



# **SERBIA: THE COURSE TOWARDS EUROPE**

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## **Preface**

Serbia's transformation from a "rogue state" (as perceived by the West) to a respected player in the Balkan region and a serious applicant for the transatlantic alliances has been amazing. This country has entered the transition race with enormous seatbacks, together with Ukraine and Georgia, countries that remain seriously ill to this date. Serbia, not only surpasses these latecomers, but has also caught up with its neighbors in the transition race.

Few papers, to my knowledge, have identified leadership as the determinant factor for this positive outcome. The literature on Serbia's democratization and Europeanization is mostly focused on the 5th October 'revolution', institutional choices, external factors (i.e., incentives and conditionalities), party politics, and voters' behavior and preferences. Contrastingly, the literature on Zoran Djindjić, the late prime minister, is focused primarily on his philosophical thought, or his violent end; thus overlooking the critical role that he played as an executive decision maker.

This paper aims to provide a tangible link between the europeanization process and the leader. It will offer an individual-centered perspective on events while arguing that Djindjić's leadership had critical role in determining the direction of the change that followed in post Milosevic Serbia. The main questions to be answered: When did the birth of European Serbia happen, by whom and how was this process stirred.

In addition, the research will draw attention to some prevalent views on events in post Milošević Serbia, and state alternative assumptions.

- 2000 'revolution' did not resulted with radical break up with the past because it was peaceful/negotiated (Protic, 2006) or because the new President, Vojislav Koštunica, did not supported the pro-reform course of the prime minister, Zoran Djindjić (Jovanovic, 2006). The

assumption here is the radical break up had not occurred primarily because the Serbian society was not ready for such break up yet.

- Djindjić was a failed reformer (Popovic, 2009; Korac, 2009). The idea of European Serbia has lost its strength with the death of Djindjić (Protic 2006; Popovic, 2009). The assumption here is that idea of European Serbia had not faded away but it had gained instead a critical mass with the death of Djindjić. The discourse between Europe and Serbia's society was nonexistent prior to the 2003 events.
- People arrested during operation Saber and accused for the assassination of the prime minister, were 'foot soldiers' to some conservative forces such as the president or the army (Popovic, 2005). The assumption here is that this group was an independent actor, pursuing its own agenda and a serious contender for supremacy in the post-Milošević society. This powerful para-state entity was planning complete state capture not a coup in 2003. Meaning Serbia was on the brink of becoming 'mafia state' instead of remaining a 'rogue state'.

I will try to defend the stated assumptions and answer the main question from the prime minister's perspective. This will be done by describing the challenges or set of collective problems and obstacles (both impersonal and personal) for development in Serbia after Milošević; by analyzing how does the prime minister had dealt with those challenges; and by explaining what the long-term consequences of his decisions are for Serbia. At the end of the paper I will try to compare the leadership of Djindjić with other examples of outstanding leadership and to draw some general conclusions regarding the role of leaders in large-scale transformational processes.

Considering the specific socio-historical conditions, the irregularities of the change process as well as the controversy surrounding Serbia after Milošević, this paper switches to a more a more narrative tone in some areas that are seen as insufficiently addressed.



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## **Serbia vs. “New Europe” countries**

Serbia had a specific past but geographically it belongs under the western sphere of influence. The society has learned from its past mistakes and rejected Milošević's politics; attracted by the seductive power of the EU and recognizing Europe as the only viable alternative, Serbia follows the path of its neighbors. Implementing reforms at the core, Serbia gains a status of a respected regional player and a serious contender for EU membership. What is so unusual about Serbia's coming to Europe?

“New Europe” countries. The process of Europeanization in most post-communist countries was initiated by the popular discontent with the communist system and geopolitical movements, such as the end of the Cold War and the process of enlargement of the EU. Whether they were ‘borderline’ countries (e.g., Romania, Bulgaria) or countries with closer socio-historical ties with the “Old Europe” (e.g., Poland, Czech Republic), the seductive power of EU was equally great everywhere. People (for cultural as well as economic reasons) were attracted by the seductive power of EU, by the idea to live in “Europe of Regions.” Some leaders (such as Walesa, Havel) followed the voice of the people, others presented just temporary obstacles (e.g., Maicar and Tudjman). While the president prime minister rivalry, where one pursues populist and the other reformist course, was notable in many transition countries (Hungary, Poland), the struggle for power took place mostly within the institutional framework. Certainly, the advancement was not (and is not) straight-forward for all countries affected by the Washington consensus. Depending on the political elite, there were notable difference between the paths of countries as similar as Slovakia and Czech Republic are. But the *course* was the same as the question was never whether but when (at least from

the applicants' side).

Serbia. The story of Serbia's path to Europe is a bit different; the question whether was widely open here for several reasons. People's preferences for 'Europe', a prerequisite for europenization, in Serbia remained weak after the fall of Milošević. Also, effective mode of governance--by this I mean executive government that has unity for the course, or effective communication with the judicial branch, or, at least, monopoly over the means of coercion--was not existent at Serbia. Finally, although the common president prime minister rivalry was evident, Serbia unlike the other post communist countries also had a third player to add to the complexity of the power struggle. This player just like the Serbian president and prime minister exercised control over some state institutions. Unlike the president/prime minister, this para-state actor, was mostly operating outside the institutional context; also, outside any ideological context. This has made it highly maneuverable and dangerous, and contributed to the uncertainty that existed in Serbia.

So Serbia after Milošević was not 'destined' to come to 'Europe,' it was more likely 'destined' to go into 'South America'. Or, at least, to remain a deeply troubled country-- like Ukraine and Georgia are today.

### ***The Challenge***

5th of October 2000, Serbia again takes the central stage; the circle of violence which started in Slovenia in 1991 was set for the grand finale in Belgrade that day. However, the events did not unfolded as predicted by political experts. This time Serbian people and Slobodan Milošević did not live up to their reputation. Milošević, the last great obstacle for the 'debalkanization of the Balkans, was removed from office relatively peacefully.

As the new government, lead by the prime minister Zoran Djindjić, had clearly pro-western course, Serbia was soon out of the geopolitical mainstream.

Still, the future was all but decided Serbia.

The first major problem for Serbia after 2000, was that it was not even a state. In order some entity to be defined as a state; it should have control of a defined territory and the capacity to monopolize violence (Weber, 1946). Serbia was part of a unity with formal nature, where the, part of its territory (Kosovo) was under international control and part of the forces of coercion were control by other para-state actor.

