FROM MOSCOW WITHOUT LOVE

CEAS analysis on the occasion of 16th anniversary of the assassination of the Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic, 20th anniversary of NATO bombing of Former Republic of Yugoslavia and 70th anniversary of the founding of NATO – the Kremlin structures against Djindjic’s dream of Serbia

Belgrade | March 2019
The month of March has been a difficult period for Serbia over the last twenty years. It is the time of the year when we remember the NATO bombing of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in 1999, assassination of the late Prime Minister Djindjic in 2003 and violent events in Kosovo in 2004. This year in March we have also witnessed an unacceptable radicalization of the protest #1od5miliona, which CEAS is warning against and denouncing in strong terms.

The manner of remembrance and interpretation of these anniversaries and media coverage of the ongoing protest #1od5miliona are the litmus test for the local and international media, civil society, academic community, pundits, experts and the international policy makers. This is also an indicator of dedication of local politicians to the objectives and interests of continued democratization of Serbia, progression towards the Euro-Atlantic world, and resolution of Belgrade-Pristina dispute, namely, the goals which late Prime Minister Djindjic, his associates and general public fought for using non-violent methods.

The non-violent methods of struggle opted for by the late Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic, who was assassinated on 12 March 2003, and his Serbian associates and majority of Serbian citizens on the one hand, and Serbia’s Western friends, first and foremost the USA, on the other hand, as the key method of supporting the oppressed citizens of Serbia to dethrone Slobodan Milosevic’s bloodstained regime in the period 1999-2000, are the most commendable legacy of the period which must not fall into oblivion.

Part of this legacy of non-violent methods was an invitation extended to the members of the police, Army and security agencies to act strictly in accordance with then current Constitution and the laws of the FRY, which at least formally included the element of civilian control, in spite of widespread public knowledge of the heinous crimes that had been committed. It should be emphasized that the amendments to the Geneva Conventions were included in the manual distributed to all members of the FRY armed forces at the time.

The heroic attempts of late PM Djindjic and majority of Serbian citizens to topple Slobodan Milosevic using non-violent means were taking place under conditions that bear no comparison to the circumstances surrounding the rallies known as “Stop the Bloody Shirts” (@STOPKrvavim) and “1 of 5 millions”, (#1od5miliona) that have been going on throughout Serbia since the winter of 2018. These protests were launched after an unacceptable and violent incident involving members of the ruling coalition and one of the opposition leaders who was severely beaten. The idea of the protests was to confront “the widespread culture of violence in Serbia instigated by Aleksandar Vucic, President of Serbia, and his regime.” These rallies were supported or directly organized by a wide coalition of small political parties and citizens’ groups, but public support (total) is just about 20% according to current polling results.¹

More importantly, these protests cannot be seen as a non-violent movement because the keynote speakers in the protests are inviting active personnel of the security forces to violate provisions of the Constitution and positive laws that require democratic oversight of the security forces! We must
emphasize that active servicemen of the Serbian security forces are obligated by law not to take part in any political activities whatsoever.

Another major difference is the fact that the non-violent movement that toppled Milosevic back in 2000 was exposed to systematic disinformation campaigns organized by the regime. In spite of this the movement refrained from launching any disinformation campaigns of its own, especially those that might instigate use of violence, which, unfortunately, is not the case with the movement #1od5miliona and their rallies.

The late Prime Minister Djindjic was the prime target of the systematic disinformation campaigns both when he was alive and after his death. Daily disinformation presented to the Serbian public included claims that he “invoked NATO bombs”, although he explicitly stated in the interview to German Spiegel the following: “Milosevic should try to avoid a military conflict by all means.”

According to the methodologically relevant census, during the NATO bombing of FRY there were 754 casualties caused by NATO—civilians, military, police officers and others. During the NATO air strikes, 101 persons under 18 years of age were killed: 66 Albanians, 24 Serbs, 9 Roma, 1 Bosniak, and 1 Goran. Among them 64 persons were under 14: 46 Albanian, 14 Serbian and 9 Roma children. There were 44 under 10: 35 Albanian and 9 Serbian children. At the same time, campaign caused huge material damage. A series of events scheduled for March 2019 will mark the twentieth anniversary of these traumatic events in Serbia.

Though they are taking place at an extremely complex political moment, when Serbia is marking the 20th anniversary of NATO bombing and striving to maintain its commitment to the efforts to reach a peaceful agreement regarding Kosovo, the ongoing protests seemed mostly peaceful, at least until the illegitimate breaking of several of the protests’ political leaders, like Dragan Djilas and Bosko Obradovic, and several dozens of their followers into the Radio Television Serbia (RTS) building in mid-March 2019. However, calls to violence were evident in one form or another even before this night. The organizers failed to distance themselves from the banners calling the police and army to take unconstitutional action. Also, in spite of pathetic and lip service declarations of refusal to take a political stance, the organizers allowed the deeply compromised Military Trade Union of Serbia (abbreviation in Serbian - VSS) and the Police Union of Serbia (abbreviation in Serbian - PSS) to join the protests. The Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies (CEAS) has been extensively reporting about their illegitimate and illegal activities that have been going on in plain sight for several years now.2

