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# Media News

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## Projects

### First Regional Communication Network

Sarajevo-based Media Plan Institute has started activities for establishing the first communication network of research and education institutions in the field of media in southeast Europe. The network is an expression of the desire of independent media institutions to contribute to creating a democratic and plural media environment as a condition for building peace and stability in this part of Europe.

The network project, developed by Media Plan Institute from Sarajevo, anticipates an exchange of information and analysis on the media situation in the countries of the region, in particular in the fields of professional and ownership transformation, media laws, protection of journalist freedoms, and establishment of a media market. Institutions dealing with professional education of journalists will exchange professors and trainers and organize seminars about their experiences. In addition to Media Plan Institute, interest in participating in the network has so far been expressed by the Institute for Media Law from Ljubljana (Slovenia), Center for Education of Journalists of Central and Eastern Europe in Opatija (Croatia), Media Center Belgrade (Yugoslavia), and Albanian Media Institute Tirana (Albania).

Some of the cooperation will be carried out through independent news agencies in the region. SAFAX Agency's *Media News* have in the last several issues been giving a lot of attention to the media picture of countries in the region, thanks to cooperation established with the news agencies BETA from Belgrade, STINA from Split, and Montena Fax from Podgorica.

It is envisioned that the network will function in a democratic and institutionally informal manner using the Internet as the basic form of communication.

## Analysis

### Stability Pact for the Balkans in the Media: Media Complementary in Practice

This article is a result of one-week monitoring and analysis of six dailies and seven weekly magazines in Bosnia-Herzegovina and three primetime news programs – TVBiH, SRT and OBN. This monitoring/analysis coincides in time with the signing of the Stability Pact in Southeast Europe (Thursday, June 10) in Cologne and concludes with the following Thursday (June 17).

The official name of the conference, that is to say of the document, is insufficiently known to the general public. It is: "Stability Pact in Southeast Europe." In media presentation different formulations have been used: "Stability Pact in the Balkans," "The Balkan process", "System for post-war southeast Europe", and the most frequent sublimation was – "Process of Europeisation of the Balkans", because that was the essence of the pact, which rests on three key areas: economic, political and military-security. The pact contains 43 articles/paragraphs.

#### ***Dnevni Avaz* Most Extensive Among Daily Newspapers**

It is noticeable that daily newspapers, with certain exceptions, reported quite sparsely about this event. As if, in the confusion of local events and scandals, the meeting in Cologne took them by surprise. European issues and integration are not of particular interest to Sarajevo and Banja Luka dailies anyway. The oldest Bosnia-Herzegovina's daily, the Sarajevo *Oslobodjenje*, was the most stingy. In its issue of Friday, June 11, on the second page it carried a news agency item (BHP/AFP), which remained almost hidden due to the way the editors presented it: "Stability pact for the Balkans adopted." As an illustration, another



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news item that was featured in a more conspicuous way was titled: “With bombs against eviction,” accompanied by a picture of the arrest of a suspect for attempting to activate two hand grenades.

*Vecernje novine* that same day were even more stingy than *Oslobodjenje*. On the second page it featured a short notice with the headline: “Stability of the continent,” and the superscript headline: “Stability pact in southeast Europe.” However, the *Vecernje novine* of June 16 carried an interesting interview with Foreign Minister Jadranko Prlic which primarily focused on the Pact. The interview was visibly announced on the front page (with a picture of the minister), with the headline: “There will be no new Yugoslavia.” The minister began answering the journalist’s questions by stating that the public is insufficiently informed about the “Stability Pact,” as he called it. In the following day’s issue, the paper presented an initiative by SDP BiH for Sarajevo to be the administrative seat of the Pact.

The youngest Sarajevo daily – *Dnevni avaz* – in line with its specific editorial policy, focuses more on figures than on events, which has proven quite attractive here (in this environment). The paper acted the same way in presenting the Pact. The third page of June 11 was dominated by the headline: “Stability pact in the Balkans signed,” with a picture of Minister Prlic, and a combined “box text”.: “Prlic offers Sarajevo as host.” Figures, in the context of the Pact, also appeared in the issue of the following day (June 12). They are Mirza Hajric and Stjepan Kljuic, again with a combined “box text”: “The advantages of Sarajevo” as a potential seat of the process. *Avaz* on June 13 featured an interview with Bogic Bogicevic on the topic of the Pact. The “box text ” this time revealed to the public that Bogicevic was actually the author of the idea of Sarajevo being the center of the Stability Pact. Finally, in the issue of June 16, *Avaz*, again using the (successful) formula of figures, mentioned the Pact. Namely, under the familiar superscript headline “*Dnevni avaz* discovers” the editors placed the headline “Hans van den Broek special coordinator of the Stability Pact?” The article, full of condensed information in only three paragraphs, was signed with initials (F. M.)

*Slobodna BiH* in the issue of June 11 did not have any news from Cologne, but only an item from Sarajevo that a session of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina was held and that it gave its support to the Stability Pact.

*Glas srpski* on June 11 also did not have any news from Cologne, but only a news item from the news agency SRNA from Sarajevo on the Bosnia-Herzegovina Presidency session which spoke about support for the Pact. It gave it the headline: “Council of Europe platform adopted.”