The other major problem was that the europenization process did not started with the fall of the Milosevic regime. Serbia after 2000 implemented institutional reforms, had free media, free market reforms, but those elements are not a guarantee that the Europenization process will occur. Europenization in its broadest terms means the influence of the core of Europe (France, Germany mainly) over the periphery. Europenization, to my understanding, means first and foremost that the society is attracted by Europe. That is the “non-Europeans” attracted by the seductive power of the EU are becoming “more European like”. This attraction in Serbia after 2000 was “synthetic”. Conformity with the West was as a result of: (a) the state desperate need of western financial aid in order not to collapse and (b) the prime minister extremely risky politics. This second factor was critical. The prime minister by swimming against the current -against the people preference, against the president and sometimes against the law- often made the attraction to look stronger than it actually was. In sum, there was no real discourse between Serbia and Europe.

Reasons for this weak ‘attraction’?

The Serbian people, being subjected to the effective propaganda from the Milošević regime for more than a decade, saw themselves as the new Jews. “In the Serbian case, the nation has been compared with Job, with the Jewish nation, even with Christ crucified” as Ramet (2005; p.2) points out. This effect did not simply vanish with the fall of Milosevic. The refugees and the ruins left after the NATO bombing campaign were still there after October 5th. Nor the people forgot about the double standards of the Western powers on some issues (particularly Kosovo). All of these factors gave legitimacy and power to those who were looking for options for Serbia outside ‘Europe’. Koštunica’s sometimes antiwestern rhetoric reflected the society’s attitude and reminded that all options are open for Serbia.

Before trying to explain how Djindjic transformed Serbia, this paper will focus on the para-state actor. I find this important so that one could understand just how close was Serbia after 2000 to complete state capture (i.e., the degree to which state institutions are used by private interest groups to intentionally distort the democratic and economic processes) and how far it was from Europe. The biggest danger for Serbia’s democracy after 2000 did not come from the conservative elements, such as the president or the army generals, but the problem was, in Djindjić’s words: “The Mafia has remained without a state and is looking for new one “ ( Djindjić, quoted in Vasic,2007; p8).

### ***The Kartel***

The common Nomenklatura structure in post-communist Europe consists of high ranked government officials, former managers of state owned enterprise and corrupt judges. The transitional elite in Serbia, was less ‘stylish’. Here “people who lived on the margins of the society became the new elite” (Andreas, 2005) The Serbian transitional elite differed not only in structure but

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in ambitions and preferences also. If in other transitional countries the “old nomenklatura converted political capital into economic capital”, here the “criminal capital...has been converted to political capital” (ibid, 2005) After the fall of Milošević, one group of this ‘nomenklatura’, becomes so powerful that it started to dictate Serbian politics, to influence outcomes. This entity goes under many names the Kartel is short and suitable for the socio-political situation in Serbia The back bone of this para-state entity were The Red Berets, their leader Milorad Lukovic-Legija and his business associates.

This criminal Kartel is often perceived as a component the pro-conservative forces of the society- Such as the army or the president. While there was certainly some kind of connection e there was non hierarchical one.

First this group was not operating on ideological basis. The Red Berets did arrest Milošević and approved his extradition- a move strongly opposed that the president and the army generals. As Jovanovic states in one of his interviews “The Hague, in fact, is a red herring! Legija[the Kartel leader] does not care for the Hague or the recent wars...(Jovanovic for Globus, 2005). Also, the assassination of the prime minister (done by this criminal entity) came when the prime minister had popular support of only 3% with only one year left to elections. Surely, Zoran Djindjic was going to lose the 2004 elections to the more conservative establishment of Koštunica. Something dramatic like assassination was not needed in order to replace the pro-reform government with a conservative one. Lastly, the Kartel had connection with army/police officials, they provided this group with intelligence. Still, there is no proof that they were employers of Legija. They were more likely corrupted and greedy government officials working for Legija. The Kartel simply had better understanding for the “needs” of the state bureaucrats, than the prime minister or the president had. Therefore, this friendly relationship comes natural. And this bond was

Strong, As Mihajlovic (2003) describes, “The Mafia had better relations with some prosecutors, courts and institutions... than any Serbian administration did.”

All of the above makes rational the conclusion that the criminal Kartel was an powerful independent player in Serbia’s political arena and while explaining the events in Serbia after 2000 it deserves such attention.

How did this criminal entity becomes so powerful?

During the nineties, all kinds of ‘Skorpions,’ ‘Eagles,’ ‘Tigers’ operated in the conflict regions. They were Serbia’s ‘hidden war effort’. The Serbian/Yugoslav government provided logistic support to some of them; others were under strict control of Milošević regime. The most powerful and best-organized paramilitary unit was Special Operations Unit AKA Red Berets. Milošević’s man of thrust Jovica Stanisic <sup>1</sup>and Franko Simatovic<sup>2</sup> established this unit. The Red Berets activities were not confined to the conflict regions. Milošević used this unit for all occasions/purposes. From weapon smuggling during the UN sanctions against Yugoslavia to assassination of political opponents (Jankovic 2007). No other state institution was allowed to question

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<sup>1</sup> Jovica Stanisic - graduated from the Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade University in 1974 and immediately began working for the secret police. As a young intelligence officer he took part in the arrest of terrorist Sanchez “Carlos” Ramirez in Belgrade. He was involved in the 1987 visit of Slobodan Milošević to Gazimestan in Kosovo, where the nationalist leader sealed his grip on power. Stanisic was subsequently appointed director of the State Security Service. He has been given credit for, the establishment of dummy opposition parties and the recruiting of criminals for special units active in battlefields throughout the former Yugoslavia. After some disagreements with Milošević and his wife, he was replaced in 1998 .Worked also as a CIA spy. Currently in Hague waiting for a trial for war crimes.

<sup>2</sup> Franko “Frankie” Simatovic -graduated from the Police Academy and the Faculty of Political Science at Belgrade University, where he met Stanisic... he created an armed division of the secret police, the Special Operations Unit, known as the Red Berets, of which he was the first commander. He is believed to have recruited widely among criminals for the unit. He led the Red Berets until and was subsequently replaced in that position by Milorad “Legija” Lukovic. (Wikipedia)

their activities. The Red Berets became Milošević's "Praetorian Guard". (Vasic,2007; p.36)

In 1999 The Red Berets got new management; Milorad Ulemek Legija<sup>3</sup> becomes the new commander of the Red Berets and the new man of trust of Milošević. Unlike his predecessors, Legija's profile – opportunist, with no moral or ideological constraints - matched more to a street criminal than to evil but "competent" state security officer. As wars were lost, Milošević becomes desperate more violent, meaning more dependent on the services of this unit. The murders of Slako Curuvlija, Ivan Stambolić and the assassination attempts on Vuk Draskovic, all of these vicious acts are associated with this unit and with the interest of Milošević's regime. (Vasic,2007; Jankovic) Normally, this 'unhealthy' reliance of the regime increased the power/influence of the new Red Berets leader. "The Praetorian Guard" apart from fulfilling 'patriotic' duties, turned to other lucrative activities. When a decade of wars ended, the era of embargo ended, same with the demand for smuggled commodities-oil, small arms. The Red Berets, under the new leadership, adjust swiftly for the new, peaceful environment. Drug trafficking, kidnapping and extortion- become their main activities source of income. Since these are 'normal' criminal activities, the bond between common organized crime groups and this paramilitary unit becomes stronger than ever (Vasic, 2007). Powerful Kartel emerged unconstrained by moral, ideology or law.