\[Image\] The support of the Police Union of Serbia to the political protests #1od5miliona, March 2019

\[Image\] Novica Antić, an illegitimate representative of the Military Trade Union of Serbia and Vyacheslav Kalinin, Vice-President of the Russian military veterans and security services Association "Boevo Bratsvo", November 2017

\[Image\] The incursion to the building of the Public National Radio Television of Serbia RTS during the political protest #1od5miliona, 16 March 2019
Non-violent methods of struggle draw their legitimacy from the nature of the regime against which they are being used, the socio-political circumstances and general situation. In respect of strategy and tactics — they are non-violent. Bearing in mind the above facts, it is our assessment that the protests taking place in Serbia under the name @STOPkrvavim and #1od5miliona, allegedly organized to address the “atmosphere of violence in society,” deviate significantly from their non-violent essence, although they are being presented as such.

The abovementioned labor unions of the Army and police and their alleged official representatives do not act in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Serbia (RS) and in their public appearances they overtly invite members of the security forces to disrespect the laws and the Constitution - in essence, the very basis of democratic control. They justify their “need to take matters in their own hands” by their own arbitrary assessment of the political situation in the country!

Serbia of 2019 is negotiating on the European Union membership, has completed the first cycle of the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO and is in the process of harmonizing the second cycle. There are also many other positive trends that are rarely discussed which we highlighted at our VI Belgrade NATO Week held in November 2018.

But, probably most aggravating circumstance under which these protests are taking place is currently halted process of achieving a peaceful and multidimensional agreement between Belgrade and Pristina, and the fact that many structures, both local and international, have vested interests to see it fail.

Therefore, incorrect assessment of the political situation by all key protests’ leaders, the two mentioned labor unions’ (illegitimate and legitimate ones) included, must be seen not only as an excuse for an attempt to come to power by abusing the strategies and tactics of non-violent forms of protest against autocratic and severely oppressive regimes or dictatorships. The timing of their emergence and the fact that all political actors leading them are against a compromise solution between Belgrade and Pristina, labeling it as “treason”, must also be taken into consideration.
It is therefore indicative that almost none of the domestic and foreign media, especially Deutsche Welle, which for months reported about allegedly non-violent protests #1od5miliona, all the way to the risky and illegitimate incursion in the Public Service Broadcaster building – Radio Television of Serbia (RTS), accidentally or deliberately failed to report on participation of members of the Serbian security system in the de facto political protests, which is illegal, as well as the numerous pro-Kremlin structures and direct Kremlin connections of all political leaders of the protests.

CEAS emphasizes that in the night of taking the RTS building Novica Antić, former president of the Military Trade Union of Serbia, legally dismissed from the Serbian Armed Forces and known for his aversion to democratic control of the armed forces, anti-immigration policies, pro-Kremlin stands and connections, strong criticism of the compromise solution between Belgrade and Pristina and increasingly obvious political ambitions – addressed the protesters as a key note speaker, before their incursion in the building, with a highly inflammatory speech in which he de facto invited generals of the Serbian Army to refuse orders from the competent government bodies. CEAS failed to find any relevant media reports on this event which is in our opinion the KEY event of that night. On account of great complexity of the situation and announcement of a large rally scheduled to be held on April 13, 2019, which Novica Antic also mentioned in his extremely dangerous speech.

Speaking of the suffering of Serbs in Kosovo in March 2004, he made a series of inaccurate statements, most likely deliberately, to instigate rage against international structures maintaining peace in Kosovo, first and foremost against KFOR. He could have been acquainted with the correct information if he only had read the UN Secretary General Report of April 2004. After that, the protestors shouted: “Go to Kosovo!” addressing the regular police units that were moving towards the RTS building.

In his address, Antic, among other things, demanded the following: disbanding of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia; overthrowing of the government; dismissal of the Republic Public Prosecutor Zagorka Dolovac. Furthermore, he insisted that “every Serb today should be against them and their dictatorship”.

 Flags of the Military Trade Union of Serbia on political protests #1od5miliona, February 2019

“Today in Serbia, which is on the historical turning point, there has to be a responsibility and someone has to take it! The Serbian army has always been and will always be with the people! This must be clear first to those at the head of the army who make important decisions and who must protect the constitutional order, and not the individuals in power who abuse it and who came to that same power in the same way that we had the opportunity to see last night. Generals at this moment have the greatest responsibility for the peace and tranquility of citizens and must not allow to be under any influence.”

Military Trade Union of Serbia statement the day after the incursion of the protesters #1od5miliona to the building of the Radio Television of Serbia, 17 March 2019

Novica Antić, an illegitimate representative of the Military Trade Union of Serbia, addresses gathered protesters at a political protest #1od5miliona in front of the Radio Television of Serbia building, 16 March 2019
For April 13, 2019 (when another opposition gathering is scheduled) he announced “the start of the third Serbian uprising”! Antic boasted on behalf of the Serbian soldiers and Serbian policemen that they will “sweep them away in a couple of days”. His message to Serbian generals was: “On April 13, look up to your colleagues in France” where allegedly 14 generals signed up to support the people, and Macron had no choice but “to give up”.

