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Media News

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• Journalism and Democracy

• Media in Transition

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Press Analysis

Bosnian Media on Attempted Assassination of Jozo Leutar: Without False Diopter

The analysis that we offer is based on three-day monitoring of five daily newspapers in Bosnia-Herzegovina: *Oslobodjenje*, *Vecernje novine*, *Dnevni avaz*, *Glas srpski*, *Dnevne nezavisne novine* and *Slobodna BiH*. The monitoring was focused exclusively on their reporting, comments, etc., on the attempted assassination of the deputy minister of the Federation Ministry of the Interior (MUP), Jozo Leutar (March 16). This attack, not only as an act of terrorism, but also as an event with different political connotations, reflects the present state of relations in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

All the monitored papers extensively covered this tragic event, including the two daily newspapers in the Republika Srpska. It goes without saying that the three Sarajevo dailies were in a privileged position when it comes to extensive reporting in view of the fact that the attack happened in Sarajevo.

Respecting Facts

The first relevant day for the newspapers was Wednesday, March 17 of this year, the day after the assassination attempt.

The oldest Sarajevo daily *Oslobodjenje* decided for a longish headline which, although not too inventive, summarizes the essence of the news: “**Assassination of Jozo Leutar, Deputy Minister of Federal Police.**” The supra-headline is “**Terrorist Attack in Sarajevo.**” The sub-headline, in three complex sentences, gives other relevant information.

This news item, composed as a so-called lead, announces a more extensive report on the bomb attack on pages 4 and 5 of the paper. The front page also features a photograph from the site, with a picture of Jozo Leutar in the upper right-hand corner of the photograph.

In line with its recognizable editorial policy, *Oslobodjenje* featured an appropriate commentary on the front page: "Political Terrorism," column *In the Spotlight*. The author Rasim Cerimagic lucidly concludes the commentary: "In this country, police is no longer a profession. It has forcibly been transformed into politics. A legacy of war and a peacetime result of politics are the divided police and the multiplied secret services, which are spying on one another in this tormented country and working to the detriment of one another, turning on their path all of us into their hostages and potential victims."

The fourth and fifth pages are entirely dedicated to the assassination attempt – from a report on the state of the seriously injured deputy minister, to strong condemnation of this terrorist act. The upper left-hand corner of the fourth page features a statement by the leader of HDZBiH, with the headline: "**Jelavic Accuses the Bosniak Political Leadership.**"

In line with the concept of a tabloid, *Vecernje novine* features a big headline: "**Leutar Victim of Terrorists**", with a supra-headline: "Attack on Deputy Minister of FBiH MUP in Sarajevo."

Under the headline are two color photographs from the site with appropriate captions. This characteristic lead takes up half of the paper's front page, along with an announcement of more extensive reports on pages 3, 4 and 5.

The third page is dominated by an article with a characteristic supra-headline: "**New Car-Bomb in FBiH**," alluding to a car-bomb in West Mostar in '97. The article has two boxes in it. The first offers the latest health report, although it is doubtful since this is a daily newspaper, while the second asks a question ("Key Question", supra-headline): "Where Was the Car the Night Before the Tragedy?"

The fourth page features Ante Jelavic's statement with the headline: "**Bosniak Political Leadership Responsible**". The fifth page is dominated by a commentary with a characteristic headline: "**We Expect an Explosion of Resignations**," in which the author Azra Alickovic emphatically calls for an end to the practice of "empty discussions on nameless terrorism."

The youngest Sarajevo daily newspaper *Dnevni avaz* also reported extensively on the bomb attack. The March 17 lead was made in such a way that the entire front page was dedicated to the attack. The lead is dominated by two large photographs – the first shows



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Thanks to the Soros Open Society Fund for BiH, local media will receive this service free of charge

Leutar at the clinic and the second shows the site of the explosion. The headline is short and clear: “**Assassination of Jozo Leutar**,” with the supra-headline: “Heinous Terrorist Act in the Center of Sarajevo.” One formulation in the sub-headline is somewhat disputed, asserting resolutely that the bomb was “activated by remote control.” At that moment it was only a supposition, and later there was some speculation that the car was blown up in a different way. Namely, there had still been no official police statement on how the explosion happened.

