country was invited to submit the Annual National Program (ANP) under the Membership Action Plan – a document important for a country to join the alliance. The invitation has been a significant topic in the debate as it has been used by Croatian and Bosniak members of the Presidency as a condition for formation of the new government. BiH was without newly formed government until November 2019 – the end of the time frame of this study. These and other important events are presented in more detail in the contextual part of the thesis. Within the framework, I observed the events concerning the possibility of NATO accession which were conflicting.

Subsequently, I have subjected this data to my research questions.

The method I chose for my research is critical discourse analysis. It requires thorough collecting and analysing of all the relevant outputs related to the problem of the foreign policy of the country.

Primary and secondary sources

Up to the current day, NATO accession of BiH has been a highly discussed topic among the politicians, media and general public. Many authors have been studying the connection between national identity and the foreign policy of BiH. In order to delineate the position of each national group and its political representation, the following text refers to the papers of Anthony Oberschall, Larisa Kurtović, Ondřej Žila and Igor Štiks. To outline the geopolitical games, goals and strategies of the big actors operating within the Balkan Peninsula, I will elaborate on the research and analyses from Roberto Belloni, Miloš Šolaja, Dragan Đukanović, Dimitar Bechev and Anthony Godfrey.

Aside from these, the thesis relies largely on non-academic sources; such as official state documents and websites, NATO booklets and brochures dedicated to the relations with particular countries and the aims of the cooperation between them and the organisation, NATO website, various UN resolutions, military and strategic doctrines, the Constitution of BiH, Dayton Peace Agreement, and various media outputs. These are for instance television N1, newspaper *Oslobođenje*, news agencies FENA and SRNA, websites Al Jazeera Balkans or Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty. I will also refer to Serbian media

such as Danas or Politika, British and American media such as BBC, The New York Times, The Guardian. Additionally, I will reference Russian outputs, for example websites of the Russian Foreign Ministry or websites of Russian embassies in BiH, Serbia and The Republic of North Macedonia. As the aims of this thesis is to examine political statements and strategies, I do not feel obliged to thoroughly describe each media house, its background and political/ethnic orientation. When referring to articles, websites and videos, the specific statement is always published unchanged and taken from at least two sources. If the second media source could not be found, the information was omitted in the text.

Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis requires study and understanding of the interconnection between text, discourse, social cognition and power. "Crucial presumption of adequate critical discourse analysis is understanding the social power and dominance" (Van Dijk: 254, 1993). This power, according to Van Dijk, is the ability of the authority to create and influence public opinion by action or cognition. This means that a group or an individual can both limit the freedom of action of others and influence their minds (Van Dijk, 1993). In my research, I focus primarily on language and the techniques of creation of discourse through the act of speech, for example in media, political statements etc. As Lene Hansen explains, "language is social and political, an inherently unstable system of signs that generate meaning through a simultaneous construction of identity and difference" (2013: 15). The construction of policy problems relies on discourse, but it is also through discourse that the problems are created in the first place. Language has its social nature, that is, in order to become comprehensible within society, one must employ a series of collective codes and conventions. According to Hansen, there is also a political nature of language. "To understand language as political is to see it as a site for the production and reproduction of particular subjectivities and identities while others are simultaneously excluded" (Hansen, 2013: 16). As Hansen suggests, many post-structuralist scholars underline the importance of juxtapositions employed in the language for it to become a tool for the creation of political discourse. Jacques Derrida claimed that it is often the binary opposition creating the meaning. The juxtaposition between a privileged sign and a devalued one leads to a creation of identity. Mary Douglas saw the juxtaposition between purity and impurity crucial for sustainability or violation of the symbolic system of society (2003). Zygmunt Bauman understood the nature of socialisation of an individual as a

process of assigning itself to a group 'us' whilst simultaneously creating opposite group 'them,' ” (Baumann, 1996). As Hansen claims, "identities need to be articulated in language to have political and analytical presence and they are thus dependent on political agency for their ontological and epistemological significance” (2013: 21). However, in her book, she examines the work of Alexander Wendt, who sees the identity not necessarily bound to nationality as the identity appears to be pre-social. "Identity is in this case narrated through the mythological origins of the group, its development and survival, and its relationship to the spiritual and natural forces” (Hansen, 2013: 21). From this perspective, the question arises whether the national identity should be perhaps studied as a subset of global or geopolitical identity. For this reason, in my research, I focused on the bonds of individual nationalities with wider groups and their efforts to be associated with these groups.

In 1992, Ó Tuathail and Agnew called for the re-conceptualisation of geopolitics with the usage of discourse. According to their arguments, geopolitics is defined as a discourse practice employed to create international politics and to present the world as composed of specific places, actors and dramas. Authors explain that even though geopolitics can be understood as being mainly about practice, not discourse, about actions and measures taken against other actors, about invasions, battles, and deployment of weapons, "it is only through discourse that that the building up of a navy or the decision to invade a foreign country is made meaningful and justified” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992: 190).

Conceptualisation

In this work, I employ several contradictory categories which are still highly interconnected and in a more general perspective can be understood as identical. Positions East and West are used frequently in the following paragraphs where West is represented by NATO and East by the Russian Federation. There are, of course, many other actors engaged in the region, who would appear to represent either West or East, nevertheless, I believe that the definition of NATO as the West and of Russia as the East is within this context accurate. The European Union undeniably represents a Western actor. However, it does not stand in opposition to Russia as much as NATO does, and, more importantly, EU membership is officially not condemned by any of the ethnic groups of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Turkey is understood as neither the West nor the East within the context of geopolitical identity of the Western Balkans. This can be explained by several reasons: Turkey is a member of NATO, therefore, it cannot be understood as its opponent which would offer the contradictory actor for the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina refusing the membership in NATO. At the same time, in the view of its current domestic political situation, Turkey can be hardly perceived as the West since it does not represent the values of what is understood to be Western European society.

Critical geopolitics suggests that there is a still-existing myth of Cold War organisation of world politics. "Numerous analyses dissect post-Cold War geopolitics to reveal the continued reliance on a binary understanding of power and spatiality, on notions of East and West, security and danger, freedom and oppression" (Kuus, 2016: 6). In the course of Cold War, NATO was the tool of western foreign policy and policy of dealing with 'Soviet threat' whether it was the policy of containment or others. The United States of America, a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was clear and sole opponent of the Soviet Union in the bipolar international system of Cold war.

Most importantly, Russia and the alliance themselves understand each other as threats and potential enemies. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation enlargement is recognised as one of the potential external dangers anchored in Russian Military Doctrine (2010). Russian president Vladimir Putin named NATO to be one of the biggest threats to Russian security strategy in 2016. NATO itself understands Russia as a threat to member states, and as the case may be, to the European security in general. On its official webpage, NATO disproves myths about its relations with Russia allegedly spread by the federation and NATO opponents. "NATO suspended practical cooperation with Russia due to its aggressive actions in Ukraine. However, we continue to keep channels for political dialogue open. The NATO-Russia Council, an important platform for dialogue, has never been suspended. We have held seven meetings since April 2016" (NATO, 2018), is NATO's official statement in regard to the relations with the Russian Federation. NATO also addresses a myth about a putative disruptive effect of NATO Open Door Policy on creating new dividing lines and deepening existing ones in Europe. According to NATO, Open Door Policy "has helped close Cold War-era divisions in Europe. NATO enlargement has contributed to spreading democracy, security, and stability further across Europe (NATO, 2018)."

Taking into consideration several facts; these highly contradictory stances of NATO and Russia, the fact that this paper studies the disruptive effects of possibility of accession of BiH to NATO, the high interconnectivity of the ethnic groups around the region, and the fact that other possibly important actors I have mentioned above, such as Turkey (which is actually a NATO member) or some of the Arab countries, do not stand in opposition to NATO, I believe that it is reasonable to operate with NATO and Russia as two contradictory actors who in the political discourse of BiH represent the West and the East, respectively.

Polarisation of the society – the theory

Hansen claims that in the representations of foreign policy actors “the foreign policies are legitimized as necessary, as in the national interest, or in the defence of human rights, through reference to identities. Yet, identities are simultaneously constituted and reproduced through formulations of foreign policy” (Hansen, 2013: 3). As I argue, the possibility of NATO membership divides BiH, which is already divided over many other topics. This polarisation effect was further described by Stephen Shulman using the example of Ukraine. Focusing on culture, identity and geography, Shulman analyses the relationship between international and national integration in a multi-ethnic state and argues that foreign policy is a key element in the construction of national identity (Shulman, 1998).

Furthermore, Shulman suggests that every national group tends to prefer relations with states whose culture is similar to their own. He calls this positive reference groups; societies, states or nations which identify themselves with specific national identity. In opposition to this are negative reference groups. Foreign states, or in this case a foreign organization, serve as positive or negative reference groups and any ties or boundaries with them affect the internal view on foreign policy. Therefore, ethnic group identity can be reinforced by strong ties with foreign states whose population is perceived culturally and ethnically similar to their own. “Disagreements between ethnic groups over the nature of external-ethnic pull and its relationship to foreign policy will be a source of conflict over international integration policy” (Shulman: 123, 1998).

Shulman's theory can be also applied to situations in which states create ties with international organizations. White, McAllister and Feklyunina studied how people in

Ukraine defined themselves according to their inclination towards East or West. The East is represented by Russia and organizations connecting countries of the former Soviet Union such as the Commonwealth of Independent States, Eurasian Economic Community or Collective Security Organisations. The European Union or NATO represent the West and Western identity to which citizens of Ukraine incline. Ukrainian foreign policy was multi-vector. The country developed relations with its Slavic neighbours but also attempted to establish closer ties with the European Union and NATO. This division in two directions of identity and foreign preferences of Ukrainians was directly reflected in presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004. Viktor Yushchenko, who was elected President of Ukraine, was openly associated with Euro-Atlantic orientation, whereas his opponent and former Prime Minister Victor Yanukovich was more inclined towards the improvement of relations with Eastern, Slavic countries. These two candidates also disagreed on the question of possible Ukrainian membership in NATO. While Yanukovich claimed that Ukraine was not ready for integration into NATO structures, in 2008, Yushchenko called for the conclusion of the MAP as soon as possible (White, McAllister, Feklyuinina, 2010).

Back in 2010, the authors claimed not only that foreign policy affects domestic policy, but also that national identity shaped by issues relating to language, culture, and nationalism can affect foreign policy in return. As exemplified by the current situation in Ukraine, the division of Ukrainian society led to the actual separation of the pro-Russian part of the country. “In an ethnically diverse society, competing integration projects – such as those of the EU on the one hand, and Russia on the other – can have a powerful effect on domestic constituencies, with the result that local leadership are even more constrained in the policy options they can pursue (White, McAllister, Feklyuinina: 363, 2010).”

NATO is highly unpopular among Bosnian Serbs due to its bombing campaign in 1995 and it can be presumed that this nation in BiH will tend to establish relations with Russia rather than with the ‘West’ which is, similarly to the Ukrainian case, represented by NATO. On the other hand, Bosniaks and Croats are expected to support the possibility of entering the alliance.

The division of the country is significant. It is visible not only in the political situation but also in society and the daily life of the citizens. Any interfering of other state or organisation, West or East, could cause great damage to the already fragile state’s domestic policy and cooperation between the two entities. Regarding the recent Ukrainian crisis, we

can see how highly influential foreign policy can be in the domestic policy of the state and it is clear today that consequences of such conflict can extend to other states and to the wider area of international politics. After the Ukrainian crisis, relations between West and Russia got cold which is, for example, visible in the Western sanction policy toward the Russian Federation. Despite the unquestionably positive effect of international integration on the domestic policy of a homogenous country, the question for the elites of an international organization is whether the effect of international integration in cases such as a heterogeneous society of BiH is not more devastating than beneficial for the state and people.

Historical context

The first democratic elections in the former Yugoslavia took place in 1990. The political representation – specifically the Communist party – enabled the people to form new political parties. Comparably to other republics, mainly the nationalist parties were successful in the former Socialist Republic of Bosnia (SRBiH): Muslim Party of Democratic Action (SDA), Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and Serbian Democratic Party (SDS). As Šolaja claims, at first, their coexistence and cooperation were harmonious. However, processes in other republics directly affected the political climate in SRBiH. “Declaration of independence of Slovenia and Croatia have opened a certain possibility for SRBiH to become independent as well. Nations in the republic were not, however, able to find a consensus over potential secession from Yugoslavia” (Šolaja, 2006: 2011).

Muslims and Bosnian Croats demanded independence. However, one third of the Bosnian population – Bosnian Serbs, refused to leave Yugoslavia. Both Bosnian Croats and Serbs had an important link with their “mother” states - Croatia for Croats and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for Serbs. The authorities and the leaders of the most numerous group - Muslims (who changed their name to Bosniaks during the war) would consider the whole territory of SRBH to be their homeland (Žiła, 2013).

In 1991, the Parliament of SRBiH passed the Memorandum on the Sovereignty of BiH. It was passed by simple majority which was opposed by Bosnian Serbs - they argued that it required a two-third majority to pass the Memorandum. After the parliamentary rift, the Serbs proclaimed Assembly of the Serb People of Bosnia and Herzegovina and declared that the serbian population of SRBiH wishes to remain with Yugoslavia (Trbović, 2008). In October 1991 they held a referendum about remaining with Yugoslavia and on 9th of

January 1992 proclaimed the Republic of Serb People and Bosnia and Herzegovina – the referendum was found unconstitutional by the government of SRBiH, and the entity was not recognised internationally. On the heels of the political crisis between the representatives of the strongest nationalist parties in SRBiH, in March 1992 the then president of the federal republic and the leader of the Muslim SDA Alija Izetbegović called a referendum about independence of SRBiH. Bosnian Serbs in large measure boycotted the referendum, Muslims and Croats voted for independence. Alija Izetbegović declared BiH independent on 3rd of March 1992. After this event, a war burst out and lasted for 43 months (Šolaja, 2006).

As Belloni notes, the then great powers “could not summon the necessary political will until the summer of 1995, when the United States took the lead by intervening militarily to create the conditions for a negotiated settlement to the crisis and opened the way to the most important international peace operation of the second half of the 1990s” (Belloni, 2007: 16). The outcome of the following protracted peace negotiations is the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) which ended the war. However, as Belloni aptly remarks, rather than a solution of the disputes, the agreement has “transformed a bloody conflict into a cold peace (2007: 1).”

The Dayton Peace Agreement

The main goal of the American-facilitated negotiation was to stop the conflict immediately rather than to establish the basis for a viable state design (Tuathail, 2006). Nevertheless, it was not only to end the war what the agreement encompassed. As Chandler notes, it was an agreement unlike any other peace treaty in history. Firstly, it was imposed by powers external to the conflict. More importantly it has radically exceeded what is understood as aims of a peace treaty. It has covered to basic aspects of government and state (Chandler, 2000).

The powers of the central government were side-lined at the expense of the new two entities – Federation of BiH (FBiH) with a majority of Bosniaks and Croats and Republika Srpska – with majorly Serbian population. Furthermore, the FBiH is segmented into ten self-governing cantons. “The segmentation is an outcome of an endeavour to find a fragile balance in the region of Bosniak and Croatian population (Žiła, 2013: 1).” Moreover, the Dayton system is supervised by the Office of High Representative (OHR) whose powers among others include a veto of any new law he or she considers to be inconsistent with the

DPA. At the same time, the OHR can with immediate effect remove from office any politician who, according to the OHR, obstructs the peace agreement (ibidem, 2013).

The Constitution of BiH is in fact annex 4 of the DPA. According to the Constitution of BiH, the head of state is a collective presidential body – the Presidency. Two Presidents representing Croatian and Bosniak nations are elected from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbian member is elected from Republika Srpska (Constitution of BiH, 1995).

Although the agreement has in fact prevented the citizens of BiH to start a new war, at the same time, it has many disappointing drawbacks which have been to the detriment of the reconciliation process. It has brought complicated institutions, predominance of ethnic politics and dependency on the foreign aid and intervention. Although as Bieber reminds, the agreement should not be blamed for everything which appears not to be well in the country. “The importance of ethnic politics and national parties is certainly not solely the result of the state structure, but at least equally the consequence of the war, even if the institutions at the time facilitated the dominance of such parties” (Bieber, 2006: 17).

However, since the importance of ethnic politics has not faded significantly, the agreement is of little help in the process of elimination of such politics.

The document has been serving as a compromise and a tool to maintain peace in the country. The U.S. diplomacy presented the framework as a functional key to provision of security to all ethnic groups. The U.S. administration believed that the support for multi-ethnic government of the country would put an end to nationalist clashes between the nations. “In Bosnia, each of the three dominant groups was a potential minority: the Muslims, the largest group, could still be outvoted by the Serbs and Croats. To safeguard a unified Bosnia it was therefore essential to ensure that minority interests were protected in the Constitution (Chandler, 2000: 66).“

However, the reality is different. The current system of the country not only keeps the society divided in ethnic parts, but it also does not, as it was the main concern of the U.S. diplomacy, ensure that every nations’ interests are protected. A good example of this inequality is the election process in FBiH where Bosniaks can vote for Croatian candidates. As Bosniaks are significantly more numerous than Croats, and they can vote for parties or a presidential candidate representing the Croatian nation, they can affect the outcomes of the election and elect a candidate or a party well-disposed to cooperation with Bosniak authorities. This had happened in the case of 2006 presidential elections when Bosniak

voters outvoted Croats and elected Željko Komšić, a Croat highly popular among Bosniaks, a president representing the Croatian nation (Toquet, 2011). Results of the last elections suggest that this was the case with Komšić's election in 2018 as well – in municipalities with a majority of Bosniaks in the FBiH Komšić got significantly more votes than his political rival – former Croatian president Dragan Čović (Centralna Izborna Komisija, 2018).

As Pehar claims, the Dayton Peace agreement is designed in such a way it limits to a large extent the constituent rights of the Croatian people in both the FBiH and BiH. As exemplified by the presidential elections, one constituent nation has been empowered (by the signatories of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which was designed in large part by an American diplomat) to influence critically the legislative representation of other people. “It does not make sense to expect that a person, who is not representative of a constituent people, be responsible toward the people, or to promote the interests of the people within the BiH Presidency” (Pehar, 2019: 56). The author claims that the international community engaged in the politics and judiciary of BiH sides with Bosniaks, and, as the legislative grounds for the very existence of the current form of the system of government was designed to a great extent by NATO member states, specifically by the US administration, he sees an opportunity for close cooperation between the international community operating in BiH and Bosniak authorities. Pehar shows on cases of the decisions of the Constitutional Court of BiH how the foreign actors shape and reinforce what he understands as the continuation of war by other means. Inverting the famous quotation of Carl von Clausewitz, Pehar argues that current Bosnian politics, institutions and ties between the authorities and international community is a preservation of the state of war in the postwar period, or more specifically, in the period of an apparent implementation of a peace frame. The Dayton Peace Agreement further cements the national division in the country. The Constitutional Court of BiH comprises of 9 judges out of whom three are foreigners appointed by the President of the European Court of Human Rights after consultation with the Presidency of BiH. Four of the remaining judges are elected from the FBiH and two from Republika Srpska (Dayton Peace Agreement, 1995). As Pehar comments, the three foreign judges can, together with only two others, outvote the rest of the members of Constitutional Court. Pehar recalls the positive response of the international community to Alija Izetbegović's appeal to the Constitutional Court. “The appeal demanded that BiH peoples get the attribute of constitutionality throughout the

territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Court's ruling was by a majority of Bosniak and international judges who outvoted the Croat and Serb judges. This strongly indicates that the ruling was politically motivated—the pre-Dayton conflict of political ideas, that gave rise to the war in Bosnia, continued into the post-Dayton period and in 2000 infected also the BiH Constitutional Court” (Pehar, 2019: 59).