Another Banja Luka daily, *Banjalucke novine*, in the issue of June 11 presented an item/announcement of the conference in Cologne, titled: “Balkan awaits stability.” In its next issue, actually a double issue, it featured a more extensive article titled: “The Balkans full, Europe satisfied,” with a striking sub-title emphasizing German Minister Fischer’s statement that European unity is a “question of war and peace,” not a “question of deciding milk production quotas.” It is noticeable that neither article contained either the name of the author, or the name of the news agency which were the source of the article/news item.

## **Extensive Weeklies**

It is really difficult to decide which of the Bosnia-Herzegovina weeklies wrote about the Pact most extensively.

For example, *Dani* magazine (June 11) featured an interview with, as it said, the right person at the right place. The interviewee was Nedžad Hadzimusić, ambassador at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The magazine anticipated the

significance of the Pact because the interview was not presented *post festum*, but practically on the eve of the conference in Cologne.

*Ljiljan* in two (straight) issues successfully dealt with the Pact. Although the “Topic of the Issue” (June 7-14) only appeared to be a variation of Silajdzic’s idea of revising Dayton, the persons who were interviewed focused on the Stability Pact for the Balkans. In the following issue of *Ljiljan*, the editorial “Frontline” (Zehrudin Isakovic), with the help of Milorad Pavic, “a fervent Serb nationalist, but also a fervently good writer,” as an appropriate metaphor, skillfully and effectively welcomed the Stability Pact for the Balkans.

*Hrvatska rijec* in the issue of June 19 featured an extensive and interesting interview with Minister Prlic, who did not speak only about the Pact, but also about Dayton, especially in the context of the idea of “Europeization” of Dayton.

*Svijet* (June 13) in its collage column “People and events” carried a notice titled: “Bosnian diplomacy initiative” related to the idea of Sarajevo becoming the administrative seat for the implementation of the Stability Pact in the Balkans. The paper’s following issue featured an article by Dr. Slobodan Inic, a Belgrade defector, with an unusual headline: “The European ‘Krajina’”. The superscript headline was “What does the ‘Stability Pact’ for southeast Europe stipulate,” which also suggests at least informal lack of definition of the Pact. On the European Union’s web site the following terms are used: “Stability Pact” or “The Cologne Process.”

## **A Minister as a Reporter**

TVBiH in the primetime news program *Dnevnik* (June 10) broadcast a live report by Minister Prlic, who has already confirmed himself as a real professional reporter (he used to be one in his youth). This time, at the very beginning of the report, he skillfully employed an original detail: “I am reporting from one of the rooftops in Cologne...” Prlic received considerable help from sensible questions asked by the editor and anchor that evening – Adisa Ruzdic-Hodzic.

SRT that same evening had neither a report nor any news from Cologne, but only an item from Sarajevo that the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina in its session had supported the Balkan Stability Pact. However, in a special broadcast (June 17) in prime viewing time, right after the 19.30 news program, the topic was the Stability Pact. The broadcast was actually a half-hour video recording (editor Milka Ceremidzic) of a discussion of the Serb Intellectual Forum from Banja Luka held the previous day.

TV INFO/OBN in its 1,000<sup>th</sup> program had Minister Prlic for a guest, but it was on the eve of his departure for Cologne. He called in the program the following day from Cologne by telephone.

In view of the numerous events taking place in this region, thanks to weeklies, and even to television stations to some degree, a favorable general evaluation can be made of the media coverage of the Balkan Stability Pact. We have said at the beginning that this monitoring was limited in selection and range, especially because the radio was left out due to our limited material resources.

Perhaps it happened unconsciously, but the much-needed media complementary has on this occasion been proven in practice. As if Walter Kronkite with his famous sentence was heard again from somewhere: “Read tomorrow in your newspapers more on what I have told you today...”

(Media Plan Monitoring Center – Dusan Babic)

In this issue of Media News we again return to media in Yugoslavia. The Kosovo crisis and NATO bombing of Yugoslavia have considerably affected this media environment. An analysis of the situation was made especially for SAFAX by the Belgrade news agency BETA and its journalist Aleksandra Rankovic. At the same time, a Media Plan Institute associate, Moni Zhubi, reported from Kosovo for SAFAX, focusing on the genesis of media discrimination in this Yugoslav province and presenting latest information on the return of Albanian journalists to Kosovo.

### Media Situation in Post-War Yugoslavia

#### Strict Control

The end of NATO air strikes on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia did not result in any improvement of the media climate in Serbia. The announced abolishment of the state of war will certainly not mean an end to repression against media since the restrictive Serbian Law on Media, passed in October of last year, will remain in effect.

Media controlled by the state have been using almost all of their resources to formulate and find justification, on behalf of the regime, for the agreement being implemented in Kosovo, which according to many analysts is more unfavorable for the Serbian side than the one proposed in Rambouillet, France, before the air strikes. On the other hand, private and independent media, subjected to strong pressure of censorship during air strikes, have to some extent opened themselves to information of a different kind, taking advantage of the weaker hold of the authorities.

