# Aalborg University – Master

# Development and international relation

“Unfinished business” – Security reform of the so-called “secret police” as a way to democracy: Case study - Serbia

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# Abstract

The paper examines the security sector reform in communist countries after 1988. It is a case study of the unfinished security reform of the secret police in Serbia.

It begins with the explanation of the term “secret police”; Regime security theory describes the link between the weak state and authoritarian regime; Authoritarian theory demonstrates how the secret police behave in those circumstances; The problem will be observed from the security sector perspective and security sector reform perspective; The security sector reform should clarify how implementation of the reform may lead to sustainable development of the society into a new climate of democratic change. Although not an easy task, because the official history of the secret police exists in fragments, and there is no free access for everyone to the files and archives, the historical facts will be presented in order to establish and define close relations between Yugoslav and Serbian secret police.

Key words: Secret police, authoritarianism, weak – state, security sector reform, Serbia

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# 1. Introduction

Secret police is a global phenomenon. It is a part of political system of every country in the world. In authoritarian regimes secret police are used to control the citizens of a certain country and it can get the form of “political police” – serving the government in order to eliminate (sometimes completely) members of the opposition and those who would and could oppose the regime. It is important to mention that they are also “security agencies” nowadays; the expression “secret police” is most used for the police from the communist era – it is an institution that existed in the ex- communist countries throughout Europe and it will be used like that in this thesis.

From the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover up to KGB it was primarily focused on the maintenance the existing political system, protecting the state from the enemies within and using any tool necessary to retain the power. Very often secret police were a state within the state, with no control from the public or media, operating in secrecy. In the authoritarian regimes secret police are the main tool to protect political power of a certain dictator or authoritarian regime as a whole. Anomalies in the work of the secret police exists even in democratic states but the parts of democratic processes, such as open media or civilian control and parliamentary supervision, often prevent damage to the state.

All post-communist regimes had to face, especially during the transition process after the fall of the Berlin wall, a huge problem – what to do with their secret services? In a group of countries it was solved without disturbances; in the second group the problem it was more complicated but it was done, and in the third one - that process is still in its early phase and very fragile. So, what about Serbia?

Transition of the Serbian secret police and Serbian society started eleven years later than in the other ex-communist countries. Not realizing what the fall of the Berlin wall meant in politics and especially geopolitics, Slobodan Milosevic, who came to power approximately at that time, maintained the same system until he was overthrown in 2000.

Today, Serbia is not the only country in Europe that still does not have full control over its secret police. One might say that Russia, for example, is still stuck in the KGB era and others would accept that there are many other ex-communist countries not yet prepared to take control.

On 21 January 2014, accession negotiations between Serbia and the European Union were opened. For many Serbs it was the sign that Serbia was moving towards a better and different future and that the past was far behind.

Well, not exactly. Unlike many other ex-communist states, the secret police in Serbia have never been fully reformed. It is well-known that, since their very beginning in 1944, the secret police have been backbone of the regime. Concerning the fact that neither Yugoslavia nor Serbia has ever been democratic states, it is evident that the secret police have played a role which is completely different than in democratic countries (in Scandinavia, for example).

The full scale of crimes committed by members of secret police is still unknown. It is hard to reveal because many archives and files are still unavailable and the facts that are known are subject to revision and further analyzes because the data are often interpreted depending on the ideological background of the person who interprets them. The other problem is minimizing the scale and impact of incidents or data connected to a certain event.

EU officials have already stated that opening of the so-called, “secret” files of the state security service is not one of the basic conditions for Serbia’s accession to the EU. The suggestion that, so-called, “secret” files should be opened has come as a recommendation from the EU officials in order to remind Serbia that this is one of the necessary steps towards facing the past and the crimes committed in the name of the Serbian people during the1990s.

It is fair to notice that BIA – the present secret police in Serbia (the name of the secret police has been changed several times. The last one – BIA dates back to 2002), is not completely the same as it used to be in the Milosevic time; Radomir Markovic, the first man of the Serbian secret police right before and during Kosovo conflict, is now in jail for the murder of four officials of one of the opposition political party and Ivan Stambolic, a significant opponent to Slobodan Milosevic back in 1988 and possible candidate for presidential election in 2000 and that “According to the law, for the first time in modern Serbian history civil security-intelligence work is separated from the Ministry of Interior”.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Still, many crimes committed during the1990s and shortly after 2000 are still not solved and the issue of “state terrorism” is in the focus of politicians only in the pre-elections campaigns.

It is obvious that since 2000 Serbia has taken steps towards the reform of its military, police and intelligence sectors. While the reform of the army (military) sector has been done successfully, the reform of the police and intelligence sectors is still unfinished and it is not clear whether the reform is on standby or, due to the changes on the Serbian political scene, is abandoned. The biggest problem is the secret police.

***Problem formulation:***

**Since the reform of the security sector is a path towards democratization of the society (see Timothy Edmunds, “Security sector reform in transforming societies”, Manchester University Press 2007), what has to be done in the area of the secret police reform in order to finish democratization of the society? What is necessary to do in order to consolidate democracy? Are the proposed reforms suitable or something else has to be done, too?**

# 2. Methodology

The methodology part consists of the explanation how the topic was chosen and what sources were used. It is discussed quality of the sources and how they were used in the thesis. In addition, it deals with the appropriate extent of gathered information and limitations and obstacles that appeared during research.

## 2.1. Choosing the topic

Secret police in ex-communist countries has been the subject of scientific researchers for many years. The full scale was achieved after the fall of the “Berlin wall” in 1989 and dissolving of communist systems all around Europe. Still, the literature about the secret police in the Balkans exists in fragments and mostly in Serbian or Serbo-Croatian. The history of secret police from the beginning (in 1944 during the war) until today is almost unexplored.

The Balkans, on the other hand, is very often in the focus of the world attention. Many regards Serbia as a crucial “player” in the politics in this part of Europe and it is not because Serbia is the biggest country in the region. Serbia has a problematic past which it has been trying to overcome since 2000, when Slobodan Milosevic lost the elections and was removed from power. Fourteen years later, accession negotiations with the EU started and the inhabitants of Serbia are longing for a better future. But, the crucial things have never been done: facing the past, war crimes, opening secret dossiers and a full reform of the secret police. The parts of the secret police that have their roots in the Milosevic time are still influential in Serbian political life and it is believed that Serbia will not be a truly democratic country until they are discarded.

It is also very important to state that the author of the thesis is closely connected with the topic and that the authors belonging to the Serbian nation greatly influenced it.

## 2.2. Research design

The research design for this thesis will be qualitative, descriptive, exploratory and explanatory.

### 2.2. 1. Research strategy - Why case study and why Serbia?

Researchers claim that case studies are useful in providing answers to “How?” and “Why?” questions. They also claim that they can be used for “exploratory, descriptive or explanatory research”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Robert K. Yin claims directly that “In general, case studies are the preferred method when (a) "how" or "why" questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context”[[3]](#footnote-3). The author of the thesis believes that in this thesis all necessary conditions for doing a case study have been met and the objective of case studies - generalized knowledge about the role of the secret police in authoritarian regimes and how the reform of the security sector improve democratic processes in the state.

It has already been mentioned that the nationality of the author of the thesis plays an important role in choosing the topic. Nevertheless, it is fair to stress that for years many politicians have been closely observing what is going on in the Western Balkans in order to prevent any possible unrest in the area. Since the bloody war lasted almost the whole last decade of the 20th century, it is highly understandable. The Balkans is known as a “barrel of powder” and the source of constant turmoil. That turmoil is highly connected to Serbia and parts of Milosevic’s secret police that are neither reformed nor lustrated.[[4]](#footnote-4) Serbia started “the European way”, but it is certain that the European Union is not eager to deal with any unrest or problems, so it is obvious that the unresolved question of democracy (the unfinished reform and the secret police apparatus which has not been disassembled are certainly incompatible with democratic processes) in Serbia can destabilize the EU. In the light of events in Ukraine and Crimea, as much as in Bosnia, Serbia again plays an important role since many compare the situation in Kosovo and Crimea, and the Republic of Srpska problem is closely connected to Serbia. Since it is not clear whether the new Serbian government is taking Serbia towards Russia or the EU (despite what the government publicly claims), the problem for the EU could be that Serbia as a full EU member, may not vote for some actions against Russia, for example.

### 2.2. 2. Research approaches

The problem of the secret police and the actions of the secret police in Serbia in this thesis has several approaches. It will be observed from the perspective of the secret police itself from the macro level – what is secret police? Why does a state depend on it? What kind of states can control the secret police and which states are controlled by the secret police? From the perspective of the micro level, politics in Serbia, in general, will be observed as well as regime security and security sector reform (hereinafter referred to as SSR).

## 2.3. Selection and methods of working with data

Concerning the research design and the type of research, there are predetermined ways to conduct this analysis.

### 2.3. 1. Empirical data and collection method

For the elaboration of this thesis only second-hand data was used. Some data are highly questionable in the scientific community, especially the historical ones. It was not possible to carry out any field analyses, so the author did not conduct any qualitative or quantitative research. However, the author heard a lot of real-life stories from the periods after the Second World War and during Milosevic’s era. Unfortunately, many of the narrators are deceased now. The author can also witness to the events in her own family. In collecting data numerous experts in the field were consulted: university professors from both Denmark and Serbia, members of NGOs and specialists in the police.

### 2.3. 2. Sources

It is evident that there are many theorists who have conducted research about the secret police in general and especially in the ex-communist countries. And while they were very interested in the mechanism of Stasi, Sigurimi or Securitatea, there are still more data about the puzzle – why communism in Europe collapsed - than why communism appeared in the first place. Anyhow, besides sources in the field of theories, the greatest source of information was media – especially in the matter of secret police in Serbia. A great contribution in the elaborating of this thesis was given by many non-governmental organizations from Serbia: CEAS – Center for Euro-Atlantic studies[[5]](#footnote-5) as much as BCSP – Belgrade Center for security policy[[6]](#footnote-6), for example.

Timothy Edmunds’ work was valuable for studying SSR and the problem of the secret police in Serbia and Allan Collin’s “Contemporary Security Studies” for regime security – a.k.a. “weak state” theory.

Thomas Plate and Andrea Darvi wrote a book “Secret Police – The Terrifying Inside Story of an International Network” that opened many opportunities to understand what secret police is.

## 2. 4. Validity and reliability

It is extraordinary that there are no books about the history of the secret police in ex-Yugoslavia and Serbia. An exception is the book “In the Name of the People – Political Repression in Serbia from 1944 until 1953” (“U ime naroda – Politicka represija u Srbiji od 1944 do 1953”), by Professor Srdjan Cvetkovic who works in the Institute for modern history in Belgrade, Serbia. The book was published only in the Serbian language. Another exception is Christian Axboe Nielsen, History Professor in Århus University, who currently writes a book about the history of police in ex-Yugoslavia and Serbia. The only history book that covers the whole period is the book in the Serbian language “Serbian Secret Service”[[7]](#footnote-7) by Mark Lobi which is a pseudonym for Marko Lopusina, journalist and publicist, known for writing a number of books on Serbian diaspora and secret services and their role in contemporary Serbian politics. During the enquiry how reliable the books are as a source of data, the researcher got unconventional replies, such as “there is some truth there” and “be very careful in using his data”. Nevertheless, as a journalist, member of one of the opposition parties during Milosevic’s time and the first eye witness, the author of the thesis is convinced that she is competent enough to present correct historical data. Besides, the author checked some information from the book by herself and was able to establish what is reliable and what is not.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Needless to say that Serbia is the only ex-communist country that has never opened the so-called “secret files”. The government after Milosevic, at the beginning at 2001, made a decision to open some files and so that the citizens, who suspected that they were under surveillance of the secret police, could be able to see them. But, the accessibility was limited. Parts of documents with personal names were covered with black ink and citizens were not allowed to take them or discuss them. Until now, only the documents concerning the period until Tito death have been accessible. Those files were used by Professors Cvetkovic and Nielsen.

## 2.5. Limitations

There were several limitations during the elaboration of this thesis. The biggest problem, as it was mentioned before, was a history part. Despite the efforts to provide facts in English about the history of secret police from 1944 until today, it was not possible. The only thing now is to rely on the facts that exist and check them with relevant historians in Serbia and abroad. Anyone deeply interested in this part of the Balkan history must wait for the book of Aarhus History Professor Christian Axboe Nielsen to be finished. The archive of the secret polices of Yugoslavia’s and Serbia’s are still not available. As it was mentioned before, the so-called “secret files” are not opened and the most important facts at this moment (the period during Milosevic) are not revealed. Compared to Stasi, for example, almost nothing has been done in this area. Besides, it is the fact that after Milosevic had lost election in 2000, members of the secret police, destroyed many documents. Basically, we may never know how many important files were destroyed and how many were displaced in unknown directions. It will not be known until the reform of the secret police is done.

# 3. Theory

The theory part consists of the regime security theory – weak state theory and the authoritarian theory. The author of the thesis is aware that there are other theories and approaches to be used in explaining this problem. However, since secret police is typical for authoritarian regimes and characteristics of the weak state often imply deficiency in the security sector that procreate existence of forces that can be alienated from the legal coercive force in the society, it was logical that those two theories can contribute answering the research question. Further, both theories support cornerstones of the thesis: reform of the security sector and democratization of the society.

## 3.1. Regime security theory

There are two approaches to security. It can be said that the approach to security can be traditional (firmly military) and non-traditional. It is also possible to associate traditional security to realism – military security is important and the main object to be secured is the state. The non-traditional approach to security has appeared in the contemporary world and can be attached to the liberal approach to security. In this case, security is considered as a broader concept – not just security of the state but security of people, environmental and economic security, energy and health security and so on.

In the globalized world divided not into East and West, but into the rich north and poor south, regime security of the “poor south” states is in the limelight. Those states face a number of security threats and “the primary security threats facing weak states are potentially catastrophic and originate primarily, although not exclusively, from internal, domestic sources”[[9]](#footnote-9). Jackson claims that those threats are rooted in the state itself (specially the government) creating, as Jackson emphasizes “insecurity dilemma” for ruling parties. “The more elites try to establish effective state rule, the more they provoke challenges to their authority from powerful groups in the society”[[10]](#footnote-10).

Regime security theory states that “there are important empirical, conceptual, normative and self-interested reasons to attend to the security of developing regions”[[11]](#footnote-11). According to Jackson, in weak states is evident absence of “effective institutions, a monopoly on the instruments of violence and consensus on the idea of the state”[[12]](#footnote-12).Weak states are weak because of these three facts.

