
PLENKOVIĆ MEETS WITH US VICE PRESIDENT PENCE

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Pence has sent a clear message of American commitment to security in Europe, says the Croatian Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Andrej Plenković met on Wednesday in Podgorica in Montenegro with US Vice President Mike Pence. They discussed the relations between Croatia and the United States, military cooperation and the Three Seas Initiative, which includes 12 EU countries, reports Jutarnji List on 3 August 2017.

Plenković and Pence met on the margins of the US-Adriatic Charter summit (A5), held in Montenegro, the latest member of NATO. We discussed the relations between Croatia and the United States, cooperation in the defence field and the benefits of economic and energy cooperation within the Three Seas Initiative, Plenković told reporters. I have invited him to visit Croatia during one of his future trips to Europe, said the Prime Minister.

Talking about the status of the Croatian armed forces, he stressed that it was important for Croatia that the defence budget was increasing and strengthening the security capabilities, part of which is the acquisition of new fighter jets. In this way, Croatia is a reliable member of the NATO alliance and takes care of its security, said Plenković. Croatia is involved in NATO missions in Poland and Lithuania. We also take part in the mission in Afghanistan and the international coalition in the fight against terrorism and the Islamic State, which speaks about the compatibility of our goals and the excellent partnership cooperation we have with the United States, stressed the Prime Minister.

Reflecting on Vice President Pence's speech, he said it was a speech that is important for the transatlantic perspective of all countries in Southeast Europe, in general for security on the European continent and for the United States commitment to supporting the countries in this part of Europe.

In my opinion, destinations for this visit to Europe have been carefully selected. Vice President Pence visited Tallinn in Estonia, Tbilisi in Georgia, and here in Podgorica he sent a clear message of American commitment to security on the European continent, said Plenković. This summit was an excellent opportunity, he continued, to discuss the ambitions of some Southeast European countries to move closer to NATO membership and to congratulate Montenegro on the accomplished goal.

The summit was also attended by prime ministers of Albania and Serbia, Edi Rama and Ana

Brnabić, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina Denis Zvizdić, President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci, as well as the hosts, prime ministers of Montenegro and Macedonia, Duško Marković and Zoran Zaev.

Before the meeting with Pence, the Croatian Prime Minister held bilateral meetings with prime ministers of Montenegro and Albania, Marković and Rama.

The US-Adriatic Charter was founded by Albania, Croatia, Macedonia and the United States to assist aspirant countries to join NATO. The Charter was signed in May 2003 in Tirana. Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina officially joined in 2008, while Serbia has been granted an observer status.

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