The authorities in Serbia have not officially proclaimed censorship, but it has been informally in effect since the beginning of NATO intervention. It was based on the state of war declared by the Federal Government on March 25. This decision was accompanied by a decision that during war, the functioning of the entire state, including media, would be regulated by decrees with the force of law passed using summary procedure. With the first bombs, institutional conditions were created for weak but existing democratic institutions in Serbia, among them independent media, to be faced with the possibility (to some extent also practice) of direct censorship, forcible detention, overtaking by the state or, the mildest form of pressure, intimidation.

#### Montenegro

The media situation in Montenegro during this whole time has been considerably different. A very liberal Law on Information was passed in Montenegro back in early 1998, made in line with European standards. Montenegro refused to accept the state of war in its territory, with the argument that it had been proclaimed by the Federal Government whose decrees it did not recognize. Therefore media were not subjected to direct censorship or pressure. Still, pressure did arrive from Belgrade in the form of military call-up papers sent to individuals among the more prominent independent journalists.

Military Court within the Command of the Second Army of Yugoslavia in Podgorica ordered the detention of the founder of the Montenegrin independent weekly *Monitor* and Antena M, Miodrag Perovic. The court accused him of violating the reputation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and of committing the criminal act of hampering the fight against the enemy, that is to say, "futility of the struggle against the enemy," which he allegedly

committed through his articles in *Monitor*. The court later modified its decision to detain Perovic due to his poor health, but the process did not end with that. Perovic left the country before it took place. Military police also came to *Monitor* looking for Beba Marusic, with a court subpoena, but the staff refused to accept it.

Military police tried to hand a military court subpoena to the editor of Podgorica's Free Montenegro Radio, Nebojsa Redzic, after first searching his and his parents' apartments.

The Montenegrin authorities, however, did resort to pressure on a media outlet close to Federal Prime Minister Momir Bulatovic, the Podgorica radio Elmag. The radio's transmitter on Bjelasica was cut off with the explanation that its contract had expired, but the radio's representatives claimed that the contract was still in effect. Its other transmitters do not enable this radio station, which has advocated for Belgrade's political views, to be heard in the north of Montenegro. Elmag has accused the Montenegrin government of hampering its work.

## **Preparation for War**

In the Serbian information system, preparation for war started back in October of last year, when a decree was passed on media conduct in a time of a threat of war. Soon after that, on October 20, a Law on Information was passed, which almost did not leave any room for giving the population free and objective information without a big risk of draconian punishment.

Almost all private and independent newspapers in Serbia were affected by the law. The highest price was paid by the daily *Dnevni telegraf* (DT) and weekly *Evropljanin*, both owned by independent publisher Slavko Curuvija, murdered on April 11 in midst of the bombing in front of his apartment in the center of Belgrade.

Under the Law on Information, which stipulates that the verdict has to be passed within 24 hours and fines should also be paid within 24 hours, *Evropljanin* was fined on October 24 with the highest amount of 2,400,000 dinars. The verdict was explained with "the attempt to overthrow constitutional order." The trial was held after charges were filed by the Patriotic Union of Belgrade, a phantom organization which as a rule appears on the political scene only in times of political campaigns.

*DT* was then fined with the maximum amount envisioned by the Law on Information, and it was even fined once under the Penal Code. On behalf of the Women's Union of Yugoslavia, Bratislava Morina (then Serbian refugee commissioner and now federal minister for displaced persons) on November 7 sued it for publishing a stylized fist, a symbol of the opposition student organization "Otpor." The paper was fined with 1,200,000 dinars for "overthrowing constitutional order."

After being sued by the deputy prime minister of Serbia, Milovan Bojic, on January 5 *DT* was fined with 450,000 dinars for "violating a person's reputation and integrity." After the trial, the public prosecutor filed criminal charges against the owner and two authors of an article on the murdered heart surgeon Aleksandar Popovic, published under the title "The murder victim criticized Bojic." Curuvija and the two *DT* journalists were sentenced on March 8 to five months in prison each. The verdict was implemented because an appeal procedure was underway.

Draconian punishment that media were threatened with under the law also brought about the closure of *Nasa Borba*, a paper that for a long time was a symbol of free press in Serbia. The Belgrade independent paper *Danas* and private paper *Glas* were punished under the same law.

Numerous local radio and television stations who are members of the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) stopped working last fall and winter when their transmitters were confiscated. Among them was Radio Kontakt from Pristina, the first and thus far only multi-ethnic electronic media outlet in the province. Transmitters were also confiscated from the radio “City” from Nis and radio Senta from Senta.

Members of government, such as Serbian Radical Party leader Vojislav Seselj, later bragged when the bombing started that the “government has done everything to prepare media for war in the best possible way.”

## War

Open and unambiguous usurpation of media freedom in Serbia began in the first days of war. The first “victim” of the never proclaimed war was the popular Belgrade radio B92, who first had its transmitter confiscated. After that its editor-in-chief Veran Matic was taken to a police station where he was held for eight hours and then released without any explanation.