Caroline Thomas explains that the strength or weakness of a state is associated with its institutional capacity. She considers that there are two forms of state power: despotic and infrastructural. Despotic states exercise their power to impose rules on civilians. Infrastructural is all about the power of institutions in the state. She claims that one state can be weak in one or in the other way but she points out that the strong state has developed institutions and does not need to exercise the use of coercive power.

According to Barry Buzan, states consist of three components: physical base, institutional capacity and the “idea of the state”. Buzan seeks the strength or weakness of the state in the “idea of the state” claiming that it is important to what extent the society is identifying with the state. He stresses that weak state has failed to create a national consensus on the use of coercive force in the society and so it stays unclear how much force is necessary to use in a state to maintain order.

Basically, Jackson summarizes that there are three dimensions of the state strength that are important: infrastructural capacity – the matter of state institutions; coercive capacity – to what extent the state is willing to use the power to protect its authority and national identity – whether the population identifies with the nation- state and accepts it as legitimate. In the case of the weak-state, one of those three characteristic is missing. When the problem of using the coercive power exists, the role of the army in the state is marginalized and some other actors in the society start to play the leading roles. Mostly, they are rival politicians with their own private armies that sometimes consist of members of the secret police that stay uncontrolled by the state institutions; warlords; criminal groups; armed ethnic or religion groups; private security companies.

Just because the weak state is weak, Jackson claims that there are many security challenges it will be faced with. The role of the, so called, “strong man” or groups that are capable to certain degree, to use the coercive or infrastructural power, is sometimes evident. They are mostly politicians or some other kind of leaders (religious, for example) who put themselves above the state authority. Other challenges come from some social groups: ethnic groups, different protestors, religious groups. Alternative threats come from severely compromised state institutions. Jackson states that “increasing lawlessness and the eventual collapse of the government institutions can create a power vacuum in which the ruling elite simply becomes one of the several factors struggling to fill the void and claim the formal mantle of statehood”[[13]](#footnote-13).

### 3.1.1. The weak state “insecurity dilemma” and security strategies

Richard Jackson claims that the combination of the weakness of the state and internal threats makes a mix that causes a serious security problem. He calls it – the insecurity dilemma. “This condition of insecurity is self-perpetuating because every effort by the regime to secure its own security through force provokes greater resistance and further undermines the institutional basis of the state and security of the state as a whole”[[14]](#footnote-14).This kind of dilemma is basically caused by the so called “lack of stateness”[[15]](#footnote-15) and failure to create the monopoly on the instruments of violence. The whole concept of insecurity dilemma transforms either national or state security into the regime security.

In order to secure their own existence, ruling elites use various tactics. Since there is a lack of institutional capacity and legitimacy in the society, elites in the weak-state rely on “coercive power and state intimidation to secure continue rule”[[16]](#footnote-16). This is very typical for weak- state regimes. They use power to deal with the real opposition to the regime – imprisonment, assassinations, killings outside the court room, disappearances, using violent repression against political opponents, and manipulation with commodities that satisfy basic human needs in the society (like food or gasoline) and Jackson claims that - in extreme cases genocide, mass rape and ethnic cleansing are normal phenomena. The problem for the elites is that instruments of coercive power sometimes strive to independence and, they can thus become a threat to the regime. That is why the army is sometimes deliberately weakened and some other coercive instruments strengthen “fomenting rivalry between different services”[[17]](#footnote-17). The maxim *Divide et impera*  is sometimes essential for maintaining the regime in power and it can be used not only for security forces – it can be applied to state bureaucracies, religious groups, opposition politicians. Jackson claims that elites sometimes try to find forces that will support the regime. “Typically, this entails the establishment of elaborate patronage system, whereby state elites and various social groups are joined in complex networks of mutual exchange”[[18]](#footnote-18). “Mutual exchange” is a system of corruption.

According to Jackson, another strategy of the weak-state elites is ethnic manipulation or the politics of identity. Elites deliberately force conflicts between various ethnic groups in the society in order to prevent forming of the united opposition. One more method is manipulation with democratic political processes. Many weak-state depends on the help from the outside – international donors like the IMF or the World Bank, for example. The help from those institutions is almost always conditioned by a change in the society presumably, a democratic reform. In order to get help, elites often “support” the democratic process. Jackson reminds that many rulers survive transition to multi – party democracy and at the same time they retain the full control over the society. “…This involved monopolizing and controlling the media, the co-option of opponents, setting up fake parties to split the vote, gerrymandering, ballot rigging, candidate and elector disqualification, and manipulating the electoral rules”[[19]](#footnote-19).

It is important to mention that weak-state elites often find a powerful ally among the most powerful states in the world.

The biggest consequence of the existence of weak-states is security of their own citizens. “The threat is affected on several levels: repression and identity politics threatens their physical survival through the spread of violent conflict; and deliberately undermining state institutions and patronage politics threatens their welfare and livelihood”[[20]](#footnote-20).

It is needless to mention that, by their internal construction, weak-states can be nothing else but authoritarian states.

## 3.2. Authoritarian theory – classical and competitive authoritarianism

Authoritarianism is a form of government, as claimed by Encyclopedia Britannica. Authoritarianism is a “principle of blind submission to authority, as opposed to individual freedom of thought and action. In government, authoritarianism denotes any political system that concentrates power in the hands of a leader or small elite that is not constitutionally responsible to the body of the people”[[21]](#footnote-21).

Juan Linz in his book “Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes” claims that there are four qualities of authoritarianism: "political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism" without an elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some point in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones”[[22]](#footnote-22) .

Among authoritarian regimes it is possible to discover several subtypes. Linz identified two basic subtypes: traditional authoritarian regimes and bureaucratic-military authoritarian regimes. There are theorists (Mark J. Gasiorowski) who consider that it is enough to distinguish simple, military regimes and bureaucratic – authoritarian regimes.

All those types of authoritarian regimes have personal dictators in common. Ex-Yugoslavia as Milosevic’s Serbia was an authoritarian regime. Basically, all communist –socialist regimes were authoritarian.

Essentially, authoritarianism is characterized by strict obedience from the citizens who do not have individual freedom. It is “a way of doing politics where command comes before consensus, political power is concentrated to a leader or organism, emblematic institutions are undermined, independent discussion and participation are demeaned, political opposition is besieged or eliminated, and control over the electoral system whose intention is to transmit the will of the people, is obtained.”[[23]](#footnote-23)

Authoritarian regimes, according to Linz, rely strongly on key groups and prevent the expression of certain group interests (labor, leftists and religious groups, for example). That is why it is about limited (not responsible) political pluralism.

Authoritarian regimes, claims Linz, organize interest representation in a corporatist (not pluralist) manner. These interests are usually arranged by function.

Explaining the difference between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, Linz shows that in the latter one, the boundary between state and society is not diminished. States allows private organizations to exist as much as a private entrepreneur.

There is no ideology in authoritarian regimes. Linz claims that it is possible to talk about “mentalities” (as a way of thinking says Linz) which, according to him, allows individual person to change sides from left to right authoritarianism but, at the same time, jeopardizes the regime. Having mentalities and not ideology means, claims Linz, the possibility to mobilize people for a certain period of time and create a strong psychological and emotional connection with the regime.

Writing about the low level of social mobilization in an authoritarian regime, Linz explains that demobilize means depoliticize. This is favorable for the regime because he claims that depoliticization is often a regime goal which simplifies the stability of the regime. Since the political pluralism is limited, this also suits to this purpose. Any change in mobilization would mean changing in the nature of the regime because, says Linz, mobilization attracts support, but becomes difficult to sustain. So, it has to move either towards democracy or totalitarianism. It should be mentioned that authoritarian regimes reduce politics on administration of public interest and expression of some key interests and that, doing politics, means existence of the one dominant or privileged political party in the society.

Linz states that there are two contexts where authoritarian regimes emerged: fight against colonial rule and crisis in liberal democracies. In the first case, the party that mobilizes the society to fight against colonial power appears to have the leading role in postcolonial reconstruction. In the second case, it is about bureaucratic authoritarianism e.g. alliance between military and bureaucratic apparatus in order to bring stability (both in economic and political spheres) and thus modernize the society that is usually, states Linz, semi-democratic. The purpose is to stabilize the society and attract investments from abroad.

### 3.2.1 The end of the Cold War as a breaking point

Observing the situation after the end of the Cold War, Steven Levitsky and Lucan A.Way noticed that transition of single-party and military dictatorships all over the world did not lead necessarily towards democracy which, according to them, dispersed widely. Many countries (authors mentioned Mexico, Peru, Taiwan, Kenya and others) “were competitive, in that opposition forces used democratic institutions to contest vigorously – and at times successfully – for power. Nevertheless, these regimes were not democratic”[[24]](#footnote-24).

Democracy is absent because any critics of the regime was harassment, persons were imprisoned and sometimes violently attacked. There is no freedom of the press; electoral frauds are common, as much as abuse of state resources in order to get advantage for the ruling party. Authors named these regimes – competitive authoritarianism - competition is evident but it is not fair. . According to the authors, labeling these regimes as “ongoing democracy”, “evolving democracy”, “transitional regimes”, and etc. was wrong and misleading in the literature of regime changes after the Cold War. The main reason is basically the belief that those regimes are moving towards democracy. The authors claim that such a belief lack empirical proof and although some regimes became democratic (the authors state cases of Slovakia, Mexico and Taiwan), most of them did not. Levitsky and Way believe that it is a time to call these “hybrid” regimes “incomplete”, transitional or “would be democracy”[[25]](#footnote-25). They prefer not to presume that these regimes are in transition process towards democracy but to conclude that they belong to the group of authoritarian states. The key question for them is – why did some countries after the Cold War become democratic and some did not?

The authors explored 37 regimes in the world from 1990 until 2005 that were or became competitive authoritarian from 1990 until 1995 and their central argument is that there are two reasons why some countries became democratic, some are still stable authoritarian countries and some are still in transition without reaching the democratization – (1) connection to the West and (2) “strength of the governing party and state organizations”[[26]](#footnote-26). They conclude that in the cases where ties to the West were strong, regimes were democratized in the period from 1990 till 1995. “Where linkage was low, regime outcomes hinged on incumbents’ organizational and coercive capacity: where incumbent capacity was high, regimes remained stable and authoritarian; where incumbent capacity was low, regimes tended to be unstable and authoritarian”[[27]](#footnote-27).

According to the authors, competitive authoritarian regimes are civilian regimes “in which formal democratic institution are widely viewed as the primary means of gaining power, but in which fraud, civil liberties violations, and abuse of state and media resources so skew the playing field that the regime cannot be labeled democratic. Such regimes are competitive, in that democratic institution are not façade; opposition forces can use legal channels to seriously contest for (and occasionally win) power; but they are authoritarian in that opposition forces are handicapped by highly uneven – and even dangerous – playing filed. Competition is thus real, but not fair”[[28]](#footnote-28).

Competitive authoritarian regimes respect, up to a certain level, a democratic electoral process. The opposition to the government exists and it takes part in the electoral process. The opposition enjoys all democratic rights and leaders of the opposition are not in prison. Yet, Levitsky and Way claim that these regimes are not democratic. They claim that democratic institutions are violated to the extent that competition is not fair and the opposition is not real and does not equally participate in the electoral process. Levitsky and Way state that there is at least one of the following democratic attributes that is missed in competitive authoritarian regimes: free elections, broad protection of civil liberties and a “reasonably even playing field”[[29]](#footnote-29). The first two concepts are widely known. The authors explain the third concept as typical for competitive authoritarian regimes. It is not unusual for all political systems that certain political groups have some advantages during the electoral process. The problem is that in competitive authoritarian regimes those advantages are far away from democracy. Levitsky and Way define those advantages as something that contributes to the uneven playing field and appears when “state institutions are widely abuse for partisan ends; (2) the incumbent party is systematically favored at the expense of the opposition; and (3) the opposition’s ability to organize and compete in elections is seriously handicapped. Three aspects of an uneven playing field are of particular importance: access to resources, media access and access to the law”[[30]](#footnote-30) .

Competitive authoritarian regimes are a product of the post-Cold War era, claim Levitsky and Way. According to them, it could be explained by the fact that both super powers withdrew their support to many countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the United States of America appeared as the winner of the Cold War race. The fall of the Soviet Union lead to the disturbance in the balance of power and many believed that the western model of state won and that the golden age of democracy was about to begin (Francis Fukuyama - "The end of history"). It is possible that there was no choice for many communist - authoritarian or classic authoritarian regimes at that time- the leaders there could choose to democratize the state or to withdraw.

Another reason for switching the politics in the post-Cold War era was, as Levitsky and Way say, the growing transnational infrastructure of organizations and network. Globalization of the world and the Internet made the whole world an open stage where it was not possible to hide abuses of human rights or any other action of any authoritarian regime.

Still, as Levitsky and Way emphasize, it is not possible to claim that there was democracy everywhere. First, because the democratic process was applied selectively and inconsistently and second, they claim that international democratic pressure was superficial, mostly because too much attention was paid to the electoral process while sometimes completely ignoring violations of human rights and abuse of state resources.

The conclusion is that there are three paths that competitive authoritarian regimes followed until 2005: democratization, "unstable competitive authoritarianism"[[31]](#footnote-31) and stable competitive authoritarianism.

## 3.3. Summary

After Milosevic and the end of the Kosovo conflict, international community was more concerned about the stabilization of the Western Balkan and Serbia as the biggest country in the area. That is why the problem of the weak state infrastructure was neglected and democratization processes were false. Serbia is a weak state with undeveloped and ineffective institutions[[32]](#footnote-32). Serbia’s *Master complex* is one again personalized in the one person – Aleksandar Vucic. That was evident in 2012, but it became definite recently, during devastating flood in May 2014. Slowly, state resources become tool for securing the rule of one man and his party.

Regime security theory explain this phenomenon in the country while authoritarian theory deals with the absent of citizens’ freedom and the rule of the one party despite specious political pluralism.

Therefore, these theories are all essential complementary tools which will be employed in the analysis of the Serbian secret police.

# 4. Key concepts

This chapter should define two basic concepts that will be used in the thesis: the secret police notion and SSR.

