

Ñđăżí à Í î àà 2003 Āî äèí à è ì đăăñòî ĵăžè Āî æèží è ì đàçí èèè.  
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## **NEW POLITICAL PARTY IN SERBIA G 17 SIGNIFICANCE, OPPORTUNITIES AND PITFALLS**

by

Miroslav Djordjevic

On December 15, 2002 Serbia got yet another political party, G17. No one really knows (or cares) how many political parties are registered. Estimates place this number around 200! However, G17 is not "just another party." The decision of this hitherto "think tank" of experts and non-governmental organization (NGO) to officially and under its own banner enter the political arena may have far reaching implications for the future of Serbia. Indeed, the event is importantly changing the Serbian political landscape and dynamics.

G17 has an organizational nucleus for a political party. It is well-financed and is led by ambitious and somewhat politically experienced people. It also has credibility in Brussels and Washington. With its just announced program, its leaders are now fashioning political vision and platform. At its founding meeting, G17 leadership advanced the following principles: a clean break with the legacy of the communist past, readiness to render hard decisions, the need for all-encompassing economic and institutional reforms, social sensitivity for those affected by economic transition, a country ruled by laws, division of power and strict accountability, rights for minorities, preservation of Serbian state, and membership in the European Union.

Significantly for the Serb Diaspora is the view stated by the new party's president, Dr. Miroljub Labus. In his acceptance speech, he called for establishment of a true national consensus on key and critical issues facing the Serbdom. He rightly noted three imperatives which the Diaspora Serbs have been championing for over a decade: (a) that a clear definition of Serbian rational national interest is quintessential, (b) that political parties alone cannot and must not define it, and (c) that in addition to political parties other relevant forces in the Serbdom must be involved also. Dr. Labus named these other participants as follows: ".....organized labor, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), institutions of national importance (the church, academy and other institutions) and, of course, we need the Diaspora. This (task) we must accomplish together with Diaspora."

All this points to a good beginning. Nonetheless, the true test is just ahead; that is, translating these words into concrete deeds. The new party has a firm albeit narrow base of support. It is being perceived among the electorate masses as "elitist" and "globalist" if not anti-nationalist in its core orientation. Obviously, the Serbian people are truly fed up with the politics and politicians of the past decade. To benefit from this universal disgust and to succeed, G17 as any other political party must make a clean and uncompromising break with "politics as usual." It has an opportunity and a moment, however short they may be. First of all, the party must try to connect with the people and modify its "elitist" image. This connection will not be gained easily, inasmuch as the top leadership of G17 has so far not manifested the requisite sensitivities and understandings of the inner world of the Serbian people - their soul life. Secondly, another fundamental issue is whether the current leadership is capable of translating its competence in mechanics of power into a genuine understanding of the true metaphysics of power and the enormous responsibilities it confers upon power holders. In other words, can G17 truly be a party which serves the people, and not the party which wants to rule them. It seems that both of these key challenges will require broadening of the leadership ranks at the top with the right people who with their character and abilities will bring these new and indispensable leadership dimensions to G17.

It is too soon to tell whether G17 has the maturity and the fundamental vision of leadership to break away from the Serbian political model of the 1990s. It has potential, but that in itself is one of the heaviest burdens of true leaders.

Time is also running out for political inaction for all Serbs who sincerely are for the country and the people. It is increasingly apparent that the truncated DOS led by Djindjic will exploit writing of new Serbian constitution to continue to hang on political power. As they procrastinated with the Yugoslav constitutional agreement for the sake of their narrow political interests, so will they string along this forthcoming constitutional process into 2004 and, thus, delay their electorate demise until the very last lawful moment.

G17 has rightly and pragmatically decided not to make any political coalitions before the all-important parliamentary elections take place. At the same time, it is in the interest of both Serbia and G17 to have Djindjic fail in his delaying maneuvers. This may require coordination and joint efforts among all genuine patriotic forces. Serbia needs and must have early and honest parliamentary elections, since the country is presently in a serious crisis of governance. The sooner G17 comes out politically and in forceful favor of an early election, the better.

The persevering and strong campaign by Serbian Unity Congress and other Serbian organizations and individuals to secure rights to citizenship and to participate in the political and economic life of the Homeland paid off. G17 has now joined President Kostunica's DSS in recognizing the moral right and the practical necessity to meaningfully involve the Diaspora in affairs of the state and society. Also, leaders such as Velja Ilic and Nebojsa Covic have earlier declared their support for the Diaspora.

The Diaspora now has allies in Serbia for fulfillment of its basic expectations and its readiness to help the Serbian people make the transition to a moral society and a modern and prosperous country. These developments offer both a fresh opportunity and a new challenge in the period just ahead. The Diaspora Serbs must organize themselves in the most effective manner to optimally help the Homeland. This help is badly needed, since the country is still in an all-encompassing and grave crisis.