The 5<sup>th</sup> October deal

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<sup>3</sup> Milorad "Legija" Ulemek is a currently imprisoned former militant, former commander of the red berets and leader of the criminal organization Zemunski Klan. Best known as the main plotter of the assassination of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in 2003. When the wars in Yugoslavia started he deserted from the French Foreign Legion in 1992 and offered his services to various paramilitary formations before joining the Red Berets in 1996.

As Milosevic reign was coming to an end, Legija, sensing the inevitable, successfully negotiated changing sides. Not only that, but he also got a good bargain . In the eve of 5<sup>th</sup> October 2000 Djindjić being the leader of the opposition and “key man of 5<sup>th</sup> October” (Protic, 2006) meets with Legija and a compromise is made: The Red Berets will not intervene in favor of Milosevic and in return they will keep some of their privileges (See Vasic 2007;) Now the Red Berets pledged their loyalty solely to their commander/to the Cartel. When they did some favors to the new government-such as the arrest of Milošević-(Vasic, 2007;p.38). they were protecting their own interest also. The hierarchical connection with the regime disappeared and cooperation soon turned into competition.

The puzzle how to deal with this enormous obstacles for democracy in Serbia (whether embodied in the “new coalition partners” or the specific socio-historical conditions) was left to the new prime minister to solve it.

## **Djindjić**

Zoran Djindjić, Serbian prime minister, mayor of Belgrade, longtime oppositionist by profession. He started as a philosopher (see Perovic, 2007; pp 101-134) relatively safe profession, only he followed Marx’s teaching; “The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.” Educated in Germany, with pragmatic approach to problems and pro-western ideas for the future of Serbia, he seemed as the right person for transforming the country. In the eyes of the West at least. However, Djindjić’s image at home was a bit different. Common Serbian people saw Djindjić as a traitor, a servant of the western powers, coward, and sometimes a mafia boss (Ibid. pp.290-303). Milošević ’s powerful media propaganda

frequently targeted Đinđić. “The Demonization of Zoran Đinđić began the very moment he stepped on Serbia’s political scene” (Ibid. p.325). Truth to be told, Djindjić sometimes made this task easy for his opponents. He meets with Clinton, he meets with the rulers of the Serbian underworld, nothing was unprincipled in his mission to beat Milošević . Controversial behavior remains his trademark after he become the prime minister. Djindjić did not care too much for the inherited legal constrains, as Gligorov notes (2007; p.153) He bended and twisted the laws, when he thought that, the laws present an obstacle for his goal. And his goal was stated clearly: “My priority is to remove all obstacles on Serbia's road to Europe, without thinking whether those obstacles are set in a justified or an unjustified way.” (Djindjić for Blic, 2001)

Djindjić had realistic views on politics “If you want morality, go to church”. His antipode was the successor of Milošević, President Vojislav Koštunica. “The biggest problem of Kostunica he wants to interpret problems, not to solve them” (Djindjić quoted in Perovic, 2007; p.102) The New President was a “legalist” professor of law. “All politics must bend its knee before right” as Kant would say and Koštunica acts upon; The new president was good politician, for some other time or place. For Serbia after 2000, with his inward looking, inflexible (Protic, 2006) politics Koštunica was only an obstacle radical change. Zoran Djindjić, proved more suitable for this complex task presented by the Serbian society; risk-taker, person with flexible moral constrains, and a leader willing to do more than he is asked. However, Djindjić had his shortcomings. He fails to see the importance of mass media/popular support. He rarely or never uses populism as a weapon during his time as a prime minister - something unconventional for a transition politician. Instead, his appeal to the people was open and straightforward. “You cannot be a reformer and be popular at the same time.” he acknowledges. This attitude - and the years of negative propaganda - had its price. Djindjić, while alive, was never worshipped as Milošević, or respected as Koštunica at the peak of their

popularity. His self-confident, sometimes arrogant attitude did not get him many friends among the new political elite also. Milan Protic, former mayor of Belgrade during 2000-2001 period and close ally to Djindjić, in his book “Democratic Revolution Betrayed” describes Djindjić -the prime minister-as a “Balkan despot.”

### ***The choices of Zoran Djindjić***

As O’Donnell point out, in periods of regime transition “Not only are (the rules of the political game) in constant flux, but they are usually arduously contested; actors struggle not just to satisfy their immediate interests and/or the interests of those whom they purport to represent, but also to define rules and procedures whose configuration will determine likely winners and losers in the future.”(O Donneell & Schmitteer,1986; p.6) And this struggle for power In Serbia for the future winners and losers was fierce, and dirty- as will be discussed below.

The democratic forces in Serbia faced three major political contends during 2000-2003 period. How to advance the idea of European Serbia, how to convince Europe that Serbia belongs there, and finally how to deal with the Cartel. Djindjić as the leader of the pro-reform forces made three choices of particular importance for the future of Serbia; they were effect of major crisis or caused major crisis. In every situation, the stakes were high so was the level of uncertainty of the outcome. The choices are interconnected as each of them alters the rules of the power games played in Serbia after Milosevic.

They are in chronological order:

-The decision to deliver Milošević to the Hague tribunal in June 2001;

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-The decision to back down, under the threat of mutiny in November 2001;

-The decision to launch operation Witness in 2002/03.

While analyzing actions and consequences, I will also try to answer to the question; Did Djindjić had other viable options? By answering this question I will try to reveal: for which actions the actors preference played an determinant role and for which the context. In order to avoid repetitiveness more detailed analysis of how does Zoran position himself within the institutional settings to have immense impact of the outcomes I will leave it for ater.

### **Milošević's case**

After the fiasco in the nineties, EU members were anxious to punish the war criminals from Bosnia and clear their conscious for overestimating their power and underestimating the madness of the Balkan warlords. The adequate international support for Serbia was conditioned by cooperation with the ICTY. However, the constitution of Serbia did not allowed, at that moment, such action and people were not in support of it. This complex problem had the potential to be dragged for years (it's a common scenario for complex problems in the region).