Another crucial question is to what extent BiH actually is a sovereign state. The Dayton framework and the presence of the OHR significantly limits country's sovereignty. It has been governed by international community and various international organisations – major world powers and NATO, the United Nations and the OSCE. At the state level, Bosnian representatives are limited by the powers of the OHR. Chandler examines the relevance of sovereignty and autonomy to the long-term success of the democratisation process. As he argues, international actors believe that the only way to reach the withdrawal of the international community and Bosnian self-government is to temporarily limit the country's sovereignty. “Bosnia, under Dayton, has been governed by a network of international community institutions representing the major world powers, with NATO, the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMiBH) and the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina as leading implementing Organs” (Chandler, 2000: 65).

In order to understand the contemporary stances of politicians towards the NATO integration, the following section will discuss the NATO engagement in the Bosnian war as well as the development of the integration process since the end of the war up until today.

NATO engagement in the Bosnian war

NATO's involvement in the Bosnian war was the first major crisis-response operation. Firstly, NATO-enforced United Nations' no-fly zone over the country and monitored compliance with sanctions imposed against the political leadership of former Yugoslavia (NATO, 2019). First two monitoring missions, Maritime Monitor and Sky Monitor, were replaced by operations seeking to enforce compliance with UN resolutions. Operation Maritime Guard launched in November 1992 has authorised the alliance to use force to enforce Security Council resolution 787 (Kaufman, 2002). Operation Deny Flight designed to enforce compliance with the no-flight zone was launched in 1993 and included the first combat in NATO's history, the Banja Luka incident in 1994. The tragic attack on the marketplace in Sarajevo in 1994 and the massacre in Srebrenica in 1995 has led UN

representatives to request air strikes. NATO thus launched the Operation Deliberate Force, which targeted Bosnian Serb command and ammunition facilities. It was the first ever NATO military intervention (NATO, 2019).

With the signing of the Dayton Peace agreement in December 1995, NATO engaged in UN-mandated mission Implementation Force (IFOR) and deployed 60 000 peacekeepers under Operation Joint Endeavour (NATO, 2019). These forces remained in the region until 1996 when the much smaller operation Stabilisation Force (SFOR) replaced it. In 2004, SFOR was replaced by the European Union's mission EUFOR Althea (ibidem).

Even though European Union has taken over the mission in order to “support the country on its journey towards European integration,” as well as to “ensure a Safe and Secure Environment (SASE) in the country, especially supporting the BiH authorities' efforts in maintaining this” (HQ EUFOR Public Affairs Office, 2019), it closely cooperates with NATO under the terms of Berlin Plus Agreement. This accord was concluded in 2002 between the EU and NATO and enables the European Union to draw on NATO's military assets in its own operation. These forces are “held in readiness by NATO to augment in-theatre forces and deal with any military contingency that arises, including the support of the BiH Ministry of Security and the Ministry of Defence, upon request” (HQ EUFOR Public Affairs Office, 2019).

NATO Accession process and BiH

In 2005, BiH has adopted a security strategy with the new Defence White Paper signed by the then members of the Presidency – Borislav Paravac, Ivo Miro Jović and Sulejman Tihić representing the Serbian, the Croatian and the Bosniak nation respectively. The NATO accession alongside with the EU integration was understood as one of the security priorities. “Bosnia and Herzegovina embraces without any limitation the concept of collective security as the keystone of its own military strategy. Based on this, it seeks membership in the NATO and other security alliances, as soon as possible, as the basis for the selection of strategic bilateral partners” (the Defence White Paper of BiH, 2005: 14). Their endeavour to cooperate with the alliance was shared by the following members of the Presidency as well. In 2006, Haris Silajdžić, Nebojša Radmanović and Željko Komšić (Bosniak, Serb and Croat resp.) accepted the NATO invitation to join the Partnership for Peace programme (Oružane snage BiH, 2015). Two years later, the Presidency agreed with NATO an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) which has started the Intensified

Dialogue – a process bringing the country closer to the NATO integration (NATO, 2017). Thus, the then members of the Presidency were undeniably open to the accession. As Đukanović notes, their will to enter the alliance was not undermined even by the 2007 Serbian declaration of its military neutrality (2019). In 2009, the Presidency formally applied for an activation of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) (Directorate for European Integration, 2010). The MAP mechanism was launched in order to facilitate the process of accession for countries wishing to join the organisation, and as such, the MAP mechanism provides assistance, advice, and practical support (NATO et Sherwen, 2006). However, the alliance showed reluctance and agreed to grant the MAP for BiH a year later - but under certain conditions only. One of the conditions was that the country must transfer military facilities from the local level to the central government. Specifically, all immovable defence properties necessary for the defence of the country must be officially registered as the property of the state for the use of Ministry of Defence (NATO, 2010). The atmosphere in BiH has gradually changed and some of the former advocates of NATO integration abandoned their stance. “While the Bosniak and Croatian elites supported by Turkey and Croatia were rather open to the NATO integration, there has been a significant transformation in the Serbian corpus. Although today’s Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) was one of the Serbian political parties advocating the integration the loudest, their current stance is completely opposing” (Đukanović, 2019: 343). In 2006, the NATO (and EU) integration was one of the goals in the then party’s program (“Kako je Dodik mijenjao stav o članstvu BiH u NATO savezu,” 2018). Four years later, their program also included NATO integration, specifically the need to adopt the MAP in the following years, nevertheless, possible membership should be according to their program further discussed and, as the case may be, decided by the citizens in a referendum (Koraci za budućnost, 2010). However, in 2017, following the Serbian example, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska proclaimed military neutrality, “in relation to the existing military alliances until a possible referendum to make a final decision on the issue is held” (Reuters, 2017).

Moscow has been claiming for a decade that NATO influence in the region directly threatens its political interests. As the influence of Russian Federation in the region has grown (this will be discussed later in a chapter dedicated to Russian interests in the region), so has the effort of the United States to ensure speedy accession of the countries to NATO.

Croatia and Albania both entered the alliance in 2009, Montenegro in 2017 and the Republic of North Macedonia is expected to access NATO shortly.

Despite the clear reluctant stance of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska, in 2018 the Presidency adopted a new Foreign Policy Strategy in which the NATO integration was named a priority of the country (Predsjedništvo Bosne i Hercegovine, 2018). The paper was signed by the then members: Dragan Čović, Bakir Izetbegović and Mladen Ivanić representing the Croatian, the Bosniak and the Serbian nation, respectively. While Mladen Ivanić as a president representing the Serbs in BiH was willing to sign a document proclaiming the NATO integration as a priority of the country's foreign policy, Milorad Dodik strongly opposed such a possibility. As such, the NATO integration was one of the key topics in the election campaign in 2018. Former advocate of the accession, Milorad Dodik, became the new member of the Presidency representing the Serbian nation.

The alliance has finally invited BiH to activate the MAP all of a sudden in December 2018. The Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that NATO is ready to accept the submission of the country's first Annual National Programme - this includes practical measures covering political, economic, and defence reform which will help the country to prepare for the membership. Stoltenberg then said that it is now up to BiH to take the next step and decide whether to accept this offer (NATO, 2018).

As Đukanović explains, political representation of Bosniaks completely adheres to the membership of the country in the NATO structures as they understand the alliance as a guarantor of security, integrity and development. He points out that this stance had been fully supported by Turkey before the 2016 Turkish Coup d'Etat attempt after which the relations between Turkey and the rest of the alliance (mainly the United States) have cooled down (Đukanović, 2019). Regarding the Croatian authorities in BiH, they have been also well disposed towards NATO integration, chiefly after Croatian accession to the alliance. "To a certain extent, Croat leaders in BiH see the country's membership as a possibility of strengthening their own position within BiH. That is, preventing potential additional majorization by more Bosniaks, primarily in the FBiH" (Đukanović, 2019:345).

To explain the ongoing changes of influence in the Balkan peninsula, I will now present and discuss the Russian engagement in the area.

Russian relations with the countries of Balkan region

Russian Federation can be viewed as a relatively important actor in the region of Western Balkan. However, in comparison with Turkey or Arabic countries, Russian investment in Serbia or BiH is rather small, although still significant, and comprise mainly vital sources of energy such as gas and oil. According to the Foreign Investment Promotion Agency of BiH, in 2017, Russian Federation ranked 9th on the list of the most important trade partners and was behind China and Turkey (FIPA, 2018). According to Bechev, the overall scale of Russian import in Serbia accounts only for 10%, which is significantly less than overall EU economic activity in the country (2017). As Bechev claims, “Russia is popular because parts of society, particularly those with nationalist leanings, see it as a counterweight to the West, and the US in particular (2018: 3).” In addition, Russia represents a traditional Orthodox ally of Serbian nation against other religious and ethnic groups favoured by the West (Bechev, 2018).

Russian engagement in the Yugoslav wars

With the dissolution of Yugoslavia and its collapse into wars at the beginning of the 1990s, Russian Federation struggled with its own problems emerging from the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. As Bowker claims, Russia paid a little attention to the events in Balkan countries (1998). At first, Russia was eager to cooperate with Western actors in their diplomatic efforts in the region. “Yeltsin and his team prioritized good ties with the West essential for Russia’s transition to a market economy and political pluralism. They also wished to preserve the country’s influence over European and global affairs, defusing nationalist opposition at home (...) The war in in BiH exposed Moscow’s weakness, while Kosovo was nothing short of a fiasco. On both occasions, Russia was left with no choice but to adjust to the consequences of NATO’s actions” (Bechev, 2017:24).

Initially, as a member of the UN Security Council, Russia supported first three economic sanctions and embargoes imposed on Serbia and Montenegro, namely the 1992 UNSC Resolutions 757, 787 and 1993 UNSC Resolution 820. Adoption of these resolutions obliged states to prevent import to and export from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and to endorse UN condemnation of the authorities of the country (General Assembly, 1992 and 1993). The first peace proposal for BiH, known as 1993 Vance-Owen plan, was according to Bowker enthusiastically received in Moscow (1998). Vance-Owen plan was, however, criticised by eminent American authorities, the

then vice president of the USA Al Gore, for instance, commented that the plan had "a terrible map and would require lots of American blood and treasure" (Foreign Policy, 2015). The plan was rejected by the Bosnian Serbs and the negotiations continued with other plans. Meanwhile the domestic policy in Russia was seriously polarised. President's Yeltsin opponents in the Russian Parliament demanded the country's support for Bosnian Serbs and an end to embargoes imposed by Russia on Belgrade. "Since 1993 Moscow showed a greater willingness to adopt a more independent pro-Serb line – a development not universally welcomed in the West, particularly it coincided with the emergence of a virulent strain of nationalism in Russian life, symbolised by the success of Vladimir Zhirinovski" (Bowker, 1998: 1245). As Bechev argues, Russian position on Bosnia rested on three assumptions: firstly, the Serbs were not understood as the only guilty party, secondly, the use of military power was unacceptable and the only desirable conflict resolution was through diplomatic means, and lastly, Russia was an indispensable partner and no resolution was feasible without its sanction (Bechev, 2017).

After the 1994 explosion in the Sarajevo Merkale market causing 68 deaths, US administrative, driven by the American public, decided to propose wider air strikes against Serbs. The proposal was vetoed by Russia and the then Russian Representative to the UN Sergey Lavrov refused to adopt any new sanctions against Serbs. At the Security Council meeting, he said that "in the present conditions any question — even indirect — of tightening the sanctions regime is illogical, and we feel it is politically inadmissible" (Security Council 3475th Meeting, 1994).

Two weeks after the explosion in the market, Russian diplomacy managed to convince Serbian troops around Sarajevo to withdraw their heavy artillery. "Vitalii Churkin got the Serbs to NATO's demands in return for the deployment of 400 Russian troops to prevent Muslims from moving into the positions vacated by the Serbs" (Bowker, 1998: 1252). The success of Russian diplomat Vitalii Churkin and president Boris Yeltsin was celebrated by some of the American media, for example New York Times, as a 'badly needed diplomatic triumph,' and the agreement in Pale was perceived as hope for "a way out of the immediate crisis, not only for itself (Russia), but also for the Serbs and the West" ("Conflict in the Balkans; Russia's Balkan Card", 1994). Nonetheless, the very next month, after no significant change in the Serbian military power over Sarajevo, the New York Times referred to the former 'badly needed diplomatic triumph' as to "Vitaly I. Churkin's

diplomatic failure to persuade the Bosnian Serbs to put a brake on their war machine” (“Conflict in the Balkans; Bosnia Update”, 1994). Stubbornness of Bosnian Serbs and their reluctance to cooperate with Moscow softened Russian determination to act as their international patron (Bechev, 2017).

According to Bowker, the historically first NATO’s military action, the interception of Serbian jets over the No-Fly Zone in February 1994, raised suspicion among Russian authorities, since there had been previous Serbian violations of the No-Fly Zone in the past without any Western response. Nevertheless, Russia decided to reluctantly support the NATO action (1998). In April, Russia condemned the NATO air strike on Serbs around the safe-area of Goražde. Boris Yeltsin together with the Russian foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev denounced NATO for bombing the area without consulting Russia. However, both statesmen at the same time criticised and reprimanded Serbian leadership. "I would very strongly recommend that the Serbs not test the patience of the world," said Andrei Kozyrev according to the New York Times at the end of April 1994 (“Yeltsin Warns Bosnian Serbs To Stop Assault on Gorazde” 1994).

In April 1994, the Contact Group was established to facilitate the decision-making process. The group comprised of the United States, France, Britain, Germany, and Russia. The creation of the group effectively enhanced Russia’s status and overshadowed the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Bechev, 2017). The Contact Group had proposed a peace plan, which was refused by Bosnian Serbs in April 1994. It was the third failed attempt to deal with the peace agreement in BiH. The refusal was condemned by the president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milošević, who consequently cut all economic ties with Bosnian Serbs across the Drina river. After meeting with Milošević, Russian foreign minister Kozyrev said that this refusal could result in "an escalation of the war, a huge confrontation and the possibility of air strikes." He then rejected any possibility of Russian participation in this kind of war ("Bosnian Serbs Reject Peace Plan for 3d Time, Defying Russia”, 1994). Milošević’s step made him an unexpected peace defender in a view of some of the western media. In September 1994, The Independent published an article presenting Milošević as “once branded a tyrant, a war criminal and the fundamental cause of former Yugoslavia's troubles,” who found himself in “the unaccustomed position of being feted as a man of peace” (“Balkans tyrant turns into architect of peace: Serbia's leader is winning international acceptance, writes Tony Barber, East Europe Editor”,

1994). While the Moscow's relations with Bosnian Serbs were after the third rejection of the peace plan rather cold, Kozyrev aimed to get closer to Slobodan Milošević as he expected him to be able to facilitate a settlement in BiH. "Moscow tried to link the tightening of sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs with the relaxation of those targeted at the FRY" (Bechev, 2017: 36). 1995 NATO operation Deliberate Force and two-weeklong targeting of Serbian positions in BiH were condemned by the Russian government, which immediately called for ending the air strikes. Their demand was ignored until the Serbian troops withdrew from around Sarajevo and lifted the siege of the city (Bowker, 1998). As a member of the Contact Group, Russia had its representative present at the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in December 1995 in the United States. Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin among others witnessed the signing of the agreement by Franjo Tudjman, Slobodan Mološević and Alija Izetbegović. Despite the differences of opinions of Russia and NATO, Moscow was eager to participate in the post-war peacebuilding and as Sakwa claims, "despite his alignment with 'pragmatic nationalists' Kozyrev remained committed to a constructive relationship with the West, refusing to accept that the latter remained the threat it had been during the Cold War" (Sakwa, 2008: 371). However, as Bechev states, Dayton exposed Russia's weakness and incompetence as the country failed to be the wished bridge between the West and the Serbs. "Moscow had wound up being ignored by both. In the process, NATO had emerged as a guarantor of security in Europe, the very outcome Russia had worked to forestall" (Bechev, 2017: 37). According to Bechev, Russian authorities had to present the settlement in BiH as a collective achievement of the international community in order not to put the American representatives on the pedestal and not to present the American negotiations resulting in the Dayton Peace Agreement as a triumph of the USA solely (ibid).

With the 1999 Kosovo case, however, Russian willingness to cooperate with the West was considerably lower. Russian formerly supreme position within the Soviet Union as well as within the international system vanished with the dissolution of the USSR and the consequent domestic socio-political and economic crisis. As mentioned above, Russia opposed the UN efforts to radically end the ongoing conflict in Kosovo and vetoed the resolution. As a result, NATO launched air strikes non-mandated by UN. "NATO's bombing campaign in Yugoslavia over Kosovo began on 24 March 1999 and lasted 78 days, provoking a rupture in Russia's relations with the West" (Sakwa, 2008: 122). Russia opposed the NATO campaign vigorously, but "once it began, Russian efforts were aimed

at getting Slobodan Milošević to sue for peace as quickly as possible, not at arming him, or encouraging him to resist” (Perrie, 2006: 704). Despite its condemnation of NATO attacks, Russia helped to negotiate the peace deal between the alliance and Milošević. However, NATO unprecedented action, which was not authorised by the Security Council comprising Russia, has proven how insignificant the then Russian influence over the European politics was. Russia, once one of the most influential world’s actors suddenly became a side-lined country dealing primarily with its own domestic problems such as corruption, oligarchs in Russian politics, and economic crisis.

With the election of Vladimir Putin to the position of the president of Russia, the Russian foreign policy strategy has changed significantly. The key foreign, military and security strategies were revised. The new National Security Concept marked a change in the naming of new security threats to the country. Moscow changed its objectives from international cooperation to cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States. This turning point was according to de Haas a result of disappointment with the cooperation with the West as well as of Russian effort to regain its superpower status (2010). “Russia’s rebuffing attitude towards NATO’s new Strategic Concept of 1999 and to its military intervention in Kosovo of the same year, meant that Western security policy was now considered to be a threat, resulting in statements in the security documents expressing these anti-Western sentiments” (de Haas, 2010:16). Together with the 2000 Military Doctrine and the Foreign Policy Concept revised and signed by President Putin, Russian foreign policy has changed significantly. "The 2000 security papers displayed a prominence of negative tendencies with reference to Western security policy. In particular, NATO's use of force in the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Kosovo) was seen as a clear example of its policy of ignoring Russia, which claimed a decisive role in Europe, as well as of disregarding the UN and the standards of international law” (de Haas, 2010: 17). NATO engagement in the Kosovo crisis underlined the then Russian incompetency to influence international politics. This frustration among others has led Vladimir Putin to change the course of his country's strategy towards Western actors, namely the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. From this point of view, the war in Kosovo was one of the crises essential for the development of Russian-NATO relations.

Current Russian relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia

On the political level, Russia has diplomatic relations with both countries. In September 2018, foreign minister of Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov visited BiH, met with the then members of presidential body Bakir Izetbegović, Dragan Čović and Mladen Ivanić in Sarajevo. Sergey Lavrov expressed his support for Dayton Peace Agreement but underlined the need to de-demonize the Republika Srpska. After this meeting, Lavrov headed to Republika Srpska for a meeting with the then-president Milorad Dodik and other authorities. On the international level, in 2015 Russia vetoed the UN resolution that would condemn the 1995 Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia as a genocide. This act, among others, underlines the closeness of Russia to Bosnian Serbs rather than to Bosniaks. Relations between Serbia and Russia have been warm and friendly. The existing cultural and religious closeness was recently emphasized, among others, by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov in November 2018 at the meeting with Serbian officials in Belgrade. Borisov stated that their relations are traditionally good and that Russia has a special relationship with Serbia ("Odnosi Srbije i Rusije su odnosi prijateljstva na najvišem nivou, kakva je i međusobna podrška i razumevanje dve države i dva naroda," 2018). At the meeting in Belgrade in January 2019, President Putin expressed his concern about alleged Western countries' destabilising effect on the West Balkan region. "He said they had tried to secure dominance in the Balkans, by absorbing Montenegro into NATO and seeking to bring North Macedonia into the Western military alliance too" ("Putin warns West on Balkans as Serbia provides a lavish welcome," 2019). Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić spoke highly of their increasing partnership and expressed his belief in the improvement of trade relations as well. Serbia is a crucial Balkan partner for Russia. President Putin praises the Serbian military neutrality and the country's unwillingness to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Russia likely perceives Serbia as a strategic ally in its foreign policy strategy.

