

ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS NEMZETVÉDELMI EGYETEM

(National Defense University)

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MONTENEGRO

ON THE WAY TO INDEPENDENCE

Doctoral (PhD) Thesis

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An exposition of the doctoral dissertation entitled „Montenegro On The Way To Independence”

I. The structure and overview of the dissertation

After Milo Djukanovic was elected president in October 1997 and reformist forces achieved victory, more and more news were broadcast about Montenegro. However, it is very interesting that – contrast to the other former member republics from Tito’s era – the events in Montenegro had hardly been mentioned prior to Djukanovic, i.e. between 1989 and 1997.

As soon as we come familiar with the history and culture of Montenegro, and the considerations of the Crna Goran people living there, the driving force behind the events over the past few years will become quite evident. We will arrive at a different point of view on the bloody massacres of the 1990s in the Balkans.

I provided a detailed analysis of Montenegro’s history from the beginning until the early 1980s in Chapters 2 and 3 of the dissertation, following the Preface.

After the overview of Montenegro’s history, I made a thorough investigation into the political events of the past two decades taking place in the republic, and in the wider Yugoslavia. In Chapters 4 and 5, I went through all the major events of Montenegro’s last 20 years. I paid special attention to what happened in the republic after Milo Djukanovic was elected president, until the new commonwealth called Serbia and Montenegro was formed.

In this way, I have provided a broad picture of Montenegro’s history in the first half of my dissertation, from the beginning until the present time. That was the primary goal of my dissertation. I dealt with the period between 1989 and 2002 in particular. It is inevitable to know the events of this period to accurately see how the small Balkan country gained extensive independence over the last five years.

The second most important question of my dissertation is what was the real cause of Montenegro for becoming independent since 1997. Political science, international relations, and the research of the Balkans have so far failed to discover the background processes which have been driving the fate, and the future course of this tiny South-East European country. That is why I made an effort to shed light on the background of the Montenegrin independence process. In the second half of my dissertation, I tried to uncover the background of Montenegro becoming independent, an aspect never analyzed so far.

I analyzed the forces and factors that motivate the Podgorica government in Chapter 6 of the Thesis. I analyzed a number of aspects which may have been in the background of Crna Gora’s impetuous secessionist policy since 1997. I analyzed the points of similarity and difference between the Serbian and the Crna Goran nations – that is to say, I analyzed the question whether the desire for freedom of the Crna Gorans could have driven the independence process. The next point of analysis was how much Milosevic’s policy of iron hand may have influenced Montenegro’s isolation. As another possible cause of the breakaway, I analyzed the alleged connections of Milo Djukanovic and his Montenegrin administration with the Mafia. I also addressed the concern how much Montenegro’s process of breakaway has been affected by the country’s economic interests, and Podgorica’s foreign

policy considerations. Finally, I analyzed the relations of the Montenegrin government with the great powers which exercise decisive influence on Balkan events.

Having arrived at a clear view of the background processes which affect Montenegrin independence, I tried to reproduce the real scenario of the secessionist efforts of the last years in the subchapter 6.5.

I focused on the possible future of Montenegro in Chapter 7, considering the expected perspectives of the entire Balkans. At the same time, I tried to use the implications of the independence process taking place in Montenegro over the last years.

II. Research goals and methods

The primary goal of my doctoral dissertation was to provide a profound and accurate analysis of Montenegro's entire breakaway process, beginning from the first mention of independence until the present day.

One of the central issues my dissertation aims to address is the degree of self-reliance the Montenegrins may exercise in the future to conduct their own affairs in the single-polar world which has existed since 1991.

In my Thesis, I also shed light on the question how the two almost identical nations could arrive at such a sharp disaccord on the verge of another military conflict in the Balkans. I explained why the Djukanovic regime has been constraining independence at all costs. However, the unconditional enforcement of secession, and a premature breakaway from Serbia would involve incalculable hazards for Montenegro too.