The manner in which statements by Jelavic and Izetbegovic (page 2) were presented clearly reflects the paper’s editorial concept and position. Let us use the following as an illustration: “Jelavic’s Serious Accusations”(supra-headline), while the headline: “**Senior Bosniak Leadership Stands Behind Everything**”, in contrast to *Oslobodjenje* and *Vecernje novine*, is put between quotation marks. Izetbegovic’s statement dominates this page, and it is summarized in the headline: “**Attack Qualified as Political Act in Advance and Without Any Proof.**”

Instead of the regular “Political Commentary”, the paper featured a propaganda article by Fadil Mandal, which is summarized in the sub-headline: “Those Who Ordered the Terrorist Attack on Jozo Leutar Chose the Worst Moment for BiH and the Best for Those Who Advocate Its Definite Division and Destruction.” The headline for the commentary is also skillfully chosen: “**Whom Does the ‘Sarajevo Assassination’ Suit,**” with a clear allusion to the 1914 assassination.

Slobodna BiH “cherishes” the style of creating a diverse front page and putting everything on it, so it is difficult to see what news dominates the paper. This time, understandably, an exception was made, and almost the entire March 17 front page was dedicated to the terrorist act in Sarajevo. The headline is dominated by political context: “The Bosniak Leadership is Behind Everything”(Jelavic), and “Negative Consequences Possible for the Entire Peace Process”(statement by the Croatian Embassy in Bosnia-Herzegovina), while a statement by Minister Zilic: “It is Too Early to Speak About Motives”, by its place, size of used letters and manner how they are colored, although also featured on the front page, is practically hidden! The second and third pages speak about the attack in a much clearer way, but with no less political charge.

The two Banjaluka daily newspapers had to rely on news agency items from Sarajevo. It is noticeable that there was no sensationalism, and even less gloating in the presentation of items, headlines, etc. What is common for both *Dnevne nezavisne novine* and *Glas srpski* is that they emphasized the Republika Srpska MUP’s condemnation of the terrorist attack, obviously done out of professional solidarity, which is encouraging in this difficult political situation for all of Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, we did not notice that print media in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina paid any attention to that news item.

After Initial News – More Pronounced Politicization

Daily newspapers on March 18 focused more on the political context and numerous speculations concerning the background of the bomb attack in Sarajevo.

“What is the Background of the Assassination of Jozo Leutar”(supra-headline) and “**Politics or Crime**”(headline) are at the top of *Oslobodjenje*’s front page. The paper also featured a commentary *In the Spotlight*, whose very headline – “Resignation,” suggests the message of the article. Inside the paper are items about the withdrawal of Croats from the joint police forces and indication that Croat representatives may freeze their functions in bodies of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Vecernje novine the same day focused significantly less attention on the Sarajevo assassination. Judging by a front page headline, the most important factor is the arrival of American experts: “**FBI Agents in the Investigation Team**”. This event is reported on the fourth page. Two items stand out: “**The Tent Hides a Secret**”, full of speculation on the eve of the official announcement of the investigation results, and a much more serious article by Mirjana Micevska, titled: “**Politics Ahead of Investigation**,” which condemns the prejudicing of the investigation results in Jelavic’s and Izetbegovic’s statements.

Dnevni avaz the day after was also modest in its media coverage of the attack that occurred in Alipasina street. Judging by the front page, primacy was given to news that apartments allegedly cannot be purchased with soldiers’ savings books, and to Izetbegovic’s replies to public questions that started recently (on every Thursdays), and even the visit of Mexican actress Leticia Calderon, better known as Esmeralda, to Sarajevo. At the bottom of the front page is a headline: “**FBI Investigating the Sarajevo Assassination.**” A strong statement by Izetbegovic is used for a headline on the second page: “**Jelavic Should Give Proof or Keep Silent**,” and underneath is Jelavic’s response, titled: “**Cynicism and Provocation.**” The third page, in the regular “Political Commentary,” features an article by Sead Numanovic with the headline: “**Jelavic’s Harsh Words**,” with quite a dubious sub-headline, which actually summarizes the essence of the message: “Politization of the assassination of Jozo Leutar favors only the terrorists who carried out the act.”

