



From left, are Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator of the SNF, Congressman David McKinley receiving the book *Serb National Federation – First 100 Years*, John Martich, President of the SNF, Misi Bielich, SNF Board Member, and Vanessa Rastovic, Policy Manager



Milos is seen here with Keynote Speaker Dr. Krinka Vidakovic Petrov and Dr. Aleksandar Petrov, Serbian section editor of the *American Srbobran*, at the National Press Club



Dr. A. Wess Mitchell, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, USA



Nebojsa Zivkovic, President of Serbian National Defense, left, with Hon. Branko Terzic, emcee



Dr. Krinka Vidakovic Petrov delivering her speech at the National Press Club



H.E. Zeljka Cvijanovic, Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Hercegovina

by Milos Rastovic

On July 25-29 this year the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in Washington, D.C., along with the Serbian-American Caucus in the U.S. Congress, the WWI Centennial Commission, and the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America sponsored a centennial commemoration of President Woodrow Wilson's Day of Prayer for Serbians and the Day the Serbian Flag Flew over the White House.

On July 26 U.S. Secretary of State Robert Lancing issued a proclamation to Serbia's denying the ultimatum from the Austro-Hungary Empire on July 28, 1914, and the Serbian struggle, suffering, and sacrifices for freedom and independence during World War I. The Serbian nation sacrificed one third of its population fighting against Austro-Hungarian aggression, a sacrifice recognized by President Wilson who admired the heroic Serbian fight for freedom, justice, and democracy. Secretary Lancing trumpeted the Serbian heroic strive for liberty with these words on that day:

*To the People of the United States:*

*On Sunday, 28th of this present month, will occur the fourth anniversary of the day when the gallant people of Serbia, rather than submit to the studied and ignoble exactions of a prearranged foe, were called upon by the war declaration of Austria-Hungary to defend their territory and their homes against an enemy bent on their destruction. Nobly did they respond. So valiantly and courageously did they oppose the forces of a country ten times greater in population and resources that it was only after they had thrice driven the Austrians back and Germany and Bulgaria had come to the aid of Austria that they were compelled to retreat into Albania. While their territory has been devastated and their homes despoiled, the spirit of the Serbian people has not been broken. Though overwhelmed by superior forces, their love of freedom remains unabated. Brutal force has left unaffected their firm determination to sacrifice everything for liberty and independence.*

*It is fitting that the people of the United States, dedicated to the self-evident truth that is the right of the people of all nations, small as well as great, to live their own lives and choose their own Government, and remembering that the principles for which Serbia has so nobly fought and suffered are those for which the United States is fighting, should on the occasion of this anniversary manifest in an appropriate manner their war sympathy with this oppressed people who have so heroically resisted the aims of the Germanic nations to master the world. At the same time, we should not forget the kindred people of the Great Slavic race--the Poles, the Czechs and Jugo-Slavs, who, now dominated and oppressed by alien races yearn for independence and national unity.*

*This can be done in a manner no more appropriate than in our churches.*

*I, therefore, appeal to the people of the United States of all faiths and creeds to assemble in their several places of worship on Sunday July 28, for the purpose of giving expression to their sympathy with this subjugated people and their oppressed and dominated kindred on other lands, and to invoke the blessings of Almighty God upon them and upon the cause to which they are pledged.*

--The White House, July 1918

*The proclamation, which was published in numerous important newspapers, was read as our church bells rang throughout the United States.*

*His Grace Bishop IRINEJ of the Eastern American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church gave the opening prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives with the following words:*

*Lord God Almighty, God of Justice, we offer You our sincere thanksgiving and heartfelt prayer for and with those whom You have graciously vested in governance of these United States of America.*

*Enable the Members of the House of Representatives, elected by the people and for the people, to present equitably the diverse interests of our citizens and those from the expanse of the world who reside, labor and study here.*

*Guide those who deliberate and legislate on our collective behalf in the spirit of unity, openness and understanding. Allow their hearts ever to be open to the resounding cry of those who earnestly pledge indivisible liberty and justice for all.*

*May they be enlightened by Your precepts and motivated in their altruistic service to our Nation and its people. Bless and preserve them and us, Lord. This we pray in Christ Jesus, through the Holy Spirit.*

Representatives of the Serb National Federation, churches,



# COMMEMORATION in WASHINGTON

and many Serbs from the Diaspora visited the offices of Congressmen Mike Doyle and Connor Lamb from the Pittsburgh area and Congressman David McKinley of West Virginia, as well as with Sarah Blocher, Senior Professional Staff Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives.