Radio B92, however, continued to broadcast via the Internet and satellite. On April 2 the authorities intervened again. Formally and legally in terms of ownership, B92 is a public company. The authorities took advantage of this fact and appointed a new director, Aleksandar Nikacevic, who is close to the Socialist Party of Serbia. The station continued to broadcast with a new editorial policy that suited the authorities.

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) spearheaded by B92, which consists of 35 members in Serbia, was also prevented from working. The authorities blockaded their premises in Belgrade and confiscated some of their equipment, although ANEM is an association of stations of which B92 is only a member and the equipment belongs to the entire association. ANEM, as an independent legal entity, immediately threw out the new, pro-state radio B92 from the Association and is now in the process of requesting the return of equipment.

During the war a large number of radio and TV stations in Serbia who are members of ANEM were closed. Transmitters were also confiscated from Radio BK from Kikinda, radio Bum 93 from Pozarevac, Radio “Pet” from Nis, and Radio Jasenice.

A certain number of local journalists were detained by the police during the war but none of them, in conditions of a state of war, wanted to speak about it publicly. It is known unofficially that some journalists were held in detention without explanation for 20 or more hours and then, also without explanation, were allowed to go home. All print media, with the exception of *Politika*, *Politika Ekspres*, *Vecernje novosti*, *Borba* and the Novi Sad *Dnevnik*, had to be censored before printing. Censorship was carried out in the premises of the Information Ministry. It was preceded by several warnings to editors-in-chief that they had to agree to the procedure in the interest of the country. The news agencies Beta and Fonet were not subjected to censorship. Beta received warnings on several occasions that some news items should not have been released. Items issued by the agency that were considered inappropriate were “cleansed” from media before they were published.

There was no news in the media on the arrest of three foreign journalists – German journalist Peter Schnietzler reporting for SAT 1 television who was accused of espionage; French journalist Eric Vaillant, cameraman for TF1 television, arrested in Montenegro for entering FRY without a visa and for “engaging in espionage”; and Croatian journalist from the *Globus* weekly Antun Masle, also detained in Montenegro for the same reason as Vaillant. After a lot of intervention from abroad, Schnietzler and Vaillant were released from prison. Masle, under unclear circumstances, escaped to Croatia. It is rumored in Podgorica that Montenegrin police helped him escape by releasing him from the prison hospital where he was not guarded by the army. Police in Montenegro are under complete control of

President Milo Djukanovic's government and during the entire time of the state of war there were bigger or smaller skirmishes between the police and Yugoslav army controlled by Belgrade.

Foreign journalists in Belgrade during the war were obliged to give their recorded material and articles to military authorities for inspection before publishing or broadcasting them. All journalists had to be accredited in the press center of the Yugoslav army in Belgrade. On the eve of the war and at its beginning, a large group of foreign journalists were expelled from the country with the explanation that they were biased in informing the public, and they were replaced by other crews of journalists.

### **The Curuvija Case**

Curuvija was killed in front of his apartment in the center of Belgrade with more than 16 shots by two masked assailants, while his wife, journalist Branka Prpa, received blows in the head. It is widely believed in Belgrade that the murder was committed by hit-men and that the perpetrators will never be found.

Before that, the daily *Politika Ekspres*, which is close to the authorities, featured a commentary on April 6 titled "Curuvija greets bombs," in which Curuvija was accused that during a visit to Washington last fall, he called in U.S. Congress for NATO intervention in order to "bring the Serbs to their senses." The author of the commentary referred to the words of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's influential wife Mirjana Markovic that "betrayal has reached the peak..." "...during a visit to the United States of an owner of a private newspaper."

Even two months after the murder, it is not certain that his two papers will resume publishing since both are burdened with high fines that still have not been paid. The heirs are also not inclined towards the idea of continuing the business despite the wish of numerous journalists to do so.

### **Relay Stations**

During the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, NATO destroyed 18 of the 19 relay stations used by state Radio Television Serbia (RTS). Some were attacked several times. The RTS building in Belgrade was devastated and 16 television workers were killed, and the state television building in Novi Sad was destroyed, but it had previously been emptied out. Material damaged is estimated at about \$1.1 billion. NATO radio and TV programming entered Yugoslavia's air several times during the bombardment. It was broadcast from AWACS, and mobile equipment near the Yugoslav border from some of the neighboring countries was also used for that purpose.

At dawn on April 23, NATO bombs struck the building containing RTS broadcasting equipment in Belgrade. Programming of this most powerful propaganda machine of the state was interrupted for several hours. However, alternative broadcasting was soon established. Thanks to destruction of RTS repeater masts throughout Serbia that preceded this, this media outlet's program can now no longer be seen in the larger part of the republic. RTS employees have said off the record that staff killed in the building had actually served as "human shields" because they were not allowed to stay away from work at the threat of being sacked although the attack on the television headquarters had been expected.

Before that, a business center in Novi Belgrade was bombed and destroyed (former Central Committee building), in which seven media had been based. Among them was TV Pink, owned by a prominent member of JUL, and radio and TV Kosava, whose owner and editor-in-chief Marija Milosevic is the daughter of the Yugoslav president. No one was killed

in that building since it had been emptied out on time. The bombing of pro-regime media and killing of employees caused general condemnation throughout the world. Protests were issued by Reporters Sans Frontiers, Amnesty International, IFEX, IFJ and many other organizations for protection of media freedom.