As expected, the *Slobodna BiH* of March 18, with the editorial office’s slogan “**The Day After**,” abounded in articles with strong emotional, and even more – political charge, such as, for example: “**The Federal MUP Still Silent About the Motives**,” or: “**We Expect Radical Reaction by the Bosniak Leadership**” (Croatian Minister Granic), all the way to an open accusation against Americans: “**Gelbard Gave a Hint to the Terrorists?** (article by Petar Milos). In short, the sixth page carries the slogan: “The Day After.”

The two dailies from the Republika Srpska, “the day after,” inevitably underlined the political context of the attack. They generally presented a variation of what the federal dailies wrote, but understandably in a more condensed form. They did not resort to sensationalism, political inflation or gloating, and even less to distortion of facts, taking them out of context, etc.

On the third day, *Oslobodjenje*, in addition to the political context, also focused on technical finesses, such as – whether service regulations were violated, etc.

Vecernje novine’s rhythm of reporting remained almost unchanged the third day. The paper put emphasis on the decision by Croat representatives in the authorities of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina to freeze their functions, and on demands for Bicakcic’s and Zilic’s resignations.

“**HDZ’s Serious Accusations and Threats**” – is a headline across all five columns of *Dnevni avaz*’s front page on the third day of the assassination. It is interesting that the caption under a picture on the front page was much more moderate: “Harsh Stances: Before the Start of an HDZ Session.” *Avaz* featured on its second page conclusions reached by HDZ BiH, and a continuation of the front page article with an identical headline: “HDZ’s Serious Accusations and Threats.”

Slobodna BiH on March 19 covered the event in a much more reduced scope, featuring the same supra-headline on four pages: “Events and Reactions Following the Assassination of Deputy Federal Minister of Police Jozo Leutar.” The front page, which is usually overcrowded with events, is dominated by a headline, which is also written on the third page: “**Croat Officials ‘Freezing’ Their Work on All Levels of Authority in Bosnia-Herzegovina Next**

Week.”The front page also lists all demands from an expanded session of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Uninventive Photograph – With Reason?

And now a couple of words about the photograph as a specific and significant journalistic expression. Our initial conclusion is that the photograph as a component of overall reporting on this event was not used in a satisfactory manner, and some photographs even provoked confusion. Namely, witnesses who passed by the site right after the explosion saw two automobiles, of which the front part of one – a white golf – in the part where the motor is located, was destroyed, but it was on the asphalt with all four wheels. Some photographs showed that same golf, but it was overturned and lying on its side. It was unclear who had done that, that is, which position of the car was authentic. Some explanation for the uninventiveness of the journalistic photograph in the Leutar case was given in a protest letter by the Independent Union of Professional Journalists, which slammed the arrogance of police and other authorities towards journalists and the general public right after the explosion.

The conclusion, as far as journalists and their organizations are concerned, is that there was no exaggeration or false diopeter in reporting on the case of the unfortunate Deputy Minister Leutar. Print media simply presented the sad reality, which is inevitably reflected in the media.

(Media Plan Monitoring Center)

R e s e a r c h

Newspapers Rate Lowest

In the last couple of issues of *Media News*, we presented some results of a media rating research, which the Sarajevo-based Center for the Protection of Minorities and Media Plan Institute conducted in 22 towns and their surroundings in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. This time we are giving some indicative data that speaks about the population’s abstinence with regard to media. For this short analysis we have used the research results from six large urban centers: Sarajevo, Banjaluka, Tuzla, Zenica, Mostar and Doboj.

The research confirmed once again that television has biggest influence. Only 1.5 percent of respondents in Sarajevo do not watch television. Following Sarajevo, by the number of people who do not sit in front of their TV sets, are Mostar (3.0%), Tuzla (4.0%), Zenica (4.5%) and Banjaluka (5.5%). The biggest percentage of people who abstain from TV was reported in Doboj (10.5%), probably because respondents in this town included the largest number of displaced persons and those who live in the zone of separation.