We emphasize that Novica Antic used another opportunity to blatantly invoke violation of democratic oversight of the security system just a couple of days ago, when he stated, at the #1od5miliona rally in Vranje, the following: “Serbian Army will never be with those who oppress their own people. No government will ever be able to use us against our own people. We do not represent the Serbian Army, which should be neutral in partisan and political sense, but our families and friends!” According to Serbian laws, they cannot participate as “members of their families’ representatives “ in political rallies.

Soon after the provocative incursion into RTS building, Antic’s colleague, Veljko Mijailovic, who is also the head of deeply compromised Police Union of Serbia, in an interview for the portal ironically named Istinometer Portal (“Truth-meter”), presented a series of conspiracy theories and lies and de facto called for unconstitutional and illegal actions of the members of security system, following the steps of above-named Novica Antić. Unfortunately, his flagrant views have not attracted an adequate journalistic and editorial critical review, including the view that the police should be independent from authorities (autocephalous) and that the presence of members of the unions in street demonstrations, with an unknown political platform, is a form of rebellion!

Bearing in mind that participation of VSS and PSS in rallies #1od5miliona have been covered only in an article by Voice of America, in which CEAS was quoted, but which does not address the legal grounds of its work and numerous breaches of the Serbian legislation, CEAS urges all readers of this report to hear the entire speech from March 16, 2019, held in front of the RTS building, which can be found at the following link: https://www.facebook.com/www.vojnisindikatsrbije.rs/videos/444863102921294/

As well as to read the compilation of CEAS’ announcements that we have made in last several months, warning the public about their illegal activities. “More and more pro-Putin tracks on path of anti-Government protests that spread throughout Serbia”

In the nutshell, CEAS is using this opportunity to remind the readers once again that though freedom of speech is guaranteed by provisions of Article 10 of the Convention on Human Rights, this freedom also entails certain obligations and responsibilities which are clearly outlined by local legislators, namely:

- In Article 12 of the Law on Army it is stipulated that the Serbian Army at all times shall remain neutral with regard to ideology, vested interests and party politics,
- One of the gravest disciplinary violations according to this Law is violation of the principle of impartiality and political neutrality or expressing and advocating political views while in the army service,
- Special collective contract for the government employees also specifies what are the major violations of work duties and obligations, including participation in the managing bodies of political parties or expressing and advocating political affiliations in the course of work for the employer,
Local regulations also stipulate that trade unions cannot take part in elections, and this model of influencing political life and political trends is not tolerated.

Beside the fact that these actors and structures, primarily the military and police unions of Serbia, act in contravention of the Serbian legislation, falsely identifying themselves as victims of non-democratic persecution, it is precisely them who believe that General Vladimir Lazarevic, war criminal convicted in the Hague-adjudicated case of crimes perpetrated in Kosovo, is actually a hero. It is them who signed the memorandum of understanding with the Russian veteran association “Boevo bratstvo” led by Viacheslav Kalinin, close to notorious Konstantin Malofeev and are hosted by the Russian Duma in front of our eyes. Both from the aspect of illegitimate Russian influence and from the aspect of systemic disinformation campaigns, it will be most useful to monitor closely how they will organize the scheduled forthcoming 20th anniversary of NATO bombardment of the FRY, and what the exhibition at the Russian Duma, which they also announced, will look like.

VSS’s and Antić’s systematic and highly inflammatory disinformation campaign against the immigration policy of the Government of the Republic of Serbia also failed to register as a major and important phenomenon against which a large number of NGOs and portals for truth-measurement and disclosure should react more energetically. Apart from the inaccurate presentation of the funds for the returnees, not migrants, allegedly taken from the budget earmarked for housing of the members of security forces, in which the labor unions antagonized the attitudes of the members of security forces and public in general towards migrants, the portal “Lepa Sumadija”, in which Antić is often advertised, published a text full of inaccuracies about Serbian government actually “bringing the ISIS to Sumadija”.

The policy of the Republic of Serbia towards migrants, and above all the reaction during the great refugee-migrant crisis in 2015, when Serbia expanded the scope of cooperation with NATO, is praise-worthy despite some shortcomings. It significantly contributed to the perception of what is happening now in Serbia, and not only through the optics of the nineties, but also in light of the recent terrorist attack in New Zealand and the circumstances surrounding the visit of the perpetrator to the region of the Western Balkans, which one must also bear in mind.

On the occasion of the security-wise provocative developments during the recent rallies, the non-representative Police Union of Serbia, also participating in the protests, issued an unfounded statement: “Violating his authorization, Stefanovic (the Minister of the interior) is issuing orders that put the citizens’ and police officers’ lives in danger.”

It should be emphasized that according to constitutional and legal framework of the Republic of Serbia members of the police and members of the military must perform their duties efficiently, professionally, impartially, in a depoliticized manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Police. Police Affairs “provides support to the rule of law and ensures the realization of the constitutional and statutory human and minority rights and freedoms ...”. In CEAS view the police actions undertook during the night of illegitimate incursion in RTS building where in accordance with laws and standard procedures.