(First of three articles and analyses  
of the current Serbian political situation.)

## **Balkans continue to face Serious Social, Economic and Political Instability**

A special "Task Force: Balkan 2010" formed by Council on Foreign relations issued last month a comprehensive analysis and study of the current conditions in the Balkans with special focus on former Yugoslavia.

"After a decade of expensive involvement and peacemaking in the Balkans the United States and its allies are winding down their commitment in the region. At this critical juncture, the Balkan states are still besieged with problems which, if left unresolved, will lead to serious social and economic instability for Southern Europe." The Task Force insisted that USA must stay actively involved in the Balkans throughout this decade.

This is the overall conclusion of the report.

The Task Force was chaired by General Edward Meyer, USA (Ret) who was a former Chief of Staff of the US Army. There were 26 additional members, all involved with the Balkans. Some are rather well known names, such as William Nash, James O'Brien, Sadako Ogata, Daniel Serwer etc.

"To help the Balkans achieve stability and integration in Europe, the Task Force makes the following key recommendations:

- (1) Reorganize the international community's involvement in the Balkans around the European Union's Stabilization and Association Process and NATO's Membership Action Plan and Partnership for Peace program, with the goal of an orderly reduction of the overall international presence in the region by 2010.
- (2) Use "carrots" - such as access to privileged political and economic relations and favorable trade terms with Europe - and "sticks" - such as linking financial assistance to specific performance goals - to reward or compel political, economic, social and security reform.
- (3) Implement internationally-led law enforcement campaign, initially in Bosnia and Kosovo, to cripple the politico-criminal syndicates that threaten internal and regional security.
- (4) Establish the rule of law and develop transparent and accountable systems of criminal and civil justice that are fair to all citizens: eliminate discriminatory provisions from constitutions and statutes; increase law enforcement training programs with the help of international organizations and NGO's; arrest and extradite war criminals' and enact legislation to restore and respect property rights.
- (5) Restructure economies by reforming the banking, taxation, trade, and pension systems; accelerating privatization; restoring physical infrastructure; and developing the private sector through training programs and leading vehicles to small and medium-sized enterprises.
- (6) Return or resettle refugees and displaced persons in a way that respects individual choices.
- (7) Reform education and establish a vigorous civil society - including a free and responsible press.

Source: Council on Foreign Relations - Press Release, December 9, 2002

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## Competition for Best Literary Work on Saint Sava and Svetosavlje

The St. Sava literary competition was established in the desire to help the moral renewal of Serbianism, to have young people learn about spirituality and Svetosavlje (St.Sava's legacy). The larger the number of schools encompassed by this project, the more children and young people will acquaint themselves each year with their historical heritage. This year we have donors for 28 schools and can expect nearly 10,000 young Serb men and women to participate in the competition. All these schools have been contacted, the principals have been informed and sent the competition Regulations, and a letter was also sent inviting the schools to participate.

We encountered a fantastic reception everywhere. There was not a single school that was not thrilled by the project. They liked the idea of stimulating young people in this manner to ponder upon issues of importance which will enable them to understand themselves and their people. Additional delight was expressed in having this kind of link established with the diaspora. The schools immediately expressed interest in the names of the donors and requested more information about them which we tried to obtain through the Central Office: whether the donor or a close relative of his/hers was a pupil of the school, was he/she born in the given town, what does he/she and his/her family do now and so on.

Every school was asked to provide written confirmation of its participation in the Project over the next three-year period, and we have received this from about 90 percent of the schools so far. We expect the balance of the schools will similarly participate. Some of these joined in the project at a later date as the donors' proposals for schools continued to come until December 15. The topics were then forwarded to these schools and, in the course of December, depending on the school, they were distributed to the pupils.

Children and young people in the following schools were fortunate to get donors this year and to participate in the competition:

1. Elementary school Dragojlo Dudic, Mionica; donor Dragoslav Georgevich
2. Elementary school Kralj Milutin, Gracanica; donor Dragoslav Georgevich
3. Elementary school Zarko Zrenjanin, Nadalj; donor Milos Celovic
4. I Belgrade High school, Belgrade; donors Marie & Miroslav Djordjevich
5. High school Becej; donor Alexandar Dzigurski
6. High school Vrnjacka Banja; donors Paunka & Petar Gmitric
7. High school Sremski Karlovci; donor Mario Vuksanovich
8. High school Svetozar Miletic, Srbobran; donor Jelena Kolarovich
9. The Language High school; donor Dejan Markovich
10. High school Isidora Sekulic, Novi Sad; donors Geraldine & George Ostich