Đinđić makes an unanticipated move (with questionable legality) and on June, 28, 2001 Vidovdan, he sends Milošević to Hague tribunal. Choosing of this important historical date can have many symbolic. I prefer the following "He [Milošević] came on Vidovdan with a helicopter, he left on Vidovdan with a helicopter" (Vasic, 2007; p39). The handling of the "keeper of Serbia," as Milošević preferred to call himself, was welcomed with mixed reactions in the Serbian public and with the disapproval of the president and other 'legalist'. President Koštunica called this move coup d etat (Perovic, 2007; p.184) and left the government coalition soon afterwards. Moreover the claim that Djindjić is "servant of the western powers' was revoked.

Did Đinđić had more viable alternatives in this situation?

In 2001 the western powers announced their intentions for trialing Milošević as a war criminal, but they were not pushing for immediate extradition. Đinđić could have waited for a law, for cooperating with the ICTY, to be brought than approved by the parliament before delivering Milošević. Hartmann (2007) (the adviser to Carla Del Ponte the 2001-2006 period) states in her book "Peace and Punishment :Milošević was delivered to the Hague tribunal without significant pressure from Washington or from Brussels.

The socio-political, conditions in Serbia provided a good alibi for inaction. Still Djindjić, sow an opportunity in this situation to bring Serbia closer to Europe, and he exploits it. This of course was not without consequences. Not only Djindjić break the formal rules of the game but also other important rule that says: "If a leader fails to reach a consensus with his inner circle (or, at least, the appearance of a consensus), opponents may take advantage of these disagreements."(Allison, 1999). Moreover, in the complex political arena Djindjić was not the only opportunist; nor the only one who does not play by formal rules.

### **The Mutiny**

With Koštunica out of the coalition, the struggle remained mostly between the Kartel and the prime minister. The first move was made by the former.

In November 2001, the Red Berets(Cartel's army) used the cooperation with the ICTY -a rather trivial element of this cooperation- as an excuse to stage an armed protest and block the city of Belgrade (See Vasic; Protic; for detailed analysis of 2001 events). Djindjić's lead government responded to this mutiny by backing down, and fulfilling the humiliating demands of the armed

protestors; decision that left many regrets. He should have dealt with the Red Berets via the other coercive forces such as the army special unit SAJ.(Vasic,2007; p.51).SAJ would have been more than happy to resolve this issue according to Vasić. Djindjić should have responded to this challenge in democratic manner. By staging elections so he could gain the legitimacy, the people support, to deal with this mutiny and with the other antireform elements in the society. (ed.Perovic, 2006;p.18).

Did Djindjić had more viable alternatives in this situation?

First, Koštunica was the symbol of the 5<sup>th</sup> October events and not Djindjić in the eyes of the people. If Djindjić took the electoral gamble and lost, the reform process would have had its reversal and the process of “state capture” would become complete for Serbia<sup>5</sup>. As for the second suggestion the army, helping hand surely was a two-edged sword. More precisely the helping hand was offered from general Nebojsa Pavkovic -a person currently serving 22 years in Hague.

Djindjić’s motives to ‘bend before Legija’ (Protic, 2006) are unclear - fear, inexperience/distrust in the democratic instruments or something else- but the fact is that Djindjić lead government was ill equipped to solve this conflict in any manner. There was not a good option in this situation only bad and worse.

Justified or unjustified, this compromise with the Kartel was devastating for the image of Djindjić’s government, as the criminals--and not just criminals- interpreted this move as fear. The Kartel members were now certain the new government is weakened enough (unpopular due to the structural adjustment reforms, delegitimized due to the decision to break the formal rules, and now afraid) to pose any serious treat and that Serbia is theirs to rule.

After this event, the criminal and political activities of the Kartel intensified as their confidence and their political ambitions grew. When someone tried to oppose them, they turned to blackmail and threats, when that did not work they turned to pure terror; and they were not acting in a quiet way. Blowing up buildings and spectacular assassinations were a method not only to kill the target but also a reminder that they answer to no one and fear no one. They became “state within the state” Mihajlovic (2007). Legija and his associates enjoyed in this in this new position within Serbian society and they were not ready to give up their privileges easily.

### **The Showdown**

The growing power of the Kartel was a problem but there was nothing much to be done within the institutional context. Djindjić lead government did not have any effective instrument for dealing with the Kartel-at least without empowering other actors and adding to the complexity of the situation. It looked like this conflict will be present for years.

The prime minister, again (as in the Milošević’s case) makes a move with questionable legality in order to regain the leverage in this battle. Under the codename operation Witness ( see Vasic pp 64-101) he establishes new parallel institutions, specialized for this battle and under Djindjić’s strict control. Special Court, new police unit<sup>6</sup>, and improved witness protection program were operational by the end of 2002. The Kartel responds to this challenge by opening a new front; A front where they clearly had advantage, as Djindjić had little or no control over the mass media- the most powerful weapon in democratic society. The Kartel launched an aggressive media campaign were successfully advertising themselves as the “the last true patriots“ and they

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<sup>6</sup> The german and british security services provided logistic support for this security reform.

advertised the prime minister also -as the “mafia boss” among other things. “The media criminalization of Zoran Djindjić was just a part of a by far larger campaign aimed at discrediting the late Premier and his reformist course implying a clear breakup with Milošević’s policy of crime (ed.Perovic,2006,p285). In this war, the prime minister had the western support, but he was loosing the most important battle: the support of the masses. This media campaign apparently proved successful as popular support of the prime minister went down to 3%.

In the beginning 2003, a high profile mafia member willing to testify against his former associates, contacts Djindjić, and so operation Witness advances. When the Cartel members realized that their privileged status in the post-Milošević society could come to an end, they have launched a desperate counter attack. And they were using all available resources. These criminals had a loyal army, the logistic support of the corrupt institutions and control over the ‘independent media’. Now, not only they were trying to delegitimize the prime minister in the media, but they were also preparing the Serbian public for what was coming. One famous news headlines, published just days before assassination of the Prime Minister goes: “If Zoran Djindjić survives, Serbia will not”<sup>7</sup> (Tijanic, 2003).

The prime minister knew that there is a lot at stake, but he was preparing carefully for this move, and he was not willing to look for diplomatic solutions any more: “Someone has to win. Coexistence is not possible any more” (Djindjić 2002, quoted in Vasic,2007p 79) He was even being sarcastic over one unsuccessful assassination attempt.

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<sup>7</sup> Aleksandar Tijanić, president Koštunica’s advisor for the media on 28. Januar 2003

After two unsuccessful assassinations attempts, (see Vasic, 2007 pp.86-95) on 12 of March 2003, Zoran Djindjić was assassinated. The killer of the prime minister was an officer in the Red Berets – the investigation soon revealed this unsurprising fact. The government officials proclaimed a report soon after: "A shadowy group that wanted to replace the pro-western government with allies of Slobodan Milošević orchestrated the assassination of Serbia's prime minister. The group behind this act hoped the assassination would create a widespread chaos and planned to follow this with a coup against Serbia's government," (Stojanovic, 2003) The same people who arrested Milošević killed the prime minister in order 'to replace the pro western government with the allies of Milošević ' .