The rallies that are happening in Serbia draw a lot of media attention in other cities in the region and around the world these months are often recklessly compared, although they are often very
different in terms of their goals and methods, but also political values and demands of both those who organize them and those against whom they are organized. There is even an umbrella description "Balkan Spring". We consider that the protests that have been taking place in Serbia since the winter of 2018 are something special and deserve special attention – which must leave behind the common generalizations such as “opposition coalition, including pro-right-wing Obraz” is for several months organizing rallies against the authoritarian regime led by Serbian President of Aleksandar Vucic”.

The similarly superficial assessment of events like “CNN effect” of the hasty declaration of victory of democracy after the famous October 5 events in 2000, when Milosevic recognized electoral defeat, was not helpful than, and is not helpful now either. Back than it was just the first step of a group of people that formally came to power, with Milosevic’s junta still holding power in reality. They were the same people who killed Prime Minister Djindjic in the assassination on 12 March 2003. And these structures may not have been fully disassembled in the 2019 Serbia.

In case of Serbia this is due to difficult and unresolved war crime legacy that had more detrimental effects here than in similar media-political rush cases after the first victories on the long and uncertain journey towards democratization in Ukraine, Georgia and in case of the “Arab Spring”, also hyped by mainstream media.

Back then in Serbia many did not necessarily know about all the crimes of Milosevic’s formally regular, but in essence profoundly irregular junta forces within the security system, basically paramilitary and para-police structures operating against Bosniaks, Croats and Albanians since the wars of the nineties. That is why we cannot afford to forget how this historic decision to deconstruct Milosevic’s system non-violently and the courage of some of the Serbian top brass officials, epitomized by the late Prime Minister, political parties and citizens who followed him, actually cost the late Prime Minister life and thwarted the hopes of faster democratic consolidation for anybody who wanted to instill the rule of law in Serbia, which implies democratic oversight of security system and Serbia’s profound integration with the structures of political West.

However, the Russian structures and their local partners that rejoiced after the assassination of Prime Minister Djindjic, which was actually the removal of the engine of Serbian democratization and its outreach towards the West, have been and still are dangerous. A journalist of the official Russian news agency justified the assassination of the late Prime Minister saying that it served him right.

Both before the assassination and, unfortunately, in its aftermath, on the Serbian list, usually compiled by the institutions of the political West, of priorities everything scored higher than the reform of security system which included many war crime perpetrators: tax reform, privatization, bank consolidation, lustration issues, everything....

The only process that substantially affected the security system was justified, though brutal and risky policy of the Western community insisting that the government must extradite the war crime indictees to the international competent court established pursuant to the UN SC decision – the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia of 1993, the famous Hague. One must not forget that this often meant realization of extradition within the highly controversial national legal framework, facing enormous political resistance and, of course, gross obstructions by large parts of the Milosevic’s apparatus which remained inside the new system. The indictees in most cases still held senior positions in the then Republic and Federal Government as well as in the Army, police and intelligence services of Serbia and the FRY.
These are unique historical circumstances within which the late Prime Minister Djindjic was working, together with his colleagues and adherents. The official Moscow, with an active disinformation campaign in the last couple of years, disqualified all the Hague verdicts and diminished the chances of continued trials before other courts. CEAS has been warning for years that the Kremlin and its spin off structures are attempting to establish cooperation with parts of the Serbian security system, indirectly offering impunity from war crimes, which is one of the most effective ways of achieving various Russian actors’ most likely desired goals of destabilization of Serbia and the Region. Yet it is the least addressed and analyzed one.23

It is crucial to bear in mind that the effective convictions for the murder of the first democratic prime minister of Serbia, Zoran Djindjic, were passed against precisely those persons from the security system who fought against the cooperation with the ICTY and thus against facing the responsibility for perpetrated crimes.24 In their attempts they even organized an armed rebellion as early as 2001. The Prime Minister’s closest aides managed to keep the rebellion of the Special Operations Unit (JSO)25 at bay with great difficulty, however they were unable to nip it in the bud because they lacked political strength and mechanisms for that.

Everywhere in the region of Western Balkans, and foremost in Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the process of reforming the security system and purging all potential war crime perpetrators and coup organizers is an essential part of any sustained peace process including the aiming to normalize the relations with Kosovo, which the late Prime Minister Djindjic also advocated for.

Not to forget that the late Prime Minister’s Government in 2001 pacified the illegitimate OVPBM (Liberation Army of Presevo, Bujanovac, and Medvedja - spin off of Kosovo Liberation Army KLA) in South Serbia, democratically and commendably, without excessive use of force and in cooperation with NATO.26

Unfortunately, in 2019, Serbia still cannot be categorized as a country with strong democratic control of the security system,27 although it is facing difficult historical decisions once again and a new surge of too excessive conditionality policy. This time it is exerted mainly by Germany, formally expecting Serbia to violate the fundamental principles of democracy and rule of law for the sake
of the alleged continuation of European integration and take decisions on a new form of relations with Kosovo, possibly without majority support.28