Identities and nationalism in BiH

During the 1990s, many academics, politicians, and journalists were seeking to comprehend the background of the Yugoslav wars. It was probably the terrifying and brutal nature of the conflicts and its media attractiveness that brought about many shallow theories which were reducing the then dynamics of the Yugoslav society to given as traditionally and culturally conflicting. To the forefront of the attention of the U.S. public

came American journalist Robert D. Kaplan¹ who presented population of the former Yugoslavia as people who have hated each other throughout history as there have been constant disputes and conflicts between the three main religions: Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Islam. He managed to endorse this picture in such a way, it has, according to Štiks, influenced the then US foreign policy towards the Bosnian war. When Kaplan wrote a book called *The Balkan Ghosts* in 1994, it had such a strong impact on public opinion it even convinced the then U.S. President Bill Clinton not to intervene during the first phase of the Yugoslav war (Štiks, 2015). Arguments like Kaplan's seem to claim the people in the Balkans share a pattern of behaviour that urges them to constantly compete with each other. Štiks understands the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the consequent conflicts as outcomes of various factors – the unsatisfactory economic situation and the nationalist political leaders who have been using the arguments of ethnic and religious identity to gain power.

Moreover, the then world-wide post-Cold War atmosphere also contributed to the politics of independence and secession. In the 1990s, influenced by the major changes in the world's politics, the western powers understood and upheld the nations' claims for autonomy as a basic human right. Štiks claims that “nationalist arguments centred on identity politics played quite well with the proliferation of multi-culturalist discourses and a general shift towards policies of recognition of specific cultural identities and their subsequent empowerment through various forms of autonomy (ibidem, 2015: 121).

But how did these political elites of the former Yugoslavia manage to gain power in the first place? Anthony Oberschall studied the process of misusing the national identity to the benefit of the nationalists in the former Yugoslavia. He claims that the interpersonal ethnic relations in Yugoslavia prior to the beginning of the wars were cooperative and that the general public opposed a breakup of the state. In order to gain power, nationalists skilfully managed to use a combination of fear instigation, recalling of painful moments from the history of coexistence of the nations, and severe repressions of those who called for a peaceful resolution of the escalation of tension. The outcomes of their actions were “fear of extinction as a group, fear of assimilation, fear of domination by another group, fear for one's life and property, fear of being a victim once more” (Oberschall, 2000: 990).

¹ Robert D. Kaplan's work was condemned by many other authors studying the creation of the “Balkan discourse”, see for example M. Todorova, V. Goldsworthy or D. Bijelić

Furthermore, the political system of the former Yugoslavia was a fruitful environment for the emergence of nationalism. Štiks explains how was it possible for the nationalists to attract the public with their rhetoric in such a way that formerly peaceful neighbourhoods of many multicultural villages, towns, and cities in former Yugoslavia have evolved in societies of people capable of atrocious acts of terror, sexual violence and mass killings in the name of the nation. He emphasizes the fact Yugoslavia consisted of six constituent republics. Each republic had its constitution and government. After the elections in 1990, political elites in each republic managed to “firmly establish a monopoly over the political arena, the economy, the media and the security apparatus of their republics and, in the case of Slobodan Milošević, over the federal army as well” (Štiks, 2015: 127). Having these means under their control, it was not difficult for the political leaders to attract the electorate.

This unsafe segmented nature of the political arrangement has, unfortunately, persisted in BiH. Today’s BiH is decentralised and divided into two strong ethno-territorial entities with separate parliaments and governments. Moreover, the Constitution of BiH is designed in such a way it directly supports, if not requires, the determination of one’s identity. The Constitution, drafted during the peace negotiation in Dayton, institutionalised and legitimised the ethno-nationalist division which has emerged mainly before and during the war. “The nationalist grid, its forms of belonging, legitimation, and claims to truth are not just a product of war, but of post-war transformations enforced through the Dayton Accords. By inscribing ethnic difference in the law, and mapping it onto territory, the provisions of Dayton helped preserve the power of nationalist elites who organized the bloodshed in the first place” (Kurtović, 2011: 245).

The institutional boundaries seriously hamper the society to develop into a non-nationalist and tolerant, a society with leaders striving to be solving the main problems of the country (such as unemployment, corruption, and serious ecological problems). The nationalist elites remain in power and through the employment of shallow, populist politics, they further drive a wedge between the nations of BiH. Kurtović observed the daily-based social relations between people living in Jajce, a town on the North of BiH which had undergone a radical transformation of its population composition from basically non-conflicting multicultural society existing prior to the war to a society consisting of people mostly considered as either Croats or Bosniaks. Based on her field research (2011) she has concluded that today’s nationalism in BiH is to a large extent determined by rather

pragmatic motivations of the people. For the citizens of today's BiH, it can be beneficial to declare their nationalism, or even to join a nationalist party to secure their job, wellbeing, and a certain quality of life.

Discourse analysis

Election campaign

The election campaign took place in the fall of 2018. In an ideal world, an election should be the clearest and the most accurate public survey as it reaches an enormous sample of the population, provided the elections are transparent and not manipulated. The last general elections in BiH were, as usual, held under the careful supervision of various international organisations such as the OSCE. According to the OSCE Final Report of the General Elections in BiH, there were several violations of the Election Law committed during the elections, however, the final results can be viewed as accurate and non-manipulated (OSCE, 2019). Therefore, the outcomes of the elections are one of the most precise pictures of the will of the electorate in BiH, among others concerning the foreign policy of the country.

Speeches after the General election

After it was clear he won the election, Milorad Dodik gave a speech at the headquarters of SNSD party in Banja Luka. At the beginning of his speech, Milorad Dodik compared the results and the number of votes he obtained with the number of votes his rival candidate Mladen Ivanić got. "I have obtained 56 percent, or, 330 890 votes. Ivanić 44 percent, which is 260 190 votes. The difference is 70 700 votes. That is an unbeatable difference, even though all Muslims who have the right to vote voted for Ivanić" ('Dodik proglasio pobjedu čistu kao suza,' 2018).

In his speech, Dodik suggested that Mladen Ivanić and his party were supported by the embassies of the United States and the United Kingdom, yet, this support did not help him to win the election. "Not even 100 United States and United Kingdom embassies could not help them even though they have helped them till this very moment. The people have shown its will and its power. Ivanić paid for his self-seeking and obedient policy towards the West and foreign embassies, mainly the US embassy and the UK embassy. The results show that the difference is so significant, it cannot be changed despite their efforts to do so" ('Dodik: Sastanak sa Vučićem možda i prije nego sa kolegama iz Predsjedništva,' 2018).

Whether or not the opposition party was supported by the foreign (Western) embassies, Dodik made clear the Serbian population of BiH stood united to defeat it. With this, Dodik presented himself as a strong and by far the only rightful leader of the Bosnian Serbs in BiH who had managed to win the elections against unfair supremacy of opposition supported by the West. In the long term, Dodik is the most popular politician in BiH as he obtained the most electoral votes. He also said that, unlike Ivanić, he was supported by the Serbs in Republika Srpska while the Bosniaks in RS voted for his opponent.

The US embassy had disclaimed these allegations already during the election campaign. “The United States is not interfering in the election process and we strongly reject such appalling accusations. We do not back one candidate or one party over another. That said, we do remain deeply committed to supporting credible and transparent elections, and will always call out vote buying, identify theft, and other forms of electoral fraud when we see it” (U.S. Embassy in BiH, 2018).

Dodik then promised that as one of the members of the Presidency of BiH, he will defend and represent Republika Srpska and his motto should be ‘Republika Srpska before everything else’. Again, Dodik emphasized his devotion to the Serbian nation, while simultaneously saying he will not let the representatives of the other two nations press for the country’s foreign policy contradictory to the Serbian interests. Dodik also said he believes that the country can develop and evolve, but without the meddling of foreign actors. At the end of his speech, he mentioned that Serbian president Vučić had happily greeted Dodik's victory. Dodik again said that not even the English people were able to help Ivanić to win. Then he said his first official meeting shall be with president Vučić, and only after this meeting he will meet the other Bosnian presidents (*ibidem*). Dodik endorsed the vital cooperation with Serbia and President Vučić. His decision to meet a president of a different state earlier than with the Bosniak and Croat members of the Presidency of his state indicates his endeavour to enhance the connection and relations with Serbia rather than to seek improvement of relations of domestic actors.

Dodik’s assumption that even Muslims voted for Ivanić outlines the domestic division of society is not incorrect. According to the results of the elections (Centralna Izborna Komisija, 2018) compared with proportional representation of Bosniaks living in municipalities of Republika Srpska according to the 2013 demographic survey (Statistika.ba, 2013), indeed they had have voted mostly for Mladen Ivanić. Ivanić won in municipalities with the majority of Bosniaks.

In his short speech, Dodik managed to create an identity of people who supported him. According to his speech, these are Serbs, well disposed towards cooperation with Serbia, people who condemn any meddling of Western international actors, people who are honest, and who support Milorad Dodik even though his party is not supported by any foreign actor or embassy. On the other hand, the identity of the Others was created as well: flawed and dishonest opposition dependent on and supported by Muslims and the Western embassies.

This speech has shown Dodik's clear position of a person who seeks to ensure that the needs of citizens of Republika Srpska will be met primarily. His comments about British and American support for his rival candidate Ivanić aimed to establish a clear definition of honest and well-deserved victorious group Us and crooked, unfair and calculating group Them represented by the opposition - Mladen Ivanić, and foreign intruders, specifically the USA and Great Britain mentioned in his speech multiple times.

In the past, Dodik accused the United States of meddling in the domestic affairs of BiH. In 2018, the Council of Ministers made a cooperation agreement with the USAID – the American governmental agency for international development. The agreement “provides for the establishment of an advisory body in the BiH Council of Ministers for cooperation with civil society NGOs” (USAID, 2018). They have done so two months prior to the parliament and presidential elections. Milorad Dodik assailed the signing of the agreement, claiming it to be against constitutional order as the Council decided without previously discussing it with the entities. He also sees the timing of the event as a sign of the United States’ effort to influence the results of the elections. Dodik also pointed to the fact there is not specified in the agreement, which NGO will receive the money from the US agency. In sum, the agency undertook to disburse 8 million dollars among Bosnian non-governmental organisations (“Otkrivamo: Šta piše u sporazumu USAID-a i Vijeća ministara koji je naljutio Dodika,” 2018). Several media confirmed (ibid), there is not specified in the agreement which NGOs will receive the money, however, the agreement is not traceable and USAID has ignored my official requests for the document. At the same time, the USAID has not disclaimed that there is not specified which NGO will receive the money and for these reasons, I will work on the assumption the USAID shall be the one to decide which NGO it will support financially.

The US foreign aid is according to Tarnoff and Lawson from the American Congressional Research Service an “essential instrument of U.S. foreign policy (...) Foreign aid is a

particularly flexible tool – it can act as both carrot and stick and is a means of influencing events, solving a specific problem, and protecting U.S. values” (2016). For the USA to gain any influence through the foreign aid mechanism in a multi-ethnic country, such as BiH, it is logical it must choose who will receive the money by itself. It will choose those NGO’s which are not against the U.S. activity in the country, or even those publicly supporting it. It is also evident that it is in the U.S. interest to support NGOs in Republika Srpska as well as in the Federation, but to give the responsibility to any governmental body in Republika Srpska would mean even the organisations opposing the U.S. policy could receive the funds. With this, not only the USAID can decide to fund organisations supporting its policy, it can choose those directly opposing Milorad Dodik and his party. One can thus understand Milorad Dodik’s irritation as the USA can influence financially, and consequently discursively, the state of civil society to undermine Dodik’s position. At the same time, the politicians in the Federation did not oppose the agreement which quite clearly shows their positive perception of the U.S. presence and activities in the entity. Dodik’s statement also indicates he opposes the composition of the Council of Ministers. There is not even one member of Dodik’s SNSD party in the Council, on top of that, one of the members is Dragan Mektić. Dodik and Mektić are long-time political rivals. This allegation of American and British meddling in the election process reflects Dodik’s anti-Western stance. With these statements and the employment of such serious allegations, Dodik seeks to consolidate his position of a rightful leader of the Serbian nation who managed to win without the support of the West. At the same time, he endeavours to discredit the opposition. Thus, his claim of American and British support of Mladen Ivanić suggests how will now the position of the Serbian authorities in BiH change concerning the Western actors: while Ivanić had cooperated with them until the elections, Dodik said quite clearly, their support will not be needed anymore. The U.S. Embassy in BiH reacted to Dodik’s accusation with a press release named “The United States is Not the Enemy; Others Actively Work Against Citizen Interests.” In this release, The US Embassy again condemned proclamations of ‘certain politicians’ stating that these allegations are ‘completely ridiculous conspiracy theories’ and on top of that are easily disproved. “Such rhetoric is irresponsible, inflammatory, and out of line with democratic norms. Certain political groups in BiH fear that their illegal and corrupt activities will be investigated and prosecuted. Instead of focusing on issues of actual

importance to the citizens of BiH, their selfish logic is to try to delude citizens by creating false enemies” (U.S. Embassy in BiH, 2018).

In the release, the Embassy affirmed its unwillingness to allow itself to be portrayed as an enemy of BiH and stated that they are the others who undermine and actively work against the interests of citizens of the country. “In keeping with our longstanding commitment to BiH's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and stability and the well-being of its citizens, we will continue to press for measures to build a justice sector to fight terrorism and counter corruption, as well as improve the credibility and transparency of elections, including by calling out electoral fraud when we see it” (ibidem, 2018).

This proclamation shows quite evidently how does the US Embassy understands its activity in the country. The group Us in this text is described as the United States together with BiH. The state is strongly supported by the USA in its effort to establish a democratic and well-functioning society. "Them" are the politicians claiming the USA interferes into the democratic processes as well as the institutions and the highest offices. These politicians are according to the US Embassy corrupt and they try to elude the attention of the citizens by creating false enemies. The embassy thus suggests that politicians who suspect the USA to be interfering in the Bosnian domestic politics are the enemies. Most importantly, it shows how the USA distrusts and discredits some of the Bosnian political authorities. As it was the case with the funding of the Bosnian NGOs of the USA's own choice, the American activities in some cases circumvent local authorities. This also uncovers the low level of the sovereignty of BiH, which is, to some extent, given by the existence of the Office of High Representative and overall influence of many international actors in the country. I argue that not only the individual politicians in BiH create the conflicting environment in the country, but also the international actors who actively seek to strengthen their power within BiH through linking with their preferred politicians or influential groups. The stance of the United States towards the authorities from Republika Srpska, specifically towards Milorad Dodik, is argumentative and conflicting. Milorad Dodik is blacklisted in the United States since 2017 for actively obstructing efforts to implement the 1995 Dayton Accords.

The symbolic system of Us and Them in this case could not be outlined more explicitly. The US embassy's text operates with allegations of corruption and indifference towards citizen's needs. On the other hand, the statement persuades the public that the Embassy always works for the citizens, for their well-being, democracy, integrity, and stability. The

group. They consist of corrupt politicians who stand against the development and well-being of the citizens. The US diplomatic mission to BiH presents any of the politicians opposing US activities in the country as corrupted and untrustworthy. The US presence on the other hand is presented as highly beneficial for the public in BiH. As we could see in the case with the agreement between USAID and the Council of Ministers, the United States chooses by itself, which citizens will profit from the help. Therefore, the proclamation that the USA works for every citizen in the country is not completely true. The USA logically disburse money among the citizens in such a way it is beneficial for the USA. It is important to say that probably every country providing foreign aid has its pragmatic reasons to do so, however, the USA is one of the most influential and richest countries in the world. Its foreign aid policy is not negligible, especially in a country such as BiH, where the independence of the state institutions is limited by the international community and the level of the actual country's independence is thus rather low. A country such as BiH is quite fragile and vulnerable to the meddling of other countries or organisations.

Dodik's effort to mark the United States, and the western international community, as an intruder is to a certain extent based on facts. To achieve support amongst Bosnian Serbs, Dodik uses the international community as the negative actor who actively disturbs BiH's sovereignty. In his speech, he aims to describe Bosnian Serbs (specifically those who voted for his party) as the only ones actively opposing such acts of violating the independence of the country.

Speeches after the General election - FBiH

Bosniak member of the Presidency, Šefik Džaferović announced his victory of the presidential election in Sarajevo. The speech was open by former Bosniak President and the chairman of the SDA party Bakir Izetbegović. In the beginning, Izetbegović stated that the SDA party is officially the strongest in BiH. To emphasize this, he said that all of the rival parties and its authorities who had cast aspersions on the SDA ended up "where they belong, at some fifth, sixth, even seventh place" ("Izetbegović i Džaferović proglasili pobjedu," 2018). Without presenting Šefik Džaferović, Izetbegović invited the journalists to ask questions. One of the journalists suggested that the winner should have a speech as well. This moment has shown who is the most important person in the party. Šefik Džaferović talked exactly for one minute and 22 seconds. After his rather vague and very short speech in which he mainly thanked all the people who supported the SDA party, was

the floor taken again by Bakir Izetbegović (ibidem). One of the journalists then asked Izetbegović for comment on Dragan Čović's allegation that Croat member Željko Komšić was elected by Bosniaks. "In this country, we follow the constitution, not the wishes of Dragan Čović. Not even we Bosniaks are happy with this, with the fact that our society consists of 50% of Bosniaks and yet, we only have one-third of the power. We are not happy with the fact that Republika Srpska exists. We are not satisfied that the Federation is divided into Cantons. We all must tolerate something" (ibidem).

Izetbegović presents Čović as a person who questions the Constitution and at the same time showing himself as someone who loses a lot even though he respects the rules. He understands himself as someone speaking for the whole Bosniak nation, which he presents as the most numerous, but he still must, according to the Constitution, share the power with considerably less numerous Croatian nation.

At the same time, it is beneficial for Izetbegović that Željko Komšić has won. They have the same interests when it comes to the foreign policy of the country. For both of them, the alliance with the Western actors means consolidation of their positions as the most important western actor in the country supports them both. The leaders of the Serbs and Croats (Dodik and Čović) are repeatedly opposed by the U.S. Embassy. The victory of Željko Komšić on the other hand was by the same embassy recognised as legitimate. It is therefore evident that Komšić represents more of an ally for the U.S. representatives in the country than Dragan Čović. In the connection with the country's foreign policy, both Izetbegović and Komšić represent the same pro-western orientated stream.

The identity of Them was outlined as well, Dragan Čović was in Izetbegović's speech described as a loser who is simply not satisfied with the outcome of the election. As for Republika Srpska, Izetbegović's view on the fact, that Bosniaks must tolerate the existence of the entity speaks for itself. Izetbegović is saying that Bosniaks should have more power than they have at this moment. He operates with numbers – Bosniaks are the most numerous group in the country (Popis u BiH, 2013). Even though he respects the Constitution, this rhetoric suggests he would like to see some changes to concede more power to the Bosniak nation. This act of speech is quite a serious example of efforts to divide society in favour of Bosniaks.