11. High school Novi Pazar; donors Danka & Aleksandar Pantich
12. Elementary school Bratstvo, Novi Pazar; donors Danka & Aleksandar Pantich
13. High school Kosovska Mitrovica; donors Danka & Aleksandar Pantich
14. Elementary school Branko Radicevic, Kosovska Mitrovica; donors Danka & Aleksandar Pantich
15. High school Mladenovac; donors Bogdanka Delic Pantich & Aleksandar Pantich
16. Technical school, Mladenovac; donors Bogdanka Delic Pantich & Aleksandar Pantich
17. School of shipping, shipbuilding and hydraulic engineering; donor Natasha Pantich Brkovich
18. Elementary school Karadjordje, Belgrade; donors Tanja i Dejan Pantich
19. Elementary school Jelena Cetkovic, Belgrade; donors Tanja i Dejan Pantich
20. Ninth Belgrade High school; donors Ljiljana i Ratibor Pantovich
21. High school Jovan Jovanovic-Zmaj, Novi Sad; donors Sofija & Kosta Papich
22. Third Belgrade High school; donor Mihailo Petrovic
23. Fourth Belgrade High school; donors Vera & Bosko Pop-Lazic
24. High school Zemun; donors Borjana & Bane Simic Glavaski
25. High school, Belgrade; donor Boba Stefanovich
26. High school Ivo Lola Ribar, Sremska Mitrovica; donors Vera & Zivota Stevovich
27. High school Jagodina; donors Jelena & Nenad Vukicevic
28. The St. Arsenius Theology High School, Sremski Karlovci; donor George Kolarovich

We congratulate and thank all the donors. We are especially grateful to the Pantich family whose numerous members responded to this wonderful drive and, among other things, remembered to include children from Kosovska Mitrovica. Of course, we owe special gratitude to Mr. Dragoslav Georgevich who launched this project last year, with a pilot project at the Mionica primary school, and who has been, all these years, the donor for yet another school: the one in Gracanica. This school, situated in a very hostile environment, is attended by around 600 Serb children. It is hard to describe the joy we felt when we presented the school principal with the donor's letter and the offer for the school to participate in the competition. Joy not only because the children will be able to reflect upon Svetosavlje and themselves, to have the chance to compete for the award and establish ties with the diaspora, but joy, most of all, because they have not been forgotten.

The board of the Literary Competition this year set the following topics which have already been forwarded to the schools that have donors:

- \* From Studenica to Hilandar, your spirit enlightens us to the present;
- \* The glory of Saint Sava's strong spirit shines through the centuries;
- \* Saint Sava showed us the grandeur of ordinary things;
- \* Svetosavlje, to remember means to exist.

The work must be written in the Cyrillic script, and the best among them will be selected by a three-member jury, consisting of teachers from the school and/or a cultural representative of the given town. On Saint Sava Day, the awarded work will be published and read before the pupils, and the award will be publicly presented. The award consists of a special commendation in the form of the SUC Charter which will state the name of the donor and the awarded funds. One prize is awarded in the case of a high school or junior college, in the amount of 100 US dollars, while two prizes can be awarded in the case of primary schools, the first one being 60 US dollars, and the second in the amount of 40 US dollars.

## **NEW DESIGN AND ORGANIZATION OF S.U.C. WEB SITE**

The internet team of the Serbian Unity Congress has reorganized and redesigned the SUC web site (<http://www.serbianunity.net>). This site, the organization's pride, is considered to be the biggest site devoted to the Serbs on the world Network. It is mostly in English and offers all types of information about Serb history, culture, spirituality, the wars during the last decade of the 20th century, as well as the latest news about all the projects of the Serbian Unity Congress. The site was the only Serbian media oasis on the world media "battlefield" when the Serbian people were experiencing the hardest of times.

The new site is of a modern design, in compliance with the most modern program-designing standards and, in view of the abundance of material, it is far more user-friendly than the previous site. Apart from the numerous sections and pages, the new SUC site has yet another novelty: all the material in the Serbian language will be presented in the Cyrillic script.

Worth mentioning is that our BLAGO site, <http://blago.serbianunity.net/> got the new look as of last month, the same look and feel as the other Serbian Unity Congress' sites. Also, many of our historical records from the last decade, and before, are archived in a special internet site <http://www.balkan-archive.org.yu/> that is used as a repository for historical data.

## **KARADJORDJEVIC SLAVA**

Since the return of the Karadjordjevic family to Serbia, and the first Slava which HRH Crown Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjevic celebrated at the Old Palace (now the City Council) in the year 2000, following the October events, the Serbian Unity Congress in Belgrade has been present at this celebration every year. The Slava of the royal family is an opportunity for reputable public figures, mayors and organization chairmen, the diplomatic corps and government members to gather at the old home of the Karadjordjevics in Dedinje. This year, the numerous guests were greeted at the White Palace by HRH Crown Prince Aleksandar II, HRH Crown Princess Katarina and Prince Filip, as well as members of the royal family – Princess Margarita (the first wife of Prince Tomislav), Prince Nikola (the son of Prince Tomislav and Princess Margarita), his wife Princess Ljiljana and daughter Princess Marija.