The radio is in the golden middle when it comes to media consumers. In the above towns, the smallest number of people who abstain from radio was reported in Doboj (3.0%), and the largest number in Tuzla (26.0%). In Mostar, according to the research, 5.0% of respondents do not listen to the radio, in Banjaluka 8.5%, in Zenica 12.0% and in Sarajevo 15.5%. It is almost a rule that in places where television rates high, radio has a smaller audience. It is interesting that radio ratings are relatively low in the largest urban centers where many radio

stations are available (for instance, in Sarajevo with 30 available signals on FM or Tuzla with 21 registered available signals).

Data on the population's interest in press is worrisome. In Sarajevo as many as 12.0 percent of respondents do not read any daily newspaper even occasionally. In Banjaluka that percentage is 19.5 percent, in Mostar 20.5 percent, in Tuzla 30.5 percent, and in Doboj 33.5 percent. Among our respondents, Zenica has the largest percentage of "non-readers"— 41.0 percent.

Research was carried out on 200 respondents in each city on a stratified sample whose national, age and social structure corresponds to the present estimated demographic structure of these cities and their rural surroundings.

(U.)

Media in Yugoslavia (1)

Journalists Work At Their Own Risk

Today and in the next two issues we will publish a review of the media situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina's neighboring countries. There are two reasons why we have made this editorial decision. The first is that media in all countries that were formed out of the former Yugoslavia started their transition at almost the same time. These processes were completed successfully in some places, while in others they are underway with more or less success, and in some they are hampered by the suspension of democratic processes in society. Each experience in this regard is valuable. The second reason is that media from Serbia and Croatia are deeply involved in the media situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and they influence the overall social processes in it.

We are starting this series of reviews with a media portrait of Serbia and Kosovo, written exclusively for *Media News* by Vladan Radosavljevic, editor of the Belgrade-based Media Center. In our next issue: Media in Montenegro.

Life in an Informative Darkness

In an opening jingle in a very popular news program on independent Belgrade *Radio B 92*, Montenegro's Reform President Milo Djukanovic says: "In this country everyone has as much information as they personally want." Taken out of context from a pre-election political address, this conclusion is essentially true and refers equally to both republics of the present Yugoslavia. A completely different question, however, is how big is the practical significance of such an assertion: for a bigger quantity of information, especially that which may be regarded as true, reliable and timely, it is necessary to invest some effort, some inventiveness and a certain amount of money. This literally includes long walks to the local newsvendor who sells independent press, the skill of hunting for *Radio B 92*'s weak signal and getting rid of the year-long habit of trusting the TV news program *Dnevnik* or the "oldest daily newspaper in the Balkans"— *Politika*. There are few citizens in Serbia who are now willing to do all that. To be consistent with the assertion from the beginning of this article – it seems there are few who truly want to be informed, which is probably partly a result of the fact that life in an informative darkness is incomparably more beautiful, and maybe also easier and safer (!?).

Media Portrait of Serbia: Newspapers Largest in Number, Television and Radio Most Influential

According to latest information received from the Ministry of Information of Serbia, there are 2,827 newspapers and magazines and 103 electronic media (radio and TV stations) registered in the Republic. It is almost impossible to determine the number of those who are working without registration and the necessary licenses. This is particularly true of the unreported expansion of small and local radio and TV stations. Among those that have licenses received from the Ministry, 32 print media are registered in the territory of Kosovo. The Ministry does not possess reliable information on the number and operation of radio and TV stations in Kosovo. This “lack of information” on the part of the Ministry is completely in line with statements given by Republic Information Minister Aleksandar Vucic at the peak of the biggest campaign against independent media in Serbia, in mid-October 1998, when the newspapers *Dnevni telegraf* and *Nasa Borba* were banned together with some others. On that occasion Minister Vucic said the Ministry was not reacting with repressive measures to reports in Kosovo media pursuant to the law on information because those articles are written in a different language and need to be translated! In other words, that meant that the Ministry, for the time being, was standing aside until a solution for the overall situation in Kosovo was found.