After he won, the last member of the Presidency, Željko Komšić had the speech in Sarajevo as well. He opened the speech with congratulations to all the candidates and with

a promise, that he will serve all citizens of BiH regardless of their decision to vote for him or not. Komšić also mentioned he will be the president of all people. Not only of those from the Federation of BiH who could vote for him but also of the people from Republika Srpska, who could not vote for him due to the Election law. Then he closed his speech by expressing his wish not to make a single mistake over the course of his mandate. After his speech, one of the journalists asked him how many times he has visited cities in Herzegovina over the course of his first mandate and how many times he plans to visit Mostar and other cities this time. In her question, she called Komšić a Croatian member of the Presidency. Komšić corrected her and said he is not a Croatian member of the Presidency, but a president elected from the Croatian nation in BiH (“Komšić: Služim svim građanima BiH,” 2018). Regardless the fact there is stated in the Constitution, that one member of the presidency shall be a Croat (Ustav BiH, 2019), with this statement, Komšić has affirmed what he was saying at the beginning of the speech: he does not want to represent Croats solely, he wants to be a President of all the citizens. As I already presented, Željko Komšić was elected by Bosniaks and is refused by the majority of Bosnian Croats. His proclamation of being a president of all the citizens is therefore faulty.

In his speech, we can see his effort to create an identity of himself as a person who does not aim to further divide society. However, not only his election is a sign of the level of division of the society, his remaining in the position further divides it. His perception of Us is not purely nationalist as were the cases with Dodik and Izetbegović, as Komšić has not supported the nation he should, according to the Constitution, represent. His election shows the inability of the Croatian nation in BiH to elect its representative and it plays into Croatian nationalists' hands. “While the election of Komšić shows that there is a desire for a more civic politics in at least a part of the population, it has also strengthened Croat nationalists’ calls for a third entity and at the same time, it also fortifies Serb nationalists’ argument that civic politics is just another term for Bosnjak majoritarianism” (Touquet, 2011).

Inauguration

Milorad Dodik initiated his speech at the presidential inauguration by kissing the flag of Republika Srpska. After this symbolic act, Dodik promised he would strive for revoking the office of the High Representative. “Many people know I have many objections to the

work of the High Representative, and I think we should have a new discussion on many questions and try to reach a compromise. 15 years old solutions were maybe adequate 15 years ago, but not anymore. I will strive for prompt revoking the office of the High Representative. Many of the decisions taken were laws imposed by him despite the fact he did not have the right to impose them. According to the annex 9 of the Dayton agreement, he can only implement civil parts of the agreement” (“Dodik poljubio zastavu RS-a i poručio: Ne želim napraviti nijedan loš potez prema Bošnjacima i Hrvatima, ali ću tražiti adekvatan tretman za RS i srpski narod,” 2018).

He also addressed the public with a promise he would not take any action against Bosniaks and Croats, but he wants to ensure adequate treatment of the Serbian nation. “I wish to establish efficient cooperation with the other members of the Presidency. It has been a long time since we fought in the war, this is an opportunity to create a democratic society” (ibidem).

Milorad Dodik in his speech showed a will to cooperate with the other two members of the Presidency, stating that there is no war anymore and the cooperation can lead towards the development of the society. However, he still underlines that he is mainly a Serbian representative in the Presidential body. “I am here as a representative of the Republika Srpska and the Serbian nation. I am here to carry out the policy of military neutrality and to dismiss any processes which are inconsistent with the interests of the Republika Srpska” (ibidem).

Dodik did not forget to underline his allegiance to the Serbian nation and his respect of the military neutrality, which again implies his will to resist any foreign efforts to disturb the Bosnian interior policy. With this statement, Dodik said he is not going to support the accession to NATO.

The group Us, in this case, is represented by the Serbian nation and Republika Srpska. To some extent, the group Us comprises also the other two constituent nations of BiH, however, this group can in Dodik’s perspective only exist when the opposite group Them consists of particular foreign actors who might be intent on interfering in the policy of BiH. Only in such a situation, BiH creates the group Us as the cooperation between all the Presidents can contribute to the development of the country. However, Komšić and Džaferović both see the NATO integration of the BiH as an essential and vital step. As such, unless they change their position towards the alliance, Dodik will never see them as a group of Us.

The prospect of both Komšić and Džaferović to change their opinion is very unlikely. As Željko Komšić in his speech said, his conviction is that “the future of BiH is membership in NATO and the EU. Together, these are the guarantees of security and prosperity for the country and its citizens. The status of NATO integration is exactly where it was four years ago when I (Komšić) served as one of the members of the Presidency of BiH. The time has come for it to be changed and I will not miss the opportunity to do so. We can change it by activation of the MAP” (“Željko Komšić: Bit ću predsjednik svih građana,” 2018).

As it was the case with his speech after it was clear he had been elected to the position of the Croatian member of the Presidency, Komšić underlined he would serve as a President of all citizens of BiH. As I already presented, Komšić can be hardly viewed as president of all. He came to power as a member of the Presidency for the first time in 2006 due to the Croat nationalist party HDZ split into two rival factions. He, as a multi-ethnic Socialist party candidate, was elected with the support of Bosniaks. “Komšić is married to a Bosniak woman and fought in the Bosnian army during the war, rather than the Croat army. He describes himself as a Bosnian patriot” (Touquet, 2011). Komšić is supported mainly by Bosniaks, who do not want to vote for nationalist Muslim party SDA. As Touquet claims, voters of Komšić call for more civic politics (2018).

Komšić strives to create a pan-nationalist identity of Us comprising every citizen of BiH. Nonetheless, his devotion to NATO and EU integration suggests he also condemns everyone, who impedes the process. His mentioning of the fact the NATO integration has not advanced since the last time Komšić served as a President of BiH suggests he is standing firm on his stance regarding the MAP activation and other following steps towards the NATO membership. Therefore, the group Them in the case comprises those supporting the military neutrality of the country, specifically Milorad Dodik, who upholds and endorses the neutrality of Republika Srpska. The group Us again comprises everyone open to cooperation, every Bosnian citizen and the foreign partners and organisations, mainly NATO and the European Union.

In his speech, Šefik Džaferović placed great emphasis on cooperation with all partners and friends in the world. “For this to happen, it is crucial to take several actions. The re-integration of the country and its accession to the EU and NATO are crucial steps. These processes must be accompanied by economic and social reforms. People in this country are tired of useless disputes. They want to live peacefully, to raise and to educate their

children. They want security, social justice, hope, and perspective. Our duty is to ensure this” (“Džaferović: BiH treba nastaviti graditi dobre odnose sa svim partnerima,” 2018). Džaferović then appealed to cooperation between the nations. “Even though we have diverse opinions, if we hold a civilized dialogue, if we make an effort to reach a consensus on the key problems and if we stand up for the truth and justice, we will have an opportunity to reintegrate the country. The re-integration means to ensure the same rights for every citizen in every part of the country, regardless of his or her ethnicity and religion. It also means to act as one to meet the goals of the country” (ibidem, 2018).

Džaferović also dedicated few words to defence plan of BiH urging to reform it under NATO standards. “I expect the MAP to be activated as soon as possible to follow up with the reform of our defence system” (ibidem, 2018).

In his speech, Džaferović created the group Us as a group of people seeking to stabilize and re-integrate the country. He did not specifically mark the group Them. He encouraged the politicians to work in the best interest of the citizens of BiH and underlined the need to cooperate with foreign partners. EU and NATO accession are according to him the number one priority.

MAP activation

A day before the NATO ministers have invited BiH to join the MAP, Milorad Dodik hosted a conference to express his stance towards the MAP activation and his overall stance towards NATO. At the conference, Dodik again upheld and endorsed the neutrality of Republika Srpska and stated that he is not interested in anything related to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. “The NATO General Secretary himself said the decision is on BiH. In this regard, I will stick with the resolution of the Parliament of Republika Srpska regarding military neutrality. The bombing of Serbs in Republika Srpska has contributed to our negative stance. I do not understand why the process has accelerated just now. Whether to test Bosnia or to show the whole absurdity of the situation” (“Dodik poručio NATO-u: Ništa od MAP-a, mene obavezuje rezolucija Republike Srpske,” 2018). General Secretary of NATO Jens Stoltenberg announced the invitation for Bosnia to activate the MAP at the press conference on the 5th of December 2018. “Today NATO Foreign Ministers agreed to continue supporting BiH with its reforms. We are ready to accept the submission of the country's first Annual National Programme. This includes practical measures covering political, economic, and defence reform which will help them prepare for membership. It is now up to BiH to make the next step and decide whether to

take up this offer” (NATO, 2018). Stoltenberg introduced this news by saying that earlier that morning he discussed the Western Balkans with EU High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini. “This demonstrates once again that NATO and the European Union have a shared commitment to stability and security in the region” (ibidem, 2018). Stoltenberg also appreciated the efforts of the Republic of North Macedonia to join the alliance as soon as possible. “Allies discussed the progress that Skopje is making towards NATO membership. Accession Talks have already begun. It is now for the parliament in Skopje to complete the process. And to seize this historic opportunity to bring the country into the Alliance” (ibidem, 2018). He then expressed his concerns about Kosovo’s intention to move ahead with the transformation of the Kosovo Security Force into an army. Stoltenberg and the NATO foreign ministers believe this plan is ill-timed and that it goes against the advice of many NATO allies. Pristina’s step can according to him have serious repercussions for Kosovo’s future Euro-Atlantic integration. “At the same time, the new tariffs introduced by Pristina create new divisions. Such steps are making the EU-mediated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina even more difficult. But this remains the only way to bring durable peace to the region. We encourage both Belgrade and Pristina to show restraint. To refrain from provocative steps and statements. And to make the necessary compromises so that they can move forward towards a better future” (ibidem, 2018). After Stoltenberg concluded his speech, several questions from the journalists came regarding Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other discussed topics. Finally, Associated Press journalist decided to ask a question about Bosnia. “I just wonder about Bosnia: will you be sitting next to the fax machine, waiting for the national programme to come in? What are your expectations that something positive will come from that, given the election results in October?” (ibidem, 2018). Stoltenberg first jested about how rare it is to see the fax machine nowadays saying he has not seen it for years. After this, he repeated that it is up to BiH to decide. “We have made a decision. We are ready to receive their Annual National Programme. But let them decide. And then we are ready if they are ready” (ibidem, 2018).

The journalist’s question was pertinent and if nothing else, it should be answered with more concern about Bosnian future in or out of NATO. What Stoltenberg said is that Bosnian internal problems are not a NATO concern. Whilst appealing for regional stability, he completely overlooks the threat the fragility of Bosnian domestic affairs represents in the region. In his speech, Jens Stoltenberg managed to outline the position

and the identity of NATO. The NATO membership is for him an opportunity, an offer. NATO in his speech is an organisation which offers stability and security, and which can ensure these as it is its duty and its commitment. However, the alliance is not here to coerce the countries into the membership.

The domestic political situation in BiH does, not concern NATO. It is a Bosnian choice to make to join the alliance or not, that Stoltenberg expressed quite clearly. The group Them is in his speech understood as comprising everyone who somehow disrupts the stability of the West Balkans region. Us is mainly everyone who takes the opportunity to join the alliance. Those countries, which do not aspire to join the alliance do not come under any of these two groups. BiH is not understood as Us unless it decides to join the alliance.

The position of the United States is in this regard strongly pro-integration. The U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan had a meeting with all three members of the Presidency shortly after the invitation to activate the MAP. At the meeting, he urged them to accelerate the country's reforms to integrate into Western organisations. "We discussed the U.S. position, which is as firm as it has ever been, supporting the decision that has been made by this government to pursue membership in NATO" ("U.S. backs NATO membership for Bosnia, dismisses Serb opposition," 2018). Sullivan explained that the USA is ready to help Bosnia counter "external forces that actively seek to make Bosnia even more vulnerable to internal instability" (ibidem, 2018). According to Reuters, he declined to specify those forces. At the press conference, Sullivan talked about alleged attempts to undermine the state institution and about desires for secession and creation of the third entity which threatens the stability of the country ("Sullivan: SAD ostaju opredijeljene za zaštitu suvereniteta BiH," 2018). Sullivan in his speech alerts to unspecified external forces. I suppose he mainly speaks of Russia. As the USA is ready to provide any help necessary to counter these forces, he says that the enemy of BiH is the enemy of the USA as well. But as we know, it is difficult to distinguish who is an enemy of BiH as BiH does not have a united view on its foreign policy. How does the USA decide who is and who is not an enemy of BiH? Even though the USA and BiH have not concluded any security agreement, the USA perceives BiH as an ally, and the responsibility of the USA is to protect it against the external threats. However, to assume responsibility for a country's security also means to limit the country's sovereignty. The USA says that no other but the US opinion is legitimate - therefore, Milorad Dodik and his supporters are understood as intruders of the common USA and BiH pro-western policy.

As such, the US diplomats logically try to depose Dodik. At the same time, it is in the US interest to support those politicians, who are open to cooperation with the USA. Which brings us to another thing Sullivan talked about - the creation of the third entity. He understands the possibility of the creation of the third entity as a threat to the country's stability. Certainly, it would do significant harm to the stability of BiH, but it would also considerably reinforce the position of Bosnian Croats and its leaders. I assume if the Croatian member of the presidency were elected from majorly Croatian third entity, Željko Komšić would not be a president. And while Željko Komšić is currently open to cooperation with the US diplomats, it is unclear how would someone else act as the Croatian member. Dragan Čović's position toward the integration seemed unclear, unlike Komšić's definite pro-NATO stance. Although I agree with Sullivan that the creation of the third entity would be very dangerous, I also must point out that the very existence of two entities poses a threat to the country's stability.

Milorad Dodik presently negated that they would discuss any of these concerns at the meeting and stated that it seems like Sullivan and Dodik had attended a different event. "Sullivan had an opportunity to hear loud and clear that there is not a consensus among us on the accession to NATO and that the National Assembly of Republika Srpska adopted the Resolution on military neutrality. If there is anyone who insists on respecting the Dayton Agreement, it is me. I have been abided by the Agreement already as the President of Republika Srpska" ("Dodik se pita: Da li smo Sullivan i ja bili na istom sastanku?," 2018).

Sullivan also talked about the sanctions that the USA imposed on Milorad Dodik in 2017 for actively obstructing efforts to implement the 1995 Dayton Accords. The situation has not changed and Milorad Dodik is still blacklisted by the USA. "I met with President Dodik because I respect his office. I also respect democracy and the right of citizens to elect their representatives. However, this does not lift the sanctions imposed on Milorad Dodik" ("Sullivan: SAD će reagovati na ugrožavanje stabilnosti BiH," 2018).

The group Us is in the speech of John Sullivan represented by the United States and BiH. Within this group, the United States represents a protector that is ready to help Bosnia against any external intruder seeking to disrupt the already fragile and vulnerable country. Balkan Peninsula is a crucial and strategically important area. The USA employs both discursive and economical tools to consolidate its position in the region. The USA often use its soft power to maintain a geopolitical superiority in strategically important regions.

As I already said, Milorad Dodik was once perceived as a moderate politician and was popular among the international community. As his politics have changed towards nationalism connected with opposing stance towards the western actors, Dodik is no longer of use to the USA and as such, he has been repeatedly assailed and criticised by the American Embassy. The group Them is represented by the intruders who are not specified as well as by those who oppose NATO integration. Milorad Dodik, who is blacklisted for obstructing the implementation of the Dayton Agreement, is understood as a member of the group Them. However, as Sullivan said, his office is understood as a result of the democratic and free will of the citizens of BiH and as such, his presence at meetings with American representatives is not undesired. Not only Dodik is indeed democratically elected, in the long term, but he has also been the most successful politician in the country. Just in the last elections, he received the most votes any presidential candidate has ever received (Izbori, 2018). The U.S. attitude to him again shows to what extent the USA respects the Constitution of BiH and the will of a great number of citizens. Sullivan in his speech reluctantly accepts that Dodik is a legitimate leader of the Bosnian Serbs, but at the same time manifests that to hold the post does not mean the USA will respect him. Needless to say, the USA has an indisputable right to blacklist anyone who in its eyes represents a threat to U.S. values, security, or ideology. In a country like BiH, however, is necessary to make every effort to support mainly the cooperation between the constituent nations. This policy of favouring one side only contributes to further division of society. Željko Komšić welcomed the invitation to submit the Annual National Plan and appreciated the opportunity to activate the MAP. Komšić then appealed to the Bosnian politicians to make an additional effort to activate the MAP. In this respect, he referred to the official BiH Foreign Policy Strategy adopted by the Presidency in March 2018 which puts the NATO integration on one of the first places of the list of the country's priorities. According to him, this strategic decision is the only binding and credible document based on the following steps in NATO integration can be made (Komšić: Odluke Predsjedništva BiH po pitanju NATO-a jedini obavezujući dokumenti, 2018). Šefik Džaferović also welcomed the opportunity to activate the MAP. At a press conference, he said this step is very important for the whole country and its citizens. "This decision is in the interest of the whole country and means peace and stability. It also means a de-blocking of the NATO integration process which had not changed since 2010. Today's decision makes way for integration. Next station is a NATO membership" ("Džaferović:

Politika procesuiranja ratnih zločina je pod snažnim političkim pritiskom kako bi se postigao etnički balans,” 2018). Džaferović also asked the politicians to take all actions necessary to successfully finish and submit the ANP. After this, Džaferović talked about meeting with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of the USA Matthew Palmer. Džaferović said he is very grateful for US support and that he appreciates the engagement of the USA in BiH. “Thanks to their help, many reforms have been made. The USA is committed to maintaining the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of BiH. For us, the activity within the Washington-Brussels area is very important” (ibidem, 2018). With this, Džaferović endorsed the U.S. engagement in the BiH domestic affairs. The USA is legally committed to maintaining the sovereignty of BiH, but as I presented earlier, the reality is slightly different. BiH is not a sovereign country, there is a powerful international body overseeing the domestic politics which is ready, and most importantly, according to the BiH constitution, it is responsible, to step in in case that an unconstitutional law is about to be approved by the politicians in BiH. The USA is one of the international actors whose engagement in the country is not problematic for Šefik Džaferović. He places Bosniaks side by side with the USA and with NATO and the European Union.

A week after this event, Milorad Dodik declared that Republika Srpska will discuss the possibility to withdraw from the treaty establishing the Joint Armed Forces of BiH from 2006 (“Dodik: RS će razmotriti mogućnost izlaska iz Oružanih snaga BiH,” 2018). The Joint Armed Forces of BiH (AFB) comprises armed forces from both the Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska and the supreme civilian commander of the AFB is the Presidency of BiH. Milorad Dodik asserted that the former members of the Government of Republika Srpska were forced to leave the Army of RS (ARS) and that the AFB was formed under brutal pressure on RS. He also added that Kosovo is allowed to have its armed forces and it is supported by international forces while RS does not. “Within the annex 1 of the Dayton Peace Agreement, we will consider whether to remain in the BiH Armed Forces Formation Agreement. The RS will examine the possibility as soon as possible” (ibidem 2018). Dodik claimed that this agreement serves not to the nation of BiH, but NATO. He also condemned any possibility for Kosovo to form its own Army as it would contravene the regional stabilisation anchored in Annex 1 of the Dayton Agreement. Groups Us and Them are in this case quite clear. In Dodik's opinion, the army of Republika Srpska had to make severe compromises to incorporate its troops into a joint army. According to him, the current situation plays into the hands of NATO rather than the

citizens of BiH. Dodik is very careful in his speech when it comes to the legality of steps similar to this one when promising these rather radical solutions, Dodik always refers to the Dayton Peace Agreement. He stands very firmly by his compliance with the agreement as we could see after the meeting with John Sullivan. Dodik presents himself as a person who follows conscientiously the rules despite the fact, he does not concur with them. He understands Republika Srpska as highly constrained by the BiH Armed Forces Formation Agreement. NATO in his point of view exploits the citizens rather than to benefit them. NATO is, therefore, the group Them. The fact that the international community supports the existence of the Kosovo army is unacceptable and it can destabilize the whole region. With this statement, Dodik again refers to the Dayton Peace Agreement and warns about the ambiguous attitude of the community. Dodik also decidedly disapproves of such a possibility. Dodik insinuates that the international community and NATO together repress the Serbs, both in BiH and Serbia. The group Us, therefore, comprises Serbs. I argue that with this Dodik seeks to cement his position of the rightful leader of Serbs in BiH - the only leader capable to stop the harmful NATO integration process.