Although state television has practically been prevented from broadcasting via its repeaters in the territory of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, its managers quickly succeeded in covering all of Serbia with the station's programming. This was done by requesting from all local and private radio and television stations to re-broadcasting the primetime news program "Dnevnik." Since some radio and television stations, such as the Belgrade-based Studio B, believed that the end of bombing meant that re-broadcasting of RTS programming was no longer necessary, the authorities intervened several times and this "recommendation" soon turned into an order.

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) protested on June 20 over the practice of the Federal Ministry of Telecommunication to issue orders to radio and television stations in Serbia to re-broadcast state Radio-Television Serbia (RTS) news programs. ANEM stated that such practice was "incomprehensible in the extended state of war in Yugoslavia that has not been abolished" and that the Federal Ministry of Telecommunication had no constitutional or legal power to order media in Serbia what they should broadcast, and what they should not.

### **Editorial Policy**

Although the end of bombing brought slight relief to media in the country, the authorities continued to put pressure on media, although it has been less strong and visible. The alleviation of pressure on media coincided with an announcement of the Serbian Radical Party that it would walk out of the coalition with the Socialists and JUL because they had accepted the peace agreement on Kosovo, agreeing to withdrawal of the army and police from the province and deployment of international forces. The Radicals did not make good on their threat, but disagreement within the authorities enabled pressure on media to abate and many took advantage of this situation to return to their earlier editorial policies. Some newspapers (*Danas*, *Vreme*) were not censored for days at a time. The two latest issues of the weekly *Vreme*, on June 10 and 17, were not censored which had a reflection on the content of the paper. Among other things, *Vreme* in its latest issue published an extensive story on Curuvija's murder. Something like that could not have been read in Serbian media since the murder of the publisher in early April. *Blic* and *Danas* started carrying statements by representatives of so-called democratic opposition in Serbia who requested early elections and new authorities, responsibility for the plight of the population and destruction of the country during the bombing. Back in late May, *Vreme* published a commentary by Teofil Pancic in which he strongly criticized the pro-government paper *Politika Ekspres*, which had accused journalists working for foreign radio stations of being traitors and "fifth-columnists."

Fear and self-censorship were present in two cases in Serbian media: the first time when the indictment was issued in The Hague on May 27 against Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and four other Serbian officials. The second time was when on June 15 the Holy Archpriest Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church requested that Milosevic and the Federal Government resign because of the catastrophic domestic policy that had led the Serbian nation to disaster.

The Hague indictment was carried, through BETA (which is the only Serbian medium that has a correspondent in The Hague), only by three dailies in Belgrade: *Danas*, *Blic* and *Glas javnosti*. Only *Danas* featured the news on the first page, and the other two papers featured it on the inside pages as small items. Belgrade radio television Studio B announced the news only in its first evening news broadcast, after which the news was thrown out of

program. Other media completely ignored it, and reported on it only “indirectly” through a series of negative reactions by the parties in power and state institutions, using formulations such as the “instrumentalized” court in The Hague and indictments “against the highest state leadership.”

The Synod statement was carried in full by BETA, while important excerpts were carried by *Danas* and *Blic*. Other papers published only those parts of the statement that warned about the difficult position of Serbs in Kosovo. Subsequently, other media carried negative reactions about the church meddling into responsibilities that are not its own. The state paper *Borba* featured a commentary by director Zivorad Djordjevic which strongly criticizes Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church Pavle and the Church itself, which according to him “deal with church business less and less.”

Following the closure of Radio B92, its role in informing the Belgrade public was taken over to a great extent by Radio Television Pancevo. Like Radio B92, this station also cannot be heard in all parts of Belgrade. However, that does not diminish its significance. Radio Pancevo during the whole time of air strikes stood for a moderate and professional editorial policy and it did not, like other electronic media, use formulations that the authorities recommended to the media. The recommendations requested from media meant that the term “NATO air force” should never be used, and that instead the terms “the criminal alliance” or “aggressor army” should be used. Also, not “implementation of the peace agreement,” but “alleged agreement in the function of occupation, American imperialism and hegemony,” etc. Such formulations have abundantly been used by all state media, chiefly by RTS, but also by Studio B.

Not a single media outlet in Serbia stopped working on its own during the air strikes. A number of members of Local Press, which encompasses more than 30 periodical papers whose total circulation was 300,000 copies, were published with longer periods in-between issues due to problems with distribution and newsprint, but also out of fear of censorship. *Nedeljni telegraf*, *Svedok* and *Argument* were not published regularly for the same reasons. The news agency Fonet at the beginning of June announced that it would stop working, but subsequently said that it would continue to function “at a minimum” due to financial problems and problems with electricity.

The authorities, however, continued to close media arbitrarily. The Federal Ministry of Telecommunication inspector confiscated in the night between June 12 and 13 one part of Television Mladenovac’s transmission equipment and ordered the station to stop broadcasting, with the explanation that it did not possess the appropriate licenses and that it had not participated in a frequency allocation competition. This television station is part of the Belgrade Studio B, but it has its own local independent program.