At this moment nine relevant daily newspapers are regularly published in Serbia (*Politika*, *Vecernje novosti*, *Ekspres Politika*, *Borba*, *Blic*, *Glas*, *Danas*, *Dnevni telegraf* and in Vojvodina the Novi Sad *Dnevnik*), as well as three weeklies (*Vreme*, *Nin* and *Nedeljni telegraf*). News programs are broadcast by four large television stations (*RTS*, *Studio B*, *BKTV* and *TV Politika*), and a whole series of local TV and radio stations with short range and limited significance. There are three news agencies (*Tanjug*, *Beta* and *FoNet*). Of course, the number of registered media is incomparably larger, but their work has not had significant influence on the formation of the media portrait and public opinion in Serbia at the beginning of 1999. A division between them, into those under the direct control of the authorities and those that are in the news business professionally, is completely clear and even a cursory glance can lead to fail-proof conclusion.

Without any dilemma, the most influential medium in all parts of Serbia, including even the mostly opposition center of Belgrade, is *Radio Television Serbia*. The following piece of information unmistakably testifies to that: according to recently completed research, there are 2,818,118 families living in Yugoslavia (including Montenegro). Of that figure, as many as 2,318,747 families have TV sets.

Television Serbia's news program *TV Dnevnik* (the main and longest news program is at 7:30 p.m., and the second one is at 10 p.m.) can be called a news program only if one possesses a huge dose of benevolence. It is actually a strictly controlled form of propaganda with a clear task and aim – to create an improved and always incorrect picture of reality, as well as a serious intention to form a stupefied and completely deceived public opinion and distorted collective consciousness ready for a new war. And while in the years of the preparation and execution of military operations in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, *RTS* fulfilled its function by avoiding to report on things that did not suit the Serbian regime, since the student and democratic opposition demonstrations in Serbia at the end of 1996 and beginning of 1997, the former Television Belgrade has been using the most open lies, with which anything can be explained if they are used uncontrollably and abundantly. This includes “international conspiracy, and peacemaking policy, and unity of the people, and economic prosperity, and unstoppable production growth, and Serbian economic successes.”

Serbia's biggest-circulation newspaper *Politika* writes in the same way, as if their news offices were in the same center. Day after day, it is impossible to find anything in that paper

that may have even indirect connection with truth. The strict political task given to *Politika* in the most disgraceful decade of its existence refers, of course, also to the business pages, but the city, sports and communal pages have not been spared either. Many people, without joking too much, say that the weather forecast published every day in the paper should also be doubted. Another good illustration of *Politika*'s position today is this: the paper's editor and director, Hadzi Dragan Antic, spent the entire duration of the negotiations in Rambouillet in close contact with the official state delegation, not missing a single opportunity to have his picture taken right next to Serbian President Milan Milutinovic.

The regime also controls in the most direct way *Vecernje novosti*, *Politika ekspres*, *Borba* and the Novi Sad *Dnevnik*, but those papers have incomparably smaller circulations and considerably less influence, which is reflected in the fact that the public believes their information with a somewhat higher degree of reserve. On the other pole are professional daily newspapers – *Danas*, *Glas*, *Blic* and *Dnevni telegraf* – as well as three serious weeklies – *Vreme*, *Nin* and *Nedeljni telegraf*. Even without a detailed analysis of these independent newspapers, the occasional mistakes they make and the professional inconsistency, one can claim – they really are newspapers. In other words, they are what that term is understood to mean in the normal world. Furthermore, we may say that the appearance of *Blic* (later split into *Blic* and *Glas*) in the fall of 1996, which soon reached an enviable circulation, is the most significant and positive media event in Serbia in the recent years. Through its objective reporting, but also an interesting form which always contains enough entertaining content, as well as its well developed sales network, *Blic* has attracted readers who were gradually abandoning *Vecernje novosti*, but also all others who wanted to see what the so-called “other side” had to say. A completely different, and of course more dangerous curiosity is the breakthrough of a partisan magazine called *Velika Srbija*. The paper is published by Seselj's *Serbian Radical Party*. Its circulation is about 1.5 million and it is distributed completely free of charge, in the streets and markets!

Generally speaking, print media have incomparably less influence than television and radio, especially channel one of state television. Research carried out by independent agencies shows that at this moment 63.3% residents of Serbia read newspapers occasionally (more than once a week). There are only 45% daily readers, who are in contact with press every day. It is certainly interesting to bear in mind that Serbia still has seven percent of completely illiterate persons among its population over the age of 10.