Even though the name (secret police) suggests secrecy, it is not always like that. The citizens of Serbia have always been aware about the existence of the secret police. The same goes to Stasi, Securitatea and others. As Plate and Darvi suggest in their contemporary study, secret police are “official or semiofficial organs of government”[[33]](#footnote-33). According to them, it is the internal security police of the state and its task is to suppress all “serious, threatening political opposition to the government in power and with a mission to control all political activity within (and sometimes even beyond) the borders of the nation-state”[[34]](#footnote-34).

SSR is a concept that has appeared recently – after the fall of the “Berlin wall” and transition of ex-communist countries to democracy. Timothy Edmunds claims that the origin of the SSR has its basis in two areas: development community and civil military relations. He says that SSR takes a holistic approach to the security sector that manifest itself in two ways. “First, by recognising the importance of militarised formations other than the regular armed forces in (civilmilitary) reform efforts. Secondly by recognising that the role of security and security sector actors in political and economic reform is important and complex, and not simply limited to questions of military praetorianism and civilian control over the armed forces”[[35]](#footnote-35).

Those two concepts are interdependent because the security reform of the secret police is one of the basic postulates of this thesis.

## 

## 4.1. The secret police

Plate and Darvi claim that the point of the secret police existence is in the nature of their routine behavior. “It is their routine practices, after all, that violate the very psychology (and at times even the anatomy) of human beings in ways that conventional police do not”[[36]](#footnote-36) . Secret police activities often include illegal surveillance; searches “often without warrants, sometimes conducted civilly, sometimes cruelly, usually disruptively”[[37]](#footnote-37); arrest – often without necessity; interrogation in any possible way and detention. Although it has already been mentioned that there is no secret police that “play by the rule”, it is important to stress that the above mentioned practice is more characteristic for totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. Among them – ex-communist regimes.

In the preface to the British edition of the book, Thomas Plate and Andrea Darvi write that for readers in Great Britain or the USA or any other democratic country, it could be difficult to believe that certain behavior was normal for many secret police forces around the globe. They suggest that the population of democratic states can be rather naïve about what was happening in the world outside, because they have got used to living in a democratic world for a long time, and some things are completely inconceivable to them.

As the book was published in 1982, it was certainly so. Today, the situation is quite different. Thanks to modern means of communication we know much more about the world around us than previous generations.

Even so, it is still quite astonishing and scary that there have not been so many changes in the world of the secret police since 1982.

A free society will demand a government that does not imply the secret police. A free society searches for democracy, justice, fair play and freedom. The government that authorizes the secret police to protect the regime usually has a lot to hide which is incompatible with a free society. That kind of government is typical for the, so called, police state that implements authoritarian rule.

It is important to stress that all states have their own services for protection of the state and constitutional order. Democratic and non-democratic states are the same in this area. The key word is – control. Democratic states are able to control those services and in the opposite case, security services control the state.

Plate and Darvi label government security forces as type “A” secret police. “Those internal security institutions that routinely exhibit the five functions of the hard-core secret police: to wit, surveillance, searches, arrests, interrogation (including torture), and indefinite detention”[[38]](#footnote-38). Besides, they recognize type “B” secret police (secret police that do not practice all functions) and type “C” – a less malignant form of phenomenon).

Security of the state is the most common excuse for forming the secret police. It is a noble, patriotic goal. Sometimes the existence of secret police is explained claiming that a certain society is not ready for full democracy and sometimes that the secret police is may be a better that eternal internal instability.

Thomas and Darvi claim that the study of secret police activities is the study of war. A war between states includes measures that are, although unacceptable in a normal situation, quite ordinary in the state of war. Secret police that is the subject of this thesis belongs to another type of war – war between the government of one country and its citizens.

### 4.1.1. Up close and personal

Thomas and Darvi state that it is not fair to claim that members of the secret police join the secret police only because of the money. It happens that one join the secret police forces because of ideological reasons although it is fair to say that such a kind of work is well-paid and at the time of ex-communist regimes, members of the secret police enjoyed many privileges - going to special restaurants and shops that were unavailable to most citizens behind the iron curtain. Also, in a lot of cases, members of the secret police were allowed to loot citizens. Thomas and Darvi claim that this was a normal practice in Argentina, Brazil, Haiti, and many ex-communist European countries. Another source of profit was corruption. It is well-known that corruption is the problem even in regular police forces. In the secret police it gets completely different dimension. It is so because of “degree of discretion they have (so much broader than that of conventional police), the climate of tolerance by the government, and widespread intimidation of the general public”[[39]](#footnote-39). Agents of the secret police are often part of lower economic classes in the society. In the ex-communist states, it was quite common (somewhere it was mandatory) that agents were members of the ruling, communist party. Thomas and Darvi conclude that for establishment of the strong police state, army personnel are not the best option for recruiting. They mention the case of Chile, Uruguay, Iran and Israel (although it was the same in many other countries), where the basic rule of the military service (fight to protect the homeland from enemy outside and to treat the enemy with honor) was not applicable in the secret police services.

Writing about the training of secret police forces, Thomas and Darvi emphasize that there was no police textbook “from which the rudimentary lessons of political suppression might be gleaned, as if the political police were medical doctors and opposition leaders were foreign agents”[[40]](#footnote-40).

In many cases, training was a part of real life events although in some communist countries governments established special schools for security forces (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union, for example).

Thomas and Darvi note that there are two seemingly contradictory truths about the secret police. The first – there are no internal security organization that look alike. The second – there is no unique secret police. “Unquestionably, each one of … secret police forces has its own unique features, reflecting (1) its particular political mission, (2) its time and place in the society’s history, and (3) unique or distinctive cultural features of the society within which it operates”[[41]](#footnote-41). It is evident that there are many similarities between societies where secret police operated. Methods and actions are almost the same no matter if they are communist or capitalist countries, wealthy countries of the developed West or poor countries from the Third World. They all have similar problems.

Trying to illustrate that statement, Thomas and Darvi offered couple of prepositions about the secret police: whatever the political system is, the secret police usurp astonishing power allowing itself to investigate, arrest and detain; the secret police is so powerful that the government is constantly under pressure to “maintain the upper hand”[[42]](#footnote-42); As the secret police are dominant, the government is sometimes compelled to form another, smaller organization whose task is to control the bigger one. “No one, it seems trusts a secret police force – not even the ruler who rules by it”[[43]](#footnote-43). Since there is no trust and loyalty, the leader of the police state sometimes, finds a loyal person (it can be a member of the family like in Iraq or a person with a special connection with a the ruling family like in Serbia) among the secret police personnel and that person reports directly to the leader; Secret police forces with a very bad reputation abroad is a huge problem for the government. It is not rare that the head of the police state, in order to minimize damage in the foreign press, changes the name of the secret police forces and even reorganizes it, but not systematically. There have been many examples of this practice. Thomas and Darvi mention Haiti, Chile, Yugoslavia, and there are a lot more; “A central job of many secret police organizations is the intimidation of the total society within the context of the clandestine tradition”[[44]](#footnote-44). The less one knows about the secret police, the bigger is the fear. But, it is also true that if there is no evidence of the existence of the police, there is no fear. So, it is important that the inhabitants of a police state know about the existence of the secret police.

### 4.1.2. Enemies of the secret police

For the secret police, enemies of the state or of the people, are always out there and there is no dilemma whether or not what they were doing was morally right. “They can rely on the time-honored, indisputable assertion that what they do (at least broadly speaking) is authorized by the state”[[45]](#footnote-45). That means that whatever we call them, they are representatives of the law and their work is legalized. Their task is to protect the state from enemies within and to protect themselves.

Besides political opposition, one of the biggest enemies of the state is the free press. “A police state is, it seems, a state of mind as much as a state of terror”[[46]](#footnote-46). The free press (foreign and domestic) is a big threat because of the press ability to present events and people just as they are. Journalists are often victims of the secret police as much as helpers – by force or by bribe. Enemies are writers who write critically about the secret police, publishers, international non-governmental organization like the International Red Cross or Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Non-governmental organization are often presented as “traitors” and people working there as deserters or spies. Enemies are lawyers’ as much as scientific workers and clergy.

## 4.2. SSR

In order to define what SSR really is it is important to state that there are two concepts that should be mentioned. The first one defines security simply as a matter of military protection of the state. The second, a broader one, define security as not just a matter of the military but “those organisations and activities concerned with the provision of security (broadly defined), and including organisations and institutions ranging from, for example, private security guards to the judiciary”[[47]](#footnote-47). So, it is possible to claim that the security sector should provide security within the state. However, "SSR also suggests an explicitly normative direction for the concept in the sense that reform prioritises the provision of security within the state in a preferred way”[[48]](#footnote-48). According to Edmunds this means that SSR is “the provision of security within the state in an effective and efficient manner, and in the framework of democratic civilian control”[[49]](#footnote-49). Edmunds also states that the definition of SSR contains two normative elements: importance of democratization and civilian control and importance of effectiveness and efficiency in SSR.

SSR is, as Edmunds stresses, the key element of processes of post-authoritarian and post-conflict transition. According to him, SSR is crucial for six processes: democratization, establishing of good governance, economic development, professionalization, prevention of conflicts in general, and integration with western type institutions (NATO and EU before anything else).

As a concept, SSR appeared after the fall of the Berlin Wall and transition of many ex-communist countries of Eastern Europe towards democracy. But, the purpose of SSR is beneficial also in post-conflict countries that likewise went through post-communist a.k.a. post-authoritarian countries (countries of ex-Yugoslavia, for example). The literature about SSR is extensive and it has been proved that SSR is of great importance in studies about development[[50]](#footnote-50). Miroslav Hadzic, Professor of “Global and National Security” in Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade writes: “Although a widely accepted definition does not exist, this phrase generally denotes the sum of changes in security thinking and practicing within the frameworks of a specific state. Thus, it is a composite syntagma that exceeds, as well as includes, a series of parallel, but relatively separate reforms of all security factors of a particular state”[[51]](#footnote-51).

Trying to simplify it, he notices that the concept of SSR derived from the “anthropocentric evolution of views on security, which placed an individual (citizen) at its center and then, at least nominally, made him the purpose and standard of the society and state”[[52]](#footnote-52). Security of citizens, state and the society result from joint economic, social, cultural, demographic and ecological forces and the military and politics are losing primacy and monopoly. There lies a difference between security and the former “defense sector”, explains Hadzic, SSR includes many changes: “changes in security thinking and practicing, change of constitutional and institutional arrangements, establishment of democratic civil control of armed forces, armed forces reform, and Security cooperation and integration”[[53]](#footnote-53).

Since SSR is a fairly broad concept, including the reform all sources of security agents (military, police, and intelligence service before anything else), for the purpose of this thesis, the emphasis will be on the reform of the secret police sector.

“The provision of security, of a sense among citizens and community that the routines of their lives are to a reasonable degree protected by the actions of the state and its social control apparatuses, is one of the basic demands laid against the state by its society”[[54]](#footnote-54).

Caparini and Marenin claim that ineffective, frivolous or repressive control over society could seriously jeopardize legitimacy of the existing relation between state and society, undermine development and “severely limits the (re)building of democratic forms of governance and order”[[55]](#footnote-55).

The role of the police is crucially important in any society and processes towards democratization of the institutions and society as a whole no matter if it is a post-conflict, post-authoritarian or developing country. In those societies the need for the safe environment for the citizens is even more important than in democratic countries.

“There can be no expectation that people are secure and their property safe when surrounded by turmoil, violence, ethnic and religious hatreds, or corrupted state institutions”[[56]](#footnote-56). So, democratic society always implies democratic police forces specially because they possess a great power – they can protect, but they can kill too. Since they are powerful, they have to be controlled. “They cannot be granted the authority to determine their work, yet they must be given enough leeway and autonomy to exercise their discretion and judgment on when and how to employ their expertise to promote a just, secure and stable social order”[[57]](#footnote-57).

Caparini and Marenin believe that there are three goals that have to be fulfilled in order for the police to be democratized: sustained legitimacy, sustained professionalism, and sustained accountability. “Professional behavior and accountability sustain legitimacy; accountability helps professionalize the police; legitimacy grants the police a necessary degree of professional autonomy”[[58]](#footnote-58).

There is a general consensus on the basic principles for democratic policing, stated Caparini and Marenin. It can be found in many international bodies[[59]](#footnote-59). “Commonly mentioned traits, which point to general and more specific traits, include: nonpartisanship; representation in the composition of personnel; integrity; fairness; accountability; transparency; sensitivity; moral consensus; civilian control; a public service orientation; obedience to law; concern for human rights; responsiveness to civic society; impartiality; minimal, last resort use of force; accessibility; separation from military forces and cultures; or general order”[[60]](#footnote-60). It is well-known that anomalies in the work of the police exist all around. In democratic societies the executive power (parliament, government) has mechanisms to control what is happening in the police. Of course it is not like that in other societies. And when the reform begins, the real problems start. Sometimes, the image and reputation of the police are jeopardized to such an extent that the society is not eager to reform it – destroying of the old police mechanisms is more acceptable. But, when the reform is possible and necessary, another obstacle appears. Namely, instructions how to do the reform does not exist. “There is no one set of organizational arrangements, managerial strategies, operational policies, accountability mechanisms or structured relations with society and the state which embody democratic norms and expectations. There are some specific policies and practices, which reflect democratic principles and which can be inspected and adapted”[[61]](#footnote-61).

There are not two same societies or completely same conditions in two states that can help implementation of the reforms. Secret police served the interests of the state or the ruling party or the leader. They are “heavily politicized, and militarized in orientation, structure and often equipment”[[62]](#footnote-62). In order to reform it and provide sustainability and legitimacy, it is of great importance that those forces are depoliticized, demilitarized and decentralized, claim Caparini and Marenin.

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### 4.2.1. Collapse of the Soviet Union and its consequences

The fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union were shocking events for many. Suddenly, the whole new sphere of social and economic conditions appeared on the world scene. It became evident that the East Bloc countries and others needed to adjust themselves to the fact that there was no balance of power anymore. The Soviet Union “was hollowed out from within”[[63]](#footnote-63)and it became clear that security apparatus had no legitimacy anymore. “Reforming the security sector and the police, that element of the sector most widely encountered by publics, became a priority”[[64]](#footnote-64).

Observing the period of time from the beginning of the 1990s until today, Caparini and Marenin conclude that the reforms of the police relied heavily on the experiences and standards of Western democratic countries and on “developing international norms and standards of democratic and accountable policing”[[65]](#footnote-65). They complain that the flow of information about the reform had one direction (from West to East) and they hope that this will be changed.