Mrs. Edita Kronic, SUC vice-president, who was visiting Belgrade at the time, attended the ceremony, together with the director of the SUC Belgrade office, Slavka Draškovic.

Princess Katarina was very pleased to meet with Mrs. Kronic and discuss their upcoming meeting in New York a few days later.

The president of the Serbian Unity Congress, Mr. Nenad Vukicevic, extended his best wishes to the Karadjordjevic family for their Slava on behalf of the Organization, and his message was personally presented by Mrs. Kronic and Mrs. Draskovic during their visit to the Palace. The message, among other things, says: "On the occasion of the Slava of St. Andrew the First Called, it is an honor for me, on behalf of the board and membership of the Serbian Unity Congress, to wish You, HRH Princess Katarina and the whole House of the Karadjordjevics a Happy Slava! May St. Andrew and the Good Lord bestow upon you a long life, full of happiness and joy in your work on helping our people".

## WASHINGTON

December 10, 2002  
Embassy of FRY  
Press Office

A newly appointed Yugoslav Ambassador in the United States, Dr. Ivan Vujacic, presented his letters of accreditation to the US President George Bush at the White House yesterday.

In his "Remarks to the President", Ambassador Vujacic said he was pleased that relations between Yugoslavia and US have improved dramatically since the restoration of democracy in Yugoslavia two years ago. "Our two countries are now united by a common commitment to democracy and the rule of law, as well as by a shared vision of peace, security and prosperity", he added.

Ambassador Vujacic assured President Bush that the Yugoslav government is firmly committed to mutual cooperation in war against terrorism. "Our two nations have recently cooperated in removing dangerous radioactive materials from Yugoslav scientific facilities, ensuring that these materials are out of the reach of potential terrorists. Most recently, Yugoslav authorities in cooperation with the United States have taken firm action in curtailing the proliferation of weapons to all states under UN sanctions"

In his Remarks to the US President, Ambassador Vujacic also welcomed the growing interest of American corporations in expanding trade and investment in Yugoslavia. He recalled the long history of excellent relations between peoples of Yugoslavia and the United States, allies in two world wars, in which the period of 1990's stands out as an aberration.

"The partnership between US and Yugoslavia is constantly developing, thus contributing mightily to stability and prosperity all across southeastern Europe. Active presence of US in our region will accelerate the transition to a full-fledged market economy with fully developed democratic and legal institutions", he said.



"At long last we are pursuing path of integration with Europe and friendship across the Atlantic, and future membership in the Partnership for Peace is a vitally important step on this course. We urge the United States to bring this latter step to fruition as soon as possible" he added.

Until he was appointed Ambassador of FRY in the USA, Dr. Ivan Vujacic was a professor of economics at the University of Belgrade. He earned his PhD in Economics in 1989 and was a research Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Ambassador Vujacic is also an experienced politician. He joined the Democratic party, (one of the biggest parties in coalition that toppled Milosevic) at its founding convention in 1990, and has since held some of its top positions. As a member of opposition to Milosevic, he was elected to the Federal Parliament where he served as an MP and Whip between 1992 and 1996. Ambassador Vujacic is not new to the United States. He was a Fulbright scholar at the University of Michigan between 1983-1984. He also participated in some of the conferences organized by the Aspen Institute and Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, and in 2001 he attended the Harvard Executive Leadership Program

Our patron St. Archangel Michael was celebrated in Washington at the property of the St. Luke Serbian Church. In spite of the snow storm that hit the Washington area two days earlier, the slava celebration was very successful. It was attended by over 80 guests including Father Irinej, member of the SUC Central Board, representatives from two embassies, former congressman J. Moody, Mr. and Mrs. Jatras and many others. Father Aleksa from the Washington parish blessed "zito" and "slavski kolac." Mira Jovanovic, President of the Washington Chapter, made an introductory speech followed by Mrs. Xenia Wilkinson, co-host of the slava, and Father Irinej.

The slava was also a fund raising event and once again part of the proceeds will go to the orphanage "Angelina Kojic" in Serbia.

Mira Jovanovic



Serbian Unity Congress is the organization of Serbs and their friends in the Diaspora.  
It was established in 1990. Its main goals are:

1. To sustain and nurture the Serbian heritage, culture and identity of Serbs in the Diaspora;
2. To garner the talents, experiences and abilities of all Serbs and their friends abroad in order to help economic, social, cultural and other positive changes towards a free political system and a moral society in Serbian lands;
3. To inform public opinion and key policymakers in the world about the true goals and aspirations of the Serbian people, as well as to endeavor to re-establish the Serbian good name and image damaged by the events of the past decade of relentless defamation.

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