The impression is that the USA, and even NATO, are once again more genuinely supportive of Serbia's democratization and better understanding all the circumstances that Serbia, the region of the Western Balkans and the world are in. This also implies the acknowledgment for the difficult reforms that Serbia has undertaken against all odds over the years and all security implications of obstructing the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, which Pristina has been conducting without any valid arguments.29

The year behind us was marked by numerous occurrences undoubtedly indicating that the Kremlin and its informal structures operating in Serbia, as well as their Serbian supporters and allies, have no interest in finding a comprehensive and multi-dimensional agreement between Belgrade and Pristina on normalization of their relations which would not leave Serbia utterly defeated in the “negotiations” - thus keeping it on the track to European integration. This,30 by the way, is the framework for normalization of relations with Kosovo advocated by the Serbian national leadership, enjoying CEAS full support.31

In the past few months, CEAS has warned against the circumstances which give us credit to be suspicious that Kremlin structures, together with its adherents in Serbia, has entered a stage of implementation of active measures against democratic oversight of Serbia’s security system. These measures can have a disastrous regional and global impact, preventing achievement of the very much needed agreement with Kosovo, which would take into consideration the legitimate interest of Serbia too, along with the new geopolitical circumstances. CEAS calls the local and international actors to especially follow, in that regard, the activities of Ana Filimonova historian from Russia and expert for Balkans, until recently senior editor-in-chief of the Fund for Strategic Culture in Serbia.

CEAS especially calls on the interested parties to pay attention to the actions of the three persons: Danica Grujicic (formally does not participate in the protests), professor of Medical School of Belgrade University, who has been campaigning for two years now and spreading disinformation about the non-existent cancer epidemic in Serbia, allegedly caused by the use of depleted uranium ammunition during the NATO bombing, with great media support primarily from the daily Večernje novosti23 and the Belgrade Sputnik newspaper,33 and since recently in cooperation with the so-called Russian humanitarian mission;34 Mladjan Djordjevic from the Alliance for Serbia,35 oppositional political group behind the street rallies #1od5miliona,36 a close associate of mentioned Dragan Djilas, but also of the Kremlin RISI, until recently headed by Leonid Petrovich Reshetnikov, former Lieutenant-General of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, and others from the Kremlin establishment, including the Russian Orthodox Church; and already mentioned Novica Antic, an illegitimate representative of the Serbian Military Union,37 association of the active members of the Serbian Army, who violate the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Serbia with their actions.38
All the above mentioned persons, and all political leaders of #1od5miliona protests, are very much present in the public landscape and they are all adamant against any peaceful compromise between Serbia and Kosovo, in advance calling it a treason and violation of the Constitution, which of course is not true, since it is assumed that any proposal of the agreement, just like the recent settlement of the dispute between Greece and North Macedonia, would have to go through parliament or receive another form of democratic verification. They, like most other “leaders” of the protests, have a similar ideological pro-Kremlin social-national orientation, strong Kremlin connections, some have anti-immigration attitude, and will not hesitate to run systematic disinformation campaigns in their public activities.

So it is not surprising that the manifesto “Agreement with people” which was offered to the public by the leaders of the Alliance for Serbia, which is de facto organizer of the rallies, does not mention at all European integration as a way of democratization of the society. Oddly enough, or not, just the violent elements, this circumstance about the rallies’ political nature is also almost not mentioned at all in otherwise wide media coverage of the rallies.

Mladjan Djordjevic, who is a close associate of one of the leaders of the #1od5miliona protests and perhaps the man who is funding Dragan Djilas, his connections with the Russian Orthodox Church and Medvedev family, his visits to the illegally annexed Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, connections with the Serbian Orthodox Church, probable actions against the realization of Montenegro’s independence and controversial coordination of Serbs in the region – all of this has been examined in detail by CEAS in the report on the strengthening of Russian soft power in Serbia – Eyes Wide Shut, published in 2017.

In capacity of the head of organization “Our Serbia”, on the occasion of signing an agreement on cooperation with the Russian Social Organization “Assembly of the Peoples of Russia”, Djordjević, very close to opposition politician Dragan Djilas, said the following: “The European Union is conditioning EU membership by making requests that are unacceptable for Serbia, such as recognition of the fake state of Kosovo, while EU member states and NATO are pressuring our country to impose sanctions on Russia. These requests are unacceptable for us and therefore Russia, with support of many eastern countries, whose representatives are present here today, remains the only source of support for Serbia in its attempts to protect its territorial and even more importantly spiritual integrity.”