## 4.3. Summary

Both Regime security theory and Authoritarian theory deal with the secret police and SSR. Regime security theory clarifies regime insecurity dilemma - regime defends itself and not the state as a whole. As for defending, regime is mostly compelled to use the service of the secret police since it is the most efficient tool to keep inhabitants in the state suppressed. On the other hand, authoritarian theory defines the nature of the state where the regime demands unconditional obedience from the citizens denying them most of the basic human rights.

SSR, as a way to democratization of the society, contributes to this thesis explaining that in authoritarian country it is almost impossible to implement SSR and in the weak state it is hard to establish mechanisms for that since institutional capacity of the state is on the very low level. Both authoritarian and the weak state (if we observe the weak state as a one step towards authoritarianism) can have elites (usually highly corrupt) that declaratively advocates for democratic standards but, instead, they just reinforced their political power. In the case of Serbia this is evident since 2003. Citizens mostly do not trust that secret police is reformed in the process of the SSR (the process has been lasting since 2000). They, apparently, have a good reason for that since some members of the Milosevic’s secret police are still influential and policy of hiding how many people died in the devastating flood in Obrenovac (one of the Belgrade municipality) in May this year, brought back old memories from 1990s.

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# 5. Analysis

# 5.1. Historical facts

It is believed that the existence of the secret police can be traced all the way back to ancient Sparta. From Sparta, through ancient Rome, czarism in Russia, Prussia and Napoleon, Gestapo and Stasi, till today, the mechanism of secret police work has stayed more-or less, the same. But, the merit for creating modern secret police is assigned to the French revolution “that remarkable social upheaval that had as its central concern the rights of man but wound up having a most unintended side effect: helping to inaugurate one of the most effective instruments for the denial of human rights that the world has seen, the modern secret police force”[[66]](#footnote-66).

The secret police in Yugoslavia and Serbia[[67]](#footnote-67) can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century. The secret police, that is the subject of this thesis, was established in a small Bosnian town of Drvar in 1944, where Tito and his closest collaborators and two representatives of the NKVD (Soviet secret police; the forerunner of the KGB), made a decision to establish OZNA (Serbian acronym for Odeljenje za zastitu naroda - Department for the people's protection)[[68]](#footnote-68). OZNA has remained a prototype for all other communist secret services until today.

As it was mentioned before, it is not an easy task to write about the history of the secret police in Yugoslavia and Serbia. But, it is important to start analysis with that - not only because *Historia magistra vitae est*, but because it is easier to follow certain patterns and methods that have been used for a long period of time. It was already stated that this thesis considers the secret police rooted in1944 when OZNA was established. Tito and Aleksandar Rankovic, Tito’s closest associate, organized OZNA in several departments which were predecessors of later VOS (Vojna Obavestajna Sluzba JNA – Military Intelligence Service of the Yugoslav Army), UDBA (Uprava Drzavne Bezbednosti – State Security Administration and KOS (Kontraobavestajna Sluzba – Counter -Intelligence Agency of the Army).

Officers of OZNA were directly subordinate to Tito. The main goal of OZNA was to eliminate spies and other collaborators with Germans, ustasas and cetniks. The saying “OZNA sve dozna – OZNA knows everything” is well-known even today and it is presumed to have been created because of cruel interrogations.

OZNA was just the first step toward establishing the notorious UDBA in 1946, at the end of the war. (Many in Serbia still use the term UDBA, when they speak about the secret police, although there have been several acronyms of the secret police so far.) UDBA’s main tasks were taking care with internal enemies “of the people” – like clergy, nationalists, people who lived abroad, foreign intelligence agencies as well as eavesdropping and tailing everybody[[69]](#footnote-69). In the world, UDBA was notorious for killing emigrants[[70]](#footnote-70).

The Cominform resolution and Stalin’s actions in 1948 when the Yugoslav communist party was expelled from Cominform[[71]](#footnote-71)- led to division among Yugoslavs: Stalin’s or Tito’s way. UDBA’s task was to establish a camp for political prisoners on Goli Otok (“Naked island” – a little, barren and uninhabited island in today’s Croatia). Approximately 30.000 people were jailed there for openly supporting Stalin, although it is estimated that more people were denounced by their comrades for their fictional or real support to the Cominform. During Tito’s life it was kept as a top secret.

Accused for spying and taping Tito, UDBA’s first man Aleksandar Rankovic was removed from power and public life in 1966. UDBA became Sluzba drzavne bezbednosti – SDB (State Security Service) and its acronym became SDB. Professor Srdjan Cvetkovic writes that the situation was significantly changed. Torture methods were abandoned or applied sporadically which cannot be compared to other communist secret police practices (Stasi, Securitatea…) According to Cvetkovic, the problem escalated in 1968 (students rebellion) and 1972 (allegedly communist - liberal uprising). New enemies appeared: friends of Rankovic, liberals, nationalists, technocrats[[72]](#footnote-72)…

The decentralization of the SDB among the central state, republics and autonomous provinces was significant but it was still, as Cvetkovic emphasizes - the classical political police whose enemies existed primarily within the state and the goal was preservation of the existing political system and the monopoly of the communist party.

The beginning of the wars in the 1990s and the break-up of Yugoslavia, meant destruction of all federal institutions. It is obvious that the most important changes appeared within the military and security sectors. Getting Slobodan Milosevic to power, led to the creation of his private secret police in 1992- Resor Drzavne Bezbednosti (RDB–State Security Department). The repression by the Milosevic family, the Socialist party of Serbia (SPS) and United left (JUL- Serbian acronym), political parties of Milosevic and his wife Mirjana Markovic was carried out in order to secure the power of the ruling couple. Anyone who could threat the leading couple was under surveillance and subjected to some kind of repression. Collaboration of the secret police with criminal gangs and paramilitaries was regular. The most significant violations of human rights were the brutal suppression of demonstrations in 1991, electoral fraud in 1996, two attempted murders of Vuk Draskovic (member of the opposition in Serbia), and assassinations of Ivan Stambolic and the Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic in 2003.

The RDB was transformed into BIA (acronym for the Serbian name: Bezbednosno-Informativna Agencija. In English: Security –Information agency) in 2002 when the law about BIA was passed.

The end of the Milosevic government on the 5th October 2000 was the turning point in the new history of Serbia as an independent state. Changes in the society should lead towards democratization of the whole society. The secret police is definitely not the same as during Milosevic’s time, but something is still missing. Fourteen years after Milosevic, Serbia is knocking at the EU door, but it is still a weak and authoritarian state and there is no true democratization of the society.

## 5.2. Democracy does not live here

Democracy and democratic processes are incompatible simply because there are no effective institutions, the monopoly on the instrument of violence and the consensus on the idea of state. Just like Richard Jackson describes the main characteristic of the weak state in Allan Collins “Contemporary Security Studies”.

If we observe the situation in Serbia from the beginning of the1990s, when Yugoslavia collapsed, it is obvious that, even today, the country does not have effective institutions. In the time of the Milosevic autocratic government, the institutions were just his tool to secure the power of his family and the oligarchy close to him. The secret police was above the law and, in 2003 (three years after Milosevic, when Zoran Djindjic was assassinated), it became evident that Milosevic’s system was not destroyed. It has survived and exists even today. It is fair to say that the methods and operating modes are different (assassination of political opponents is no more “everyday life” in Serbia) but the same people are parts of political processes and, ironically, they are very often, the leading figures in Serbia’s attempt to get close to the EU and democracy.

A strong state has well-developed institutions and there is no need for using coercive power[[73]](#footnote-73). It is the fact that the Serbian secret police created mafia, and that is why it is hard to make a clear distinction between Yugoslav and Serbian secret police. The coercive power that Serbian secret police used to use was inherited from its predecessors. UDBA and the SDB used people with a criminal background for liquidation of political opponents. It happened mostly abroad, in dealing with members of immigrations. Those criminals, very often with the Serbian background like Arkan[[74]](#footnote-74), became prominent leaders of paramilitary forces in Milosevic time and their influence is still obvious. Serbian weak institutions were not able to deal with it and the result today is nearly the collapse of the society in general. It is especially evident in the economic sphere. Those, enabled by Milosevic to earn a lot of money, some of them were and still are very close to the secret police, are Serbia’s pillar today. “Since they employ large numbers of people, the country depends on them and cannot do anything against them anymore. It is one of the reasons state institutions have been virtually working for the businessmen for years. Huge money, which circulates among the same people, gives them power and position, which they can use to blackmail politicians, form governments that suit them, appoint their own people in relevant institutions, simultaneously financing both the position and opposition, thus closing the circle”[[75]](#footnote-75).

Supposing that Barry Buzan is right and that one of the biggest problems of the state is to what extent the society is identified with the state, it is important to stress a clear division in the Serbian society between the groups that could not be identified with the secret police state in the Milosevic’s time. A clear distinction should also be made between what should be a regular process towards democracy and the situation today when many of those directly responsible for the actions of the secret police in the past and with a close connection with its past and present members, form today’s government. The group, to whom the coercive power of the secret police was acceptable and necessary in order to reach the goals of extreme nationalists, still exists. It could not be identified with the society after Slobodan Milosevic when Zoran Djindjic became the Prime Minister and when Serbia tried to reach the standards of a democratic society.

The society is still deeply concerned about the role of the secret police. The fact is that Radomir Markovic, head of the secret police in the time of the Kosovo war and many assassinations, and who was sentenced to 40 years in prison, still has a certain influence on Serbian government[[76]](#footnote-76). Zoran Stijovic, former member of the SDB, claimed in the Serbian press[[77]](#footnote-77) that many collaborators of the secret police were prominent members of government elites and that they had formed a parallel power center with a huge impact on politics and economy in the country.

Still, it was a shock for the public when the official adviser of Tomislav Nikolic, who became President of Serbia in 2012, visited Radovan Markovic in prison. People in Serbia have never found out the subject of their conversation.

Following Richard Jackson’s conclusion about the weak state, it can be proved that Serbian institutions (especially the judiciary and the police) do not have enough infrastructural capacity to seriously deal with the secret police. DOS (Democratic Opposition of Serbia) that won the 2000 election failed to conduct the transition of the society from authoritarianism to democracy. Members of the coalition were more concerned about getting and maintaining the power than about changing and strengthening of the institutions. It is well-known that certain DOS leaders used many incidents in the police or the army for mutual clashes. It was more important who will control the army or the police than how it will be reformed[[78]](#footnote-78).

Citizens of Serbia still live in fear of possible armed conflicts within the state. Since the economic situation is bad and it may get even worse, especially after the devastating flood in May this year, the social uprising is possible. Not a long time ago, there were numerous serious incidents in Bosnia because of economic disaster. Bosnia is still more or less stable despite the conflict between the police and citizens of Bosnia in the Federation part (where mostly Muslims and Croats live). But the Republic of Srpska stayed calm. Namely, since the national connections play a very important role in the Balkans, it is believed that Serbs from Serbia sympathize with the people of Srpska who, on the other hand, claimed that the uprising in the Federation part had been organized in order to cancel Dayton Peace Agreement and destroy the Republic of Srpska. Nevertheless, it was clearly a social uprising against the catastrophic situation in the country so it is likely, concerning the strong connection of the people in the Balkans despite their national divisions, that it is only a matter of time when such an uprising could happen in Serbia. In that situation, nobody can predict how the government will behave and whether it will use the coercive measures to protect its power. Speaking about the coercive power, it is typical for the weak state that the role of the army is marginalized. In Serbia, that happened during Milosevic’s time and it seems that, it is happening again. It is the fact that the present Minister of the Defense is Bratislav Gasic, member of the ruling SNS (Srpska napredna stranka – Serbian Progressive Party) a businessman who has never been employed in the defense sector. Another problem is the existence of private security companies. The private security sector in Serbia is still not regulated despite several attempts of many individuals and non-governmental organizations to adopt the law in order to adjust the sector to the EU normative[[79]](#footnote-79).

One of great security challenges, according to Richard Jackson, is the role of, the so-called, strong man. Serbian history is full of strong men and, in recent history, they have played an important role. Milosevic appeared after Tito, and today that role is played by Aleksandar Vucic, lider of the SNS and Prime Minister of the Serbian government. It is interesting that even Zoran Djindjic, one of Serbian rare democratic leaders, played that role, too. Why Serbians need a strong man is a matter of some other analyses, but it should be said that “strong men” are supreme masters and it is a Weber’s charismatic type of legitimacy that implies the belief in exceptional qualities of the leader who, very often, appear as the savior in the time of crises. Since they are supreme commanders of the secret police too, let us remind ourselves of Weber’s observation that the problem with this legitimacy is the fact that it is not stable (everything usually ends with the death of the leader) and the transfer of power is almost impossible. It has not been recorded that any of these types of leaders were brilliant and successful. Many tried to connect traditional and charismatic types of legitimacy (Napoleon was a warrior and then an emperor) but everything was, again, finished with the death of the ruler.

### 5.2.1. Serbia’s “insecurity dilemma”

Surely, there are not many experts (especially from the West) that would say that Serbia today has an “insecurity dilemma” problem. While tapping Serbian politicians on the shoulders for the removal of the Kosovo problem, they would claim that the authorities today do not need to use coercive power and state intimidation to secure their rule. And they are right up to a certain point.

The authorities in Serbia do not use coercive power to deal with the opposition. But, physical confrontation between supporters of the ruling political party and the opposition is something that marks every electoral process. It is common knowledge that hooligan groups are instruments of the secret police. Incidents during the 2008 protests in Belgrade, when Kosovo proclaimed independency, are well-known all over the world. Well-orchestrated by the secret police, hooligans attacked foreign embassies and set fire in the American embassy. “Department spokesman, Sean McCormack told reporters on Thursday that “we would hold the Serbian government personally responsible for the safety and well-being of our embassy employees.” He added that the security that had been provided was completely inadequate”[[80]](#footnote-80). According to the witnesses, policemen were reluctant to intervene and when the crowd attacked the mosque in the very center in Belgrade, they withdrew, with an authorization from the Minister of the Interior. Hooligans and other informal groups, often with weapons, are still a real danger to the citizens of Serbia. It very often seems that they have protection from members of the judiciary and the police.

Serbian government appointed Gasic for the Minister of Defense and Nebojsa Stefanovic for the Minister of Internal Affairs. Like Gasic, Stefanovic is quite inexperienced to be the chief of such an important ministry. Stefanovic, with a very specific nickname (Slina – something like “mucus” in English) is an economist who used to work in marketing. Those who are acquainted with the situation claim that both position in the Serbian government will be controlled by today’s “strong man” Aleksandar Vucic and that those two ministers are just marionettes.