Did Djindjić had other viable options in this situation?

If some excuses in form of external pressures can be found for the extradition of Milošević, looking from a distance, in this situation there were more than enough rational reasons for inaction. First, this action was not was not part of the conditionalities, at least not in an direct way as the liberalization of the market, free elections, independent media, and the cooperation with the ICTY situation were. In the first few year implementations of radical reforms, apart from forming a functioning free market, are not expected from the new government.<sup>8</sup> Second, Djindjić made deal with the criminal elite in 2000, and used the services of their army (the Red Berets) in 2001 when Milošević was arrested. By doing so, he legitimized, recognized them as an important factor in

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<sup>8</sup> IMF, World Bank, as much as altruistic their feelings may be, are financial institutions primarily concerned with forming a functioning free market in New Europe countries. These two elements are not mutually exclusive. As the case of Bulgaria shows, a country may have a strong mafia and an EU membership together.

politics in the past. Undoubtedly the power of the Kartel was a growing threat, but the prime minister already solved the Milošević issue, first by leading the opposition on the historical 5<sup>th</sup> of October and then by sending Milošević to Hague; stabilized the freefalling economy and began the unpopular free market reforms. For only two years, he had done more than enough for Serbia. To leave this problem for another government/future or simply to ignore it, instead of turning it into extreme zero-sum game, was more than rational option.

Did Djindjić paid for his overconfidence with his life? The essence of ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer - often, indeed, to the decider himself. (Kenedy quoted in Allison 1999) Luckily for Serbia, the Kartel also did some miscalculations; that is they miscalculated the society reaction.

## **The turning point**

Serbia's response over Djindjić's death was unforeseen; nearly half million people attended his funeral<sup>9</sup>. That is roughly about the same number of people that marched on the street of Belgrade during the historic 5 October, and much more than one would expect for someone with just 3% popular support. The pro reform forces in Serbia arguably for the first time got the legitimacy of the people to deal with the Kartel. A window of opportunity was finally open and the pro democratic forces acted swiftly. Djindjić's Democratic Party-DS quickly named a successor and state of emergency was commenced across the country<sup>10</sup>. The only one opposing this measure was president Koštunica:

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<sup>10</sup> The state of emergency means police can hold suspects for up to 30 days without charge or access to a lawyer.

“Milošević’s alter ego” (Jovanovic, 2005) or just a man with poor judgment of what is a political opportunity.

Dusan Mihajlovic, Minister of Interior, had a dramatic/emotional appearance on Serbian national television, soon after the assassination: “I promise that we will avenge the death of Djindjić” (Mihajlovic, 2003). Operation “Witness” becomes operation “Saber ”. A list of 200 persons, suspected to have connections with the assassination, was given to the public. The organization behind the assassination was identified as “Zemunski Klan” And Milord Lukovic-Legija was identified as the leader of this organization. Operation Saber spreads in all directions; Newspapers, TV stations Celebrities that were the acting as the advocates of the Kartel were closed/arrested (ed.Perovic,2006;p.267). During the first days of “Saber” two leaders of the Kartel are killed in a controversial police action. Accusation that these suspects were tortured before the police killed them came mainly from Kostunaca’s camp. Still, Koštunica’s party was not the only one that criticized the behavior of the police in this wide spread operation “There have been dozens of cases recorded by reliable NGOs of beatings by the police, sometimes leading to deaths in custody,” HRW’s Balkan researcher, Bogdan Ivanisevic said.

The remaining members of Kartel were now in panic as their options were shrinking. Few of them managed to flee the country –Legija among them - many of them turned to witness protection program. They provided the police with valuable information and evidence. During the 42 days operation ““Saber”, more than 12000 people were arrested, 4500 were kept in custody, and 3700 criminal charges were brought against 3200 people. (Vasic, 2007) The body of the missing ex president of Serbia, Ivan Stambolić, was found and Many unsolved cases of kidnappings, murders, that were standing there for years as a reminder of the ugly face of the ex regime, were solved in a matter of days.

The assassins of Djindjić, with that ‘patriotic act’, as some prefer to call it, triggered a series of events that helped the democracy in Serbia on a way that Djindjić could not have done it. Their plan-whatever it was- backfired to Legija and his associates. The forces loyal to the late prime minister took full advantage of the situation to struck a decisive blow to the criminal Kartel-even if that was not done in democratic manner.

### ***The failure?***

However, not everything went straightforward for Serbia after 2003. Soon after, in 2004, The DS (Djindjić’s party) and its coalition partners lose the next parliamentary elections to DSS (Koštunica’s party). As Koštunica grasps power, political revanchism and negative attitude towards the legacy of the former government become evident. Consequently, pessimism and skepticism spreads among Djindjić’s supporters/successors. There was a feeling that the radical transformation of the Serbian society did not occur “Serbia after remained in the place where it was before Djindjić”(ed.Perovic, 2006, p. 155). Djindjić is viewed as one tragic hero. “Djindjić had no chance in the ‘given circumstances’, but he commands respect precisely because he fought to change ‘the circumstances’, because he remained loyal to his convictions despite ‘the circumstances’” (Popovic,2008) To paraphrase the last statement : Djindjić gave his best and failed; still, good effort. Many casted a doubt over the success of Operation “Saber”. “After all the operation ‘Saber’ was a missed opportunity of politicians and of politics” (Jovanovic for Globus, 2005) This skepticism was dominant among international analyst also: “Operation Saber” did not really crack the backbone of organized crime or eliminate the influence of criminal clans operating in Serbian politics” (Cohen, 2004).

## **The Echoes**

“Successful leaders are those who have demonstrated their ability to move their society tangibly in the direction that seemed clearly supportive of their suggested ‘grand design’ ” (Masciulli et al. , 2007;p10).

I will provide a ‘positive’ view on the events in post- Djindjić’s Serbia and I will argue that Zoran Djindjić achieved more than he is credited for; as not only did he triggered action, but also he made the changes for Serbia irreversible.

### ***The preferences of Serbian people are changed***

For reasons discussed in the first chapter here, the seductive power of the EU was fairly limited in Serbia after 2000. Something dramatic was needed in order Serbia to wake up from the dream where Milošević has placed it, and to rethink who were the patriots and who were the traitors. That came in the assassination of the prime minister. The Serbia society finally has had enough of the true patriots and of their patriotic activities such as waging of “defensive wars,” (the Srebrenica massacre) saving Serbia from traitors (assassination of an prime minister). The twisted perception in Serbia of the organized crime members as “the true patriots” or elite members of the society was no longer dominant after the assassination of the prime minister.