As already mentioned, the organizers of the weekly rallies #1od5miliona, which started under a slogan “stop the blood-stained shirts” (@STOPkravim), leave the impression that they are aiming primarily to obstruct the attempts to reach a peaceful compromise between Belgrade and Pristina, even at the price of escalation of violence. At the same time, they marked the anniversary of the Prime Minister’s assassination trying to profit from that, presenting themselves as guardians of his legacy. One of the main protest organizers, its most salient figure, deeply
compromised actor Sergej Trifunovic, publicly glorified the “war” in Kosovo waged by one of the convicts sentenced for assassination of Prime Minister Djindjic - Milorad Ulemek Legija.43

Let us not forget that during the Kosovo conflicts Serbian armed forces killed around 8,000 Albanian civilians, and around 1,400 before NATO commenced bombing campaign in FRY.44

Sergej Trifunovic, one of the leaders of the protests being presented as protests against violence in Serbia, literally stated in the year 2019 the following: „Legija waged a war in Kosovo against the KLA. He didn’t beat Serbs in the streets. Sometimes, when he got drunk, he would strike people in clubs and snatch their earrings off. But those are two diametrically different things.45

On the basis of the above findings, after illegal incursion of protestors in the RTS building and other provocative actions that took place during the weekend of mid-March 2019, we are now even more convinced that these developments could cause incidents that can get out of hand. This could cause a range of consequences, from undermining the great progress Serbia has made to at least bringing the cooperation with the ICTY to an end, curtailing the already slow process of proceeding the war crimes before domestic courts. We underline again many positive trends evident in Serbia, like the last year’s change at the helm of the Serbian Army,46 any yet these trends still find their way to the Western decision-makers, commentators, analysts of the regional affairs and media much too slow. Why is this being additionally aggravated and in whose interest?

The structures described above, with their systematically orchestrated dissemination of disinformation on the events from the nineties, never mentioning the crimes against Kosovar Albanians, for example, just as the Kremlin officials and the Serbian section of Sputnik never mention atrocities of Serbian forces against Kosovo civilians when they impart disinformation on the causes that triggered NATO bombing of the FRY,47 while supporting those from the security system who glorify the convicted war criminals and in violation of the Serbian laws participate in the protests “against violence”, calling upon “the Army and the police to take justice in their own hands”, as in case of the two leaders of the mentioned unions, make legitimate, we fear, already alarming absence of support for transitional justice in Kosovo.

Who would find such a course of events in Serbia and the Western Balkans region conducive? Serbian Government, EU, and the NATO Member States endeavoring to reach a multidimensional, peaceful and democratically supported agreement between Belgrade and Pristina, would not by any means.
CEAS specifically warns that Grujicic, who started her anti-NATO campaign based on lies and spreading panic instead of facts, began a few years ago in Herceg Novi in Montenegro, when that state was preparing to start a public campaign for NATO membership, with extensive media support of the pro-Kremlin portal IN4S.68

Practically unchecked, for almost two years she has been misinforming the public in Serbia about the cancer epidemic in Serbia, allegedly caused by depleted uranium ammunition used during NATO bombing. CEAS Director Jelena Milic, appearing in the same TV show with Grujicic, presented irrefutable evidence of Grujicic’s involvement in an anti-vaccine campaign, which she tried to hide with the help of friendly media. Let us remind you that the real epidemic of measles in Serbia has taken 15 lives. Unfortunately, many platforms that deal with disinformation did not deal with this great systematic campaign.

Namely, at the public event organized at the faculty of Political Sciences on March 2017,69 Grujicic, among other disinformation, like the World Health Organization (WHO) being an exponent of the USA military defense industry, stated: “If for our children vaccine is made by those who will give it to their own children then it’s fine. And that is why we all need to get out into the street. One day we will need to get organized. I will be the first to get out to the street. Torlak must be saved, it is a strategic matter. Let us presume that everything is excellent and that the vaccine is of good quality, but if you will not recognize Kosovo, I will not give you the vaccine for your child. Let your children get sick.”

CEAS wrote extensively about the activities of Grujicic, as well as others who almost without bounds and any public response, even by NGOs and anti-disinformation portals, have compromised the Serbian public with the systematic disinformation campaign regarding the alleged fatal consequences of the NATO bombing of the FRY, which she described as “the ecocide” and NATO’s intentions as “genocidal”, in the report of July 2017 Basic Instinct - For more NATO in the Western Balkans.51

Grujicic’s latest start-up campaign, which is promoted these days - the founding of the “Together for Youth”52 Foundation, is probably just another platform for realization of unfulfilled political ambitions, following the collapse of the presidential campaign53 in which she participated in 2012, the campaign “For a Healthy Serbia” and similar. All of these are characterized by an ideology...
similar to that promoted by Sergey Baburin, the leader of the national-conservative party Russian All-People's Union, and many of their activities were conducted in public buildings of all taxpayers of Serbia, primarily pedagogical and medical. Although deeply compromised by participation in an anti-vaccines campaign that has actually taken 15 lives in Serbia due to a real epidemic of measles, Grujicic was recently selected among the top ten women in Serbia in the poll of one of the edition of the big media company Ringier Axel Springer - Blic Woman, and the daily paper Blic also included her among the hundred most powerful women in Serbia, against which CEAS fought by demanding that Blic takes off the name of Jelena Milic, CEAS director, from the said list, so far unsuccessfully.

We emphasize this especially because the Serbian public found out about the latest Grujicic’s organization when, indicatively, just a few days after the Kosovo government decided to impose taxes on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina the delegation of the alleged Russian humanitarian mission visited Serbia. The delegation included: Pavel Sergeyevich Dorohin – Russian Duma MP, President of the Russian Committee for the Protection of General Mladic, Deputy President of the Russian Communist Party and author of the book “The Last Battle” about General Ratko Mladic; Valery Viktorovich Ivanov - chairman of the parliamentary group for cooperation with Serbia; Yevgeny Primakov - Russian journalist, Russian Duma deputy and director of the “Russian Humanitarian Mission” and Mikhail Bondar - head of the Russian humanitarian mission for the Balkans.