Appointment of Aleksandar Djordjevic for the new BIA director could again mean that Vucic wants to hold the secret police under his personal control. Djordjevic is a lawyer and, according to his biography, he has nothing in common with the secret police.

The principle of *divide et impera* is evident in the weak state case, in the case of relation between the army and the police. But, the same principle can be used by the regime in other areas of the society. Vucic and his associates succeeded in dividing the citizens of Serbia into those who earn money and those who works for months without salary; public sector employees and those working in private companies; Serbs who still live in Kosovo and Serbs in other parts of Serbia; those educated at private universities and those educated at state University.

Manipulation with ethnicity is something that will always work in the Balkans. While the ethnic conflict between the states that once constituted Yugoslavia is on standby and still smolder, at this moment there are no conflicts between ethnic groups in Serbia. Knowing the situation in the Balkans and the history of conflicts in the area, one can never be sure that there will be no clashes. That is why ethnicity will always stay perfect for manipulation.

Milosevic is one of the leaders that, as Jackson explain survived transition into multi-party democracy and at the same time retained full control over the society. This is happening again. Vucic uses monopoly and totally controls the media, ballot rigging and electoral frauds. He is linked with the setting up of fake parties to split votes and gerrymandering. During the last electoral campaign for parliamentary elections, ministers from the SNS were often accused of using state resources to make the gains for their own party.

Since the SNS was formed from the members of the former Radical Party, whose leader Vojislav Seselj is currently awaiting the verdict of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for war crimes, and members of the SNS are now advocates for Serbia’s membership in the EU, it is still not clear which state is the patronage state to Serbia. While close ties with Russia are hard to rip, there are many contacts between SNS politicians and officials from the USA and Germany.

One cannot say that there is a real threat from spreading the conflict, but other forms of citizens’ insecurity are present. State institutions are deliberately being undermined and patronage politics threatens the welfare and livelihood of the people of Serbia.

Fourteen years after Milosevic, Serbia is not a consolidated democracy but a weak state again in the hands of one man. It seems that the road to authoritarianism is being tiled again.

## 5.3. Authoritarianism as a tradition

Serbia is an authoritarian state. It has always been like that. Through its history, as an independent kingdom after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and as a part of Yugoslavia later, until today, authoritarianism has been a constant. It is even more obvious if we suppose that a democratic system is a system of association, information and communication in order to have free competition between political leaders who fight legally for their right to rule and in that battle all have a fair chance.

Linz says[[81]](#footnote-81) that authoritarian regimes rely strongly on key groups and prevent the expression of certain group interests. Tito’s and Milosevic’s regimes relied strongly on the secret police and they were the guarantee that the regime would survive. It is not easy to tell to what extent Aleksandar Vucic’s regime relies on the secret police, but there are some disturbing facts that force us to fear that the ghost of the Serbian secret police is very much alive. It is indicative that, from time to time, members of the government recall the memory of Aleksandar Rankovic, the first chief of OZNA who has remained notorious in the memory of Kosovo Albanians. That something was going on between the ruling majority and the secret police became obvious during the electoral campaign. “Two former members of the country’s security services have been detained for the 1999 killing of Serbian publisher and journalist Slavko Curuvija, an opponent of Slobodan Milosevic”[[82]](#footnote-82). Also, stories about: who ordered the assassination of Zoran Djindjic (members of the secret police private army “Red Berets”, later Unit for the Special Operations (JSO), were executors) ; is it possible that the Serbian secret police killed young men in Kosovo in 1998 (“Café Panda” case) and not Albanian terrorists as it was presented; mysterious report of 2013 about the Unit for Special Operation that was disbanded after the assassination of Djindjic in 2003; violence in the northern part of Kosovo committed by extremists who had support from the secret police; a couple of affairs about eavesdropping that drew attention of the public thanks to President and Prime Minister of Serbia – Tomislav Nikolic and Aleksandar Vucic.

Certain groups have always been prevented from expressing their interests. And while they used to be opposition political parties and members of the civil society, today they are minority groups – like journalists that are often dismissed for criticizing the regime or members of the LGBT community who are terrorized if they show in public.

Members of business elites (mostly tycoons) have a special place in the authoritarian Serbia. And their position depends on the fact whether they support (financially) the government or the opposition. At this moment, there are several court processes against tycoons who earned their first million during the Milosevic government but stayed close to the government after Milosevic. On the other hand, tycoons who are close to the present government are privileged.

Mentalities, according to Linz’s explanation, are present in Serbian authoritarianism. Aleksandar Vucic became extremely popular in a short period of time. It was shown that he was capable of promptly creating of strong psychological and emotional connections with his voters (mostly older people, uneducated or without university education, rural origin) using populist rhetoric about fighting against tycoons, corruption and solving of the Kosovo problem and, at the same time, getting Serbia to become a member of the EU. Needless to say that during the negotiations in Brussels Vucic was not as much in the spotlight as the ex-Prime Minister and newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic from Milosevic’s Socialist Party of Serbia. Vucic’s fight against tycoons and corruption is conducted mostly in the tabloid press and since 2012, when he got the power, until today, there have been no verdict and nobody has really gone to jail.

It is hard to discuss social mobilization in Serbia now because it does not exist and doing politics today is reduced to applauding Vucic and his decisions no matter how ridiculous they are.

### 5.3.1. Is Serbian authoritarianism competitive?

It has already been mentioned that the end of the Cold War did not mean the same for Yugoslavia and Serbia as for the other ex-communist countries. While the others started a long journey towards a democratic change, the bloody war started in the Western Balkans. At the same time, Milosevic’s authoritarianism in Serbia was hidden at the beginning, with fight for “national awakening” of the Serbian people. Political pluralism was introduced into society and the Communist Party, at least it looked like that, left the political scene. The Socialist Party of Serbia, made from the ex-members of the Communist Party, got the support of the citizens. Yet, already in 1991, with the first demonstration of the opposition, it was clear how Milosevic planned to rule. He completely controlled all institutions in Serbia (at that time still a part of Yugoslavia) successfully convincing Serbs that they were in jeopardy and that he was the only one who could save them. Clearly, there was no democracy in the country and since there was competition among political parties (although not fair at all), we can follow the idea of Levitsky and Lucan[[83]](#footnote-83) and proclaim that regime as competitive authoritarianism. Is it the same today? Many politicians (especially from the West) are ready to state that the Serbian society is “on the road” towards democracy. Many Serbs, on the other hand, do not see that road, feel no change and have the impression that that road has no end. There are, however, analysts whose ideas are very similar to Levitsky and Lucan. Florian Bieber, Professor of Southeast European Studies and Director of the Centre for Southeast European Studies at the University of Graz, Austria, claims that a particular type of democracy appeared in South Eastern Europe: “elections are democratic, the political landscape is diverse, but populist and corrupt governments hinder the consolidation of democratic structures. Most post-communist countries in Central Europe developed into consolidated democracies”[[84]](#footnote-84). He observes that in South Eastern Europe, however, a transitional form of democracies exists, but political parties that rule the social life are populist ones and they control the state through patronage structures. He reminds that during the last election campaign in Serbia Aleksandar Vucic saved a child during a snowstorm and that, conveniently, there were cameras of the state television station on the scene. “While this ‘performance’ was quickly mocked in social networks, the message got through: Vucic rescues children, while others go campaigning”[[85]](#footnote-85). Another aspect of the “authoritarian temptation”, as Bieber calls it, is the control of the media. Nowadays it is very hard to find the critical media in Serbia, and the Internet is the only place where critics of the ruling government can be heard. The severe economic crisis since 2008 with more serious consequences than in the rest of the world has caused closing of a large number of companies so the state has become the main source of income for the media. On the other hand, the media loyal to the government perpetually works against any opposition. Bieber reminds of the dominance of political parties over the state. “Careers in the public administration and in government-controlled companies are usually only possible with party membership. Thus, parties acts as employment agencies and can thus secure the loyalty of its voters. This reduces the potential for protest as public criticism may result in loss of employment”[[86]](#footnote-86). Bieber also criticizes the EU claiming that the Union often overlooks this as long as the government is willing to cooperate. The Serbian government made a compromise over the Kosovo problem which blurred political populism for a certain period of time. But, “if the rule of law cannot take hold, this will either lead to social protests, as recently in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or to illiberal governments, which seek to preserve their power with populist means, as in Macedonia and, probably soon, Serbia”[[87]](#footnote-87).

If we follow Levitsky and Lucan’s conclusions why some countries became democracies after the end of the Cold War and some did not – like connections to the West and strength of the governing party and state organizations, it is easy to conclude that this can be implemented in Serbia. As an Orthodox Christian country, Serbia has always cultivated close relations with Russia and Greece. Even the Tito –Stalin clash of 1948 could not jeopardize it seriously and in the long run. Those bonds became even stronger with the desolation of Yugoslavia and later happenings in Kosovo after the bombing stopped in June 1999[[88]](#footnote-88).

Even today, it is very unclear whether Serbia will go east or west. Today, top politicians send mixed signals to the population praising Putin one day, and glorifying the EU and western leaders the other.

For a long time formal democratic institutions in Serbia have been just instrument for getting power. The same happened during the parliamentary elections this year. Levitsky and Lucan are right when they claim that in the regimes like Serbian fraud, violations of civil rights and abuse of state resources and the media in order to get advantage for a certain political party are present. So, it is possible to label the Serbian regime as competitive authoritarians since there are democratic processes that are respected (elections, for example). Since Milosevic, the ruling party or coalition has been violating institutions to such an extent that the institutions have started to serve only the ruling elites and not citizens. There is no wide respect of civil liberties and the opposition has no access to resources, the media and the law. Anyhow, even Levitsky and Lucan claim that Serbia was a competitive authoritarian state until 2005 and then started the process of democratization - it is far from what really was going on and what is happening today.

## 5.4. Secret police – “Nothing is more despicable, than respect based on fear” (Albert Camus)

When Tomas Plate and Andrea Darvi wrote a book about secret police it was 1982 and nobody could imagine that, in just a couple of years, the Cold War would be over. There were sometimes rumors and sometimes evidence about the cruelty of the secret police behind the Iron Curtain. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, it became obvious that communist regimes in the eastern part of Europe survived thanks to the help of their secret police. It is presumed that Milosevic would not be ousted from power in 2000 if the members of the secret police stayed loyal. However, with a little cosmetic change, the same secret police stayed influential until the members of the Special Operation Unit assassinated the Prime Minister in 2003.

The secret police and mafia clans in Serbia were in the same line of defense at the beginning of the 1990s. Since that cooperation was very profitable, it continued later but in the domain of “black economy”. The symbiosis between the police and the mafia was a logical consequence of that cooperation. It turned out that the symbiosis is a perfect method to control, completely, the political and economic life in the country.

“This pact was sealed during the time of international sanctions, when the governments of Serbia, Yugoslavia and Montenegro have asked respective services to supply the country with strategic goods (oil, above all) through illegal channels – the only ones available. Once established, these secret ventures resisted closure even after the “state reason” for their existence terminated. In fact, they expanded to accommodate additional goods – stolen cars, trafficked persons, cigarettes, even chewing-gums. The symbiosis of corrupted politicians, perverted services and organised crime slowly but overwhelmingly shook the country, annulling the rule of law, destroying the economy, suspending democracy and wiping away every aspect of human security. They became the prosecutor, the judge and the executor to those who jeopardised their interests”[[89]](#footnote-89).

Apparently, the mafia was stronger – it became independent and was able to directly influence everyday life in Serbia. It is believed that, even today, some mafia centers of power are in the police, banks, economy and politics.

Reserving the right to claim that the Serbian secret police from Milosevic’s time is still very much alive, it is important to stress that the main reason is the fact that there were some attempts to start the transition of the Serbian society but the real transition has never been done. Members of the secret police, except a couple of them who were directly involved in serious crimes and were sentenced to jail, have changed their behavior but stayed active and untouchable.

### 5.4.1. Modern scandals and secret files

“… in fact it is hard to find a significant crime scene in Serbia of the nineties which was left without the fingerprints of at least one of the various secret services, or “at least” the police, and which does not link to the political or economic interests of the corrupted “elite””[[90]](#footnote-90).

Almost right after getting the power in the 2012 elections, the newly elected President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolic and Aleksandar Vucic (at that time first Vice President of the Government) informed the public that they received some information from the BIA about illicit wire-tapping. Apparently, the BIA had an order from a high rank police officer for wire-tapping the two of them. The story was widely popular in the press, the Constitutional Court was involved, but today almost nobody remembers it. It has remained unclear whether the BIA tried to manipulate with the new regime, or Nikolic and Vucic tried to manipulate the Serbs or the wire-tapping happened but it was not acceptable for the public to know more about it.

Slavko Curuvija was a Serbian journalist and newspaper publisher. He was murdered in April 1999, during the bombardment of Yugoslavia. It is known that he was close to the “ruling family” until he started to criticize the government in his paper “Dnevni telegraf” (Daily Telegraph) in 1998.

On the 11th of April 1999, on Easter Sunday, Curuvija was killed by two masked men in front of the building where he lived. Branka Prpa, his common-law wife, was with him and has remained as a witness. Soon, it was revealed that he had been killed by the members of the RDB who have stayed untouchable until today. Many governments have tried to show that they are dedicated to revealing who killed Curuvija[[91]](#footnote-91), but it seems that the core of the secret police is not easy to break. It has become popular to use the “Slavko Curuvija story” in the election campaigns and forget all about it when the elections are over.

The same has happened this year. In the election campaign the SNS and Vucic (he was a member of the Milosevic government in April of 1999 and Minister for the media) used the same pattern. At the beginning of this year, the Serbian police arrested Milan Radonjic and Ratko Romic as suspects in the assassination and announced the arrest warrant for Miroslav Kurak, who left the country a couple of years ago. They were, and maybe still are, members of the RDB. It is interesting to mention that Branka Prpa, who was injured but survived the assassination, claims that Kurak was not the executor and that she saw the face of the man who did it. Nobody from the government pays any attention to what she says. Needless to say that now the whole story is forgotten again.