With the revival of political activity of democratic forces in Serbia, requests for making media space more liberal have become stronger. This process will certainly unfold slowly and will be directly linked with the political situation. Media control has always been one of the authorities’ priorities.

A leader of non-parliament opposition, Zoran Djindjic, has announced the opening of a satellite television station seated in Montenegro, which will “try to break through the information blockade in Serbia.” This station, according to Djindjic, will try to bring together journalists who have lost their jobs in Serbia due to pressure from the regime and closure of media.

### **Punishment For Albanian Press in Kosovo**

At the end of December of last year, the Ministry of Information of Serbia warned six Pristina newspapers in the Albanian language that their editorial policies should be

“harmonized with the Law on Information” of Serbia, or criminal or misdemeanor charges would be brought against them.

The Ministry informed these newspapers that with insight into their articles “it was determined that they directly instigate terrorism, call for violent overthrowing of constitutional order, violation of the territorial integrity and independence of Serbia and FRY, violation of the guaranteed freedoms and rights of man and citizen, and provoke national and religious intolerance and hatred.”

The papers that received the warning are *Koha ditore*, *Bujku*, *Zeri i dites*, *Fjala i Jole*, *Koha* and *Kosova sot*.

After that, the district public prosecutor’s office in Pristina started misdemeanor procedures in March of this year, at the request of the Ministry of Information of Serbia, against some of these newspapers. The Pristina Albanian-language daily *Kosova sot* on March 12, and the bi-weekly *Gazeta Scriptare* on March 16 were fined with 1.6 million dinars for publishing a calendar with pictures of members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), committing the violation of “provoking national and religious hatred and intolerance,” or, as Minister of Information Aleksandar Vucic put it, for “advertising terrorists.”

The Pristina Albanian-language daily *Kosova sot* announced on March 17 that it would temporarily stop publishing because financial police banned the paper’s sale. Both papers stopped publishing on March 22 because they were unable to pay the high taxes determined by the authorities.

The Pristina Albanian-language daily *Kombi* was fined on March 21 with 1.6 million dinars for breaching the Law on Information. The paper *Koha ditore* was fined on March 22 with 410,000 dinars, and editor-in-chief Baton Hadziu with 110,000 dinars after a magistrate judge in Pristina decided that the paper had breached the Law on Information of Serbia.

In its explanation of the request to launch a misdemeanor procedure, the Ministry stated that the paper, in the articles “Now Kosovo again awaits deployment of NATO troops” and “Taqi calls on the Serbian people to distance themselves from the regime,” with the superscript headline “What is happening in Kosovo is genocide” of March 19, 1999 – violated Article 67 of the Republic Law on Information. This article forbids the publishing of information that calls for violent overthrowing of constitutional order, violates the territorial integrity and independence of the country, and spreads national, racial and religious hatred.

The daily *Koha Ditore*, which published in Pristina until the end of May, continued on April 25, with approval from the Macedonian authorities, to come out in Tetovo.

(Aleksandra Rankovic, BETA, special for SAFAX)

## **Return to Kosovo**

The media problem in Kosovo dates back to the arrival of Slobodan Milosevic into power and abolishment of Kosovo’s autonomy in 1989, when police forcibly broke into the premises of Radio Television Pristina, whose footage was carried by all the most important TV stations throughout the world. Later, other media experienced the same fate as television, starting with *Rilindja*, a paper that had to stop publishing after a 50-year tradition, and which at that time was the only Albanian-language daily. It was followed by local radio stations, which had been operating in all larger towns, quite successfully in both languages – Serbian and Albanian. There were six of them, in Prizren, Djakovica, Pec, Mitrovica, Gnjilani and Urosevac. Albanians were forcibly thrown out of them, or they themselves left their positions held for many years after new, unacceptable conditions of work were established by pro-regime directors.

After that, one can freely say, Kosovo Albanians were engulfed in complete media darkness. Many believe that it is precisely this situation that led Kosovo Albanians to buy large numbers of satellite dishes to get information on what was happening in Kosovo and in the rest of the then Yugoslavia.

In this situation, journalists and the leadership of the Democratic Alliance of Kosovo, which at that time was the main Albanian political party, reached an agreement with the management of Radio Zagreb to be given five minutes in its program, from 22.00 to 22.05, every day. This program lasted for almost a whole year before it was closed for reasons that are still unknown.

### ***Koha Ditore* – The Most Popular Daily**

After the fall of the 50-year communist regime in Albania, when Sali Berisha and his Democratic Party came into power, Kosovo's government in exile led by Bujar Bukoshi, which was already functioning in Germany, in agreement with the Albanian government, started two hours of satellite programming on TVSH (Albanian Radio Television). This program has been financed for nine years now by the Albanians themselves. It is interesting that until the war the program contained mostly informative content, but with a lot of documentary and entertainment broadcasts as well.