Montenegro became de facto independent in the course of the last years. One may ask, why is it so important to declare de jure secession? Even among the professional analysts, the generally recognized view – in connection to the process of becoming independent – is that Podgorica's break-away is primarily, and exclusively a consequence of Milosevic's oppressive policy. According to this presumption, Montenegro is in a vacuum in the international political life, since the tiny country is only affected by internal affairs, with a marginal influence of external factors.

In fact, the Balkans was already a stage for games played by the great powers in the 19th century. Hitler's Third Reich exercised a determinant influence on the tiny nations living here in the middle of the 20th century. The pressure from the great powers hardly diminished by the end of the 20th century, even though we do not yet have the documents which would unambiguously justify this. Based on the events of the previous centuries in the Balkans however, we can safely dismiss all the simplifying explanations which attribute the events of the 1990s merely to the conflicts between different nations.

I have proved in the Thesis that the economies of the small states in the Balkans profoundly depend on the outside countries; and their political elite may remain in power and survive only if they can obtain foreign loans and assistance. Hence, their independent actions and roles are negligible in the conflicts of the Balkans. This is especially the case in the small entities becoming independent in the last few years (Bosnia, Macedonia, Kosovo), which are practically incapable of living in economic – and also political – terms.

During my works, I processed the articles of daily papers and periodicals dealing with Montenegro and Yugoslavia, published between 1985 and 2002. They were essential to write an up-to-date dissertation. I also processed the Hungarian literature published since 1991 (dealing with the events in Yugoslavia). During my research work, I also made use of the

diploma works which deal with Southern Slavic issues, available in the libraries of the Budapest University of Economics and Public Administration (Budapesti Közgazdaságtudományi és Államigazgatási Egyetem) and the National Defense University (Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem). I used papers and books in English, Russian and German language dealing with Montenegro. I also used the pertinent sections of my own books, as well as materials available on the Internet in this topic.

I employed a wide range of scientific methods during the analytical work. Using the historic method, I tracked the temporal progress of Montenegro towards independence. As a part of the general method, I used the comparative method to examine in which aspects Montenegro's independence process is similar to, or different from that of the other former Yugoslavian republics.

I made use of analysis and synthesis to obtain research results in the analytical chapters. At the end of the dissertation, I also applied the opportunities provided by the use of induction and deduction.

III. The scientific yields of the dissertation

In my opinion, I made the following new scientific achievements in my doctoral dissertation:

1. An outline of Montenegrin history in Hungarian language

No publication in Hungarian has ever been issued about the comprehensive history of Montenegro. Analyses handle the small country of Montenegro together with, and subordinate to Serbia. Montenegro is hardly mentioned at all in the various writings when dealing with the history of the Serbian – Crna Goran nation. However – as it becomes obvious from my dissertation – the people of Crna Gora is significantly different from the history of the Serbian nation. They have developed a self-sufficient sense of identity, remarkably diverging from that of the Serbians. Montenegro was an independent state from the 15th century until 1918, and it has again established its quasi independent statehood over the past half decade (1997-2002). In spite of its tiny area and population, it has always played a remarkable role in policy in the Balkans.

I made an effort to provide a review of Montenegrin history as deep into the details as possible, from the beginning until the present day. I have made use of all the sources available in Hungary, in various languages.

2. The Montenegrin aspect of Yugoslavia's disintegration and its assessment

Countless sources are available in connection with the disintegration of Tito's Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, Montenegro is almost completely omitted from the Southern Slavic events of the 1990s. Especially neglected is the side of Yugoslavia's disintegration which analyses what really happened in the 1990s – during the years of disintegration – in Montenegro. The negligence over Montenegro is also peculiar because a vast number of writings were published about Kosovo and Vojvodina at the same time.