In a dramatic address to the public, Pavel Sergeyevich Dorohin, a member of the Russian Duma, told the Serbian media literally the following: “I plan to go to the north of Kosovo by New Year to see how our delivery has gone, whether it has reached its destination. If they do not allow us to deliver medicines, then they will provoke anger of the international community, which will proclaim them cannibals.”

CEAS especially emphasizes that Grujicic, who allegedly could not appear for personal reasons, sent a welcoming letter to the members of the delegation, stating that delivery of medicines would be organized in cooperation with the Foundation “Together for Youth” - Danica Grujicic! Little green men anyone?
Yevgeny Primakov Jr, was one of the many Russian speakers on several events/programs on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the beginning of NATO bombing of FRY, among which was organized the conference by the Belgrade Strategic Dialogue Foundation. CEAS will extensively, in its upcoming report, cover Sputnik Serbia almost hijacking the commemoration of the entire anniversary by amount of events and texts produced and syndicated. At the moment of publishing of this Analysis, Sputnik Serbia is running 78 days long “special program” which already has a lot of disinformation about the bombing and circumstances that preceded it.60

CEAS notes with particular concern the two-year absence of a stronger institutional, professional, political, media and analytical-activist response to Danica Grujicic campaign of disinformation, which we find to be very dangerous. Instead, the local editions of large international corporations, such as Ringier Axel Springer, their Blic daily and the Blic Woman magazine, rewarded this kind of action, so in March 2019 Grujicic was included in their list “Top 10 Women of Serbia”.

Bearing in mind all of the above on the one hand, very complex political-security situation in Serbia and Kosovo and the fear that there will be provocations that could get out of hand and threaten the communication and trust of the competent state institutions of the RS and KFOR on the other hand, CEAS holds that the civil society organizations within the National Convention on the European Union and the Berlin Process, as well as other NGOs and portals designed for truth-measurement, debunking and fight against disinformation, numerous investigative (“investigative”) journalism, as well as EU and NATO member states’ governments, need to pay much more attention to the of violent features of the rallies, pro-Russian connections of those rallying and running perilous disinformation campaigns across Serbia.

In the light of the latest developments, from the incursion to the RTS building and onwards, we consider that the special attention should be paid to the calls directed to the members of the security system to take undemocratic and unconstitutional actions and their liaisons with Kremlin, using a pretext of struggle for more democracy in Serbia as a smokescreen. What democracy, the Russian type? In relation to these alarming circumstances, the criterion for reaction and new attitude must not be favoritism or odium and disappointment in individuals from the government and their current positions regarding Kosovo, but principles.

In March 2019, when we are marking yet another anniversary of the Prime Minister Djindjic’s assassination and NATO bombing, for us who remember: the illegal armed rebellion of the police Special Operations Unit in the year 2001 and the actual reasons for that rebellion – to exert pressure against cooperation with the ICTY, and the way it was “pacified”, leaving alone the perpetrators who eventually murdered the Prime Minister in March 2003 in this system of impunity; the media and political atmosphere in the society preceding the assassination of the Prime Minister, his criminalization and glorification of the anti-Hague lobby as well as the indifference of the Western international community at the time, loud silence of the allegedly supportive Western international community today and allegedly pro-democratic local actors regarding the fact that the rallies “against violence” and “for greater rule of law” across Serbia are also attended by the structures allegedly representing the interests of the Serbian security system forces, who are illegally opposing a peaceful and multidimensional agreement with Kosovo, not even hiding their Kremlin connections and preferences for such a system, all of this is absolutely unacceptable.

On behalf of the cause that the late Prime Minister Djindjic advocated for, and the actual causes of his murder – absence of democratic control of the security system and too much of conditioning policy which obstructed realization of difficult tasks such as continued cooperation with the ICTY
under such circumstances – we appeal primarily to the local actors, who are also marking the anniversary of the assassination of the late Prime Minister and NATO bombing, to take a clear position on the actions taken by Danica Grujić, Mladjan Djordjevic and Novica Antic, and those who provide them with political and media support, but also regarding the nature and the essential goal of the #1od5miliona protest.

The recent experience that Montenegro and the United Kingdom have undergone with Kremlin, teaches us that Kremlin and pro-Kremlin structures will not refrain from anything. For Serbia in the year 2019, the particularly aggravating circumstance is the similarity with the Serbia of the late Prime Minister Djindjic. Namely, due to the complex legacy on the one hand, and numerous new challenges on the other, the government was unable to publicly fight certain trends, as the Serbian Government and President of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic cannot address publically all the challenges they face and directions from which they come, keep Serbia on the right track-towards political West and secure majority democratic support at the same time.

The recent assessment by Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic in an interview on TV Pink on the day the protestors briefly entered the Republic of Serbia Presidency building, namely, that participants in the non-violent rallies on October 5th, 2000 “had legitimacy because they defended the will of the majority of people clearly expressed in the elections”, is commendable.