Later in December, Milorad Dodik met with the Russian Ambassador to BiH Peter Ivancov. They discussed the current political situation in the country. Milorad Dodik promised to urge the prompt formation of the new Council of Ministers of BiH and announced that the SNSD party nominated Zoran Tageltija to the office of the Chairman (“Dodik sa Ivancovim: Unaprijediti odnose BiH i Rusije,” 2018). Leaving aside the fact that Dodik rightfully wanted to speed up the process of creation of the government as a member of his party had a chance to be appointed as a chairman, Dodik also strived for removing the then chairman, Dragan Mektić from opposing SDS party and his long-time political enemy.

Few days after this meeting, Ivancov and Dodik met again in Banja Luka during the meeting the Russian Ambassador had with the chairman of the Parliament of Republika Srpska Nedejko Čubrilović. Čubrilović and Ivancov also discussed the formation of Council of Ministers of BiH. “He (Čubrilović) added that actual political situation confirms that the biggest obstruction to the functioning of the common organs and institutions in BiH makes political Sarajevo, which is not ready to implement the election results” (Narodna Skupština Republike Srpske, 2018).

Indeed, both remaining members of the Presidency have conditioned the formation of the Government with progress towards NATO. Šefik Džaferović said at the end of December

2018 that all the decisions necessary concerning NATO integration have been made and everyone in the country must respect these decisions and relevant laws. “You can take a different stand, you can have a different opinion and different policy, yet, you must respect the existing decisions. The policy of BiH is quite clear when it comes to EU and NATO integration process” (“Džaferović i Komšić: Put ka NATO-u uvjet za izbor Tegeltije,” 2018). Yet again, he is not right. Milorad Dodik has a constitutional right to oppose the decisions regarding the foreign policy of the country. So, he can take a different stand. Džaferović also said that BiH needs stability and a stable political scene. “Without peace and stability is difficult to continue in the direction we were going until now. In 2019, I expect peace, stability and a strong progress in NATO and EU integration process as well as new economic reforms” (“Džaferović: Imenovanje Tegeltije ću podržati uz jasnu opredijeljenost nove većine za NATO put,” 2018). However, this adamant pro-NATO position by no means straightens neither peace nor stability of the country. The same stand takes Željko Komšić. Apart from conditioning the formation of the Council, Komšić also considered whether it should be Dodik's candidate to take the position of the Chairman in the view of the fact he would hold the office during the crucial time of NATO integration. “I do not know what will they (Džaferović and Dodik) do, but it is elusive to expect that the Presidency of BiH is going to give the mandate to a person who opposes the important decisions” (“Džaferović i Komšić: Put ka NATO-u uvjet za izbor Tegeltije,” 2018). What Komšić was saying, is that Dodik should accede to his demands because it can only get worse for him - the longer Dodik is refusing towards the NATO accession, the less willing Komšić will be to allow an SNSD candidate to become the prime minister. Their decision to block the formation of the Government shows how truly dedicated they are to finish the processes while disregarding Republika Srpska's military neutrality. Komšić underlined his stance again in January. He said he would not mind if the leaving Denis Zvizdić's Government from the previous tenure stayed in the office for the following 4 years. “Tegeltija has a chance to be appointed. As soon as the MAP is activated” (“Presidency member conditions government formation with progress towards NATO,” 2019). This rather strict statement shows that Komšić is not in this regard open to any discussion. It is either NATO integration or blocking the formation of the new Government and the appointment of Serbian Chairman of the Council. It was beneficial for Željko Komšić to keep the government in the way it was at that time, for several reasons: there was not even one SNSD party member in the government, the

members from the Republika Srpska in the Council of Ministers were the members of Dodik's opposition SDS, more importantly, Dragan Mektić, the long-years opponent of Milorad Dodik was a Minister of Security. This time of political void had lasted for more than one year. After many disputes, the Presidents of BiH finally agreed on nominating Zoran Tegeltija a Chairman of Council of Ministers in November 2019 - the final formation of the government will be in more detail broke down in the last subchapter of the analysis.

Vladimir Putin in Belgrade

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Serbia in January 2019. Milorad Dodik participated in the meeting and he used the opportunity to discuss the Bosnian domestic situation with him. Dodik brought the topic of the putative obstructions of formation of the Government conditioned by the acceleration of the NATO accession into the debate with Putin and explained to him why the process of forming the government and other authorities is so lengthy. "We achieved good election result, we are now in the process of constituting the offices and authorities at the level of BiH, of course, there are certain delays. As is customary in BiH, everything is always conditioned. At this moment, Bosniak's side conditions the process by acceptance of the NATO path. We refuse that, of course" ("Dodik Putinu: Bošnjačka strana nas uslovljava," 2019).

The fact that Dodik expresses his discontent about the situation to the president of the Russian Federation after two similar discussions with the Russian Ambassador to BiH implies that the bound with Russia is very important for him. At the meetings with Ivancov, Dodik promised to straighten the relations and cooperation with Russia while condemning any effort to enter NATO. Dodik seeks to find a strong ally, an opponent of NATO, who can help him to sustain the pressure put on him, Serbs, and Republika Srpska by Bosniaks. Therefore, group Us also comprises Russia as a key ally. The group Them consists of Bosniaks and NATO.

According to Serbian newspaper Politika, Putin expressed his support for the stabilisation of the region, his support for the Dayton Peace Agreement, and his hope for progress in BiH and Republika Srpska. In this regard, he expressed the conviction that Russia will contribute to the stabilisation and overall good state of affairs in the region ("Dodik: Putin izrazio podršku stabilizaciji u regionu," 2019). Putin's position is the same as the position of the USA. However, the stability of the Balkan region is not what the USA believes Russia strives for. Russian activities in the country, as articulated in the statement of the

American ambassador to Serbia Anthony F. Godfrey, are disruptive and destabilising. “Throughout the region, Russia has successfully distorted public discourse — on Kosovo, on the EU, on U.S. policies — and undermined a considered, fact-based discussion of key issues. Russia does this through false and misleading narratives, emotional and sensational memes, outrageous conspiracy theories, and trolls and bots that spread these poisonous voices far and wide through social media. The goal of this disinformation is to muddy the debate, increase polarization, and ultimately undermine good governance, trust in institutions, and democracy itself” (Godfrey, 2019). The representative of the USA resolutely disagrees with Putin’s statements of stability Russia wants to see in the Balkans. On the other hand, potential NATO integration of these countries would according to Russian stand also disrupt the region and as such, Russia also presents the USA as an actor disturbing the peace and stability in the Balkan region. Both actors are playing a dangerous geopolitical game in a region where almost every public debate has the potential to evolve into society-wide conflict. As we could see in several cases from the most fragile society in the region – Bosnian and Herzegovinian – influential powers’ engagement in the region has brought mainly confusion and enmity rather than stability and peace.

The Name of Republika Srpska

In the last week of January, the Bosniak member of the Presidency Šefik Džaferović talked about SDA's proclamation it will initiate a law procedure to change the name of Republika Srpska in an interview for Al Jazeera. “BiH is a multiethnic country in which the three constituent nations and minorities live together. It is not all right that one part of the country is named after just one of these nations. Republika Srpska is according to the Constitution multiethnic entity where Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats, and others are equal. It is discriminatory for everybody who is not Serbs that the entity is named after Serbs only” (“Džaferović: Naziv Republike Srpske je diskriminatoran,” 2019). Džaferović said the practice has shown that the very name of Republika Srpska is systematically used to discriminate non-Serbian citizens. According to Džaferović, in Republika Srpska the right to language is being challenged, proportional employment in public institutions is violated as well as the Constitutional Court decisions, such as the decision about celebrating the 9th of January. The Constitutional Court of BiH has proclaimed the celebration of the 9th of January unconstitutional in 2015. On this day in 1992, Republika Srpska was established. “It is harmful to deny people the right to their mother tongue, employment, and other human rights which are violated in that entity. It is frustrating to mark the January 9th even

though the Constitutional Court proclaimed it unconstitutional” (ibidem, 2019). Džaferović also said this issue will not further block the formation of the Government. “It is important to create a program, but there are problems – statements of authorities from Republika Srpska, mainly the officials and political parties that should participate in the Government, that they will not respect the law and the already adopted decisions about NATO accession. You cannot support a candidate who does not respect these decisions” (ibidem, 2019). Džaferović added that the accession to NATO does not depend on Dodik’s opinion as the decision was already taken. His proclamation is not correct. The Constitution of BiH gives the same power to every one of the three members of the presidential body when it comes to foreign policy decisions, and, as such, the accession to NATO does depend on Dodik’s decision. Džaferović’s statement is purely populist and serves mainly to degrade Dodik and his actual political power.

Džaferović in this interview created identities of Us, people who respect the Constitution and the decisions of Constitutional Court, people, who respect the multiethnic character of BiH and people who condemn the violations of human rights. The group Them are people who violate the Constitutional law, who support purely homogenous Serbian entity and who disrupt the country's path to NATO. The formation of the Government is according to him blocked by people who oppose the previous decisions about the process of integration into NATO and the EU. In this regard, Džaferović stands strictly in opposition to Dodik who claims it is the Bosniak nation that obstructs the Government formation. Needless to say, that Džaferović in his statement denied Dodik his right to decide on a foreign affair topic and with this, Džaferović himself opposed the very Constitution. His creation of Us as people who respect the Constitution and the multiethnic character of BiH is highly inaccurate.

Milorad Dodik called this suggestion to change the name of Republika Srpska an initiative to divide the country. “This initiative is not compatible with the BiH Constitution. The Constitution says BiH is composed of Republika Srpska and the Federation of BiH, which indicated that the RS is a constitutional category and its name cannot be questioned. If the initiative is submitted, we will call a meeting of the National Assembly of RS and propose adequate measures. The submission would be an initiative for the separation of BiH. Republika Srpska does not intend to tolerate this and to wait for the outcome of this process as it does not have confidence in the Constitutional Court's decisions” (“Dodik: Ovo je inicijativa za razdruživanje BiH,“ 2019). The group Us is again the Serbs and

Republika Srpska, as he called for a meeting of the National Assembly. Constitutional Court's decisions are according to him dubious and Republika Srpska should not tolerate actions against itself. He again referred to the Constitution stating that Republika Srpska is constitutionally recognized as an entity and there is no reason for changing its name. Similarly, the president of Republika Srpska Željka Cvijanović denounced the SDA suggestion and promised that through the representatives in the institutions of BiH a legal procedure will be initiated before the Constitutional Court starts reconsidering the name of Republika Srpska. She also said that the SDA party plays a dangerous game with BiH. Cvijanović understood this initiative as another proof of hatred towards Republika Srpska and as an absence of tolerance and forbearance. “This will, of course, further motivate the will of politicians and the nation to defend the Republika Srpska against this kind of attack. At this moment, there are millions of things required to do in BiH, economic, social and concerning EU accession, but the SDA party decided to be concerned with topics that raise the temperature, further divide BiH internally and deepen distrust among constituent peoples” (“Cvijanović: Inicijativa za promenu imena RS opasno poigravanje SDA sa BiH,” 2019). Cvijanović also added that while SDA always upholds the Dayton Agreement, it now disregards that the name of Republika Srpska is anchored in the document (ibidem, 2019).

The President of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska Željko Čubrilović condemned this initiative as well stating that the SDA party intentionally provokes and that this suggestion is not in accordance with the Dayton Peace Agreement. “They claim that the name Republika Srpska is discriminatory and that it excludes the other two nations, they are disgusting and pathetic because they are the same who for 12 years have not been implementing the decision of the Constitutional Court on the constituency of the Serbian nation in the Federation of BiH” (ibidem, 2019).

These three key Serbian authorities in BiH strictly condemned any efforts to change the name of Republika Srpska. All of them referred to the Constitution, argued with the fact that the Dayton Peace Agreement has comprised the name since its adoption in 1995. All three understand this SDA’s initiative as a provocation and needless action taken whilst ignoring the others, more important issues the country is currently dealing with. The SDA party, specifically Šefik Džaferović and Bakir Izetbegović (who also supported the change) are understood as people who intentionally block and hinder the overall development of the country and who seek to provoke Serbs and to further divide the society. They on the

one hand meticulously uphold the Constitution but on the other hand, contest the parts granting the freedoms and rights of Republika Srpska and the Serbian nation. The group Us comprises Serbs, the group Them are specifically Bosniaks from the SDA party and to some extent also the Constitutional Court whose reliability was questioned by Milorad Dodik.

Meeting with the European Commission

“Impressive to witness up close how the three members of the Presidency put aside their differences and agreed on coordinated positions during the first joint visit to meet with the EU leaders” (“Dodik, Komšić, Džaferović: Pomirenje u Briselu,“ 2019), tweeted on 30th of January the EU Head of Delegation and Special Representative to BiH Lars-Gunnar Wigemark. The three members of the Presidential body met together in Brussels to discuss the BiH EU path. As Wigemark noted, the three Presidents finally managed to work together in concordance to facilitate the accession to the European Union. According to media, in front of the journalists, Milorad Dodik was addressing Željko Komšić ‘my friend Željko,’ and rather informally, but good-naturedly, a ‘civic conservative’ and ‘pro-multiethnic oriented.’

Milorad Dodik had been announcing in advance that he would go to Brussels to discuss the EU path, not the NATO path. “We will discuss Bosnia’s EU accession process and its slow-down which was caused by the issues related to the country’s NATO path. The EU accession is now being linked to the NATO accession process, and the Membership Action Plan and the government creation” (“Bosnia's Presidency going to Brussels to discuss EU accession, not NATO path,“ 2019). In Brussels, the Presidency met with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini. With her, the Presidents discussed the possibility BiH could obtain the candidate status until the end of the year 2019. After this meeting, Šefik Džaferović said that the priority of BiH is the EU and the NATO accession, and again mentioned the crucial operating within the Washington-Brussels route (“Predsjedništvo BiH u Briselu: Do kraja godine kandidatski status,“ 2019).

After meeting with the European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Han and the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, Milorad Dodik again underlined his unwillingness to condition the EU accession and the Government formation with the NATO membership. “Without a new Government, it is impossible to ensure and adopt a new dynamic. There are still-existing

differences between our stances concerning NATO and MAP. Regardless of the previous decisions taken, I think we should discuss these questions again in BiH. As far as I understood it, the EU path and formation of the Government are not conditioned with the issues of MAP and NATO” (“Dodik: NATO i MAP nije isto,“ 2019).

Želko Komšić later commented on the visit as a successful one. “It was very good. As far as I see it, I believe the EU representatives were pleasantly surprised that there are no conflicts between us. We discussed the EU candidate status, not the NATO path. Of course, we acknowledged existing differences concerning NATO, but apart from this, they were no disputes or discussions about it” (“Bruxelles očekuje izmjenu Izbornog zakona?“ 2019).

This case shows quite evidently how different surroundings and a non-conflict subject of discussion can completely turn over the existing enmity between the representatives of the Presidency of BiH. When it comes to the discussion over the EU integration, all the verbal attacks, allegations, and reproofs from the members seem to disappear or at least to be put aside. EU integration is a topic that connects every one of the Presidents. Suddenly, the Presidents cooperate, address each other with familiar and informal names. Concerning EU integration, the identity created by all of them is cooperative and friendly. The group Us comprises every Bosnian and Herzegovinian citizen regardless of his or her nationality or religion. Milorad Dodik reassured that the successful EU integration has nothing to do with the MAP activation and consequent NATO accession. As we can see, focusing on the EU accession rather than on the NATO accession can be the solution of ongoing disputes within the Presidency and the society of BiH. The question remains to what extent the surroundings and the company of EU authorities influenced the friendly behaviour of the members of the Presidency. However, the topic of EU integration had always been rather consensual and therefore we can assume that the friendly behaviour stems from the nature of the discussed topic rather than from the influence of the EU authorities.

Change of the name of the then Republic of Macedonia to the Republic of North Macedonia and consequent ratification of the NATO Accession Protocol

In February 2019, the newly re-named Republic of North Macedonia (North Macedonia) ratified the NATO Accession Protocol in Brussels. Many years of disputes between the then Republic of Macedonia (Macedonia) and Greece preceded this event. When Macedonia finally acceded to the demand to change its name, the NATO accession process has started. The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg appreciated the cooperation

between Greece and North Macedonia and stated that this path was not an easy one. It was according to him full of challenges and difficult decisions (“Makedonija zakoračila u NATO,“ 2019).

The Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia Zoran Zaev in the interview with the Al Jazeera Balkans said that this step towards NATO accession is proof that Balkan is changing. This agreement was according to him made to ensure a better future for the people of the country. “The Prime Minister of BiH Denis Zvizdić was with us. He is one of the positive cases who wishes that BiH, as well as the other Balkan countries, moves towards the EU and NATO integration. Our agreement with Greece shows how the Balkan changes. We showed European behaviour, and we dedicated this agreement to all the young Balkan people and the future generations” (“Zaev za AJB: Dogovor sa Grčkom pokazuje da se Balkan mijenja,“ 2019). This step is according to him a proof that Balkan belongs to Europe and that it means new hope for Balkan countries.

Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov had earlier questioned the legitimacy of the process. “We do not oppose the name that eventually appeared and was announced. We ask questions about how legitimate this process is and how much it is conditioned by the desire to find a consensus between Greece and Skopje, or it is conditioned by the US desire to drive all Balkan countries into NATO as soon as possible and stop any Russian influence in that region” (“Lavrov: Moscow does not oppose new name for Macedonia, but questions legitimacy,“ 2019). Zoran Zaev was asked to react to Lavrov's statement in the interview for Al Jazeera. “We are a small country, so is BiH, so are all the Balkan countries. We wish to cooperate with every country in the world, also with the Russian Federation – there is a lot to improve our cooperation. However, there is no alternative for us but the EU and NATO. 80% of our citizens are in favour of the EU and NATO accession. I as a leader, as well as the opposition, we all are in favour of EU” (“Zaev za AJB: Dogovor sa Grčkom pokazuje da se Balkan mijenja,“ 2019).

Russian President Vladimir Putin had also commented on the planned change of the name of the then Macedonia during his visit to Belgrade in January. In an interview for Politika and Večernje Novosti Putin suggested that the USA and its allies destabilise the Balkans by asserting their dominant role in the region (“Intervju predsednika Ruske Federacije Vladimira Putina,“ 2019). “This will eventually increase mistrust and tension in Europe, rather than improve stability (...) We have repeatedly said that we see NATO expansion as a relic of the cold war, an ill-informed and destructive military and political strategy”

("Putin says the US wants to 'assert dominance' in Balkans as Macedonia changes name," 2019).

Few days after the event, Sergey Lavrov stated that NATO expansionism seriously threatens European security which is becoming a hostage to US policies. "Regrettably, the European people's safety and European peace have become hostage to the destructive policies pursued by Washington and a small but highly aggressive group of Russia-haters in the European Union (...) Apart from Macedonia and other Balkan countries, the North Atlantic Alliance is still determined to absorb Ukraine and Georgia" ("European security is hostage to US policies, says Lavrov," 2019).

Željko Komšić met with Zoran Zaev a week after the event. Together they discussed the Euro-Atlantic advancement of their countries and they expressed a strong will to reinforce bilateral cooperation between the North Macedonia and BiH. Both expressed their determination to speed up the process of accession to NATO and the EU. Komšić appreciated the agreement between the North Macedonia and Greece. "It is a great event for the whole region because it has shown that with a consensus, people can reach the solutions necessary for a country's development" ("Komšić se sastao sa Zaevom: Članstvo u NATO i EU zajednički interes," 2019).