With regard to print media, after the only Albanian-language daily *Rilindja* was banned, several journalists from this paper joined the paper *Bujku*, which until then had mostly dealt with agricultural issues. Part of the staff went to Albania, and part to Switzerland to work there and to continue putting out *Rilindja* in 10,000 copies.

In late 1997, well-known Kosovo intellectual and politician Veton Suroi, with help from the Soros Foundation, established an Albanian-language daily called *Koha Ditore*, which soon became the most popular paper for Albanians in Kosovo, but even wider. Putting together quite a young team of enthusiastic journalists who spoke several foreign languages, and with Suroi's expert leadership, *Koha Ditore* became the main source of information also for numerous journalists throughout the world. Such a *Koha Ditore*, but also its journalists, soon became a thorn in the eye of the Belgrade regime and were frequently harassed and punished by the authorities both with fines and many "informative conversations," or interrogations.

Along with *Bujku* and *Koha Ditore*, the role of QIK (Kosovo Information Center) should also be mentioned. It was something like a telegraphic agency of Kosovo Albanians. It was founded by the Democratic Alliance of Kosovo. The Center was managed by its director Enver Maljoku, who has been murdered in the meantime. This center for many years was one of the most quoted sources from Kosovo throughout the world.

To this group of journalists we should add journalists reporting from Kosovo, who worked for many media organizations in the world, from Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, Free Europe, Radio BBC and others, to media from other former Yugoslav republics. They also were often targets for the regime. Most of them continued to work until the beginning of NATO bombing when, if they did not get out on time, they became the main target in Kosovo for Serbian military, police and paramilitary forces.

During these past 10 years, the situation was a little better for weekly press. *Zeri i Rinis*, a well-known cultural and political magazine, was published in continuity, and also *Kosovarja*, a weekly that mostly focused on women's issues, as well as two newly-formed weekly magazines *Gazeta Sqiptare* and *Kombi*.

## **Conflict Over RTV Pristina**

Now, after the signing of the agreement between the Contact Group and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, when Albanians from Kosovo are massively returning to their homes, journalists are also coming back with them. However, their news offices, like many other companies, have been looted. An exception are local radio stations which are in good condition and which have already started working. The European Commission has announced that it will give emergency aid in the amount of 700,000 Euro as assistance to Kosovo journalists and for objective reporting from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

With regards to Radio Television Pristina, as the largest media outlet, the situation is much more complicated. While the majority of Serbs from other towns have left their homes in fear of KLA members despite NATO's appeal that it would protect them, a significant number of Serbs have remained in Pristina. They continue to go to work and there are often conflicts when ethnic Albanian workers return to their jobs. A hundred of so Albanians who forcibly tried to enter the premises of Radio Pristina last Thursday were prevented in doing so by KFOR members. "The situation was quite conflict-prone as some of the workers were armed, but we succeeded in disarming them," we were told by Major Jan Serap, a deputy commander of a KFOR unit on site. A meeting has been announced in a few days between the present director of Radio Pristina, Miladin Jovic, and three representatives of this group of Albanian journalists. "The talks will be conducted through a mediator and later they will be held directly between Serb and Albanian representatives," Major Serap said.

We have found out that the *Rilindja* building, which Serbs after forcible takeover turned into a public enterprise called Panorama, has been looted almost completely and it is unknown when it will be equipped for use. *Koha Ditore* has been publishing in Macedonia for almost a month and distributing the paper for free, initially to Albanian refugees in Macedonia and Albania, and now also in all of Kosovo's towns. We have found out that the paper's management is looking for new premises in Pristina and soon expect to move to Kosovo. Almost all correspondents who used to work for media organizations outside of Kosovo have continued to report for them as before.

It will take time to restore the media infrastructure in Kosovo, after 10 years of systematic destruction, to what it used to be. However, the impression is that the process of establishing a new media environment is in sight. Professional journalists hope that the information system in Kosovo will be established with as little conflict as possible.

(Moni Zhubi, SAFAX)

## **Media Cooperation**

### **ANEM BiH: First Umbrella Organization of RTV Stations**

The founding assembly of the Association of Electronic Media of Bosnia-Herzegovina (ANEM BiH) was held in Neum two weekends ago (June 18-19). Some may comment that this organization is not legal in a formal sense, because it cannot be registered at this moment at the level of post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it is certainly legitimate and needed. Therefore also accepted both by one part of the profession and by international organizations and agencies from the field of media, which will help ANEM BiH to receive its formal and legal foundation.

Namely, association of citizens and business associations are the responsibility of entities and the question that arises is whether entity courts may register an association whose membership includes members from both entities. Another of the 'Dayton's' absurdities! While many Bosnian organizations are becoming full members of various integration on regional, European and world level, a solution cannot be found in Bosnia for media from both entities to work within the same business association. Remarks from the Republika Srpska that only relevant entity business associations of electronic media can associate into an association at the level of the entire Bosnia-Herzegovina are groundless. ANEM and associations like it are not state institutions. They are interest associations and they do not have to follow the logic of state organization.