Daily and weekly newspaper circulations are guarded as the biggest business secrets. Estimates, however, say that the situation is the following. *Politika* has a daily circulation of about 150,000 copies, *Vecernje novosti* 140,000, *Politika ekspres* 20,000, *Blic* 180,000, *Glas* 100,000, *Danas* 15,000. When it comes to weeklies, the estimates are as follows – *Vreme* 15,000, and *Nin* around 20,000 copies.

The story of electronic (broadcast) media in Serbia at the end of the 20th century is equally interesting. In addition to the already mentioned *RTS*, regular news broadcasts and other informative content is also offered every day by three other large TV stations – *TV Politika*, *BKTV* and *Studio B* – as well as a whole series of local televisions. Like the newspaper *Politika*, this organization's broadcast medium is purely a propaganda tool for the regime. The name *BKTV* actually reveals the best known Serbian businessmen of the 90's – Braca Karic (the Karic brothers). This wealthy family has developed a well designed, fast and modern TV organization, but the content of its TV program does not differ significantly from what is dictated by the close friendship between the president of Yugoslavia and Bogoljub Karic, the most important of the brothers and the head of the *BK Corporation*.

A special case is *Studio B*. Going from one hand into another in the past years, it has ended up as the partisan organ of the *Serbian Renewal Movement* under unreserved control of Vuk Draskovic, today deputy head of the Federal Government.

The most significant electronic medium, known even outside Serbian borders, *Radio B 92*, has in the recent years developed an alternative network of radio and television stations (*ANEM – Association of Independent Electronic Media*), which has found members in all of the most important provincial towns in Serbia. Radio *ANEM* at this moment has 27 members (radio stations), and the television part of the Association comprises 22 local television stations. All radio stations operating within *ANEM* re-broadcast *Radio B 92*'s news and informative programs, so one may say that Serbia is actually “covered” with a network of stations that offer listeners the opportunity to be objectively informed. Unfortunately, that is not completely so. These stations have short range and weak signals and they have constant problems with the authorities which materialize in the form of closures, penalties and threats.

The news agency *Tanjug*, still the largest news service in Serbia and completely partial towards the regime, in addition to news, every day produces harsh commentaries aimed at verbal show-down with “international powers and domestic traitors.” *Beta* and *FoNet* professionally carry out their news agency tasks.

Media Portrait of Kosovo: Kosovo Albanian Media Are Becoming Stronger

Among the daily and weekly newspapers properly registered with the Ministry of Information of Serbia, there are some media run by Kosovo Albanians whose reporting is completely outside of state control: *Koha Ditore*, *Zeri*, *Kosova Sot* and *Bujku*. There is also a whole series of papers published by “honest” Albanians (that is what the regime calls them) and other “suitable” national minorities, such as the paper of the Democratic Alliance of Turks in Kosovo *Sesimlis*, the Roman magazine *Romano neviqe*, a magazine by Kosovo's Egyptians *Glas jugoslovenskih Egipcana!* Of course, a daily newspaper in the Serbian language is also regularly published – *Jedinstvo* – a paper of insignificant influence and completely controlled by the regime. According to a source close to the pro-government *Kosovo Information Center* from Pristina, there are no daily newspapers in Kosovo which are not registered. However, Kosovo's Albanians do publish several unregistered weeklies in the Albanian language. The most important among them are *Gazeta Siptare* and *Kombi* (meaning *Nation*).

The central radio television in Kosovo is *Radio Television Pristina*, a field bureau of the Belgrade *RTS*, with everyday programming in the languages of all the minorities living in Kosovo. On the other side are the Albanian radio *Koha* and *Radio 021* which broadcast news programs, and for half an hour daily they are within the independent network *ANEM*.

The Albanian minority in Kosovo twice a week for a total of two hours has a slot on TV Tirana whose signal can easily be received in the larger part of Kosovo.