CEAS also commends President Aleksandar Vucic recent acknowledgment that “Serbia is aware of menaces it did in the past” made during official state ceremony of commemoration of the beginning of the 20th anniversary of NATO aggression on Serbia held in Nis.

Only few days after, President Vucic, on a very popular TV show with regional coverage in dialogue with CEAS director Jelena Milic, acknowledged that several Serbian NGOs (implying Humanitarian Law Fond whose data CEAS use in its reports) have most accurate data about human loses caused by NATO bombing.

On the other hand, not a single alleged anti-violence leader in society opposition movement STOPkravim #1od5miliona, who make a huge effort put in international focus state of affairs in Serbian media, have condemned increased presence of convicted war criminals on TVs and in print media. None of them, these days when we commemorate 20th anniversary of beginning of NATO bombing, have mentioned 1400 Kosovo Albanian civilians killed before March 24th 1999, tens of thousands who were expelled, or approximately 6000 killed by Serbian forces during the bombing and hundreds of thousands expelled. CEAS find very indicative the loud silence of those allegedly anti-violence in society in Serbia these days.

In April 2019 the Western World commemorates the 70th anniversary of the founding of NATO.

CEAS commends ongoing deepening and widening of cooperation between Serbia and NATO, that is going on under President Vucic leadership, and hopes that this trend, as well as the one of improvement in trust between two sides, will continue. Bearing in mind all challenges related to the process in which Belgrade and Pristina could reach multidimensional comprehensive agreement, and the fact that many state and non-state actors have interests in its potential failure, it is of the utmost importance for the security of the entire Western Balkans that this trends continue.

CEAS uses this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, a great friend of Serbia, extension of his mandate as Secretary General of NATO.

Therefore, once again, emphasizing the security and political complexity of the moment in which we mark the sixteenth anniversary of the assassination and, above all the need that Serbia achieves a comprehensive and multi-dimensional agreement with Kosovo for the sake of security and democracy, it is obvious that more and more local and international actors are trying to obstruct it using provocations that could easily get out of hand, we recall the great words of the late Prime Minister Djindjic from 2001: “I believe it is a greater honor to make history as a generation that
brought the Balkans into an era of peace and prosperity and permanently resolved the issues of its European appurtenance, than make history as politicians who obtained sovereignty or international recognition for their country.”

CEAS believes that Djindjic’s way is pursued only by those who struggle for a peaceful, comprehensive and multidimensional agreement with Kosovo and for Serbia’s continued European integration. For Djindjic’s strategies that will make Djindjic’s dream come true.

In Belgrade, March 2019
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Announcement of the new big rally on April 13, 2019 with participants from entire Serbia.
About CEAS

The Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies (CEAS) is an independent socio-liberal think-tank organization founded in 2007 in Belgrade, Serbia.

The motto which the CEAS follows in its work is “Progress, Determination, Influence”.

We stand for:

• Adoption of the principle of the precedence of individual over collective rights, without disregard for the rights which individuals can only achieve through collective action;

• Strengthening of the secular state principle and promotion of a faithless understanding of the world;

• Development and preservation of a more open, freer, more prosperous and more cooperative international order founded on smart globalization.

Our advocacy and research work is mostly focused on:

• Contemporary Serbian, Regional and Trans-Atlantic Foreign and Security Policies;

• Full Serbian membership in EU and NATO;

• Russian and other non-democratic influences on the stabilization and democratization of Western Balkans;

• Importance of connection between security sector reform and transitional justice in the post-conflict Balkans;

• Promotion of Responsibility to Protect, the international humanitarian and security doctrine;

• Overcoming of the democratic deficits of multiculturalism.


CEAS is the only member from the Region of South-Eastern Europe to have full membership in ICRtoP- the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect. The coalition brings together non-governmental organizations from all over the world to collectively strengthen the normative consensus for the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect (RtoP), with the aim of better understanding this principle, pushing for the strengthened capacities of the international community to prevent and halt genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and to mobilize the non-governmental sector to push for action to save lives in RtoP country-specific situations.

CEAS is a member of the Coalition for RECOM – a coalition comprising more than 1,800 organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia, advocating for the founding of the Regional Commission for establishing facts about war crimes and other serious violations of human rights committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 2001.

CEAS is among the most visible think-tanks in the Balkans, with a wide media, institutional and social outreach. CEAS has been quoted in leading prominent liberal media such as The New York Times, Washington Post, Politico, etc. In December 2016, CEAS Director Jelena Milic was elected as
one of the POLITICO 28 Most influential People in the annual POLITICO 28 list of people who are shaping, shaking and stirring Europe.

In mid-2018 CEAS became one of the 22 leading international organizations, and the only one from the Western Balkans, which are partners of the Atlantic Council (AC USA) on the new strategic project DisinfoPortal. AC USA is considered one of the most influential think tank organizations in the world.

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For more information about CEAS, our team and activities please visit our web site www.ceas-serbia.org and more information of an overview of all pending and completed projects can be found directly at https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/projects.