

UNMIK



United Nations Mission in Kosovo

Division of Public Information

Media Monitoring

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30 December

Serbia's radicalization sends Kosovo a step closer to independence (Zëri)

Zëri carried a front page analyzes regarding Serbian elections.

Real figures of the extraordinary parliamentary election in Serbia of December 28, which nobody in the west is willing to accept, show that political parties which regardless of their weaknesses aim to reform the Serbian society, took just 900,000 votes or only 30% of overall votes. More than 2.3 millions votes were divided between the right wing parties. All parties, including the Serbian Democratic Party of former president Vojislav Kostunica, had in principle had declined to support the reforms or oppose it. It is well known that western diplomats and politicians aren't happy with the changes in the Serbian society.

The Serbian radical party led by war crimes suspects Vojislav Seselj took more than 27% of the overall votes, which is more than one million votes. There is not a single country in Europe where such a party could have won one third of the overall votes. A few day ago its leader Tomislav Nikolic publicly supported the murder of the Serbian reporter by the Secret Service in spring 1999 during the NATO air campaign.

As we said before, there are only a few western officials who are willing to speak about the election results because they are disappointed. They all would attempt to rationalize these result as they did in 2000 when they created an artificial coalition which had nothing in common except for being unified to bring down Milosevic's regime.

The paper further said that Serbia expects to change its constitution without which it cannot accelerate the process of significant changes in the society, while the constitution itself cannot be changed without support of two thirds of the deputies. Radicals of Seselj and socialist of Milosevic make the critical potential and they can also block approval of the new constitution. Therefore, it seems that the radicals aren't only winners of the parliamentary elections, but they also would control the process of constitutional changes in Serbia.

It seems that the first analysis of Serbia's extraordinary elections will show a deep political crisis. This crisis will also impact on Belgrade's relations with Kosovo in the most critical period when the final status is addressed.

Even though it is still early to predict what will happen to these relations, it is not easy to predict the Serbian policy towards Kosovo.

The paper concludes that the current political developments in Serbia should push forward the option of Kosovo and Montenegro's independence.

Shala: Elections of 1993 (Zëri)

In a front-page editorial for Zëri, Blerim Shala writes:

As if it is 1993, and not 2003! As if nothing has happened in the last ten years! We are absolutely certain that this is the joint opinion of rational Serb politicians and western diplomats, after the announcements of the results of extraordinary elections in Serbia. We all know who the winners and losers are. In fact, these elections gave a verdict to the period after Milosevic's downfall. This period has been completely devaluated and the statements of western officials are useless in this aspect.

Even though in politics one must always seek the genuine causes of a phenomenon in order to justify a certain development, it is very difficult to find the common denominator of these election results. Therefore, it is easier for others – all those who harshly criticized the post-Milosevic regime in Serbia, who tried to be reformist in economy and conservative in politics, and who co-existed with organized crime of the previous regime. The latter cost former Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic his life.

So far, western officials refused to see what the critics of the Serbian regime have seen. After the elections, those officials who deal with the Balkans will have two possibilities: to continue their approach that has no results, or to change their policy by admitting some things that are going to happen. One of them is the independence of Kosovo.

Agron Bajrami: Who waits for Serbia, loses (Koha Ditore)

Koha Ditore carries an editorial by Agron Bajrami, who comments on the extraordinary parliamentary elections in Serbia.

The parliamentary elections in Serbia have brought no surprises. According to all predictions, Seselj's fascists came out as the biggest political party in the country, whereas the divided 'democrats' seem to have enough votes to form an unstable government, which doesn't stand much chances to last a full mandate.

Even the nationalists of Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia have won seats at the Serbian Parliament, where together with radicals they will be able to block all necessary laws and reforms that are required for this country to join European Union.

Therefore, in 2004, Serbia enters a cycle of political crisis with unpredictable consequences for the entire region.

Although Serb leaders, who are considered ‘reformists’ and ‘democrats’ by the West try to interpret the election results with a certain dose of optimism by claiming that this was expected and that it does not create problems, the truth is that many things will be even worse now after these Serbian elections.