Law on Information: A Whip in the Hands of the Regime

After an unusually short preparation and with almost no serious public debate, the Serbian Assembly passed a new Law on Information on October 20, 1998. The law appeared as a consequence of a previously introduced “decree on special measures in the conditions of the threat of NATO military strikes on Serbia.” This repressive law has created some sort of real “state of emergency” in Serbian media, and its consequence has been the closure of at least two significant daily newspapers – *Nasa Borba* and *Dnevni telegraf*. The latter has

continued publishing in Montenegro. The new law, among other things, strictly bans the re-broadcasting of foreign programming in all media in Serbia. Hence, *B 92*, members of *ANEM* and some other media were forced, almost overnight, to abandon services in the Serbian language on international radio and TV stations such as *BBC*, *Voice of America*, *Radio Free Europe* and others. The stipulated penalties for those who violate the law range from huge fines to threats of closure. This improvised legal act (in whose express passage and zealous application a significant role was played by Seselj's Radical Party, whose member Aleksandar Vucic is the Serbian information minister) has made judicial misdemeanor organs responsible for acts that may resemble criminal acts (slander, disseminating untrue information, defeatism) and has given a deadline of only 24 hours for proving them. That very fact indicates that this is some sort of summary court, because it is almost impossible to determine or refute anything before the misdemeanor organ in such a short time. A special problem, of course, is the question of what is untrue information, and especially what can be included under the definition of defeatism. The penalties with which the Law on Information threatens those who violate it are so harsh that they are several times higher than penalties envisioned for other acts in misdemeanor proceedings. They automatically mean that media who violate the Law will go financially bankrupt.

Despite the strong opposition of the local, and even international democratic public, the Law on Information of Serbia is still in effect. According to everyday experiences by journalists and editors working in Serbia, it is practically impossible to engage in any type of journalist work if one wants full safety from possible violation of the provisions of the new law. In other words, journalists work at their own risk – with the hope that no one will sue them.

This is additional unmistakable confirmation of the belief that journalism is a dangerous profession. And that journalists die young, especially in Serbia.

The Most Significant Independent Media in Serbia

Radio B 92

The only free radio station in Belgrade that offers the opportunity of objective and direct information. Radio B 92 has expanded its influence by establishing the independent network ANEM. It broadcasts program 24 hours a day, with news every hour on the hour and with longer news programs at 0900, 1700 and 2130 hrs. One can say without much dilemma that Radio B 92 is the most significant independent medium in Serbia.

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Director: Sasa Mirkovic

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BETA – News Agency

An independent professional news agency with daily production of 150 to 200 news items. All independent media in Serbia carry information issued by Beta. In addition to

journalists employed in the head office, Beta employs a number of permanently or temporarily accredited reporters in all important world centers.

Editor-in-Chief: Ljubica Markovic

Director: Radomir Diklic

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Tel: (381 11) 3602 400, 3602 412, 3602 419

Fax: (381 11) 642 551

DANAS

An independent daily newspaper. Danas has a small circulation, but the articles it publishes are the most reliable and the most analytical. Danas was launched less than two years ago, but it improved its staffing and became more professional when Nasa Borba stopped working.

Editor-in-Chief: Grujica Spasovic

Director: Dusan Simic

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VREME

An independent weekly. Published Fridays. The paper reports on current events using the form of reportage, but it also employs many relevant experts and analysts, which is another reason why people read Vreme. The consistent anti-war and civil-oriented engagement of the weekly has lasted for a full eight years now.

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GLAS

A daily newspaper with an independent orientation and a high circulation. The paper owes its popularity primarily to its short and concise articles and a clear orientation towards entertaining content which makes up at least half of the paper. Together with Blic (Glas was established after Blic was split into two), Glas has been greatly responsible for a certain change of the media portrait and public opinion in Serbia.

Although it cannot be seen from its manner of reporting, there is some indication that the control package of Glas shares may soon go to Vojislav Seselj's Radical Party. The reason for that lies in the printing house whose services the paper uses but does not pay for regularly. According to some, the printing house is owned by the above party's eminence grise.