Although Podgorica stayed in Belgrade's shadow after 1989, letting Serbia conduct small Yugoslavia's external relations, still it played a significant role in the Southern Slavic events of the early 1990s. Moreover, Montenegro constituted small Yugoslavia's second member republic – besides Serbia –, so the Montenegrin internal policy exercised a decisive influence on the processes taking place in the federal Yugoslavia. The politicians originating from Montenegro – as they always did after 1920 – have been playing a remarkable role

in the Yugoslavian governments of the 1990s, i.e. the Yugoslavian prime ministers were people from Crna Gora in the 1990s.

3. The change in the balance of powers in the Balkans, and the influence of the great powers on Montenegro

In my doctoral dissertation, I confront the simplified and generalizing analysis of history which has been spreading in the last decade in connection with the events of Yugoslavia. It traces back Yugoslavia's disintegration to the conflict of nations and Serbia's strife for hegemony, while maintaining a benevolent and passive image of the outside, which is only interfering with the Southern Slavic events selflessly, only with the purpose to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe. Most of the Balkan and Yugoslavia specialists give an in-depth analysis of the ethnical, historical and religious antagonisms prevailing after the disintegration of Tito's Yugoslavia, even giving a well-tinged picture of the internal policy. At the same time, the foreign policy situation – which has always been an important factor in world history –, the influence of the great powers and the changes thereof, barely progressed beyond the level of hints and references in the otherwise exceedingly high-standard analyses. The works published about the Southern Slavic conflicts in Hungarian language failed to consider that the Balkans remain a key territory for the great powers to this day. I feel that this dissertation has proved that the real picture is a lot more shaded. American president Wilson struggled in vain urging the full abolishment of secret diplomacy in the end of World War I so it remains and everyday practice in the end of the 20th century, just like the time-tested practice of establishing separate zones of influence in the Balkans for the great powers. The territory of the former Yugoslavia is a playground for the great powers – as it was in the 19th century too – where it is highly unlikely that the great powers are just being drifted with the current of events.

In Chapter 6 of my doctoral dissertation – while analyzing also the different causes in the background of Montenegro's independence process, i.e. the desire of the Montenegrins for freedom, Milosevic's policy and the alleged Mafia connections of the Djukanovic regime –, I particularly discuss the role of the great powers in the region, as well as their influence in the course of Balkan events. I provide an exhaustive analysis into the all-important role of the great powers – first of all the United States – in the pro-independence rhetoric of president Djukanovic, as well as the rise of the pro-independence forces. I especially analyzed the issue of financial assistance and the other kinds of support, as well as their huge influence on the tight budget of the Podgorica government. Accordingly, my third scientific achievement in my view is the discovery that the tiny entities of the Balkans do not in any means exist in a vacuum at the turn of the millennium. Not only their internal, but also their foreign policy is affected by remarkable influences. Therefore, it is inevitable to keep track of the changes of the geopolitical balance.

4. The situation of internal policy in Montenegro: the attitude of pro-Yugoslavians and the pro-independence voices towards independent statehood

A growing number of writings about Montenegro have been published since 1997 when Milo Djukanovic was elected president. Nevertheless, they have failed to examine the attitude of pro-Yugoslavians and the pro-independence forces towards the independent statehood, the forces which are experiencing an elemental impact upon the Montenegrin internal policy. This is also the stand, which influenced Montenegro's process of becoming independent.

I pointed out in my Thesis that a fervent struggle has taken place in the internal politics of the tiny Southern Slavic republic between the pro-independence and the pro-Yugoslavian

forces. This struggle has begun in the end of 1997, and continues up to this day. I also particularly analyzed Montenegro's immense division, since the popularity of the two contradictory forces are nearly 50-50 percent. The ability of the pro-independence forces to remain in power for a prolonged period is not primarily provided by the overwhelming Montenegrin support of independent statehood, but much more by the influence of the rest of the world as mentioned above. The struggle of the pro-independence forces and the pro-Yugoslavian concentration has been accompanying Montenegro's history for five years. The struggle between the two groups of power, as well as their balance, will also exercise a profound influence in the future on the process of Montenegro becoming independent.