For Zoran Zaev, the group Us comprises Balkan countries and its citizens, but mainly those, who are in favour of EU and NATO integration. Even though Zaev states the North Macedonia wishes to cooperate with every country in the world, he emphasizes it is the EU and NATO path he and most of the nation prefers. He does not specifically put Russia to the group Them, it is, in fact, visible he does not want to fall out with Russia or any other country. However, NATO and EU integration is the priority regardless of the Russian opinion. Thus, when it comes to choosing between EU, NATO, and Russia, Zaev chooses the path of Euro-Atlantic integration, which represents the group Us. Russia, in this case, represents the group Them, even though it is not explicitly said.

For the Russian side, Zaev's step towards NATO and EU integration represents a vulnerability to US influence and is presented by both Lavrov and Putin as a threat to European security. Lavrov's decision to create a threat to European security, to use expressions such as *hostage*, *destructive policies*, or *aggressive haters* implies how strongly his group opposes the juxtaposition represented mainly by the USA, NATO, and the EU.

This case from North Macedonia is mentioned here to explain the creation of geopolitical identity concerning NATO integration. As elaborated in the theoretical part of this paper, geopolitical identity offers a structure or a framework with which the particular national identities can identify. Putin's stance on the NATO Open Door Policy provides its allied nations with a notion of the Russian backup in the debates on NATO integration.

Željko Komšić expressed his affiliation with the Euro-Atlantic geopolitical identity when meeting Zaev and expressing his joy from the promising development of the North Macedonian NATO integration process. Komšić understands the cooperation between the North Macedonia and Greece as an example of dispute resolution and underlines the importance of consensus to support the country's development. Komšić understands the group Us firstly as the pro-Euro-Atlantic orientated people able to concede to reach their common goals. With this, Komšić indirectly points out the ongoing contradictory stances of the members of the Presidency and their impact on the deadlock in the foreign policy of BiH.

20th anniversary of the NATO bombing campaign in Serbia

Serbia marked the 20th anniversary of the NATO bombing campaign at the end of March 2019. Memorial ceremony took place in Serbian city Niš and before Vučić's with his rather emotive speech, the floor was taken by Milorad Dodik.

In his speech, Milorad Dodik talked about NATO intervention as an act of aggression committed directly against Serbs. He reminded similar bombing campaigns held by NATO during the war in BiH and underlined that the Serbs in Republika Srpska had to undergo the same suffering as Serbs in Belgrade a few years later. He also mentioned a tragic death of 12 hurt children in a hospital in Banja Luka who, due to NATO bombing in BiH, did not receive oxygen crucial for their survival. "Bombing of Republika Srpska and Serbia was a criminal act of NATO and Western countries. (...) Today we know that the NATO aggression was planned and that it has lasted till this very day. The consequences prove it. When we see children without hair or men who are never going to be fathers, little girls who cannot wear hair in plaits, we can say, that the aggression still lasts" ("Vučić zaplakao tokom govora o NATO bombardovanju Srbije," 2019). Dodik also said that the attacks are inexcusable, and he will never forgive. "Their rockets were equipped with monitoring devices and they were well-informed about children casualties, about targeting family houses, the television building, and the Chinese embassy. They knew they were targeting the civilians and they knew they had killed 13 civilians on the 7th of April, one of them

was a woman in her 7th month of pregnancy. The damage is enormous, it is damage on civilisation” (ibidem, 2019). Dodik underlined that while Serbs are put on international trial, NATO soldiers, generals, and others are not. These proceedings are according to him held exclusively against Serbs. “They said we are the ones who commit genocide and ethnic cleansing – they did the same to us. They tried to justify their actions with stories of a threat of collateral damage. I am not a person who would forgive them” (ibidem, 2019). Dodik specifically said during the Yugoslavian wars, NATO was on the side of the enemies of Serbs – Bosniaks, and Croats and in the case of the Kosovo crisis, on the side of Albanians. According to him, those western actors who once attacked Serbia because of Kosovo, are today again against Serbia as they urge the country to recognize Kosovo. NATO as an aggressor according to Dodik forced out Serbs from Croatia and Kosovo. Then he again underlined he will never support BiH accession to NATO. “I am today in BiH exposed to appeals for entering the NATO path. I always say clearly I cannot and I will not accept it. I will not because Serbia will not either. I will never allow for creating a NATO border between BiH and Serbia on the Drina river. I hope they understand there is no other way. When I talk to them at the diplomatic level about how is BiH existence possible, do not believe me. I do not believe in the country, because it is just a result of an ideology and politics which stand behind the bombing of Serbs in Serbia and Republika Srpska” (“Milorad Dodik: Od onih koji su nas bombardovali mrži su mi samo ovi koji ih opravdavaju,” 2019).

Milorad Dodik's speech was full of examples of the creation of the identity of Serbs in opposition to whom stands NATO or other western actors. These try to weaken, endanger, or even divide the Serbian nation. Milorad Dodik uses rather radical allegations, he refers to NATO as to the everlasting enemy, he accuses the alliance of intentional killing of civilians, children and pregnant women. He understands NATO as an organisation always supporting the enemies of Serbs, namely Bosniaks, Croats, and Albanians. Dodik multiple times underlined the Serbian unity and cohesion and pointed to unfair and biased international treatment of war criminals when mentioning the international proceedings held mostly against Serbs and in none of the cases against NATO soldiers. The distinction between the group Us consisting of Serbs and the group Them comprising NATO and the West is crystal clear. The group Them is here depicted as a group of perpetrators, aggressors, and enemies. This speech is a reflection of arguably the strongest anti-NATO stance made by Dodik I have elaborated in this paper. Employment of expressions

referring to direct and intentional endangerment of the Serbian lives and claims of persisting danger coming from the alliance indicate how definite Dodik's perception of NATO as the fundamental member of the group Them is. Moreover, Dodik directly comprises Bosniaks and Croats from the war period to the enemy group. International pressure on Serbia to find a common dialogue with Kosovo Dodik understands as a display of persisting anti-Serbian stances of the Western countries.

The Day of Republika Srpska

In March 2019, the Constitutional Court of BiH confirmed its previous review of the unconstitutionality of the celebration of 9th January as a Day of Republika Srpska. Few days after the review, the representatives of Republika Srpska released a proclamation that the Day of Republika Srpska will be celebrated despite the constitutional review. Leaders of 15 political parties from Republika Srpska affirmed the court's decision is politically motivated. The president of Republika Srpska Željka Cvijanović said that the Constitutional court has once again proven that it acts upon political, not legal criteria. "It fully took over the task previously conducted by OHR. Unfortunately, this decision will disrupt the already fragile trust of Republika Srpska citizens in the institution, which is, evidently ruled by political Sarajevo" ("Političari iz RS: Uprkos odluci Ustavnog suda nastavićemo da slavimo 9. januar," 2019).

This declaration and Cvijanović's comment addressing the allegedly newly obtained responsibilities of the Constitutional Court which she compares with the authority of the OHR point out to the Serbian distrust in the country's institutions (operating on the state level). Željka Cvijanović herself underlines the already fragile confidence of the citizens of Republika Srpska in the court's work. As it was the case with distrust in decisions of the ICTY, this case again proves the overall scepticism of authorities of Republika Srpska about the politics conducted in the Federation of BiH. Cvijanović compares the work of the Constitutional Court with the work once conducted by the OHR. The Office of the High Representative, however, still carries out its mandate, it was not stopped or modified. Cvijanović thus claims that the mandate the international body carries out was unofficially delegated to the Constitutional Court, which at the same time follows the will and political interests of the politicians of Federation, or, as she put it, of Sarajevo. This statement yet again shows the creation of the identity of Serbs as an opposition group to the Western actors. In this case, the western actor is represented by the OHR, which, in the perspective of Cvijanović, carelessly overlooks the fact the Constitutional Court has overtaken the

authority of the High Representative and uses it as a tool for repressions against Serbs and their rights.

Legislative changes in Republika Srpska

In April, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska adopted controversial draft law changes establishing auxiliary police unit, which should constitute 20% of the overall police force in the entity (“Bosnian Serb region adopts draft law changes establishing auxiliary police unit,” 2019). The law was adopted despite various discouragements coming from different sides. Before the adoption of the law, the Embassies of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Office of the High Representative condemned the pursuit to reinforce the police force in Republika Srpska. In their joint statement, these actors appeal to the authorities of BiH to uphold and to implement the reforms needed to move closer to the European norms and standards, instead, the leaders of Republika Srpska are according to the Embassies and the OHR moving away from these standards. “legislative changes that empower authorities to censor individuals, groups, or the media, or that criminalize the free exercise of official duty, only serve to undermine democracy (...) The drafts place unnecessary restrictions on public gatherings and limit the media's ability to report on important events; they also carry excessively harsh penalties for non-compliance. We call on all levels of government in BiH to uphold and respect the obligations they undertook by signing onto specific EU and UN international conventions on human rights” (“Joint Statement by Embassies of the U.S., Germany, the UK and the OHR on Draft Legislation in the Republika Srpska,” 2019).

As a reaction to the adoption of the law, the SDA party and its chairman Bakir Izetbegović appealed to reinforce and to equip the active structures of the police forces in the Federation of BiH. At the same time, the SDA aims to pursue a law enabling the creation of the auxiliary police unit in the Federation, similarly as it was done by the representatives of RS. “In the view of the fact that the Ministry of Interior of Republika Srpska as well as the National Assembly of the RS did not contemplate the alerts and appeals of domestic and international officials and adopted the draft of a law creating the auxiliary police unit, we believe our answer is necessary and legitimate, as we want to prevent disruption of the evenness of police force in the entities” (“SDA zatražila formiranje rezervnog sastava policije u FBiH,” 2019).

The appeal of the American, British, and German embassies to stop the adoption of the law shows again the concerns some of the western embassies have concerning the stability of the country. Republika Srpska, as a semi-autonomous entity, adopted a law that is being criticised for alleged restraint of human rights and media freedom. As a reaction to the adoption, the SDA party declares it is necessary to take similar actions in the Federation of BiH. The joint statement of the embassies and the OHR, however, addressed the Republika Srpska officials and expresses concerns about the human rights violation in Republika Srpska only. Actions such as this create a notion of clear opposition between the Western countries and Republika Srpska.

Matthew Palmer in BiH

In June 2019, Matthew A. Palmer, the Deputy Assistant Secretary from the U.S.

Department of State - Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs visited BiH. When on his visit, he made a public appearance and spoke with journalists, among others, about NATO and EU integration, and relations with Russia. Palmer said that the most important steps for BiH are to release the ANP and to form a government. He also talked about Russian interests in the region and compared them with the interests of the USA. “The core of American politics within the region of the Western Balkan is support for European and Euro-Atlantic integration. (...) The Russians have completely different goals. They want to see the region divided and under pressure. In 2016, the Russians were the sponsors of the attempt for a coup d’etat in Montenegro. They were working on undermining of Prespa agreement to block the Euro-Atlantic path for North Macedonia. There is no reason not to believe Russia has the same intentions here in BiH as well” (“Palmer: „Rusija želi blokirati euroatlantske procese u BiH,” 2019). Several US and EU diplomats and politicians argued that Russia has launched a campaign to outmaneuver the closer integration with the West. Russia has denied such allegations, moreover, Russian foreign ministry has pointed to the question of the validity of the referendum. “The 36.8 percent turnout means that the referendum cannot be recognised as valid (the turnout must be at least 50 percent), (...) Even though two-thirds of Macedonia’s population did not vote in favour of the Prespa Agreement, the results of the vote were instantly hailed by the EU and NATO leaders, and in Washington as well. The desire to ensure and speed up Skopje’s accession to NATO despite the will of the people of Macedonia is evident” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2018). When addressing the EU and NATO alleged campaign in the country, the Russian foreign ministry uses the very much same language figures as the

USA. “(...) the leading politicians from NATO and EU member states participated in this large-scale propaganda campaign directly, freely interfering in the internal affairs of this Balkan state” (ibidem). Luckily, it is not the purpose of this thesis to study both Russian and U.S. interference in the domestic politics of North Macedonia, however, I would like to point to several things. Russian and U.S. politicians use the same tools when speaking of the other side’s alleged meddling in the domestic affairs of the countries of the Western Balkan. Both sides name each other as the biggest threat to the countries of the Western Balkan. Therefore, for both sides, this region is strategically very important and NATO is by both sides understood as the main tool to get the countries within the Balkan region on the side of the USA. While the USA is trying to push for speedy integration, Russia is trying to prevent it. In BiH, where the discussion on NATO integration is so conflicting and causes a governmental crisis, the effect of the geopolitical competing on the future of the country can be devastating. For the USA, the biggest obstacle remains Milorad Dodik - a politician who is actively blocking the possibility of BiH to enter NATO. Matthew Palmer talked about Dodik as well, he emphasized that Dodik is blacklisted due to his (Dodik’s) own decisions, stances, and activities he had performed. If Dodik wishes the sanctions to be lifted, he, according to Palmer, knows what to do (“Palmer: „Rusija želi blokirati euroatlantske procese u BiH,” 2019).

Palmer reduces this complex topic of NATO accession to “yes or no” situation - either BiH enters the NATO structures or the country will continue to be threatened by Russia. His advocacy of Dodik being blacklisted shows the disrespect to this politician and depreciation of Dodik’s politics. Regardless of Dodik’s nationalism, he remains the most popular politician in the country and he represents the will of the majority of the Serbian population in BiH. Not only Bosnian politicians take hasty and rather radical steps - Komšić and Džaferović block the formation of the Council of Ministers and Dodik threatens with the secession of Republika Srpska - it is evident that the politicians representing the most powerful countries in the world are doing the minimum to calm the discussion down.

Reaching the deal on Cabinet Formation

10 months after the elections, the leaders of the three most powerful parties in BiH had finally managed to reach a partial consensus on the formation of the Council of Ministers: in August, Dragan Čović from the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), Milorad Dodik from the SNSD and Bakir Izetbegović from the SDA signed the principles for forming

BiH-level authorities (“Dodik, Čović and Izetbegović sign principles for authorities formation,” 2019). The accord provided conditions for the formation of the central cabinet within a period of 30 days. Among other things, the document includes a condition of a commitment to advance the ties with NATO and the EU. It is said in the agreement, that this promotion of relations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation does not undertake the politicians to enter the alliance in the future (“Bosnian Leaders Reach Deal On Cabinet Formation 10 Months After Vote,” 2019).

However, this promising agreement had have not brought any progress. At the end of August, it was already clear that the leaders of the main parties will not find a consensus: Milorad Dodik refused to send the ANP to Brussels, while Bakir Izetbegović insisted on sending the document. In September, Milorad Dodik threatened that the army of RS will withdraw from the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina if the principles for the Council of Ministers' formation are not accepted by the given period of 30 days. “We will not allow that the rights of the Serbs in RS are limited as the political Sarajevo wishes” (“Bez dogovora o mandataru BiH, Dodik najavljuje izlazak iz sporazuma,” 2019).

However, they did not manage to establish the government within the given period. In the middle of September, Bakir Izetbegović had a speech at the 7th SDA congress. At the meeting, he said that the negotiations before the signing of the principles for government formation were difficult - mainly because Milorad Dodik strived for domination, and allegedly was blackmailing the others by giving ultimatums (SDA, 2019). Two months later, after many unsuccessful negotiations, Bakir Izetbegović told to *Oslobođenje* that BiH does not have to enter NATO if Serbs do not want to - however, he insisted on sending the ANP to the Brussels. “You cannot put a rock on the road and then blame the others if they move it away” (“Izetbegović: Nećemo u NATO ako Srbi to ne žele,” 2019). Sending the ANP is a direct step forward in the process of NATO integration and as such, it is confusing why would Izetbegović insisted on it if he really did not want Serbs to change their mind and enter the organisation some point in the future. He presents himself as the one who is ready to make a concession, but the reality is he does not make any concession whatsoever.

As we have seen many times already, each of the politicians puts a blame on someone else as all strive for a policy which is somehow conflicting or even unacceptable for the remaining ones. The most interesting aspect of this negotiation is that in the end, Izetbegović and Čović had to be those to hold talks with Dodik. It shows quite clearly that

those are the most important politicians in the country. Although the formation took much more than just 30 days, after 14 months of deadlock, the government was established in December 2019. The final nomination of Zoran Tegeltija to the position of the Prime minister of BiH, was instead of ANP, accompanied with the so-called Programme of reform addressed to NATO headquarters in Brussels. This document had a different meaning for every one of the members of the Presidency. According to Džaferović, the document was support for the NATO accession, Komšić said this document may have a different name (different name than Annual National Program), but NATO accepts it anyway. On the other hand, Milorad Dodik said, the document does not precede the NATO accession and it is according to him anchored in it (“Tegeltija kandidat za šefa Vijeća ministara BiH, Program reformi ide u NATO,“ 2019). According to Dragan Mektić, the document is, in fact, ANP and according to him, with this document, Milorad Dodik has stabbed Serbia in the back (“Mektić: Program reformi BiH je nož u ledja Srbiji, Dodik vara da bi se dočepao vlasti,“ 2019).

The text of the Programme of reform (PoF) was published later in December and it is similar to the 2019 draft of ANP. The texts differ in some ways however: in ANP, there is a part dedicated to the relations with NATO stating that together with EU integration, NATO integration is the priority of the BiH foreign policy. In the PoF, there is a MAP activation and transfer of immovable military property to the state level left out as well (“Objavljujemo Program reformi koji BiH šalje u NATO,“ 2019). It is difficult to say whether the PoF fulfills the criteria of ANP or not, opinions on this differ greatly. The truth is, that whether or not is the sending of PoF to Brussels a step towards the accession, it did not change the political climate in BiH. As all of the politicians involved in the formation of Government somehow reached what they wanted, nothing has changed: the citizens of BiH do not know what it means for the country and them. The process of government formation concludes that if the document sent to Brussels is ANP with just a different name, the Serbs in BiH were deceived. At the same time, if the document is not an equivalent of ANP than were deceived the people from the federation wishing to join NATO. BiH finally has a government - the question remains, how efficient it can be in a political environment like this. Precisely speaking, how efficient can any state-level institution be in a country with a little or a no political autonomy and in a society divided on every political level.

Conclusion

This thesis outlines the current political environment in BiH and the overall political stances towards the NATO integration process. Firstly, I have presented the historical context: the disputes over independence, the war in BiH, the NATO engagement in the conflict and the history of Bosnian integration process to the alliance. Secondly, I have discussed the role of ethnic identity in the policy making with regard to the foreign policy conducting. Finally, I have analysed speeches and statements of the relevant political authorities.

As illustrated, NATO remains the bone of contention in the Bosnian society: it is often used as a leverage to condition various political steps, and it further divides the politicians in BiH. I have argued that in the debate, politicians often employ nationalism and identity to support their own policy making or to discredit the opponent. As a textbook example, I have outlined the process of formation of the government of BiH that took more than a year and was being continuously hindered by various discords over the NATO accession of BiH. I have answered the research questions, specifically what stance do the members of the Presidency and other relevant political authorities take toward the NATO integration, and in what manner the authorities operate with the concept of nationality when speaking about NATO. As demonstrated, nationalism and identity was used every time when the politicians had to discuss the NATO accession and the relations with NATO and the Western countries, particularly the USA.

This fact supports my hypothesis that the discussion over NATO integration of BiH is driven and affected by nationalist positions of political authorities. At the same time, their nationalist rhetoric contributes to the reinforcement of their political power in the country. Furthermore, I have noted that the current political debate over the integration can be seriously harmful to the Bosnian society. Moreover, I have discussed the involvement of the international actors in the society of BiH and showed how risky the geopolitical contentions can be for a fragile country with limited sovereignty as BiH.