First of all, in 2004, when the remaining issues in the region – the status of Kosovo and the status of Montenegro – are expected to be resolved, Serbia will remain a country in constant political crisis. This will not be of help to the ongoing processes in the Balkans.

Second, these results can further complicate the European integration of the region, process that is perceived by some decision-making centers as one that must include the majority of former Yugoslav countries. And despite the investments of the West, Serbia remains the black hole of the region.

Third, the much-needed process of reconciliation in the region remains impossible. So far, Serb ‘democrats’ haven’t shown the willingness to carry their burden in this historic confrontation with crime. Not only do they consider it unnecessary, but they also lack the pragmatic motivation to take this step. With an even stronger position of radicals and socialists in Serbian politics, the Serbian regime will hardly acknowledge that this is high time to admit the historic responsibility.

Thus, even reconciliation, which was mentioned and requested so often by people of good will, must wait for ‘a better day in Belgrade’. The reality is that many people in the Balkans already gave up waiting for such a day.

Only three years after the downfall of Milosevic the prime guilty for this verdict of the Serb voters are the power holders in Serbia. The political calculations that the Serbian Government made for daily usage now prove that they haven’t either resulted in reforms, which the West so eagerly requested, or in facing the close past that was requested by the neighboring countries, or even in ensuring a better life for all citizens of Serbia.

Hysa: Seselj, Serb Santa Claus of 2004? (Koha Ditore)

Koha Ditore carries an opinion piece by Ylber Hysa, director of the Kosovo Action for Civic Initiatives (KACI), who comments on the results of extraordinary parliamentary elections in Serbia.

‘It is not going to be easy for Belgrade to take the government towards democratic and sustainable reforms. It isn’t going to be easy for Serbia’s neighbors or its western partners, who have overestimated the situation created after 5 October 2000. And if there is one good thing about the 28 December elections, it is the removal of illusions,’ writes Hysa.

28 December of 2003 should bring a sobering surprise to the post-Milosevic Serbia. The party led by a Hague client has won the majority of votes in the parliamentary elections in Serbia and the success of the hardliners in Serbia is the best indicator of the situation in Serbia after 5 October 2000 and after the assassination of Djindjic.

In fact the election results in Serbia have created a situation in which it is difficult to establish a steady government. The votes for the so-called democratic bloc allow a theoretical possibility for the creation of a wide coalition government only with the inclusion of the fourth party. But to make the allocation of seats even more complicated, Kostunica's party DSS has won the biggest number of votes in this bloc, 17.8 % (53 seats), which is 10 % less than the hardliners, DS of late Djindjic has won 12.6 % (37 seats), G17 of Labus 11.7 % (34 seats), and SPO-NS 7.7 %, and the party of Milosevic, PSS 7.4 % or 21 seats in the Serbian Parliament.

Mathematics of the post-election Serbia is an equation with many unknowns, says Hysa.

If we make a simple calculation we could have these combinations; hardliners and the group of SRS-SPS, which would mean 103 seats. They could still not form the government unless another party joined them (like SPO-NS).

On the other hand, it would require reform parties to constitute a broad coalition to form the new Serbian Government; DSS-DS-G17+SPO-NS, which would mean 147 seats. If a miracle happens to bring the Coalition for Minorities in the parliament, the combinations could change even further.

Combinations to form a government from the democratic block are more than mathematics. Decisive statements of Kostunica about Zivkovic's DS party, conflict, criticism and swearing between the former two main allies over extradition of Milosevic, makes compromise even more difficult.

On the other hand the hardliners say they are in no hurry to form the government. It is enough for them that the Constitution of Serbia cannot change without their votes, implying that nobody can control two thirds of the parliament needed to change the Constitution. This way they want to show that they will have the final say in determining the constitution of a state or of state union.

Therefore equations in the new parliament when it is formed will make it difficult for the democratic block to negotiate.

Anyway, even if a compromise is reached, it would imply a fragile government juxtaposed against a very strong and unprincipled opposition.

Another probability is not to form the government at all before the deadline, which according to law would require fresh elections. In such a situation, Serbia would enter a period of governmental instability that would increase the number of disaffected adding to the hardliners vote bank.

Formation of a feeble government and of a strong opposition does not ensure a steady partner for Kosovo and the region, or forces on which the West could rely.