IV. The adaptability of the dissertation

The dissertation entitled "Montenegro On The Way To Independence" may be used by anyone who is seriously interested in Montenegro's history, as well as what happened there during the last years. This analysis is also going to be a support for the Balkan researchers who are examining the historical and political processes of the entire Balkans. Given that I laid special emphasis on the role and behavior of the great powers influencing the Balkans, the work may be useful also to those who analyze one of the great powers in terms of influence on the Balkans or as a world power.

The Thesis may be of use to the future researchers for whom the secret archives of the distant past will be available, so they will be able to examine the suggestions brought up in this dissertation, in comparison to the actual and known facts.

Given its unconventional way of analysis and its different approach, the dissertation can be an interesting reading to many people interested in the Balkans.

In the course of the fighting, the territory of Tito's Yugoslavia incurred 120 billion USD in damage between August 1990 and August 2001, 4 million people were forced to flee their homes, and a further 250,000 people were killed. Once the most developed country in Eastern Europe and eager to carry out Western integration, the state of Yugoslavia turned into a disintegrated, economically unviable and pauperized region left to the tender mercies of the world power who is currently dominating.

The main purpose of the thesis entitled "*Montenegro On The Way To Independence*" was to provide a broad picture about everything we have so far known about Montenegro, and to analyze the background of the independence process from several different points of view. The dissertation may serve as a link between the works that research what has been actually happening in Yugoslavia over the past 15 years.

A list of the publications related to the dissertation

- A large number of articles published in the foreign policy columns of the daily Magyar Nemzet (Hungarian Nation), between September 1998 and December 1998, mainly focusing on the Balkan daily events. (The most of the articles were published anonymously on the pages 2-3, or signed as B.A. in the end, or sometimes with the name Borsányi displayed.)
- April 2000: A book entitled “A Koszovói Felszabadítási Hadsereg (UCK) rejtélye” (“The Kosovo Liberation Army [UCK] Mystery”), page 272. The book on the KLA Mystery deals with the Kosovo war and its circumstances. The work gives much ground to the history of the guerilla army called KLA and its fighting in Kosovo.
- December 2000: A book entitled “A három pillér” (“The Three Pillars”), page 172. This is a foreign political analysis of the future of Central and Eastern Europe. It enlists the conflicts expected to take place in the Balkans, and it outlines an action plan for the Hungarian foreign policy.
- An article in the Heti Világgazdaság (“World Economy Weekly”), 18 August 2001, page 40, entitled “A NATO enged” (“NATO gives in”). The article analyses the circumstances of the war in Macedonia, bringing up the responsibility of the West.
- December 2001: A book entitled “A visszacsapás doktrínája” (“The Doctrine of the Counterstrike”), page 360. This is a geopolitical analysis dealing with the foreign policy of the United States. The book outlines a detailed action doctrine for Washington. It particularly analyses the geopolitical balance of the world in the beginning of the 21st century, including the Balkan region.
- A study in the magazine “Új Honvédségi Szemle” (“New Defense Watch”), 2003/01, pages 74-96, entitled “A titói Jugoszlávia felbomlása” (“The Disintegration of Tito’s Yugoslavia”). The study deals with the Southern Slavic crisis of the 1990s.

Under preparation are the followings:

- A study in the magazine “Társadalom és Honvédelem” (“Society and Defense”), 2003/01, entitled “Az ismeretlen Szandzsák” (“The Unknown Sandzak”). The study focuses on the Sandzak region which is situated between Montenegro and Serbia, as well as the Bosnian people living there.
- A study in the magazine “Új Honvédségi Szemle” (“New Defense Watch”), 2003/06, entitled “Egy napra a román-magyar háborútól” (“One Day From The War Between Rumania and Hungary”). The study examines the Hungarian-Rumanian conflict taking place in the Summer of 1940.
- “The World Dominance Of The United States In The End Of The 20th Century”, ARMS 2003/01. The analysis, written in English, deals with the global power of the United States and the American predominance in the world politics of the 1990s.

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