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The Monitor's Eye

A Plea for Milena

The political magazine *Ljiljan* in its issue of March 15-22 this year featured an article by its stringer Alosman Husejnovic. The editors gave it the following headline: **“Milena is old and besides does not have a pretty name!”**, which is actually the key “argument” used by the management of Tuzla’s Mining-Geological Faculty to prevent her from becoming an instructor at the faculty. Milena Cavic’s brilliant references were in vain, although she graduated from the Mining-Geological Faculty (engineer of geology) at the top of her generation, with the highest grade 10 in the subject Dynamics of Underground Waters, with active knowledge of English, computer skills and so on. That was in vain due to the ethnic context, and *Ljiljan* bravely uncovered it.

NEWS

Poplasen and Professional Reporting

The international community’s administrator for media control in the Republika Srpska, Dragan Gasic, following High Representative Carlos Westendorp’s dismissal of RS President Nikola Poplasen, delivered instructions to Serb Television journalists according to which Poplasen shall in the future be called “former president of the RS.” Gasic, according to sources close to SRT, told all journalists who expressed disagreement with the decision that they were free to resign.

However, due to an RS Parliament resolution rejecting Poplasen’s dismissal, as well as massive journalist protests, Gasic changed the decision, and journalists were told to call Poplasen only by his first and last name, without stating any function.

By watching SRT news programs one can conclude that Nikola Poplasen has mostly been addressed without any function, although it was noticed on several occasions that he was called “RS president,” but also “RS president dismissed by the international community.”

In the meantime, the Independent Media Commission (IMC) praised Republika Srpska media for fair and professional reporting on the passage of the arbitration ruling in Brcko and dismissal of Nikola Poplasen by the international community. An IMC press release stated that RS media did not provoke tension in the Republika Srpska with regard to the two decisions, nor did they disseminate intolerance towards international representatives in the field. The IMC called on media in the RS to continue with the practice of professional reporting.

Dani to be Published Weekly Starting May 1

The independent magazine Dani will be published weekly and completely in color starting with its jubilee hundredth issue, which is supposed to come out on May 1.

The first issue of Dani appeared in September 1992 in the form of a wartime monthly magazine. In time the magazine was profiled into an independent paper, particularly sharp towards the incumbent authorities. Dani started coming out as a bi-weekly a year and a half ago.

The paper's officials told us that the weekly dynamics of publishing will enable the editorial staff and reporters to "act on the first ball," which will considerably improve the paper's topicality.

New TV Network in FBiH

The Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina is soon to get another television network, this time composed of 12 local television stations. According to initial information, they are: NTV Hayat, TV TPK, TV USK, TV Mostar, TV Bugojno, TV Travnik, TV Gorazde, TV Maglaj, TV Zavidovici, TV Visoko, TV Vogosca and NTV Zetel.

It is envisioned that the network will in the beginning function as a coordinator in the purchase of foreign programs and exchange of the stations' own production. In the first phase, they plan to use "express mail," that is, tapes that will be copied 12 times, exchanged mutually and broadcast at the same time on all the stations. The stations plan to link with one another using optical cables this year, and next year using the system of link connections. The final phase will be to form a central studio, and most probably to produce joint daily news programs.

This network may become the first, very strong commercial TV network in the territory of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in view of the fact that each one of these stations has already been in existence for several years and has developed its own production and staffing and also has its own audience, according to the directors of the interested stations.

The project will be implemented by Independent Television Hayat and Tuzla-Podrinje Canton TV. We assume that the motive is primarily economic because there is a real danger that local television stations will be smothered by the rapid development of the two largest Bosnian-Herzegovinian networks, RTV BiH and OBN, as well as by the increasing difficulties of survival on the market.

Protest by Independent Union of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina

The Independent Union of Professional Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina has protested over police conduct in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the case of the terrorist attack on Deputy Police Minister Jozo Leutar.

A Union press release said journalists were deprived of information as well as of access to the site of the attempted assassination, and thus prevented from giving relevant facts to the Bosnian-Herzegovinian public.

Films with footage made on the site were also confiscated from a number of journalists.

New School of Journalism Generation

The Media Plan Institute Sarajevo School of Journalism management reported that an open competition for enrollment of the second generation of students in the school will be announced in May, while entrance examinations will be held in the month of June. Classes will begin in October.

Students from the first generation in 1998/99 will take graduation examinations in May.

On the Threshold of a New Century



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Look with your eyes!



Think with your head!

Council:Media Plan Institute

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