After the March 2003 events, the ideas of integration in the transatlantic alliance become more attractive than ‘seeking for the historical rights’. 57% of the population opted for decent living standards as their priority and only 6% opted for accomplishment of their national goals as their priority. (Spasic, 2008). With this development, the democratic changes and the course of Serbia become irreversible. Once that the “wheel of time is turned” it is hard

to reverse it. The time of extraordinary politics has ended after 2003 and the rules that governed the Europeanization process in any other post communist country became applicable in Serbia also.

Argument against my assumption can be found in the fact that on the 2004 parliamentary elections Koštunica's party wins and Seselj's Radical party performs strong. This electoral outcome, is interpreted as the return of strong nationalistic feelings among people and triumph of the anti reform forces. Moreover, the policies of Koštunica's government are mainly described as 'policy of continuity with Milošević ' regime'. (see Jovanovic, 2006; Klark, 2008).

I consider this view's on post- Djindjić Serbia as overly pessimistic and one sided. I argue Koštunica's policy did not presented a policy of continuity with the Milošević regime, rather it was a policy of continuity with Đinđić's regime-just with much slower pace (as some ideological and personal capacity constrains were evident). Koštunica, after becoming a prime minister, continued the cooperation with the ICTY, just under a different name: 'voluntary surrenders'. As Orlentlicher notes "There were voluntary surrenders where people showed with pajamas and duct tape."<sup>11</sup> (Orentlicher, 2008). General Nebojsa Pavkovic is delivered to the Hague, and Legija, the main plotter of the assassination, is arrested during Koštunica's term. Koštunica followed Djindjić's footsteps while trying to look like he was going on a different route. Reason? The lack of leadership ability, the external pressures; above all: the cultural change in the society. Had Koštunica refused cooperation with the ICTY-as much as he wanted- the financial help for Serbia would have stopped and the citizens would have suffered the consequences. The citizens of Serbia, although still

reserved about the path towards the West, were not willing to suffer anymore for “the true patriots.” Therefore, Koštunica as many modern politicians, acted in this situation to protect his rating, rather than his ideological beliefs. The fact is even if Koštunica wanted to establish a policy of continuity with Milošević’s regime he could not have done it. Because of the different preferences of the people, and the external factor presented an impassable obstacle. Precisely the existence of such impassable obstacles is what distinguishes common government administration from outstanding leadership.

A logical question would be why the people vote for Koštunica if the “wheel of time is turned”?

The pendulum of normal politics has to swing once in the liberal and once in the social direction before you feel that you have made it” (Dahrendorf quoted in White, 1998; p.183). Voter’s behavior likely reflects dissatisfaction of the structural adjustment reforms rather than a return to nationalism and rejection of the idea of westernized Serbia. The rapid liberalization of the market hit hard economically already traumatized citizens of Serbia. What happens in Serbia in 2004 can be described in the following terms: Đinđić’s party-DS sees the fate of all post-communist reformist governments. People dissatisfied with the harsh economic reforms cast their “protest vote”; Koštunica, being the only rational alternative, (the other available alternatives were SPS-Milosevic’s party and SRS-Seselj’s party) collects that vote and continues the reform course. A common scenario for most transitional countries.

If Serbia’s people did not clearly express their new preferences in the 2004 elections, they left little doubt in the 2008 parliamentary elections. Months after the international recognition of Kosovo, a coalition called “For a European Serbia” wins last year elections.” Only 8 years after the illegal succession of Kosovo, Serbia votes “For a European Serbia” over “The Heart of Serbia”. It is

worth mentioning the West, most likely, gave small contribution to this electoral outcome.

### ***Relations between Serbia and the West have changed***

The first impression of Serbia as a post-communist nation state was seen through the likes of Milošević, Arkan and shameful moments such as those in Srebrenica. Serbs were perceived as the new Nazis (Todorova;p119). Just one year before the fall of Milosevic, Newsweek portrayed Serbia as "a nation of haters raised on self-pity" (Aaron 2005). When Milošević fell, the Western powers remained deeply skeptical about the questions can Serbia can transform or if Serbia belongs to Europe. Today, less than a decade after, Serbia is a respected regional player, on its way towards the transatlantic alliances.

When Djindjić chose to defy the institutional constrains and to give Milošević to The Hague tribunal, he accomplished much more than getting financial aid for Serbia and antagonizing president Koštunica. Serbia establishes a new relationship with the West on that historical date. Djindjić has changed the disastrous pattern, introduced by Milošević , to respond to external pressure only when all other options are exhausted and proclaimed the serious aspiration of Serbia towards EU/Western alliances. The reaction from Europe was positive. Serbia got the much-needed financial aid and the process of the EU integration of Serbia begun although the official start was during the summit in Thessaloniki in 2003. Furthermore when Djindjić was assassinated, the western power's felt partially responsible for this act. This belief is best expressed in Holbrooke statement: He made the courageous decision to send the

ousted dictator to the war crimes tribunal in 2001. For this, Djindjić paid with his life. (Holbrooke for Financial Times 2006). Therefore, Western powers took a relatively soft stance towards the new conservative government led by Kostunica—the first beneficiary from the new Europe-Serbia relationship. The West was not pressing Kostunica to comply with conditionalities too hard—at least not in the way as it was pressing Djindjić's government. Furthermore, the Western powers, by making some major financial investments in Serbia, before the 2008 elections, helped the citizens of Serbia to see the benefits of choosing Europe over Kosovo.

But that was not the biggest change for Serbia.

### ***The balance of power within the Serbian Society has changed***

Just before his death Djindjić says, “If someone believes they can stop the implementation of the law by eliminating me, they are seriously deluding themselves, because I am not the system. The system will continue to function, and no-one will receive amnesty for their crimes by eliminating one or two government officials” (Djindjić, Feb 2003). And he predicted well.

Organized crime in Serbia did not disappear, but today organized crime is just as anywhere else: People on the margins of the society, dealing with illegal activities for economic benefit. These people are not celebrities occupying the front pages of the newspapers, dealing with mainstream politics, deciding who will live who will die, who is a patriot and who is a traitor. Serbia can claim that it surpassed in this element of democratic convergence its neighbor Croatia even the EU member Bulgaria. This is a remarkable achievement considering the fact that Serbia was the prime source of the criminalization of the Balkans during the nineties. With this particular development, all major obstacles for the rise of Serbia as a relatively normal, respected and ‘boring’ country are removed.