This would adversely impact on the cooperation of Belgrade with the Hague and would slow down processes of reforms started after the Milosevic era.

In Kosovo, where according to radicals Kosovo Serbs voted 5 to 1 for Seselj's party, they now have a greater mandate to place Kosovo higher on the agenda of Serbian parliament and Serbian politics.

According to a variant still undefined, it is possible for Covic to remain head of the Coordination Centre for Kosovo, because some western centers still want it, and for the simple reason that nobody wants to hold the hot potato called Kosovo in this situation.

Still, though it might seem weird when you first look at it, this situation might be beneficial for Kosovo in the sense that there will not be heavy western pressure for unnecessary compromises with Belgrade. This would create room for political leaders to focus on priorities for Kosovo. In this case Belgrade would neither be a facilitator for the policy of 'standards before status', nor an obstacle, having in mind priorities that the complicated Serbian politics will throw up.

It is not going to be easy for Belgrade to manage the government toward democratic and sustainable reforms. It is not going to be easy for Serbia's neighbors or its western partners, who had overestimated the improvement in the situation after 5 October 2000. And if there is one good thing about the 28 December elections, it is the removing of illusions.

Thaçi: Some ministers work for uncles and nephews (Kosova Sot)

Kosova Sot carries an interview with Hashim Thaçi, leader of the Kosovo Democratic Party (PDK) who, according to the paper, directly accused the head of the Kosovo Assembly of corruption in the rebuilding of the assembly building. Thaçi also reportedly accused some ministers, 'of working for uncles and nephews'.

'Kosovo cannot be an exception from the region of the corrupt world. People working in Kosovar institutions are not all saints. You can also see that some ministers are working more for their uncles and nephews than for the Kosovo Government. In the near future, the Prime Minister will distance himself from officials of ministries,' Thaçi added.

Mr. Thaçi, how do you assess developments at the end of this year?

I assess the latest developments as very interesting with relative successes of local institutions for solving the concerns of the people, and at the same time strengthening of cooperation with UNMIK. But I also see the drawbacks of the lack of representation of Kosovo in the international structures. I welcome 'Standards for Kosovo' and I am confident we will speed up the process of fulfilling them in the near future; solution of the Mitrovica problem, elimination of enclaves, and solution of many other issues.

Having in mind you are the leader of one of the coalition parties, can you be objective and tell us about the successes and failures of the Kosovo institutions?

I consider functioning of co-governance structures as a success. We have had more or less stable, efficient and inclusive institutions. It has led to a relaxation of relations

among parties, and has encouraged the inclusion of Serb and other minorities. So, Kosovo is gradually building its political and state identity. I consider however cooperation with UNMIK and other diplomatic institutions as unsatisfactory. They haven't yet properly understood properly the engagement of the international community here and in the region, but I consider rounding up this year with 'Standards for Kosovo' as a success.

Although UNMIK has promised to transfer competences by the end of this year, it is not happening. Why?

There can be no transfer of competencies to the locals without changes in the Constitutional Framework of Kosovo, which unfortunately has made it impossible for the Kosovo institutions to function as state institutions.

What will be the defending force in Kosovo after 2005, when definition of the final status is expected?

Kosovo defense force is directly linked to the political status of Kosovo.

But, do you see the KPC as the future army for Kosovo?

I see KPC as a protection force that will grow in accordance with international standards and will integrate in Euro-Atlantic defense structures.

Mr. Thaçi, how much have you changed over the last four years? You can often hear voices in the public say that you try to sound like Rugova?

I continually change in order to remain the one I am. Me and Mr. Rugova are two completely different worlds. PDK belongs to the future, LDK to the past.

How is the PDK financed if we leave aside the money you get from the Kosovo budget?

PDK is financed by Kosovo budget, by its branches in the Diaspora and by donors who support it.

There is a potential risk for corruption of institution leaders in the neighboring countries. Is it likely for this to happen in Kosovo?

Kosovo cannot be an exception in the corrupted region or in the world. And officials in the Kosovo institutions are not all angels. Your newspaper has written about indecent acts of the parliamentary speaker regarding the reconstruction of the Kosovo Assembly. And you can see that some ministers are working more for their uncles and their nephews than for the Government of Kosovo. In the near future the Prime Minister will distance himself from such officials.