“Panda” was a café in Pec, Kosovo. In 1998, six Serbian boys were assassinated there. The government accused “Albanian terrorists” although nobody provided evidence for such a claim. This marked the beginning of the Serbian police campaign against Albanians in Kosovo just as Racak was the excuse for bombing Serbia[[92]](#footnote-92). The Serbian public was shocked in January this year when the news about who really shot the boys in Pec spread. Namely, it was said that those responsible for the assassination should be looked for among the Serbian secret police members. Radomir Markovic and Milorad Ulemek – Legija accuse each other of that assassination[[93]](#footnote-93).

Apparently, it was done in order to present the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) as a terrorist organization and Vucic openly discussed the suspicions that the investigation had not been done properly. It is unknown if anything is happening right now.

Zoran Djindjic, ex- Serbian Prime Minister was assassinated in March 2003. According to the indictment, members of the JSO killed him. The trial for this murder was over and Zvezdan Jovanovic, Milorad Ulemek - Legija, Aleksandar Simovic, Ninoslav Konstantinovic, Vladimir Milisavljevic , Milos Simovic, Milan Jurisic, Branislav Bezarevic, Sretko Kalinic, Dusan Krsmanovic, Zeljko Tojaga and Sasa Pejakovic were sentenced to jail[[94]](#footnote-94). The group is a mix of the secret police and mafia members. Why was Djindjic assassinated? There have been a couple of speculations but, according to the official verdict, the motive for the crime was Djindjic’s intention to fight against organized crime. It was claimed that Djindjic (who was responsible for delivering Slobodan Milosevic to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) would do the same with members of the JSO who, allegedly, committed many crimes in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. Anyhow, it has remained unclear whether Djindjic was killed by notorious criminals or there were some persons in Serbia with a political background who ordered the assassination[[95]](#footnote-95).

Last November Radomir Markovic, according to the Serbia press, threatened from prison that he could reveal some secret files in his possession if the government did not reconsider his 40-year prison sentence[[96]](#footnote-96). He claimed that revealing of the file could have devastating consequences for the country.

Again, the history of destroying important papers, CDs and other material from the RDB when Milosevic lost elections, was opened again. Rumors spread that Markovic, before being arrested, had removed certain dossiers and files from the RDB building. He was prosecuted earlier, together with his colleagues Branko Crni and Milan Radonjic. They were accused that in 2000 they have taken copies of dossiers of 16 opposition leaders (DOS members) and public figures from the RDB. The court did not find any evidence so they were released. Concerning the fact that the judiciary was also closely connected to the secret police, nobody was surprised by the decision. According to the official document from the RDB[[97]](#footnote-97) preparations for destroying documents from the RDB started the day after the elections – the 25th of September 2000. It seems that almost all documents from 1998 until 2000 were destroyed. It has never been fully checked so it has remained unclear how many documents were destroyed and what Markovic possesses. Considering the fact that the court set him free despite some evidence, there is plenty of space for speculations.

### 5.4.1.1. Open the secret files!

Files are very often the only proof of a dark legacy of an authoritarian government. “They best illustrate the mechanisms of a reign of terror, cast light on the fates of many individuals and serve as a testament to and warning of the opportunities for abuse of power which is controlled only by itself”[[98]](#footnote-98).

Vojislav Kostunica is still “the prime suspect” in the case of opening the secret files. In 2000, when he became the President of the Yugoslavia, Kostunica did not allow the removal of the highest rank officials from Milosevic’s secret police and when it became possible (four months later, when the parliamentary elections were held and Djindjic became the Prime Minister) a lot of document were destroyed. “Radomir Markovic, Stanisic’s successor as the RDB chief, quickly pledged his loyalty to

Vojislav Kostunica, and kept his job for a full three months after Milosevic’s downfall. During this time, much of the RDB’s precious archive was systematically burned and shredded, especially the files containing information on the agency’s criminal activities (see “The bonfire of Secrets”, VREME issue 725, November 18 2004.) Almost a year later, an internal RDB investigation revealed the extent of the damage and the names of all officers implicated in the destruction of documents. However, no action was ever taken to punish the culprits”[[99]](#footnote-99).

If we compare Serbia with the countries from former Soviet bloc, in the case of secret files or secret dossiers, it becomes obvious that almost nothing has been done in that area. Shortly after the overthrowing of Milosevic, citizens were able to see their files. It is important to mention that the government did not apply any law in that area except an internal document (Decree - Uredba, in Serbian). Citizens were able to see their files and read them. The problem is that those files were not complete, their pages were shaded black and citizens could not copy it or take notes. It has remained unknown if those files were real. Anyhow, soon it was stopped. Today Serbia is the only country that still has not opened the secret files to the public.

Even before 2000 many international organizations supported opening of files. “During the 23rd session, held on June 27th 1996, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted the Resolution 1096 (1996) on the measures to dismantle the heritage of former communist totalitarian systems”[[100]](#footnote-100).

According to Art. 9, "the Assembly welcomes the opening of secret service files for public examination in some former communist totalitarian countries. It advises all countries concerned to enable the persons affected to examine, upon their request, the files kept on them by the former secret services"[[101]](#footnote-101). Serbia did not follow the Resolution of the Council of Europe and the Constitutional Court decided that the decree was not constitutional. It was recommended that the area of the secret files must be regulated by the law and not by so-called – a bylaw.

That law “should prescribe opening of all files, kept for political and/or ideological reasons, no matter which services kept them - civilian, military, partisan (if there were any) and no matter on which level they were organised (federal or republic one). All citizens’ files, kept by all security services, from the period when OZNA was founded (May 13th 1944) until the day when this/these laws have been adopted, should be handed over to an independent institution (a commission or an agency) founded by the parliament, which would receive all the files, to possess, store and handle them. After a period of five or ten years has passed, this institution should give them over to an archival institution in charge, to be stored and used according to the regulations for the archival documents”[[102]](#footnote-102).

It should be mentioned that the public was informed, from time to time, about what was going on in the secret police and who were the “persons of interest” but only when suited to the police. So, it is well-known that Rade Bulatovic the first man of the secret police when Vojislav Kostunica took the power and Dragan Jocic, the Minister of Internal Affairs, met Milorad Ulemek Legija in person, after he had surrendered to the police (Legija was sentenced to 40 years in jail as the mastermind of the killing of Djindjic) without providing any information about that meeting and keeping that as a secret. Bulatovic also hired again the people who had been dismissed after 2000. Ivica Dacic, now the Minister of Foreign Affairs and before Minister of the Interior was involved in a scandal about a Balkan drugs cartel. Serbs found out that one of the prominent members of the Serbian Orthodox Church Bishop Vasilije Kacavenda was a secret police informer with the code name “Pablo”. It seems that at the moment when the secret police found it to be convenient, Pablo was disclosed as a homosexual. He was also accused as a man in the chain of helpers of war criminals and even of a murder. The Serbian press explained that the bishop had been blackmailed by the secret police during the 1960s and it is noted that he lived in the house furnished as a castle.

In contrast to the other ex-communist states (Poland and East Germany, for example), nobody in Serbia has lost a job or been exposed as a secret police collaborator. Lustration has never happened and it seems that many people have been abolished without any discussion or an official decision upon it. Debates typical of ex-communist countries, about the consequences of opening files from the moral point of view, have also never been organized.

It is a paradox that the public in Serbia has learnt more about the secret police from the documents presented at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia than from their own politicians who have apparently, been dedicated to the democratization of Serbia. Politicians have neglected the warning from the civil society that opening of the secret files is of special importance for the reform of the security sector that will lead to the democratic consolidation of the society.

## 5.5. SSR

Common sense, as much as social and political theories, tells us that there is a direct and clear link between SSR and democratization of the society, especially in post-conflict societies. Since Serbia can be named a post-conflict country, it is evident that SSR is very important in the process of democratization. In order to democratize the whole society the first and most important step is to face the past and prosecute the persons who took part in the regime’s oppression. The process itself started in 2000 when DOS took power after 5 October 2000 which is known as the electoral or bulldozer revolution. It is, however also important to state the fact that Serbia, as an independent state, has existed since 2006 when the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro collapsed. That is why many, including Professor Miroslav Hadzic, consider 2006 as the year when Serbia got its own security sector and started managing its reform.

The reform of the security sector – the reform of the secret police in particular – implies civilian control of the secret police, which includes primary parliamentary control. Unfortunately, there is plenty of evidence that SSR in Serbia has never been finished. As it was previously mentioned, it is not clear if this process is on standby or abandoned.

Democratic control, by itself, is not enough to successfully implement SSR, especially in the case of Serbia, in the area of the police. Filip Ejdus advocates comprehensive democratic security sector reforms. He claims that the interests of certain institutions in the security sector are often opposed to democratic transformation “due to the pivotal role these institutions had by default in both maintaining autocracy and during armed conflict”[[103]](#footnote-103). Ejdus also claims that their monopoly over the legitimate use of coercive power means that these institutions could jeopardize or even stop democratic transformation. Therefore, he concludes, it is of primary importance to put the security sector under civilian control. Unfortunately, that is not enough.

“Neither the legislative nor judicial branches of government possessed sufficient expertise to effectively manage and oversee operations within the security sector. In addition, civil society was concerned with economic and social issues and showed no interest in participating actively in security and defence matters”[[104]](#footnote-104).

According to Ejdus, Serbia is not consolidated or full democracy but rather under-consolidated or, as he mentions, flawed democracy. That means that political parties are much stronger than state institutions, “while the executive power still dominates over the legislative and judicial branches”[[105]](#footnote-105).

BIA today has the same role as any other so-called secret police in the world. The problem is that, although there have been some changes, the fact that secret files have never been opened, that many members of the disbanded JSO with a criminal past have become members of the newly formed gendarmerie (special police forces) and have never been prosecuted for their crimes, that many prosecuted members of the JSO are still influential, that politicians flirt with the previous representatives of the secret police – means that the reform of the secret police is far from being finished. It also means that, no matter how much politicians feign - Serbia is not on the democratic track.

After the “democratic changes” in October 2000, the reform of security services started immediately. However, very soon it turned out that there were two sides in DOS and that the leaders of the hardly united coalition that beat Milosevic were not capable to finish the process of social reforms. Referring to legitimacy, Vojislav Kostunica, as the President refused to dismiss Milosevic’s chiefs of the police and the army. Zoran Djindjic, who became Prime Minister several months later, was determined to dismantle the old system and send Milosevic to the Hague Tribunal[[106]](#footnote-106). It appears that, even though BIA is separated from the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the first time in the history of secret police, and there are no murders of political opponents, and unlawful imprisonments and journalists are freer to write about it, the present Serbian secret police is not depoliticized and decriminalized. Last April politicians still discussed the reform of the police. Probably, this will be one of the conditions on the Serbian road to the EU.

Talking to the press in 2006[[107]](#footnote-107), one of Serbian experts in security studies, Bogoljub Milosavljevic[[108]](#footnote-108)[[109]](#footnote-109) claimed that there was a tacit agreement among most political parties not to establish civilian control of the secret police. He also claimed that it was certain that some members of the secret police influence political processes even today. Explaining the absence of civilian control over the secret police, Milosavljevic emphasized that the problem was the absence of parliamentary control. Back in 2002, there was the law on the security services of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia establishing four federal intelligence and security services and laying down detailed provisions to enable their effective parliamentary control. Milosavljevic thought that the law was good. Yet, in 2006 Serbia did not have a complete security system but only some pieces left from the previous state. The “one step forward, two steps backward” approach is still a method of doing SRS in Serbia.

Let it be clear – there are certain laws about the secret police and there is a parliamentary body – Committee for Security Services Control – but, as it happened with the previous Serbian Parliamentary Defense and Security Committee (DSC) - which did not have any impact, the same goes with laws. Laws are changed as governments change and very often only the form is modified but not the essence, and the first man in BIA is always someone close to the ruling party or coalition. The ruling party or coalition MUST have control over the secret police. How important it is one can see in the case of the arrest of the war crime suspect Radovan Karadzic “only four days after the change of the Agency’s Director on 17 July 2008. This leaves little doubt that the Security Information Agency had already known his whereabouts for some time but did not apprehend him due to the lack of political will within the Democratic Party of Serbia that had a grip on the Agency”[[110]](#footnote-110). Also, it is not completely clear what kind of information BIA should forward to the parliament and what the government should do.

“… neither the parliamentarians know what they are entitled to ask, nor the Agency knows what it should and must give to them![[111]](#footnote-111)”At the end, citizens have no information about BIA activities. It has remained unknown who are the members of the Committee for Security Services Control, since every government changes everything after elections.

“In short, the parliamentary control of the intelligence and security sector in Serbia fairly reflects the “maturing” stage of the Serbian Parliament as a democratic institution, as well as numerous compromises that characterise the current political moment in Serbia”[[112]](#footnote-112).

Jankovic stresses that BIA was left alone, to reform by itself. He reminds that out of almost 3000 employees in 2002, 600 were replaced because of their ties with criminal circles or failing to pass background security checks. It is unknown if the situation today is better. It is fair to say that BIA today is far away from Milosevic’s secret police. However, scandals, secret files and “strange persons” among those most responsible for the security of citizens of Serbia, give us a reason to doubt. It seems, Jankovic writes, that the leaders are well aware of the rule of law, civilian control and other democratic principles. Still, Jankovic wonders if lower ranks personnel know what that means in practice.

“When the Agency does not get a clear signal about that from its “controllers”, it is difficult to expect that its own ranks will come up with proper solutions in drawing the lines separating the state from party politics, the national from state security, the discipline from blind obedience; nor will they be easily ready to protect the rule of law against abuse without any institutional protection provided for the whistleblowers”[[113]](#footnote-113).

### 5.5.1. Who controls whom

Considering the habit of politicians in Serbia to completely change people and laws when their party comes to power, it is not easy to follow what they are doing. Unlike Milosevic’s time, the secret police are controlled today. The question is – to what extent and how transparent.

“Executive controls include the authority to direct and coordinate the work of the securityintelligence agencies, appoint and dismiss their key personnel, and approve their organizational structures. In addition, the security-intelligence agencies are obligated to provide organs of the executive branch of government with annual reports that vary according to the needs and demands of each organ”[[114]](#footnote-114).

BIA submits reports to the Government. The NSC (National Security Committee that is run by the president) should play a decisive role in the area of control. However, “NSC’s role in these activities is known only in general terms. The specifics of council operations and decisions, and even the frequency of its meetings, are withheld from the public”[[115]](#footnote-115).