At the meetings, the importance of improving the Serbian-American relationship was stressed. Congressman McKinley was delighted to be present at the following reception regarding the centennial commemoration of the Woodrow Wilson's Day of Prayer for Serbians. At the reception, many officials of the U.S. Administration and Congress, diplomats, clergy, and guests were present including Laura Cooper, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia, Ted Poe, Congressman and Co-Chair of the Serbian-American Congressional Caucus, Ron Johnson, Head of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation, Ana Brnabic, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Ivica Dacic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Zeljka Cvijanovic, Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina and others. Many guests had an opportunity to meet and socialize.

On the next day, the Serbian National Defense Council of America sponsored a symposium on Serbia and America in World War I at the National Press Club. Welcoming speakers were His Grace Bishop IRINEJ, Eastern American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Dr. A. Wess Mitchell, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, USA, H.E. Zeljka Cvijanovic, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Nebojsa Zivkovic, President of the Serbian National Defense Council of America.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Krinka Vidakovic Petrov who delivered the lecture "The Role of Serbian-Americans in World War I." Dr. Petrov gave a great review of the Serbian-American support of their homeland during World War I including distinguished people such as Mihajlo I. Pupin and Nikola Tesla, Serbian-American scientists and inventors. She edited the book *The Great War 1914 – 1918, The Kingdom of Serbia, the United States of America, and Serbian-American Diaspora*, published by Sebastian Press.

Svetlana Rogic opened her exhibition "Tamo daleko: 1918 – 2018/ Over There, so Far Away: 1918 – 2018." Dr. Branko Mikasinovich was the moderator of the panel on Serbia, America, and the Great War. Panelists were Dr. Gordon N. Bardos, President of SEERECON, LLC, Dr. Julian Schuster, Provost and Senior Vice President of the Webster University, Rev. Dr. Vasilije Vranic, Professor of the Saint Sava School of Theology, and the Hon. Branko Terzic, Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council. Panelists discussed the role of Serbian-Americans in the Great War, media narratives, and the current relationship between the United States and Serbia.

On the third day, the Republic of Srpska Office for Cooperation, Trade, and Investment sponsored a reception at the Carnegie Institution for Science. After the reception, a concert and cultural program was sponsored by the Serb National Federation. The String Quartet of the School for Music Talents from Cuprija, Serbia and the Serbian Singing Society Lira of St. Luke Serbian Orthodox Church, Washington, D.C., presented an excellent performance. They deeply touched emotions of the audience by singing famous Serbian songs "Marsirala Kralja Petra Garda," "Tamo Daleko," "Ovo je Srbija" and more.

On the next day Bishop IRINEJ served Pan-Orthodox Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with a Memorial Service at St. Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral National War Memorial Shrine, Washington, D.C. In the evening, a gala banquet assembled many guests who enjoyed the program and socialized.

In remembering the end of World War I and Serbian-American alliances, the hope is that this event will strengthen the ties between the US and Serbia and initiate the building of a better future Serbians and their descendants here.



Panelists Dr. Gordon N. Bardos, Dr. Julian Schuster, Rev. Dr. Vasilije Vranic, and Hon. Branko Terzic at the Symposium on Serbia and America in World War I



His Grace Bishop IRINEJ, Eastern American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church



The Exhibition "Tamo daleko 1918 – 2018/ Over There, So Far Away: 1918 – 2018"



Holding the Serbian flag, from left, Milana Bizic, H.E. Zeljka Cvijanovic, H.G. Bishop IRINEJ, Verica Matkovic, Rados Bajic, and Obrad Kesic, at the Reception in the Carnegie Science Center,



The String Quartet of the School for Music Talents from Cuprija, Serbia



Serbian Singing Society Lira of St. Luke Serbian Orthodox Church in Washington, D.C. at the Carnegie Science Center, Washington, D.C.