It all started with Djindjić's choice to launch operation Witness in 2002. The two profound consequences of operation Witness were operation Saber and the founding of the Special Court.

Operation Saber was everything that operation Witness aspired to be: efficient and with far reaching consequences. The notorious Red Berets were disbanded and as Miloš Vasić notes, "This action effectively resets the underground in Serbia" (Vasic, 2005). The broader consequences of this operation is that "it offers for many people the first concrete evidence that the state is capable of efficient and coordinated action" (Gordy, 2008) . The case of Kartel will serve as a reminder for the criminals that they don't belong in mainstream politics and that the costs for openly challenging the government/the democratic order are simply too high.

The Special Court. This institution is the pillar in the process of democratic consolidation of Serbia. Serbia is the only country in the region, and one of the few posts-communist countries, that have a functioning Special Court dedicated to fight organized crime. The Special Court had its hardest test soon after the assassination; Koštunica as a prime minister, (questioning the need for existence of this court) and the assignment to trial the remaining leaders of the Kartel. Despite the adverse political conditions, tremendous pressure on the people involved in the process, life treats, and suspicious deaths, the Special Court showed to be up for the assignment: Twelve people, including Legija, were sentenced for the death of the prime minister<sup>12</sup>.(Cvijic, 2009). Since this brutal test was past with flying marks, I

believe this institution is here to stay, to make sure that organized crime will never again be such a lucrative activity in Serbia. This institution is a concrete evidence of how valuable was Djindjić's leadership for Serbia.

## European Serbia

### Key points

- Serbia after 2000 presented a unique transitional challenge and had remained a country with unclear future course until 2003;
- Djindjić with his risk-taking politics was bringing Serbia closer to Europe but he was also empowering the Kartel up to the point where the scenario of total State capture emerged as highly probable;
- The action intended to block the democratization process, (the assassination) in fact promoted it; People preferences for Europe, which are a prerequisite for Europeanization of a given country, emerged as a consequence of this action.

Serbia after 2000 was not ready to come to Europe, but Đinđić with his life but also his death forced her to do so.

I have argued that after 2000, the seductive power of the EU remained relatively weak and Serbia remained an open ended story with the scenario of becoming a mafia state emerging as highly probable. I have argued against the

claim that the idea of European Serbia lost its significance with the death of Đinđić (as suggested by Protic 2006; Popovic, 2009) on the contrary that idea of European Serbia was reborn with the death of Djindjić. Of course, one can say that the Kartel members also contributed to Europeanization of Serbia by killing the prime minister; but that was more an act of despair than a real choice. With the progress of operation Witness their option was left to disappear or fight back. Zoran Djindjić, on the other hand, had other rational options before commencing operation Witness. One can argue people at the end decided; True, but it is unlikely people's strong preferences for 'Europe' emerged as a result of the structural adjustment programs; The Chicago school shock therapy did not evoke positive feelings among the masses, in any country to my knowledge; People's preferences were not more likely consequence of the dramatic events in 2003. Two decisions made by Djindjić had far-reaching impact for the future of Serbia. The fact that Djindjić had more viable options in both situations when he delivers Milosevic and when he commences operation Witness is a good indicator that the leadership of Zoran Djindjić played a key role for this positive outcome in Serbia.

To prescribe the democratization and Europeanization of Serbia to a single cause is naïve. Many factors contributed for the positive outcome. The strong external effort, both the willingness and ability of Djindjić's followers to continue in the critical moments; and finally the courtesy of the people to vote for European Serbia in 2008. The purpose of this paper was to answer how, when and by whom was it all started. The "wheel of time" for Serbia was not turned in 2000, when Milošević fell, nor in 2008 when Serbia voted for Europe. It was turned in 2003, by a joint effort of *virtù* and *fortuna*; by one outstanding leadership and one critical moment with unanticipated outcome.

## **The Leadership of Djindjić in Comparative Perspective**

Leaders that had outstanding impact on outcomes are a somewhat universal phenomenon. Examples range from Bismarck and Lincoln to Mandela and Gandhi. Comparing and contrasting Djindjić with these leaders would be unpractical; Djindjić was no Gandhi for sure and his role will probably get less recognition compared to Lincoln or Bismarck's. To compare Djindjić with the other notable contemporary Serbian leader, Slobodan Milošević, seems appropriate. Although Kostunica is mostly perceived as 'Milosevic alter ego' Jovanovic (2005) or 'soft-spoken version of Milošević' (Vaknin 2005), Kostunica was in a different league from the other two Serbian leaders. When Kostunica replaced Milosevic, the only substantial impact he was able to achieve, was to transform the presidential position into ceremonial role. Later in 2004, when Kostunica replaced Djindjić on the prime minister position, he acted as a poor copy of Djindjić- moving in the same direction with slower pace

. While the political career of Vojislav Kostunica presents a good case for analysis of how formal power and lack of leadership skills interact, this chapter will focus on the two leaders who managed to achieve substantial impact turned the wheel of time.

Djindjić and Milosevic- how did they move within the context to have such significant impact on the changes that occurred in Yugoslavia/Serbia? what kind of leadership they exerted?

I will argue here that Milosevic and Djindjić, although distinctive as persons, had a lot in common when it comes to leadership. Both of them can be labeled as 'innovative'; as 'leaders who seek to implement more radical changes and

revise the very rules of the game, or the nature of societal responses to the problem (Misculi et al., 2007 ; p 7).

### ***The Innovative leadership of Djindjić and Milošević***

Since innovation was arguably the predominant feature of both Djindjić and Milošević, some general introduction to this leadership conception will follow. Shaffer describes innovative leaders as persons who are prone to “gambling with history” (Sheffer, 1993;p31). The focus in this theory is on the soft aspects politics, which in times of crisis tend to be more important for outcomes than formal ‘hard’ politics. Innovative leadership says Sheffer(1993) refers to:

dominant leaders who introduced new ideas or novel orientations... Leaders that succeeded to overcome and/or reconstruct the state apparatus and break through rigidities thus achieving significant impact... Innovative leadership becomes a matter of using limited resource to overcome whatever opposition and other contextual obstacle stand in the way ... short of use of force and varying with the circumstances success will depend on effective threats, on bluffing, manipulation and bargaining tradeoffs.. ..... ( pp. 5 -24)

Djindjić and Milosevic used limited resource and relied on ‘soft’ politics (manipulation bargaining tradeoffs) in order to obtain power.