According to the present law, military intelligence agencies are controlled by the Inspector General whose job is to ensure that the agencies are politically and ideologically neutral, that the measures that they provide are according to the laws and that there is nothing wrong with their budgets. Inspector’s job is also to provide that all activities are performed according to the law and take care if there are any complaints from ordinary citizens. On the other hand, Inspector General for BIA is not provided (SIA is English acronym for BIA and that is how Petrovic uses it in the text).

“Instead, SIA has an Internal and Budgetary Control Unit that has handled citizen and employee complaints for many years. Two obvious problems exist with this unit, however.

First, its head is responsible solely to the SIA director. In such cases, when the head of an internal control unit belongs to the agency he is supposed to control and has no obligation to report outside the agency, then the manner of the control is said to be self-control.

Second, many citizens are unaware of the Internal and Budgetary Control Unit, and the SIA web site offers no helpful information in this regard. Therefore, most Serbians do not know that they can make complaints to the unit regarding the conduct of SIA agents”[[116]](#footnote-116).

The Parliament exercises its right to control the secret police through the DSC (Petrovic use the acronym CDS – Committee for Defense and Security but it is the same).

“…the committee is charged with supervising the constitutionality and legality of the security services’ work (including their use of special investigative measures), their compliance with the National Security Strategy and Defence Strategy documents, their political and ideological neutrality, and the legality of their budgetary expenditures. In addition, the committee considers and approves reports on the work of the security services and proposes and reviews draft legislation. Finally, CDS handles suggestions, petitions, and requests related to the security services that have been sent to Parliament by citizens”[[117]](#footnote-117).

The DSC can conduct an unofficial field tour and the BIA is obliged to give them any document they ask for and answer all their questions. “Another piece of legislation, the Law on Data Secrecy, grants the members of relevant parliamentary committees (those with mandates in the areas of security, defence, and internal affairs) access to classified data, with the only condition being that they sign a statement pledging to handle the data in accordance with the law and other governing regulations”[[118]](#footnote-118).

Petrovic reminds that this privilege has been used insufficiently and irregularly. Members of the Parliament have lacked initiatives, their oversight has been conducted mostly reviewing laws and asking questions in the Parliament. “Furthermore, MPs have shown an extremely low level of interest in exercising control of the security services”. Being aware of the lack of parliamentary control over secret police, in 2009 the committee made a decision to improve that practice “by developing a formal strategy for carrying out the work. Thus far, no such strategy has been developed”[[119]](#footnote-119).

Petrovic mentions that there were many seminars for MPs and members of the parliamentary stuff, organized mostly by the OSCE and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). This did not help. “The reason may be that MPs from the ruling coalition are generally unwilling to criticise the work of party colleagues lest they lose their own seats in Parliament. Up until recently this could have easily happened because of a mechanism known as the blanco resignation. According to Article 102 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, “a deputy shall be free to irrevocably put his or her term of office at the disposal of the political party upon whose proposal he or she has been elected.” Thus, as a matter of practice, MPs sign letters of resignation that their party leadership can activate at any time should an MP break party discipline”[[120]](#footnote-120). This practice is abandoned today.

Experts advised that situation could be improved by electing someone from the strongest opposition party to have a mandate in the DSC. “Although adoption of this protocol has improved the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight elsewhere in the Balkans, it did not have the same effect in Serbia”[[121]](#footnote-121).

In fact, as usual, the opposition used the DSC sessions only to promote its own party ideology. At the end, the DSC again became controlled by the ruling party.

In 2012 DSC became the Committee for Defense and International Affairs and the control of the secret police was transferred to the Committee for the Control of the Security Services. Still, no parliamentary body is responsible to anybody and the public is uninformed about their work. Today, the situation is the same.

It is important to stress that since 2004 the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance play a very important role in the reform of the security forces. On one hand, their work is very visible and influential but, on the other hand, the existence of the state Anti-Corruption

Agency is, at least, questionable. Namely, although the agency is as active as the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance, politicians have ignored it without any consequences.

The Ombudsman and the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance “…have actively asserted the powers granted them by law, provoking at times clashes with SIA (though not with the military agencies). In the Commissioner of Information’s report for the year 2006, he identified SIA as the government agency most resistant to his rulings, of which six in 2006 concerned SIA”[[122]](#footnote-122).

The situation is improved notwithstanding the fact that BIA very often uses one of the most important advice from any marketing agency – do not pay much attention and people will forget it.

It is also fair to state that independent parliamentary bodies have always had better cooperation with BIA than with the government.

The media and the civil society influence security policy although it is sometimes hard to measure to what extent. Namely, one cannot say that the media in Serbia are free and ordinary people are detained in the police because of criticizing the government, for tweets and Facebook posts! Sites get hacked; articles get taken down over night, silently, even from official local government sites. The OSCE has started to worry[[123]](#footnote-123).

Concerning the recent past and the rule of Slobodan Milosevic, it is obvious that there is a reason for concern.

Members of the civil society are often labeled as “traitors” and “servants of the West”. This is particularly true in the case of the NGOs financed by foreign donors. However, there are many seminars and round tables organized by the NGOs and attended by members of the Parliament and other governments’ bodies. It has happened that, thanks to their influence, some controversial laws were not adopted and the control of security services is improved. It is very important to stress the existence of the Insajder (Insider) series from the B92 television. Insajder has uncovered many secrets of the secret police and other malignant phenomena in the society. The leading author of the Insajder, Brankica Stankovic, has been living with police protection for several years.

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### 5.5.2. Illiberal resilience

On the eve of the 5th of October, DOS, coalition of 18 political parties whose representatives won against Milosevic, was ready to open the secret files and bring Milosevic and his counterparts to court. Soon it was clear that there was no political consensus and clear political vision among the politicians within the coalition. Later, some of them told the press that actually they had been in great shock after the elections and had not been aware of what should be done. It is believed that, in that situation, it was convenient to keep Milosevic’s men. Bitter rivalry among two leading men in the coalition (Zoran Djindjic and Vojislav Kostunica), together with Milosevic’s apparatus that basically stayed intact, blocked the creation of national consensus about SSR. According to Timothy Edmunds, strategies of illiberal resilience in Serbia are: 1) “implicit or explicit *resistance* (italics by Edmunds) to democratization; 2) *cooption* of the practices and procedures of democratic politics through the emergence or persistence of informal institutions of governance; 3) *adaptation*, in which illiberal interests use the process of democratization to aid their own consolidation”[[124]](#footnote-124). Although the article was written in 2008, the author of the thesis is confident that little was changed from the elections in 2008 until the elections in 2014.

Namely, Edmunds explains the methods used to sabotage the democratic process. He states that it is possible to achieve that by exploiting or hijacking the electoral process “by limiting citizens’ freedom to access information and learn about electoral alternatives”[[125]](#footnote-125). It is also common that voters are constrained at the ballot box and intimidated (almost every elections, even the ones in 2014, were marked by this); “harassing, outlawing, or restricting opposition parties; or engaging in acts of blatant fraud such as falsifying voting slips”[[126]](#footnote-126). Apparently, during the 2012 election, members of the SNS found a bag full of ballots. There was a huge scandal even when it became obvious that there was no fraud. The SNS firmly promised to investigate “electoral fraud” that has never been done. To be true, there were no serious complaints from the OECD observers, but the number of article in the press about intimidation of voters and even physical conflicts among supporters of some political parties at the polling places, rises concerns.

Other ways of illiberal resilience, according to Edmunds, are more subtle. He mentions the possibility that secret services can use force, or just a threat of force, to influence political processes. For example, Miljko Radisavljevic, special prosecutor for organized crime has recently been accused of dereliction and losing items with some evidence that were on his desk and that were thrown into the garbage by a cleaning lady. The accusation came from the tabloid press that is very close to the secret police. It is speculated that he will be dismissed from the office and Aleksandar Djordjevic, who is now director of BIA, should sit in his chair. Who will be the new BIA chief, is still unknown.

There is still a tradition from Milosevic’s time – politicians use the secret police for their own purposes. “…feuding civilian politicians have several times drawn soldiers or police officials into politics, whether as makeweights in power struggles or as bargaining chips whose coercive capacities could be offered or withheld for political advantage”[[127]](#footnote-127). Edmunds reminds that the other way around is also possible like it was with the Unit for Special Operations (JSO) until 2003 or later with the ex-commander of the gendarmerie, Bratislav Dikovic.

Timothy Edmunds also points out that some features of illiberal resilience in Serbia are harder to detect and address. “Apart from specific occasions, threats or intimidation from security actors have generally taking place in private, making it difficult for outsiders to track them or identify their veracity or seriousness”[[128]](#footnote-128).

Writing about formal and informal institutions in the society, (formal: electoral process, manner in which government is constituted, constitutial and legislative framework that regulates politics; informal: clientelism, corruption, development of customary law – phrases coined by Edmunds), Edmunds claims that it is possible to have free and fair election, new constitution, active civil society good legislature system and still there is a possibility of illiberal resilience practice.

Patronage, clientelism and corruption have a long tradition in the Serbian society. Dated in Tito’s time, they became perfect during Milosevic and still resist. Once again, it is very important to be a member of the ruling elite in order to get a job and a place close to Vucic can provide power and money.

The 2012 elections were surprising. The SNS, whose members separated from the ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS), won the elections and the Democratic Party that was known as a leader of the democratic change in Serbia was defeated. It happened that, at least for the public, the SNS had nothing in common with the SRS and surprisingly, they won the elections promising to solve the Kosovo problem and get Serbia into the EU. The new coalition made by the SNS, the Serbian Socialist Party and the United Regions of Serbia proclaimed the “Agreement on Common Political Aims”. According to this document, it was obvious that the reform of the security service in Serbia was stopped. “Only a few passing remarks of this important document indicate that the new government acknowledges the existence of the sector and policies in this area. The priorities cited in the Agreement only indirectly concern the army, the police, the intelligence services or the private security sector. Only the judicial sector has been addressed to somewhat greater extent”[[129]](#footnote-129). The document does not tackle SSR directly but rather the framework of populist platitudes that they have been using ever since. Gamser cites “accelerating the process of European integration”, “necessary to carry out systemic reforms”, “painful reforms”, “the fight against organized crime and corruption”. Claiming that this cannot be a real reform of the society but rather desirable state policies, Gamser emphasizes that this is not possible to achieve without the reform of the security sector – especially the secret police. One could say that the reform of the security sector can include fight against corruption and organized crime as much as closer cooperation among state administration, security and judicial sectors.

“Taking into account the earlier statements by the newly elected President of Serbia about the quality of reports sent to him by the security services and his sarcastic remark that they are such that he would “gladly cede them to the opposition,” it is questionable whether the demand of the Serbian Progress Party for better cooperation among various security services is truly motivated by the desire for efficiency in the fight against corruption (because sometimes it is precisely the competition among those services which is beneficial for disclosing the cases of high corruption) or by the desire to establish their own party control”[[130]](#footnote-130).

The point is, Gamser states, that President (Tomislav Nikolic) did not question party control over the secret police, but the quality of the information he gets “discretely hinting at a possible disloyalty of staff appointed by the previous authorities or some other political party”[[131]](#footnote-131).

The coalition agreement from 2012[[132]](#footnote-132) lacked a lot of things. For instance, there were no continued establishment of democratic oversight of the security sector, the importance of human rights and freedoms and rule of law as the foundation of every democratic security policy. Since this government is similar to the previous one, one can conclude that little will be changed.

# 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, in order to democratize the society, the reform of its secret police is not sufficient and in a weak state with a strong authoritarian tradition it is not easy to achieve democracy without a substantial impact from the international community, especially the EU.

It is evident that SSR in the area of the secret police is not functional, albeit there were a couple of attempts. If the society is truly dedicated to democracy, the reform of its secret police must be abolished and the whole apparatus of the secret police dismantled. Instead of the reform, the process of transformation should start. There is no need for inventing new solutions since there are many successful ones. Like the Stasi, for example.

Secret dossiers must be opened and presented to the public. The names of all perpetrators of crimes committed in the name of the state must be revealed. It is also important to reveal the names of members of the secret police and its informers from political parties, clergy, judiciary, media and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art. Since the same has already happened in Slovenia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, there are no reasons to prevent that in Serbia. Also, lustration that has never been implemented in Serbian political life after Milosevic should be reconsidered. It is never too late.

Transformation involves building institutions and its capacities at all levels – from the state itself to the municipalities; legislative and policy changes and improvements need to be made; it is crucial to establish institutions designed for *real control* of the security sector be reformed in order to level their institutional capacities; the role of the NGO sector, which was almost completely neglected by the state authorities, should be reversed and the state should recognize the contribution of the civil sector. Work of the government must be transparent and accountable. Party appointments must be reduced and professionalization of the public administration has to be at a higher level. Gender and minority issues must be recognized and serious commitment to solving them must be demonstrated.

Since the regime insecurity dilemma is established by applying the regime security theory, it is necessary to break that chain by avoiding subservient mentality and populist political culture.

The rule of law is the essence of a democratic state. A lot of existing laws in Serbia written according to good governance are not implemented, and there are no consequences for those who are responsible for that. There are many other laws that need to be passed. When that is achieved, dismantling of Milosevic’s secret police will be complete and it should be transformed into a modern security service.

Censorship must be abandoned and freedom of the press encouraged – according to the international standards. Censorship is inadmissible in today globalized world, where the Internet and WikiLeaks are the biggest proofs that it is impossible to silence anybody.

Serbia is a country of the “strong man” Aleksandar Vucic. There is, virtually, no decision that can be made without his approval. Appointing insignificant persons to the most important positions in the security sector indicates his intention to control it by himself. We are the witnesses how the national or state security becomes regime security – almost all state resources are used to secure the rule of one political party. So, it is reasonable to conclude that Serbia is not a democratic country and the question is if the present government has any intentions to go that way. If it is like that, members of Milosevic’s secret police are safe. The truth about what was going on during the 1990s will never be revealed and the appearance of new “Milosevic” is highly possible. That is why the EU and international community have to stay alert about what is going on in Serbia.

Are the proposed reforms suitable or something else has to be done, too? No, reforms are not suitable and yes – definitely something else has to be done. Applying the regime security theory and authoritarian theory in the case of Serbia demonstrated that the country has never abandoned authoritarianism and the weakness of the institution is an “endemic disease” of the state.