List of References

Monographs and Academic articles

BAUMAN, Zygmunt. Myslet sociologicky: netradiční uvedení do sociologie. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství, 1996.

BECHEV, Dimitar. Russia's Foray into the Balkans: Who Is Really to Blame? Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2017.

BECHEV, Dimitar. Rival power: Russia's influence in Southeast Europe. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.

BECHEV, Dimitar. Understanding Russia's influence in the Western Balkans: Strategic Analysis September 2018. The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, 2018.

BELLONI, Roberto. State building and international intervention in Bosnia. Routledge, 2007.

BOWKER, Mike. The wars in Yugoslavia: Russia and the international community. Europe-Asia Studies, 1998.

CHANDLER, David. Bosnia: faking democracy after Dayton. Pluto Press, 2000.

DE HAAS, Marcel. Russia's foreign security policy in the 21st century: Putin, Medvedev and beyond. Routledge, 2010.

DOUGLAS, Mary. Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo. Routledge, 2003.

ĐUKANOVIĆ, Dragan. Bosnia and Herzegovina on the uncertain path towards the membership in NATO. Medjunarodni problemi, 2019, 71.3: 335-360.

HANSEN, Lene. Security as practice: discourse analysis and the Bosnian war. Routledge, 2013.

HQ EUFOR Public Affairs Office. OPERATION ALTHEA EUROPEAN UNION FORCE IN BiH: INFORMATION BOOKLET. Camp Butmir Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: HQ EUFOR Public Affairs Office, 2019.

KAUFMAN, Joyce P. NATO and the former Yugoslavia: crisis, conflict, and the Atlantic Alliance. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.

KURTOVIĆ, Larisa. What is a Nationalist? Some Thoughts on the Question from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Anthropology of Eastern Europe Review 29 (2). 2011, 242-252.

KUUS, Merje. The Routledge Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics. Routledge, 2016.

NATO a ORIGINATOR: NICHOLAS SHERWEN. NATO handbook. Brussels: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2006.

Ó TUATHAIL, G., and AGNEW, J. Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy. *Political Geography* 11 (2), 1992.

OBERSCHALL, Anthony. "The Manipulation of Ethnicity: From Ethnic Cooperation to Violence and War in Yugoslavia." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23 (6), 2000, 982–1001.

PEHAR, Dražen. *Peace as War: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Post-Dayton*. Central European University Press, 2019.

PERRIE, Maureen, et al. (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Russia: Volume 3, The Twentieth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

SAKWA, Richard. *Russian politics and society*. Routledge, 2008.

SHULMAN, Stephen. *National integration and foreign policy in multiethnic states*. Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 1998.

ŠOLAJA, Miloš. *Balkan u transatlantskoj pukotini*. Banja Luka: CIR, 2006.

ŠTIKS, Igor. "Being a Citizen the Bosnian Way." *Transformations of Citizenship and Political Identities in Bosnia-Herzegovina Transitions* 51, 2011.

TOUQUET, Heleen. *Multi-Ethnic Parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Naša Stranka and the Paradoxes of Post-ethnic Politics*. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 2011, 11.3: 451-467.

VAN DIJK, Teun A. *Principles of critical discourse analysis*. Discourse & society, 1993.

WHITE, Stephen; MCALLISTER, Ian; FEKLYUNINA, Valentina. *Belarus, Ukraine and Russia: east or west?*. *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 2010.

ŽÍLA, O.: *Poválečná Bosna a Hercegovina: země v začarovaném kruhu*. In: *Geografické rozhledy*, roč. 22, č. 4, 26–27, 2013.

Online sources

AGREEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT OPENS DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES TO BOSNIAN CITIZENS. *USAID* [online]. 2018 [accessed 2019-11-26]. Available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/bosnia/news/agreement-government-opens-decision-making-processes-bosnian-citizens>

AKCIONI PLAN ZA ČLANSTVO. *Directorate for European Integration* [online]. 2010 [accessed 2020-03-07]. Available at: <http://www.dei.gov.ba/dokumenti/default.aspx?id=4536&langTag=en-US>

Balkans tyrant turns into architect of peace: Serbia's leader is winning international acceptance, writes Tony Barber, East Europe Editor. *The Independent* [online]. [accessed 2019-04-13]. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/balkans->

[tyrant-turns-into-architect-of-peace-serbias-leader-is-winning-international-acceptance-1448856.html](https://www.nytimes.com/1994/04/19/world/conflict-in-the-balkans-bosnia-update.html)

Bez dogovora o mandataru BiH, Dodik najavljuje izlazak iz sporazuma. *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2020-06-29]. Available at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/predsjedavju%C4%87i-vije%C4%87a-ministara/30129832.html>

Bosnia and Herzegovina, General Elections, 7 October 2018: Final Report. *OSCE* [online]. OSCE, 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-05-12]. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bih/409905>

Bosnian Leaders Reach Deal On Cabinet Formation 10 Months After Vote. *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2020-06-29]. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/bosnian-leaders-reach-deal-on-cabinet-formation-10-months-after-vote/30093891.html>

Bosnian Serb region adopts draft law changes establishing auxiliary police unit. *NI* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-26]. Available at: <http://ba.n1info.com/English/NEWS/a338944/Bosnian-Serb-region-adopts-draft-law-changes-establishing-auxiliary-police-unit.html>

Bosnian Serbs Reject Peace Plan for 3d Time, Defying Russia. *New York Times* [online]. New York, New York, 1994, 1994 [accessed 2019-04-13]. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/08/02/world/bosnian-serbs-reject-peace-plan-for-3d-time-defying-russia.html?mtrref=www.google.com>

'Bosnia's Presidency going to Brussels to discuss EU accession, not NATO path'. *NI* [online]. 19. 01. 2019 [accessed 2019-03-29]. Available at: <http://ba.n1info.com/English/NEWS/a310528/Dodik-NATO-accession-process-blocking-Bosnia-s-EU-path.html>

Bruxelles očekuje izmjenu Izbornog zakona?. *OSLOBODENJE* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-09]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/video-bruxelles-ocekuje-izmjenu-izbornog-zakona-430346>

Centralna Izborna Komisija [online]. 2018 [accessed 2019-07-02]. Available at: <http://www.izbori.ba>

Comment by the Information and Press Department on the results of Macedonia's referendum. *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation* [online]. Moscow, 2018, 2018 [accessed 2020-06-27]. Available at: https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/UdAzvXr89FbD/content/id/3363368

CONFLICT IN THE BALKANS; BOSNIA UPDATE. *New York Times* [online]. New York, New York, 1994 [accessed 2019-04-09]. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/04/19/world/conflict-in-the-balkans-bosnia-update.html>

CONFLICT IN THE BALKANS; Russia's Balkan Card. *New York Times* [online]. New York, New York, 1994 [accessed 2019-04-09]. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/02/18/world/conflict-in-the-balkans-russia-s-balkan-card.html>

Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In: . Sarajevo: OHR, 1995. Available at: <http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/legal/laws-of-bih/pdf/001%20-%20Constitutions/BH/BH%20CONSTITUTION%20.pdf>

CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2018. *Transparency International* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-11-28]. Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

Cvijanović: Inicijativa za promenu imena RS opasno poigravanje SDA sa BiH. *NI* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-08]. Available at: <http://rs.n1info.com/Region/a454307/Republika-Srpska-osudila-inicijativu-SDA-za-promenu-imena-RS.html>

Dayton Peace Agreement, General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 21 November 1995, [accessed 27 October 2019] available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3de495c34.html>

Defence White Paper of BiH. *Ministarstvo odbrane Bosne i Hercegovine* [online]. 2005 [accessed 2020-03-07]. Available at: <http://www.mod.gov.ba/files/file/dokumenti/defense/engwhitebook.pdf>

Direktna strana ulaganja (DSU) – stanje i performanse. FIPA - *Agencija za unapređenje stranih investicija u Bosni i Hercegovini* [online]. Bosna i Hercegovina, 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-04]. Available at: <http://www.fipa.gov.ba/informacije/statistike/investicije/default.aspx?id=180&langTag=bs-BA>

Dodik (se) pita: Da li smo Sullivan i ja bili na istom sastanku?. *OSLOBODENJE* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-28]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/dodik-da-li-smo-sullivan-i-ja-bili-na-istom-sastanku-418109>

Dodik poljubio zastavu RS-a i poručio: Ne želim napraviti nijedan loš potez prema Bošnjacima i Hrvatima, ali ću tražiti adekvatan tretman za RS i srpski narod. *OSLOBODENJE* [online]. Sarajevo, 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-24]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/prvo-obracanje-dodika-kao-predsjedavajuceg-predsjedništva-bih-ne-zelim-napraviti-nijedan-los-potez-prema-bosnjacima-i-hrvatima-ali-cu-traziti-adekvatan-tretman-za-republiku-srpsku-i-srpski>

Dodik poručio NATO-u: Ništa od MAP-a, mene obavezuje rezolucija Republike Srpske. *Klix* [online]. 2019, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-21]. Available at: <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/dodik-porucio-nato-u-nista-od-map-a-mene-obavezuje-rezolucija-republike-srpske/181204128>

Dodik proglasio pobjedu „čistu kao suza”. *Politika* [online]. 07. 10. 2018 [accessed 2019-05-14]. Available at: <http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/412714/Регион/Додик-прогласио-победу-чисту-као-суза>

Dodik Putinu: Bošnjačka strana nas uslovljava. *NI* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-07]. Available at: http://ba.n1info.com/Vijesti/a310213/Dodik-na-sastanku-sa-Putinom-o-Bosnjacima.html?fbclid=IwAR2YWXqTd_dntQMW67afD81lnJlrRkge4l0CWCCx0HCpMJGZRZIY8a66Ygk

Dodik sa Ivancovim: U Federaciji BiH na sceni opstrukcija formiranja Vijeća ministara BiH. *OSLOBOĐENJE* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-06-04]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/dodik-sa-ivancovim-u-federaciji-bih-na-sceni-opstrukcija-formiranja-vijeca-ministara-bih-420317>

Dodik sa Ivancovim: Unaprijediti odnose BiH i Rusije. *Nezavisne* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-06-04]. Available at: <https://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/bih/Dodik-sa-Ivancovim-Unaprijediti-odnose-BiH-i-Rusije/513964>

Dodik, Čović and Izetbegović sign principles for authorities formation. *The Srpska Times* [online]. 2019 [accessed 2020-06-28]. Available at: <http://thesrpskatimes.com/dodik-covic-and-izetbegovic-sign-principles-for-authorities-formation/>

Dodik, Komšić, Džaferović: Pomirenje u Briselu. *Al Jazeera Balkans* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-09]. Available at: <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/dodik-komsic-dzaferovic-pomirenje-u-briselu>

Dodik: NATO i MAP nije isto. *OSLOBOĐENJE* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-09]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/dodik-nato-i-map-nije-isto-429518>

Dodik: Ovo je inicijativa za razdruživanje BiH. *Al Jazeera Balkans* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-07]. Available at: <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/video/dodik-ovo-je-inicijativa-za-razdruzivanje-bih>

Dodik: Putin izrazio podršku stabilizaciji u regionu. *Politika* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-07]. Available at: <http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/364117/RTRS-Poceo-sastanak-Putina-sa-Dodikom>

Dodik: RS će razmotriti mogućnost izlaska iz Oružanih snaga BiH. *FENA* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-06-03]. Available at: <http://www.fena.ba/article/1058255/dodik-rs-ce-razmotriti-mogucnost-izlaska-iz-oruzanih-snaga-bih>

Dodik: Sastanak sa Vučićem možda i prije nego sa kolegama iz Predsjedništva. *Al Jazeera Balkans* [online]. 07. 10. 2018 [accessed 2019-05-14]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7G5oAmAAuJ4>

Džaferović i Komšić: Put ka NATO-u uvjet za izbor Tegeltije. *Al Jazeera Balkans* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-06-04]. Available at:

<http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/dzaferovic-i-komsic-put-ka-nato-u-uvjet-za-izbor-tegeltije>

Džaferović: BiH treba nastaviti graditi dobre odnose sa svim partnerima. *OSLOBOĐENJE* [online]. Sarajevo, 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-26]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/dzaferovic-bih-treba-nastaviti-graditi-dobre-odnose-sa-svim-partnerima-410687>

Džaferović: Imenovanje Tegeltije ću podržati uz jasnu opredijeljenost nove većine za NATO put. *Klix* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-06-04]. Available at: <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/dzaferovic-imenovanje-tegeltije-cu-podrzati-uz-jasnu-opredijeljenost-nove-vecine-za-nato-put/181227061>

Džaferović: Naziv Republike Srpske je diskriminatoran. *Al Jazeera Balkans* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-07]. Available at: <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/dzaferovic-naziv-republike-srpske-je-diskriminatoran>

Džaferović: Politika procesuiranja ratnih zločina je pod snažnim političkim pritiskom kako bi se postigao etnički balans. *OSLOBOĐENJE* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-29]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/video-dzaferovic-o-aktivaciji-map-a-414717>

European security is hostage to US policies, says Lavrov. *TASS* [online]. [accessed 2019-06-16]. Available at: <https://tass.com/defense/1045837>
General Assembly resolution 757, Bosnia and Herzegovina (30 May) (30 May 1992), available from <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/757>.
General Assembly resolution 787, Bosnia and Herzegovina (16 November) (16 November 1992), available from <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/787>

General Assembly resolution 820, Bosnia and Herzegovina (17 April) (17 April 1993) available from <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/820>

GODFREY, Anthony F. Sharp Power Grip: Dimensions of Russian Influence in Southeast Europe Introductory Remarks. *U.S. Embassy in Serbia* [online]. 2019 [accessed 2019-12-01]. Available at: <https://rs.usembassy.gov/sharp-power-grip-dimensions-of-russian-influence-in-southeast-europe-introductory-remarks/>

Individual Partnership Action Plans. *NATO* [online]. 2017 [accessed 2019-04-13]. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/topics_49290.htm

Intervju predsjednika Ruske Federacije Vladimira Putina. *Politika* [online]. [accessed 2019-06-15]. Available at: <http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/420383/Intervju-predsjednika-Ruske-Federacije-Vladimira-Putina>

Izetbegović i Džaferović proglasili pobjedu. *Al Jazeera Balkans* [online]. [accessed 2019-05-15]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HB1fnOA11uc>

Izetbegović: Nećemo u NATO ako Srbi to ne žele. Oslobođenje [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2020-06-29]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/izetbegovic-necemo-u-nato-ako-srbi-to-ne-zele-503372>

Joint Statement by Embassies of the U.S., Germany, the UK and the OHR on Draft Legislation in the Republika Srpska. *U.S. Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-26]. Available at: <https://ba.usembassy.gov/joint-statement-by-embassies-of-the-u-s-germany-the-uk-and-the-ohr-on-draft-legislation-in-the-republika-srpska/>

Kako je Dodik mijenjao stav o članstvu BiH u NATO savezu. *Istinomjer.ba* [online]. 2018 [accessed 2020-03-09]. Available at: <https://istinomjer.ba/kako-je-dodik-mijenjao-stav-o-clanstvu-bih-u-nato-savezu/>

Komšić se sastao sa Zaevom: Članstvo u NATO i EU zajednički interes. *OSLOBOĐENJE* [online]. [accessed 2019-06-16]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/komsic-se-sastao-sa-zaevom-clanstvo-u-nato-i-eu-zajednicki-interes-436692>

Komšić: Odluke Predsjedništva BiH po pitanju NATO-a jedini obavezujući dokumenti. *FENA* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-29]. Available at: <http://www.fena.ba/article/1056298/komsic-odluke-predsjednistva-bih-po-pitanju-nato-a-jedini-obavezujuci-dokumenti>

Komšić: Služim svim građanima BiH. *Al Jazeera Balkans* [online]. 2018 [accessed 2019-05-18]. Available at: <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/video/komsic-sluzim-svim-gradanima-bih>

Konačni rezultati Popisa 2013. *Federalni zavod za statistiku* [online]. Sarajevo, Bosna i Hercegovina, 2018 [accessed 2019-10-31]. Available at: <http://fzs.ba/index.php/popis-stanovnistva/popis-stanovnistva-2013/konacni-rezultati-popisa-2013/>

Koraci za budućnost: SNSD Milorad Dodik. *Istinomjer.ba* [online]. 2010 [accessed 2020-03-09]. Available at: <https://istinomjer.ba/app/uploads/2011/06/SNSD.pdf>

Lavrov: Moscow does not oppose new name for Macedonia, but questions legitimacy. *MIA* [online]. 2019 [accessed 2019-06-15]. Available at: <https://mia.mk/2019/01/lavrov-moscow-does-not-oppose-new-name-for-macedonia-but-questions-legitimacy/?lang=en>

LYNCH, Colum. The Bosnian War Cables. *Foreign Policy* [online]. 2015 [accessed 2019-04-09]. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/11/22/the-bosnian-war-cables/>

Makedonija zakoračila u NATO. *Radio Slobodna Evropa* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-15]. Available at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/makedonija-potpisala-protokol-o-pristupanju-nato/29754468.html>

Mektić: Program reformi BiH je nož u ledja Srbiji, Dodik vara da bi se dočepao vlasti. *Danas* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-12-04]. Available at:

<https://www.danas.rs/svet/mektic-program-reformi-bih-je-noz-u-ledja-srbiji-dodik-vara-da-bi-se-docepao-vlasti/>

Milorad Dodik: Od onih koji su nas bombardovali mrži su mi samo ovi koji ih opravdavaju. *OSLOBOĐENJE* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-24]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/video-milorad-dodik-od-onih-koji-su-nas-bombardovali-mrzi-su-mi-samo-ovi-koji-ih-opravdavaju-443857>

NATO-Russia relations: the facts. *NATO* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-04-06]. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_111767.htm

Objavljujemo Program reformi koji BiH šalje u NATO. *Klix.ba* [online]. www.klix.ba, 2019 [accessed 2020-06-30]. Available at: <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/objavljujemo-program-reformi-koji-bih-salje-u-nato/191220128>

Obraćanje Bakira Izetbegovića: Izvještaj o radu SDA 2015-2019. SDA [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2020-06-29]. Available at: <http://www.sda.ba/vijest/obracanje-bakira-izetbegovica-izvjestaj-o-radu-sda-2015-2019/303>

Odnosi Srbije i Rusije su odnosi prijateljstva na najvišem nivou, kakva je i međusobna podrška i razumevanje dve države i dva naroda. *Ministarstvo spoljnih poslova Srbije* [online]. Belgrade, 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-06]. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/index.php/pres-servis/saopstenja/20527-2018-11-09-14-27-06?lang=lat>

Opći izbori 2018.godine - Potvrđeni rezultati. *Centralna izborna komisija BiH* [online]. 2018 [accessed 2019-10-31]. Available at: https://www.izbori.ba/rezultati_izbora?resId=25&langId=1#/1/0/0/0/0

Operations and missions: past and present. *NATO* [online]. 2. 10. 2018 [accessed 2019-03-30]. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52060.htm

Operations and missions: past and present. *NATO* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-04-02]. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52060.htm

Oružane snage BiH. *Ministarstvo odbrane Bosne i Hercegovine* [online]. 2015 [accessed 2020-03-07]. Available at: <http://os.mod.gov.ba/vojno-vojna-saradnja/saradnja-sa-nato/default.aspx?id=946&langTag=bs-BA>

Otkrivamo: Šta piše u sporazumu USAID-a i Vijeća ministara koji je naljutio Dodika. *Faktor.ba* [online]. 2018 [accessed 2019-11-26]. Available at: <https://www.faktor.ba/vijest/otkrivamo-sta-pise-u-sporazumu-usaid-a-i-vijeca-ministara-koji-je-naljutio-dodika-308147>