Preparations for the founding assembly started in April of this year, with assistance from Internews and the International Media Commission (IMC). Invitations were sent to all RTV stations (more than 280) contained in the IMC Registry. Approximately one third of stations responded. Several days before the founding assembly, the Association of Electronic Media of the Republika Srpska (AEMRS), formed a month ago and now comprising 36 RTV stations from this entity, called on its members to boycott the assembly. The boycott did not succeed because 21 radio and TV stations from the RS attended the founding assembly.

The Association plans to articulate and protect common interests, such as:

- launching initiatives and giving advice in the field of media legislation;
- protecting the interests of association members in relation to the state, management, etc., and particularly in the field of media market;
- protecting intellectual property of association members and authors;
- researching the media market, program reception, public opinion surveys, etc.
- promoting the market, adopting contemporary technologies and media software;
- educating staff, promoting working conditions, organizing festivals, consultation, seminars, panel discussions, etc.

Membership in the association is voluntary and does not stand in the way of similar association at other levels.

The assembly elected members of the Presidency by secret vote. They are representatives of Radio Pegaz, Trebinje; Radio Kontakt, Banja Luka; NTV Hayat, Sarajevo; RTV Travnik, Travnik; Radio Valentino, Orasje; ATV Banja Luka; and HRTV Kiseljak.

Members of the Court of Honor were also elected and they are representatives of Radio Dzungla, Teslic; Radio Osvit, Zvornik; Radio Beta, Zenica; Radio Tuzla, Tuzla; and TV CV 7, Vitez. The president of the Court of Honor is Zorana Petkovic, director of Radio Osvit.

Elvir Svrakic, director of NTV Hayat from Sarajevo, was chosen president of the Presidency. Adnan Osmanagic, director of Radio Stari Grad, Sarajevo, was chosen president of the ANEM BiH Assembly.

## Not True

### (“SRT – Ignoring the Work of the Common Bodies, Media News, no. 34)

*Dear Sirs,*

*I request that in the first next issue of “Media News” you publish a correction of untruths written in the article “SRT – Ignoring the Work of the Common Bodies,” on page 10 in issue no. 34 of June 14, 1999.*

*Since last year, SRT has regularly in its news programs reported on the work of the common bodies, usually in the central part. The broadcast Novosti (News) is followed as a rule by a special bloc which features a review at least 10 minutes long, of sessions of both houses of the Assembly of BiH. This happened, for instance, on June 8 when the House of Representatives held a session. If you had intended to write objectively about SRT, you could have seen this for yourself in a simple way – by watching our program.*

*Your claim that the NATO air campaign was a good excuse for SRT “to completely push into the background the work of the common state bodies” is also untrue. Between April 19 and June 10, when NATO carried out the fiercest strikes on Yugoslavia, TV Dnevnik (TV Journal), the primetime news program, for example, featured exactly 15 reports on sessions of the common bodies. Unlike you, I think that what is written in “Media News” reminds of the ugly anti-Dayton intentions.*

*General Director of SRT*

*Andjelko Kozomara*

## News

### Bosniak Television on Air Again

Bosniak Television (BRT Int) on June 18, after receiving a broadcasting license from IMC, again went on air. BRT Int started broadcasting at the end of March of this year, but after an IMC intervention had to stop its broadcasting activities. Bosniak Television considered the decision to be of political nature and said that the international community did not want a television station with Moslem elements. IMC rejected this interpretation and said that BRT Int, as a new media outlet, did not adhere to the licensing procedure.

The Independent Media Commission continues to issue licenses to electronic media in Bosnia-Herzegovina. By June 23, 190 radio and TV stations received broadcasting licenses. A total of 271 electronic media from both entities have applied.

## **SRT Fined for Biased Reporting During NATO Strikes**

The Independent Media Commission (IMC) fined Serb Radio Television (SRT) with 2,000 DEM for untrue information on the NATO campaign in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and for untrue reports on the human catastrophe in Kosovo. IMC made the decision after a detailed insight into SRT programming during the first weeks of NATO strikes on Yugoslavia, in which it noted an extremely partial attitude towards the Serbian side to the conflict, as well as distortion of facts. Such information, in IMC's opinion, contributes to destabilization of Bosnia-Herzegovina itself and inspires a negativistic attitude towards the international community in the Republika Srpska.

"We did not expect SRT to have a benevolent position towards NATO, but correct presentation of facts is vital," IMC Deputy General Director Robert Gillette said when he announced the decision in Sarajevo. He underlined that the fine was symbolic and expressed hope that it would act as a warning.

## ***Glas Nade* – Newspaper for Disabled Persons**

The first issue of the newspaper "Glas nade" (meaning voice of hope), intended for persons with special needs, was promoted in Gorazde. The paper was launched by an association from the Gorazde Canton which gathers disabled persons, such as those suffering from dystrophy, cerebral paralysis, blind people and people with impaired sight, as well as people with impaired hearing. The main intention of the paper is to help this category of the population with practical advice and to draw public attention to their needs.

## **Cable TV in Banja Luka**

Cable television owned by a local private company was launched in Banja Luka. All those interested in the urban part of Banja Luka who sign an admission contract are now able to watch in their homes all land television stations available in this region, as well as 20 or so well-known satellite organizations including CNN, SKY and BBC.

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a New Century**

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