Members of the SNS carry a heavy burden of the past that is hard to forget, and contemporary events remind all about the recent past under Milosevic rule, so it is overly optimistic to expect that this Serbian government will apply democratic standards in the society. If the government is sincere and the EU is the final goal for Serbia (which is hard to believe) then the policy of “carrot and the stick” is a good way to go. Since the EU has already recognized the importance of SSR in Serbia, it is a wise if new security mechanisms become the standard that Serbia must fulfil before its full membership. It will not be the first time that the EU demands from Serbia to meet certain criteria in order to become a member-state. Until now, it has referred mainly to the normalization of relations with Kosovo and fulfilment of obligations towards the ICTY. The EU also demands that the future member-state respect and implement good governance, democratic control, accountability and transparency. If all this is a condition for Serbia to become the member of the EU, one more condition has to be added – getting rid of Milosevic's legacy in the security sector. We can deduce that this will significantly strengthen democratic processes in the country and once and for all - consolidate democracy. However, this cannot be done without sustained pressure from the EU institutions.

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# List of abbreviations

BIA – Bezbednosno – informativna agencija (Security information agency)

BCSP – Belgrade Center for security policy

CDS - Defense and Security Committee in Predrag Petrovic, Strengthening Intelligence Governance in the Western Balkans – Intelligence Governance in Serbia, DCAF project on Strengthening Intelligence Oversight in the Western Balkans

CEAS – Center for Euro-Atlantic studies

DCAF - Democratic Control of Armed Forces

DCS – DSC in Predrag Petrovic, Strengthening Intelligence Governance in the Western Balkans – Intelligence Governance in Serbia, DCAF project on Strengthening Intelligence Oversight in the Western Balkans

DOS - Democratic opposition of Serbia

DSC - Defense and Security Committee

EU – European Union

IMF – International Monetary Fund

JNA – Jugoslovenska Narodna Amrija – (Yugoslav People’s Army)

JSO – Jedinica za specijalne operacije – (Unit for the special operations)

JUL – Jugoslovenska Udruzena levica – (United left of Serbia)

KGB - Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti (Committee for State Security)

KLA - Kosovo liberation army

KOS - kontraobavestajna sluzba – (Contra intelligence agency of the army)

LGBT - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

MP – Member of the parliament

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO – Non-governmental organization

NKVD - Народный комиссариат внутренних дел, Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del – (The

People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs)

NSC - National security committee

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

OZNA - Odeljenje za zastitu naroda – (Department for the Protection of People)

RDB - Resor drzavne bezbednosti– (Department of the state security)

SDB - Sluzba drzavne bezbednosti - (State security service)

SIA – BIA is Predrag Petrovic, Strengthening Intelligence Governance in the Western Balkans – Intelligence Governance in Serbia, DCAF project on Strengthening Intelligence Oversight in the Western Balkans

SPS - Socialist party of Serbia

SNS - Srpska napredna stranka – (Serbian progressive party)

SRS – Srpska radikalna stranka (Serbian radical party)

SSR – Security sector reform

USA – United States of America

UDBA - uprava drzavne bezbednosti – (Bureau of the state security)

VOS - vojna obavestajna sluzba – (Military intelligence service)

1. BIA - Serbian security information agency http://www.bia.gov.rs/eng/istorijat/vremeplov-006.html - 5. 03. 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ” Jennifer Rowley “Using case studies in research” http://www.arf-asia.org/resources/using\_case\_study\_in\_research.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Robert K. Yin, “Case study research – design and methods” http://cemusstudent.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/YIN\_K\_ROBERT-1.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Helga A. Welsh explained in her article “Dealing with the communist past: Central and Eastern European experiences after 1990” that lustration is the commonly used translation from the Czech term that refers to politically motivated “cleansing”. Originally, the term lustration is derived from the Latin lustrum which refers to ritually cleansing of the state and the people [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://ceas-serbia.org/root/index.php/en/ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. http://www.bezbednost.org/BCSP/2001/Home.shtml [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “Tajne sluzbe Srbije” available on Amazon <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Books/s?ie=UTF8&field-author=Mark%20LOBI&page=1&rh=n%3A266239%2Cp_27%3AMark%20LOBI> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For example, in 1995 there was a huge explosion in the “Grmec” factory in Belgrade. Lopusina explained that the explosion had occurred because the secret police, with the authorization given directly by Slobodan Milosevic, had tried to organize production of rocket fuel. Eleven people died in the explosion. The author contacted Jasmina Stancic, whose husband died in “Grmec” and checked if Lopusina’s story was correct. She confirmed it. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Richard Jackson, “Regime Security” in the Allan Collins “Contemporary Security Studies”, Oxford University Press 2013, p. 162 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. ibid, p.163 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. ibid p. 165 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. ibid p. 166 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. ibid p. 167 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. ibid p. 168 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. ibid p. 170 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/44640/authoritarianism> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Juan José Linz, “Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes”, <http://books.google.dk/books?id=8cYk_ABfMJIC&pg=PA159&lpg=PA159&dq=Juan+Jos%C3%A9+Linz+authoritarianism&source=bl&ots=0knPZnq9uZ&sig=-kv7xo18EaE0fo_gzPleyT3qVAE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=7aUtU7itOaf04QTgmoGAAw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Juan%20Jos%C3%A9%20Linz%20authoritarianism&f=false> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. “Venezuela: Authoritarianism and its accomplices” - <http://infovnzla.com/2014/04/02/venezuela-authoritarianism-and-its-accomplices/> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Steven Levitsky and Lucan A.Way “Competitive Authoritarianism: The Emergence And Dynamics of Hybrid Regimes in the Post-Cold War era”, <http://sitemaker.umich.edu/comparative.speaker.series/files/levitsky_with_bib.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. ibid, p.6 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. ibid, p.9 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. ibid, p.20 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Serbia ranked 80th place, by Corruption Perception Index that ranks 177 states and territories; rule of the law is jeopardize: judiciary is incompetent so more and more people are looking for justice in European Court of Human Right – there are more than 12.000 applications now - more on <http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/CP_Serbia_ENG.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Tomas Plate & Andrea Darvi, “Secret Police – The Terrifying Inside Story of an International Network”, Robert Hale Ltd, Great Britain 1982 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. ibid, p.8 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Timothy Edmunds, Security Sector Reform: Concepts and Implementation www.dcaf.ch/content/download/36494/528205/file/01\_Edmunds.pdf‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. op.cit. p.9 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Thomas Plate & Andrea Darvi, “Secret police – The terrifying inside story of an international network”, Robert Hale Ltd, Great Britain 1982, p. 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. ibid, p. 43 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. ibid p. 50 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. ibid p. 85 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. ibid p. 97 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. ibid p. 104 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. ibid p. 122 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. ibid p. 245 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. ibid p. 246 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Timothy Edmunds, Security Sector Reform: Concepts and Implementation [www.dcaf.ch/content/download/36494/528205/file/01\_Edmunds.pdf](http://www.dcaf.ch/content/download/36494/528205/file/01_Edmunds.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Heiner Hänggi wrote extensively about that [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. SOURCEBOOK ON SECURITY SECTORnREFORM Collection of Papers, Edited by: Philipp Fluri and Miroslav Hadžić, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces; Centre for Civil-Military Relations, Belgrade, 2004 [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Marina Caparini and Otwin Marenin “REFORM AND PROGRESS IN THE POLICING SYSTEMS OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES” in SOURCEBOOK ON SECURITY SECTOR

    REFORM Collection of Papers, Edited by: Philipp Fluri and Miroslav Hadžić, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces; Centre for Civil-Military Relations, Belgrade, 2004 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. like the UN <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/LawEnforcementOfficials.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. op.cit. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Tomas Plate & Andrea Darvi, “Secret Police – The Terrifying Inside Story of an International Network”, Robert Hale Ltd, Great Britain 1982, p. 22 [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. It is important to mention that the secret police of Yugoslavia and Serbia will often be overlapped since it is hard, in many cases, to make clear distinctions between the two of them. The only clear distinction will be made in the case of the secret police from 1988, when Slobodan Milosevic came to power [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Documentary “Jugoslavenske tajne sluzbe” – Yugoslavia’s Secret Police“, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZDkM8kbaGk and Professor Srdjan Cvetkovic - [scvetkovic72@gmail.com](mailto:scvetkovic72@gmail.com) [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Some of UDBA’s methods are still used in Serbia. For example, if some Serb has a guest from abroad, it is his/her duty to go with that person in the nearest police station and register foreign guest. If the police reveal that the foreign citizen in Serbia is not register, Serbian resident must pay considerable fine [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. It came into the focus recently when top Yugoslav and Croatian security service official Josip Perkovic was arrested and deported to Germany. He was charged for participation in the murder of political émigré Stjepan Djurekovic in 1983 in Bavaria, Germany – more on <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/jailed-yugoslav-agent-reveals-croatian-spy-boss-links> [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. More in Fred Warner Neal “Titoism in Action: The Reforms in Yugoslavia After 1948”, Google books [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. http://scindeks-clanci.ceon.rs/data/pdf/0352-3160/2009/0352-31600902131C.pdf

    Unfortunately, professor Cvetkovic published in Serbian and Cyrillic, but he can be reached by e-mail [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. See 3.1. Regime security theory [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Tim Judah, The Serbs, Yale University Press Publication 2009, p. 184 [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. “Abuse of office (part one) – TV B9 <http://www.b92.net/eng/insajder/index.php?yyyy=2009&mm=04&dd=13&nav_id=74606> [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. “Former Serbian State Security Service Chief threatens to disclose secret files” <http://inserbia.info/today/2013/11/former-serbian-state-security-service-chief-threatens-to-disclose-secret-files/> [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Only in Serbian - <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Politika/421995/Zoran-Stijovic-Spijuni-DB-danas--ugledni-politicari> [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. For more about this Miroslav Hadzic, “Civil-Military Features of the FRY” <http://www.bezbednost.org/All-publications/4310/CivilMilitary-Features-of-the-FRY.shtml> [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. More about this CEAS “KEEPING UP WITH THE PRIVATE SECURITY SECTOR” <http://ceas-serbia.org/root/images/CEAS_Report_-_Keeping_up_with_the_private_security_sector.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. New York Times from the 22nd of February 2008 <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/22/world/europe/22kosovo.html?_r=0> [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. See 3.2. Authoritarian theory – classical and competitive authoritarianism [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/suspects-in-curuvija-murder-arrested> [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. See 3.2.1. - The end of the Cold War as a breaking point [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Florian Bieber, “The Authoritarian Temptation”, <http://fbieber.wordpress.com/2014/03/15/the-authoritarian-temptation/#respond> [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. More <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/12/world/crisis-balkans-overview-russians-enter-kosovo-early-but-moscow-calls-it-mistake.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Sasa Jankovic “The Status of Serbia’s Intelligence Reform and its Challenges” in Anja H. Ebnoether, Ernst M. Felberbauer Mladen Staničić “Security Sector Reform in South East Europe – from a Necessary Remedy to a Global Concept”, 13th Workshop of the Study Group „Regional Stability in South East Europe” in cooperation with the Working Group „Security Sector Reform”, Vienna and Geneva, January 2007 [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. ibid, p. 149-150 [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Although there are more murdered journalist like Dada Vujasinovic and Milan Pantic whose killers stayed unknown [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. More about Racak <http://www.hirhome.com/yugo/ranta.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Legija is a notorious commander of the secret police private army JSO - “Special operation unit”, previous “Red berets” – paramilitary unit that took part in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia. Both Markovic and Legija are in prison now. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Maximum penalty in Serbia is 40 years in prison [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. <http://english.blic.rs/In-Focus/10300/Tanja-Miscevic-Investigation-of-political-background-of-Djindjics-assassination-a-condition-set-by-the-EU> [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. <http://inserbia.info/today/2013/11/former-serbian-state-security-service-chief-threatens-to-disclose-secret-files/> [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. only in Serbian - <http://pescanik.net/wp-content/PDF/dokumenta/Prilog_6_%28Spaljivanje%29.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Bogoljub Milosavljevic, Djorjde Pavicevic “Secret files – Opening the files of the state security services, Center for antiwar action, 2002 [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Dejan Anastasijevic, “What’s Wrong With Serbia? <http://www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=310> [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Aleksandar Resanovic, “Opening of Secret Files of the State Security Services”

     <http://www.bezbednost.org/All-publications/4275/Opening-of-Secret-Files-of-the-State-Security.shtml> [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Filip Ejdus, “Democratic Security Sector Governance in Serbia”, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. There is a speculation that Djindjic was assassinated because people from the old regime, mostly from the secret police, did not wanted any changes and they were afraid that they would be sent to Hague [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. This year is significant for Serbia because negotiations on the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU started again. It was put on hold due to the lack of cooperation with the ICTY [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. http://www.bezbednost.org/BCSP/4032/Bogoljub-Milosavljevic.shtml text in Serbian [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. <http://www.blic.rs/stara_arhiva/hronika/124034/Politicke-stranke-pod-kontrolom-tajnih-sluzbi> [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Filip Ejdus, “Democratic Security Sector Governance in Serbia, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Sasa Jankovic “The Status of Serbia’s Intelligence Reform and its Challenges” in Anja H. Ebnoether, Ernst M. Felberbauer Mladen Staničić “Security Sector Reform in South East Europe – from a Necessary Remedy to a Global Concept”, 13th Workshop of the Study Group „Regional Stability in South East Europe” in cooperation with the Working Group „Security Sector Reform”, Vienna and Geneva, January 2007 [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Predrag Petrovic, Strengthening Intelligence Governance in the Western Balkans – Intelligence Governance in Serbia, DCAF project on Strengthening Intelligence Oversight in the Western Balkans, p. 14 [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. ibid, p.15 [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. ibid, p. 17 [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. ibid, p.18 [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. ibid, p. 19 [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. ibid, p.22 [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. <http://www.osce.org/fom/119173> [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Timothy Edmunds, “Illiberal resilience in Serbia”, Journal of democracy, Volume 20, Number 1, January 2009 [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Dusan Gamser, “What the Agreement on the New Parliamentary Majority Does (Not) Bring to the Security Sector Reform and Security Policy”, <http://ceas-serbia.org/root/tromesecnik/the-new-century-02.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Government today is very similar to the one from 2012. The difference is that SNS was in coalition in that time and now they have huge majority in parliament. In 2012 the Prime Minister was from Socialist party Ivica Dacic, who is now Minister for Foreign affairs and Aleksandar Vucic, who is now Prime Minister, was “the first deputy of the Prime Minister” – position that nobody has seen before [↑](#footnote-ref-132)