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"Redrawing of borders may bring Belgrade's recognition"

Source: Tanjug

WASHINGTON -- The latest events in the north of Kosovo illustrate how fragile the region's stability is, Cato Institute's Ted Carpenter says.



U.S. troops at the Jarinjë checkpoints (Tanjug)

Speaking for Tanjug news agency, the vice president for Defense and Foreign Policy Studies at the think-tank added that he did not expect further incidents.

The region's stability will remain fragile, because none of the problems have been solved, he noted.

Carpenter told the news agency that in the coming period he did not expect violent incidents similar to the ones that happened recently, but highlighted that the resolving of problems will take time.

The U.S. analyst added that it was highly questionable whether the forthcoming dialogue between Belgrade and Priština would solve some of those problems.

"The EU is imposing pressure on both sides to the dialogue, but that pressure is not equal, since Belgrade is under greater pressure not only to facilitate the dialogue, but also to make concessions," Carpenter was quoted as saying.

According to him, although the EU "will never publicly present such a formal

prerequisite, there is an implicit precondition for Serbia to recognize Kosovo's independence in order to join the EU".

"That puts the Serbian government in an extremely delicate situation, since the EU accession is in Serbia's best interest. On the other hand, it would be highly difficult in political terms to endorse the Kosovo independence, especially if the other side is not willing to make concessions," the U.S. analyst noted.

"I think that the possibility of recognition would not be excluded in case of significant redrawing of borders, if, for example, northern Kosovo would remain a part of Serbia, and especially in case of readiness to endorse the independence of the Serb Republic (in Bosnia) and possibly merge it with Serbia," Carpenter said.

According to him, in such a scenario, it would be easier for the Serbian authorities to make controversial decisions of the kind.

"However, if the country does not receive anything but the vague promise of eventual EU entry, that is not enough for taking on the risk at the political level," he noted.

Asked to what extent the U.S. administration may have learned in advance about the latest events in Kosovo, he said that "most likely, it was for purely technical reasons that the U.S. had not received an official notification from the Priština government about its future moves".

"But the capacity of the U.S. intelligence is enormous, so I do not believe that these moves were a complete surprise for Washington," Carpenter concluded.