Public Opinion on the Security of Serbia and Dialogue with Pristina

Belgrade Centre for Security Policy
14 February 2017
Project Aim

• Explore citizens’ attitude about personal and national security, foreign policy and expected answers to security challenges and threats

• Contribution to the discussion on new Strategy of National Security of Serbia
On public opinion research

• **Questionnaire**: includes 135 questions envisioned by BCSP
• **Methodology**: face-to-face interviews using random sample
• **Timeframe**: from 26 December 2016 until 14 January 2017
• **Representative sample**: 1,403 adult citizens of Serbia (excluding Kosovo)
The public perception of internal and external threats

Dr Miloš Popović (BCBP)
Researcher
Belgrade Centre for Security Policy
Internal threats

• More than a half of respondents believes that the country’s national security is under threat

• Two-thirds see corruption and crime, and the behavior of politicians as the main internal threats

• National security requires strengthening our economy
TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF SERBIA UNDER THREAT?

- Somewhat: 42%
- Little: 30%
- Very much: 15%
- Don't know: 13%
WHAT IS THE MAIN INTERNAL THREAT TO SERBIA?

- Corruption & crime: 35%
- Politicians, poor governance: 31%
- Other: 10%
- Economic issues - poverty, unemployment: 6%
- DK: 5%
- Disunity: 5%
- Kosovo: 3%
- Migrants: 3%
- Secret services: 2%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threat</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low or None</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Organized crime &amp; its influence on politicians</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local crime</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural disasters</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terrorist attack</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal dissent</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War vs. neighbors</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
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Citizens give a bad grade to government for its fight against crime and corruption

- The government is not serious about fighting corruption
- The government is selective in its fight against organized crime
- Investments into economy/education strengthen national security
Is the government serious about fighting corruption?

- No, the government is not serious: 45%
- Somewhat, dealing with some cases of corruption: 38%
- Yes, it is serious: 12%
- Don't know: 5%
IS THE GOVERNMENT SERIOUS ABOUT FIGHTING ORGANIZED CRIME?

- No, govt. is not serious: 42%
- Somewhat, dealing with some leaders of organized crime, but not all: 40%
- Yes, it is serious: 13%
- Don't know: 5%
STRONGER NATIONAL SECURITY REQUIRES INVESTING IN:

- Economic revival & education: 38%
- Security forces: 19%
- Solving disputes with neighbors & fostering cooperation: 10%
- Diplomatic activity & improved intl. image: 9%
- Improving human & minority rights: 9%
- Finding strong allies among the major powers or joining a major security alliance: 6%

%
External threats

- Major powers and terrorism are key external threats for a half of respondents
- The majority is not afraid of terrorist attacks
- The government cannot protect us from terrorism, nearly a half of citizens thinks
- Better economy facilitates fight against terrorism, every third respondent thinks
WHAT ARE EXTERNAL THREATS TO SERBIA?

- Major power politics toward our country: 32%
- Terrorism: 15%
- Foreign policy and domestic politics of Serbia: 10%
- Other: 9%
- Migrants: 9%
- Neighbors: 8%
- DK: 7%
- Organized crime in the Balkans: 5%
- Greater Albania project: 3%
- Further dissolution of Serbia: 2%
ARE YOU AFRAID OF TERRORIST ATTACKS IN SERBIA?

- Mostly no: 39%
- Mostly yes: 29%
- Not at all: 20%
- Very much: 6%
- DK: 6%
HOW SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT DETER CITIZENS FROM JOINING TERRORIST GROUPS?

- Fight against poverty and marginalization of groups that terrorists recruit from: 37%
- Educational programs in schools: 19%
- Better information- & experience-sharing with neighbors/EU: 13%
- Fight vs. terrorist propaganda on Internet: 8%
- Wage campaigns aimed at youth & other endangered groups: 7%
- Promote inter-ethnic & inter-ethnic dialogue: 7%

%
The perception of Belgrade-Pristina relations

Sonja Stojanović Gajić
Executive
Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP)
Perception of the region

• The majority believes that Serbia has more enemies than friends in the neighborhood, although a significant number of respondents does not think in those terms

• The majority expects no armed conflict in the next 5 years, although the proportion of those afraid of war has increased

• The majority does not want to wage war to keep Kosovo as a part of Serbia, nor in cases human rights violations of Serbs in the neighborhood
Does Serbia have more friends or enemies in its neighborhood?

- More enemies: 40%
- Don't think in those terms: 30%
- More friends: 23%
- DK: 7%
ARE YOU AFRAID THAT ARMED CONFLICT MAY ERRUPT IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS IN THE BALKANS?

- Mostly no: 38%
- Mostly yes: 29%
- Not at all: 16%
- Very much: 9%
- DK: 8%
IF YOUR CO-ETHNICS ARE SUFFERING IN ARMED CONFLICT IN A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY, I WOULD BE READY TO:

- Do nothing: 28%
- Accept refugees: 27%
- Exert pressure on our government to represent them: 11%
- Join hands with them in the armed conflict: 6%
- Financially support them: 4%
SHOULD SERBIA WAGE ARMED CONFLICT TO PRESERVE KOSOVO AS ITS INTEGRAL PART?

- No: 74%
- DK: 16%
- Yes: 10%
Belgrade- Pristina

• The majority has no relatives or friends in Kosovo (80%), and has never been there or met an ethnic Albanian
• Among 7% of those who were in Kosovo after 1999, and met ethnic Albanians last year are mostly youth (14%) and Bosniaks
• Bosniaks can serve as a bridge between the Serbs and Albanians (27% of them have relatives and friends in Kosovo)
• The majority is against waging wars to preserve Kosovo as a part of Serbia
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO KOSOVO?

- I have never been there: 65%
- Yes, before 1999: 25%
- Yes, after 1999: 7%
- I was born in Kosovo & lived there until 1999: 3%
Do you have relatives or friends who live in Kosovo?

- No: 78%
- Yes: 19%
- No answer: 3%

Did you talk or meet ethnic Albanian last year?

- No: 80%
- Yes: 15%
- No answer: 5%
The Perception of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue

• Three-quarters are in favor of the dialogue, only 9% are against

• The citizens of Serbia think that Albanians have more gains from the dialogue, while a research from Kosovo shows that Albanians believe that Serbs benefit more

• The citizens support the agreements with Pristina as long as they do not lead to the recognition of Kosovo. Only 8% is in favor of independence, and 10% - for partition

• One quarter expects Kosovo to be independent in the future, and one-fifth that it will be part of Serbia or be partitioned between Albania and Serbia, respectively
SHOULD THERE BE A BELGRADE-PRISTINA DIALOGUE?

- Yes, regardless of potential EU pressure in order to not transfer disputes to future generations: 33%
- Yes, only if it protects the Serbian interests: 23%
- DK: 16%
- Yes, if it does not lead to formal recognition of Kosovo: 14%
- No: 9%
- Yes, if it increases the chance of EU membership: 5%
WHAT TYPE OF AGREEMENT IS THE MOST ACCEPTABLE IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRISTINA?

- All deals that improve stability are in order, short of formal recognition of Kosovo's independence: 31%
- All deals that improve the protection of Serbs who live in Kosovo: 30%
- Partition of Kosovo into southern & northerns with Serb majority is best: 20%
- Recognition of independence is ok, if it brings regional stability & accelerates our development: 11%
- DK: 8%
HOW DO YOU SEE KOSOVO'S FUTURE?

- DK: 28%
- Independent: 24%
- Part of Serbia: 20%
- Split between Albania & Serbia: 19%
- United with Albania: 9%
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