



AFTER SECOND TRI-PARTITE BALKAN SUMMIT IN SERBIA

Second Tri-Partite Balkan Summit in Serbia has been realized on April 26th, 2011 with the participation of the Presidents of Turkey, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although one of the subjects concentrated on was how political, economic and cultural relations between them could be developed, the focal point was Bosnia and Herzegovina. The joint press conference held afterwards was an occasion for giving out the messages that solidarity and friendship on the basis of good neighborly ties are going to be cultivated, the peace process will be continued, cooperation will be held on joint economic projects and support will be given for speeding up the process for Western Balkans to join the EU.

The increasing dynamism in Turkey's foreign policy towards the Western Balkans, Bosnia Herzegovina in particular, is remarkable. Aware of the sensitivity of the political picture in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its possible impact on the entire region, Turkey has succeeded in becoming one of the most active actors in the Western Balkans. Turkey has launched the Tri-partite Balkan Summit with the belief that Bosnia and Herzegovina's domestic problems will be eased with the elimination of the conflict between Sarajevo and Belgrade.

¹ [http://www.tepav.org.tr/en/ekibimiz/s/1105/Erhan+Turbedar +PhD](http://www.tepav.org.tr/en/ekibimiz/s/1105/Erhan+Turbedar+PhD)

The first of the Tri-partite summit at presidential level was held in Istanbul under the chairmanship of President Abdullah Gül on April 24, 2010. The joint declaration accepted at the summit said efforts were going to be put in for lasting peace and stability in the Balkans and respect would be shown for Bosnia Herzegovina's territorial integrity.

The first of the summits was important in terms of the normalization of Belgrade-Sarajevo relations which had gone down a couple of notches for the past three years. Still, relations between Belgrade and Sarajevo have had an undulating course for the past one year. One of the reasons of this was that Belgrade continued having Bosnia and Herzegovina nationals arrested on the basis of politically-motivated accusations. And what's more Zeljko Komsic, member of the Bosnia Herzegovina Presidential Council, has contended that Serbia's interference in his country's internal affairs assumed dimensions of discomfiture.

Although the recent turmoil and uprisings in the Arab geography have consumed a great part of Turkey's foreign policy energy, Ankara has persevered in remaining active in the Balkans too. In fact, Turkey is known to have expended special efforts towards the realization of the second tri-partite Balkan summit. That the second summit in Serbia convened in Karadjordjevo is quite noteworthy. Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic and Croatian leader Franjo Tudjman met in this town about 20 years ago to take up the issue of how Bosnia and Herzegovina was going to be divided between them. We can say that Belgrade has wittingly chosen this town as the venue of the tri-partite meeting to give out the message that the past is now a closed chapter.

The participation of all three members of the tri-partite meeting in Serbia is itself a remarkable development and quite a success. The Bosniak member of the Bosnia and Herzegovina presidential council was last in Serbia in 2001. The summit is also important in terms of the development of regional cooperation and dialogue between Belgrade and Sarajevo. The thing is that the Balkan summits are somewhat tied down and have a limited ability in finding solutions to the problems of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bosnian Serbs are of the opinion that Turkey and the western countries are aspiring to weaken the Republic of Srpska and turn Bosnia and Herzegovina into a Bosnian-dominated state. That is why Bosnian Serbs are wary of Turkey's presence in the region and its rapprochement with Serbia. As a matter of fact, Bosnian Serbs have been for years creating barriers to impede the progress of the state. The President of the Republic of Srpska, Milorad Dodik said in March 2011 that Bosnia and Herzegovina is bound to disintegrate just as the former Yugoslavia did.

The Serbian government aspiring to obtain the candidate status to enter the EU has demonstrated through the tri-partite summit in Karadjordjevo that it can get along with its neighbors and is an element of peace and stability in the region. Belgrade is also trying to give the impression that it is doing its best to stop Dodik's destructive activities. The reality, however, is that the Serbian government is in deep solidarity with the Bosnian Serbs. The Serbian government acquiescing to any solution other than a confederal state model would be equal to committing suicide.

Not only Bosnian Serbs but also Bosnian Croats have also been on the agenda for the past one year with their conduct fanning nationalistic sentiments and heightening tensions. As a result, the tri-partite summit in Serbia will give a new lease of life to relations between Belgrade and Sarajevo. However, all foreign actors' active in the region will eventually have to embark upon closer solidarity for more substantial results to be obtained in Bosnia Herzegovina.