Palmer: „Rusija želi blokirati euroatlantske procese u BiH“. *Deutsche Welle* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2020-06-27]. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/bs/palmer-rusija-%C5%BEeli-blokirati-euroatlantske-procese-u-bih/a-49223857>

Političari iz RS: Uprkos odluci Ustavnog suda nastavićemo da slavimo 9. januar. *Danas* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-26]. Available at: <https://www.danas.rs/svet/politicari-iz-rs-uprkos-odluci-ustavnog-suda-nastavicemo-da-slavima-9-januar/>

Popis 2013 u BiH. *Statistika.ba* [online]. 2013 [accessed 2019-11-23]. Available at: <http://www.statistika.ba/>

Predsjedništvo BiH u Briselu: Do kraja godine kandidatski status. *Al Jazeera Balkans* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-09]. Available at: <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/predsjednistvo-bih-u-briselu-do-kraja-godine-kandidatski-status>

Presidency member conditions government formation with progress towards NATO. *NI* [online]. 12.1. 2019 [accessed 2019-03-30]. Available at: <http://ba.n1info.com/English/NEWS/a309123/Presidency-member-conditions-government-formation-with-progress-towards-NATO.html>

Putin says US wants to 'assert dominance' in Balkans as Macedonia changes name. *Guardian* [online]. [accessed 2019-06-15]. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/16/putin-says-us-wants-to-assert-dominance-in-balkans-as-macedonia-changes-name>

Putin warns West on Balkans as Serbia provides lavish welcome. *BBC* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-05-06]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46892363>

Relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina [online]. 06-23-2017 [accessed 2019-03-27]. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49127.htm

Relations with Serbia. *NATO* [online]. 2019, [accessed 2019-04-13]. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50100.htm

SCHIMMELFENNIG, Frank. Strategic Calculation and International Socialization: Membership Incentives, Party Constellations, and Sustained Compliance in Central and Eastern Europe. *International Organization* [online]. 2005, 59(04) [accessed 2019-10-31]. DOI: 10.1017/S0020818305050290. ISSN 0020-8183. Available at: http://www.journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0020818305050290

SDA zatražila formiranje rezervnog sastava policije u FBiH. *Stranka Demokratske Akcije* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-26]. Available at: <http://sda.ba/2019/04/sda-zvanicno-inicirana-popuna-aktivnog-sastava-policije-i-formiranje-rezvernog-sastava-u-fbih-i-kantonima/>

Šefik Džaferović: Popuštanje Dodiku je put u anarhiju. *OSLOBODENJE* [online]. 2019 [accessed 2020-07-14]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/intervjui/sefik-dzaferovic-popustanje-dodiku-je-put-u-anarhiju-491224>

Statistika.ba [online]. 2013 [accessed 2019-07-02]. Available at: <http://www.statistika.ba/>

Strategija vanjske politike Bosne i Hercegovine 2018. - 2023. *Predsjedništvo Bosne i Hercegovine* [online]. 2018 [accessed 2020-03-07]. Available at: <http://www.predsjednistvobih.ba/vanj/default.aspx?id=79555&langTag=bs-BA>

Sullivan: SAD će reagovati na ugrožavanja stabilnosti BiH. N1 [online]. 2018, 2018 [cit. 2019-05-28]. Dostupné z: <http://ba.n1info.com/Vijesti/a304017/Sullivan-SAD-ce-reagovati-na-ugrozavanja-stabilnosti-BiH.html>

Sullivan: SAD ostaju opredijeljene za zaštitu suvereniteta BiH. *FENA* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-28]. Available at: <http://fena.ba/video/2402/sullivan-sad-ostaju-opredijeljene-za-zastitu-suvereniteta-bih>

Tarnoff, C., & Lawson, M. (2016). *Foreign aid: An introduction to U.S. programs and policy (Congressional Research Service Report)*. Available at: <http://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/R40213.pdf>

Tegeltija kandidat za šefa Vijeća ministara BiH, Program reformi ide u NATO. *Radio Slobodna Evropa* [online]. 2019 [accessed 2019-12-04]. Available at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30280415.html>

The President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska Nedeljko Čurilović met today with the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to BiH Peter Ivancov. *Narodna Skupština Republike Srpske* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-06-04]. Available at: <http://www.narodnaskupstinars.net/?q=en/news/president-national-assembly-republic-srpska-nedeljko-%C4%8Durilovi%C4%87-met-today-ambassador-russian-federation-bih-peter-ivancov>

The United States is Not the Enemy; Others Actively Work Against Citizen Interests. *U.S. Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-28]. Available at: <https://ba.usembassy.gov/the-united-states-is-not-the-enemy-others-actively-work-against-citizen-interests/>

U.S. backs NATO membership for Bosnia, dismisses Serb opposition. *Reuters* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-27]. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bosnia-usa-nato/u-s-backs-nato-membership-for-bosnia-dismisses-serb-opposition-idUSKBN1OG238>

U.S. Strongly Rejects Accusation of Election Interference. *U.S. Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina* [online]. 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-28]. Available at: <https://ba.usembassy.gov/u-s-strongly-rejects-accusation-of-election-interference/>

Ustav BiH. *Ministarstvo vanjskih poslova Bosne i Hercegovine* [online]. 2019 [accessed 2019-05-18]. Available at: http://www.mvp.gov.ba/dobro_dosli_u_bih/drzavno_uredjenje/ustav_bih/?id=261

Voennaja doktrina Rossijskoj Federaciji. *Kremlin.ru* [online]. 2010 [accessed 2019-10-31]. Available at: <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/461>

Vučić zaplakao tokom govora o NATO bombardovanju Srbije. *Klix.ba* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-24]. Available at: https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/regija/vucic-zaplakao-tokom-govora-o-nato-bombardovanju-srbije/190324100?utm_medium=Status&utm_source=Facebook&utm_content=190324100&utm_campaign=Klix.ba+Facebook+status&fbclid=IwAR03FWSadau4DwEoKiP--L92_PRXhm1XG7WsIdObChlYT452VRxsEGDqz4

Yeltsin Warns Bosnian Serbs To Stop Assault on Gorazde. *New York Times* [online]. New York, New York, 1994 [accessed 2019-04-09]. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/04/20/world/yeltsin-warns-bosnian-serbs-to-stop-assault-on-gorazde.html>

Zaev za AJB: Dogovor sa Grčkom pokazuje da se Balkan mijenja. *Al Jazeera Balkans* [online]. 2019, 2019 [accessed 2019-06-15]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeKWOYrQ4y4>

Željko Komšić: Bit ću predsjednik svih građana. *OSLOBODENJE* [online]. Sarajevo, 2018, 2018 [accessed 2019-05-26]. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/zeljko-komsic-bit-cu-predsjednik-svih-gradana-410679>

Master's Thesis Project

'Bosnia and Herzegovina aspires to join NATO. Support for democratic, institutional, security sector and defence reforms are a key focus of cooperation (NATO, 2017).' This is the official statement of North Atlantic Treaty organization from June 2017 and the result of years of discussing the possible Bosnian membership in NATO. However, the process of entering the structures is very complicated, because in order for Bosnia to enter this international organization, the representatives of all three nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina must agree. While the officials of the Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina agree with joining NATO, those from Republika Srpska are against this step. While the politicians representing Bosnian Serbs and Bosniaks, two constitutive nations, take an opposing position, the attitude of the third nation, Bosnian Croats, remains unclear. In my research, I would like to analyse various media outputs and statements of politicians and authorities from both Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. I would like to examine the distinction between the discussions over NATO between the three constitutive nations living in the country and the effect it has on both domestic and international politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The purpose of my research is to analyse the forms and ways of reporting the negotiation and disputes over this topic. Research background War in Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of the most horrifying conflict of the second half of the 20th century. Dayton peace agreement put an end to the war in 1995. Dayton agreement not only ended the war, but its purpose was also to rebuild and repair the institutions of civil society. Although the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina claims to reflect the constitutive will of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the agreement was drafted in large part by members of the international community. The result of Dayton agreement is a country structured as what Slye calls 'institutionalized nationality'(1996). Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into two parts: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. In the later, there is a major population of ethnic Serbs while Bosniaks and Croats live mostly in Federation. Bosnia and Herzegovina faces the decision of whether the country will enter the NATO. Views on this step differ. While leaders of Bosniaks are open to the option of international integration, the president of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, told the local media that he is strongly against the possibility of Bosnia and Herzegovina entering North Atlantic Treaty Organization ("Srpska's policy - rejecting joining NATO," 2017). Nor Republika Srpska will get involved in any activity leading to the implementation of NATO Membership Action plan

(MAP) (Kovacevic, 2017). National assembly of the Republika Srpska proclaimed military neutrality in October 2017 as official resolution says, “in relation to the existing military alliances until a possible referendum to make a final decision on the issue is held (Reuters, 2017).” The reasons, beside following the international policy of Serbia, are the conditions which the North-Atlantic treaty organization gave to the country in 2010 after Bosniak member of the Presidency Haris Silajdžić announced official application for joining MAP. One of the conditions is that the country must transfer military facilities from the local level to the central government. This membership will be granted to Bosnia and Herzegovina as soon as all immovable defence properties which are necessary for the defence of the country are officially registered as the property of the state for the use of Ministry of Defence (NATO, 2010). The President of Republika Srpska declined this condition and argued that NATO got involved in the property issue. He also suggested that the organization has a direct influence on the Constitutional Court of BiH (“Srpska's policy - rejecting joining NATO,” 2017). Earlier this year, Dodik said that if there will be NATO base in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the future, there should be Russian base as well in case of Russian interest (“Dodik: Ako u BiH bude NATO baza, biće i ruska,” 2018). On the contrary, Current Bosniak Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bakir Izetbegović stands up for the future Bosnian membership in the NATO. In May 2017 he said in Mostar that Bosnia and Hercegovina slowly heads for the future of EU and NATO and that this process is the right one. Izetbegović also said that this way to the membership is very difficult because Bosnia and Herzegovina carries ‘three loads other countries do not have’ (“Izetbegović na tribini u Mostaru,” 2017). Relatively questionable is Croatian position in this discussion. In October 2017, Dragan Čović said that the way towards NATO is Bosnian way but that he simultaneously respects the decision of officials of Serbia. He did not want to comment on the decision of neutrality of Republika Srpska (“Čović: Uvažavam stavove srpskog naroda o NATO-u,” 2017).

Aims and objectives

My aim is to study the socio-political environment and discourse. For this purpose, I am going to study statements of politicians, programs of political parties, transcriptions of political debates in television and radio and newspaper articles refer to and discuss the foreign policy of the state, particularly the views on possible integration in NATO

structures. In this research I will use critical discourse analysis, as I find it the most eligible for the comprehensive interpretation and understanding of the socio-political situation. Critical discourse analysis requires to study and to understand the interconnection between the text, discourse, social cognition and power. “Crucial presumption of adequate critical discourse analysis is understanding the social power and dominance (Van Dijk: 254, 1993).” This power, according to Van Dijk, is the ability of authority to create and influence the public opinion by action or cognition. This means that a group or an individual can both limit the freedom of action of others and influence their minds (Van Dijk, 1993). The aim of my research is thus to observe the techniques of the local authorities in the process of constructing the national attitude to the integration in NATO. The premise is that the authorities of all three nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina are going to straighten the national identity and relations with foreign actors in the interest of entering NATO or staying neutral. Because, in this case, the politicians from Republika Srpska followed the policy of Serbia, it is expected that their consensus will continue. Regarding Milorad Dodik’s comment about Russian base in Bosnia in case of NATO, I also expect the rise of consensus in international policy with Russian Federation. In Federation, I expect closer cooperation with western organizations and wider promotion of the membership. The position of Bosnian Croats is questionable, and I am interested in Čović’s further statements and acts as his action is crucial for the further development of the country’s foreign policy. The key research question is how the officials and authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina develop their attitudes towards the possibility of entering the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and how these attitudes reflect the cosmopolitan values of the society and the nation. In order to effectively carry out my research, I believe it is necessary to spend some time in the country and study the environment through the daily contact with the politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as with the citizens of the country. For that purpose, I would like to spend one semester at the University of Sarajevo and travel to Banja Luka and Mostar.

Current state of research

The possibility of membership of Bosnia and Herzegovina in NATO divides the country, which is already divided over many other topics. This polarisation effect is described by Stephen Shulman on using the example of Ukraine. Focusing on culture, identity and

geography, Shulman analyses the relationship between international and national integration in a multiethnic state and argues that foreign policy is a key element in the construction of national identity (Shulman, 1998). Furthermore, Shulman suggests that every national group tends to prefer relations with the state of culture similar to their own. He calls this positive reference groups; societies, states or nations which identify with specific national identity. In opposition to this are negative reference groups. Foreign states, or in this case a foreign organization, serve as positive or negative reference groups and any ties or boundaries with them affect the internal view on foreign policy. Ethnic group identity can be therefore reinforced by strong ties with foreign states whose population is perceived culturally and ethnically similar to their own. 'Disagreements between ethnic groups over the nature of external-ethnic pull and its relationship to foreign policy will be a source of conflict over international integration policy (Shulman: 123, 1998).' Shulman's theory can be also applied on the situations in which state creates ties with international organizations. White, McAllister and Feklyunina studied how people in Ukraine defined themselves according to their inclination towards East or West. East is represented by Russia and organizations connecting countries of the former Soviet Union such as Commonwealth of Independent States, Eurasian Economic Community or Collective Security Organisations. European Union or NATO represent West and Western identity to which citizens of Ukraine incline. Ukrainian foreign policy was multi-vector. The Country developed relations with its Slavic neighbours but also attempted to establish closer ties with European Union and NATO. This division in two directions of identity and foreign preferences of Ukrainians was directly reflected in presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004. Viktor Yushchenko who was elected as the president of Ukraine was openly associated with Euro-Atlantic orientation, whereas his opponent and current Prime Minister Victor Yanukovich inclined to the improvement of relations with Eastern, Slavic countries. These two candidates also disagreed in the question of possible Ukrainian membership in NATO. While Yanukovich in 2006 claimed that Ukraine was not ready for integration into NATO structures, in 2008, Yushchenko called for the conclusion of MAP as soon as possible (White, McAllister, Feklyuinina, 2010). Back in 2010, the Authors claimed that not only foreign policy affects domestic one, but also that national identity shaped by the issues relating to language, culture and nationalism can affect foreign policy in return. As exemplified by the current situation in Ukraine, the division of the society led to the actual separation of the pro-Russian part of the country. 'In an ethnically diverse

society, competing integration projects – such as those of the EU on the one hand, and Russia on the other – can have a powerful effect on domestic constituencies, with the result that local leaderships are even more constrained in the policy options they can pursue (White, McAllister, Feklyuinina: 363, 2010).’ NATO is among Bosnian Serbs highly unpopular due to its bombing campaign in 1995 and it is possible that this nation in Bosnia will tend to establish relations with Russia rather than with ‘West’ which is, similarly to the Ukrainian case, represented by NATO. On the other hand, Bosniaks and Croats are expected to support the possibility of entering the alliance but as I already mentioned above, Dragan Čović’s position is not completely clear and thus it is difficult to make any conclusion now. The division of the country is significant. It is visible not only in the political situation but also in society and daily life of the citizens. Any interfering of other state or organisation, west or east, could cause great damage to the already fragile state’s domestic policy and cooperation between two federations. Regarding the recent Ukrainian crisis, we can see how highly influencing foreign policy can be in the domestic policy of the state and it is clear today that consequences of such a conflict can extend to the other states and to the wider area of the international politics. After the Ukrainian crisis, the relations between West and Russia got cold which is, for example, visible on the western sanction policy toward Russian Federation. Despite the unquestionably positive effect that international integration can have on the domestic policy of a homogeneous country, the question for the elites of the international organization is whether the effect of international integration in cases such as heterogenic society of Bosnia and Herzegovina is not more devastating than beneficial for the state and people.

Methodology

As I mentioned above, I am going to use critical discursive analysis in this research. That requires thorough collecting and analysing of all the relevant media outputs related to the problem of foreign policy of the country. I am going to analyse these statements in the text and try to locate and discuss their power and ambition to strengthen the national identity for the purposes of using it as a key argument for the public advocacy of the foreign policy. Alongside media analysis, I am also going to talk with politicians and local authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina who comment on the situation in the relevant and publicly reflected way. In my research, I am going to use both discursive text analysis and qualitative interviews. From these two methods I am going to collect data which I am

going to organize in three categories according to their approach to the integration in the NATO structures as negative, neutral and positive. I am going to discuss to what extent they refer to and work with the discourse of national identity and international cooperation based on the shared values. I expect these statements to be more and more frequent and stronger. It is also important to analyse the strength, urgency and perhaps the belligerence of the statements, which I will take into account as well. I expect the statements to reflect also the differences between the nations and their purpose of creating their own identity. That is, to create contradictory positions of Us and Them. I am also going to evaluate the influential potential of the speaker according to his or hers political or symbolic power in the society.

Sources

SHULMAN, Stephen. National integration and foreign policy in multiethnic states.

Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 1998, 4.4: 110-132. SLYE, Ronald C. The Dayton peace agreement: Constitutionalism and ethnicity. Yale J. Int'l L., 1996, 21: 459.

VAN DIJK, Teun A. Principles of critical discourse analysis. Discourse & society, 1993, 4.2: 249- 283.

WHITE, Stephen; MCALLISTER, Ian; FEKLYUNINA, Valentina. Belarus, Ukraine and Russia: east or west?. The British Journal of Politics & International Relations, 2010, 12.3: 344-367.

Websites

Bosnia's Serb region declares neutrality in bid to block NATO membership. Reuters [online]. 10- 18-2017 [cit. 2018-02-04]. Available from:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bosniaserb/bosnias-serb-region-declares-neutrality-in-bid-to-block-nato-membershipidUSKBN1CN1F5>

Čović: Uvažavam stavove srpskog naroda o NATO-u. Glas Srpske [online]. 2017-10-19 [cit. 2018- 01-27]. Available from:

https://www.glassrpske.com/novosti/vijesti_dana/Covic-Uvazavamstavove-srpskog-naroda-o-NATO-u/lat/248183.html

Dodik: Ako u BiH bude NATO baza, biće i ruska. Glas Srpske [online]. 2018-01-05 [cit. 2018-01-24]. Available from: https://www.glassrpske.com/novosti/vijesti_dana/Dodik-Ako-u-BiH-budeNATO-baza-bice-i-ruska/lat/253018.html

Izetbegović na tribini u Mostaru: „BiH ne ide dovoljno brzo ali se ipak kreće, i to u dobrom smjeru – ka EU i NATO paktu“. Slobodna Bosna[online]. 2017-05-20 [cit. 2018-01-24]. Available from: https://www.slobodnabosna.ba/vijest/52679/izetbegovic_na_tribini_u_mostaru_bih_ne_ide_dovoljno_brzo_ali_se_ipak_krece_i_to_u_dobrom_smjeru_ka_eu_i_nato_paktu.html

KOVACEVIC, Danijel. Bosnia Serbs Vow to Block NATO Accession Plan. Balkan Insight [online]. 2017-12-15 [cit. 2018-01-24]. Available from: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnia-serbs-oppose-natoaccession-bid-12-15-2017>

North Atlantic Council encourages Bosnia and Herzegovina to step up reform process. North Atlantic Treaty Organization [online]. 2010-07-14 [cit. 2018-01-24]. Available from: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_64981.htm?selectedLocale=en

Relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina [online]. 06-23-2017 [cit. 2018-01-27]. Available from: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49127.htm

Srpska's policy - rejecting joining NATO. The Srpska Times [online]. 2017-08-21 [cit. 2018-01-24]. Available from: <http://thesrpskatimes.com/srpskas-policy-rejecting-joining-nato/>