Since both had limited authority within the existing institutional context(Milošević was a republic president ... Djindjić was a prime minister of dysfunctional government) in order to increase their influence they were prone to unprincipled coalitions. Moreover their actions were aimed at the existing institutional order by proclaiming it incompetent, unfair (in the case of Milošević ) criminal (in the case of Djindjić), they tried to legitimize their actions. In particular, Milošević forms an unprincipled coalition with the ultra-nationalists during his campaign to obtain power. He increases his political

power by organizing the 'spontaneous' anti-bureaucratic revolution, during which he replaces legally elected officials with his obedient followers; he abolishes Kosovo and tries to give legitimacy on his actions by claiming the 1974 constitution as unfair for the Serbians. He undermines the position of the federal government- ignoring the federal laws, and by pronouncing the federal government as incompetent, he tries to justify his actions. Djindjić acted in slightly different institutional setting, but in similar manner. He enters into unprincipled coalition with the Kartel in order to topple Milošević. In 2002 by using extralegal measures, Djindjić replaces 50 deputies from the parliament, by claiming that absenteeism by those deputies had blocked parliament's work; by doing so he gains the full support of the parliament for his actions. Despite the institutional constraints he delivers Milošević to the Hague tribunal and by claiming the judicial system is run by criminals he tries to give legitimacy to his actions. :“in a normal democratic society they would all be jailed”( Djindjić 2001, quoted in ed.Perovic, 2006, p.239). Djindjić also proclaims the president as the most important institution, but the person in position (Koštunica) as incompetent. “The duty of the Yugoslav president is to take care of the country's international position, ...” but he describes Koštunica politics as “cowardly, hypocritical and irresponsible”. By discrediting the president Djindjić promoted himself as the only one who is working on Europeanization of Serbia before the western powers.

The innovative leadership of Djindjić and Milošević moves well beyond using unconventional methods in order to gain power. Both of them introduced new ideas or novel orientations while 'gambling with history'. Both promoted questions such as: Who are we? Where do we belong? Djindjić and Milošević visions for the future, were not only distinct from the reality existing in their societies but also exceeded the visions of the people they led, thus gambling with history.

Milošević ideas varied from free-market reforms to nationalism. First he calls on people to abandon their "unfounded, irrational, and primitive fear of exploitation by foreign capital" (See Cohen, 1994), which soon turned into "seeking the historical rights"; the rest is history. Although the idea of Great Serbia was not something new, after half of century under "brotherhood and unity" it was not something that common Serbian people were interested in. Mass nationalism was a consequence of Milošević actions not perquisite; the dissolution was an elite driven process as Zimmermann, the last ambassador, has noted. 'Yugoslavia was destroyed from the top-down' (Zimmermann, 1993; p.vii).

In Djindjić's case those new ideas and novel orientation were more coherent and clear. He proclaims the idea of Serbia outside of Europe as a 'death idea' and the idea of European Serbia not as option but as 'matter of survival of the nation'. Djindjić also breaks the disastrous pattern introduced by Milosevic-- to respond to external demand only when all other options are exhausted-- and makes the first step towards Europe on the historical Vidovdan, 2001. The emergence of Europeanism in Serbia was (as argued in this paper) a consequence of Djindjić actions and not perquisite.

Lastly, Djindjić and Milošević had another feature common for innovative leadership. Both were predominant decision makers: In critical moments they were less prone to group decisions but have relied instead heavily on their judgment. They both surrounded themselves with obedient, followers as Protic (2006) notes. Only Milošević was feared, and Djindjić (judging by the events after he died) was admired, if not loved. Although they have used different instruments as their source of power, they treated them the same: like instruments. 'Party was a sort of ticket for Djindjić in order to come into position from where he will be able to act as a predominant decision maker, and here the role of the party ends' (Gligorov,2007; p.187).

Milošević used the masses in similar manner, as a ticket to become sovereign, and here the role of the people ended.

While the leadership of Djindjić/Milosevic can be confined in the broader conception of innovative leadership, in some aspects they differ. The notable difference is that Milošević's never had the courage/decency to break the unprincipled coalition with the nationalist (although, arguably, he was not nationalist himself) and relied on their support until the very end. Djindjić had the courage to break the unprincipled coalition with the Cartel, even if at the end he paid the ultimate price for this break up.

The consequences of Milošević's actions are well known (even if the dissolution was eminent, as many argue, the violence certainly was not) and the consequences of Djindjić's actions were discussed in details in this paper. To criticize Milošević's political conduct is a cliché. To criticize Djindjić's political conduct is an easy task. Still one should have in mind that Djindjić was building an order on the ruins that Milosevic and the likes of him left. As Phillip (2007) says "Rich sense of personal or professional integrity...is not available to those desperately attempting to shore beleaguered states or level the crumbling ruins of a tyranny. For such tasks other skills are required and individual integrity may be shallower, more difficult to sustain, and often more difficult to recognize or admire"<sup>13</sup> (p.3)

Innovative leadership can be force of creation or force of destruction-judging by the case of Serbia/Yugoslavia. Innovative leadership's are incident, but such incidents arguably have profound influence why we have lived in a unipolar world for almost 20 years, why we don't live in an unipolar world, today. Why

the Russian Model of reforms ended in disaster and why the Chinese reform model was successful. Innovative leaders demonstrate how apparently intractable obstacles are often subjective. The tendency and ability of innovative leaders to move on the verge of law, to break taboos and to test the existing constraints (whether they are historical, cultural or institutional), also to create new ones, makes them a phenomenon that deserves more attention. If politics is the art of possible, than innovative leaders are its finest artist.

To conclude this paper with the broader consequences of the leadership of Zoran Djindjić and the Europeanization of Serbia.

Serbia today is a successful story; it is not a country at the crossroads, but a country heading towards the transatlantic alliances. The Kosovo issue is slowly exiting mainstream politics while Russia is complaining on the friendly relations between Serbia and NATO. Today the Brussels-Washington influence is much stronger than that from Moscow--probably for the first time in history. This is important because "Serbia remains central to the stability and prosperity of the whole Balkan peninsula" (Keridis, 2006). And Balkans and Europe stability are interconnected as history reminds us on several times. Since history did not ended yet, Europe with revisionist Serbia and strong Russia behind it, would have been a completely different place from what it is today.

### Original contribution

- I have argued that Serbia's Europeanization process did not begin in 2000; rather it has remained an event with low probability. The death of the prime minister was not an obstacle for radical change (although intended as such), rather it was a catalyst for that change in Serbia. Serbia's course for Europe was marked in 2003.

- I have argued that Milošević and Đinđić resemble many similarities in their leadership behavior, and that they can be better understood through the concept of innovative leadership.

-The events central to this study demonstrate that a leader in times of crisis needs not extensive institutional authority or strong popular support in order leadership- as his personal traits, actions and ideas- to emerge as the determinant factor in outcomes. Judging by the events described in this case study, the question when the institutional, historical constraints become so severe so to limit a leader's ability to influence outcomes, remains widely open.

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