Why aren't the institutions fighting this phenomenon?

I believe that they will fight this dangerous phenomenon in the near future.

Are there facts, evidence?

There are sufficient facts and evidence to enter the process of distancing the governing institutions from the people who only work for themselves.

Haradinaj proposes regional conference for Kosovo under US supervision

*“Before 2005 we would like to hold a regional conference sponsored by the US that would help to establish good mutual relations between all regional countries, including Kosovo,” said Ramush Haradinaj, leader of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) in an interview with **Kosova Sot**.*

‘There is only one standard that we consider to be difficult. And this is that UNMIK should get rid of its prejudice and stop holding the people of Kosovo hostage by holding on to the so-called reserved competencies. If this continues, there will be certainly be other solutions,’ said Haradinaj.

Commenting on the request of his political party for the Kosovo Assembly to declare independence, Haradinaj said, ‘I think that the lack of willingness to reconfirm our will for the independence of Kosovo is a major mistake, especially by the LDK, but also the Assembly of Kosovo. We were surprised by this.’

Asked to comment on the suspension of 12 KPC officers and to make clear what he told SRSB Harri Holkeri, Haradinaj was quoted as saying, ‘I have made my position public. We are dealing with two concepts in this case. One concept is building of the army of Kosovo in the spirit of the Kosovo Liberation Army, in a different spirit from the international community. A modern, obedient and in accordance with NATO standards. I also think that many of these accusations are untrue and they are simple accusations made with the aim to throw people out on the street. I am convinced that the truth is completely different.’

Dickinson: No one knows what happens in Kosovo until the end of the month (Kosova Sot)

Kosova Sot conducted an interview with UK liaison office head in Pristina, Marc Dickinson.

Mr. Dickinson, what do you think about developments in Kosovo this year?

I think that it was a good year for Kosovo. In particular the last two months because the date when the progress on standards will be reviewed was determined, whether they are fulfilled or not. Apart from that the standards and the implementation plan on how to achieve it were prepared.

UNMIK officials said that first evaluation of standards would take place in January. What do you think about this?

I do not know. In Kosovo I have learned one thing: anything can happen here by the end of the month. The first review of the implementation is planned for the end of January.

On the other hand, Mr. Dickinson, one of the obstacles for fulfillment of standards is the refusal of K-Serbs to participate in the implementation of standards.

We should see what happens after December 28. I think we will fulfill the demands for fulfillment of standards. This is progress for both the Albanians and the Serbs. I hope they will not remain out of this process. We should wait. Fulfillment of the standards is a requirement that derives from the UNSC Resolution 1244.

What is the biggest failure and success in Kosovo by UNMIK and Kosovars?

The biggest successes were standards for Kosovo, while the biggest failure is when UNMIK and the government do not work together. As an outcome of this we had a few disagreements that I wouldn't count now.

What is your message for Kosovars in 2004?

I wish that all benefits of the last 12 months to be reflected in the next year. This will require hard work not only for Kosovars but for all of us.

Rondorf: Kosovo status maybe in 2007 (Kosova Sot)

Kosova Sot conducted an interview with the head of the German Liaison office in Pristina, Peter Rondorf.

Mr. Rondorf, how do you assess this year for Kosovo?

This year started badly but went very well. It started badly because it looked as if there would be no cooperation between UNMIK and PISG. This year is finishing very well because we have already started the practical work on standards.

How do you assess the plan for the operationalization of standards?

The launch of the standards was done on December 10. The logical step is that the process should go further. It is for the PISG to present a concrete plan. We are willing to assist when they require our assistance. The plan itself should be concrete and flexible. Nobody will require implementing a bad plan.

How much will Serbia impact in the process of standards fulfillment?

Belgrade's behavior will impact immediately on the fulfillment of standards. It would be easy for us if Belgrade cooperates with us. In no way should Kosovo be blamed if Belgrade continues to behave like it is doing currently. My advice is: if Belgrade does nothing, Kosovars should not speak but perform their tasks.

What is your message for Kosovar politicians and citizens in 2004?

My message is: support yourself and do not always expect assistance from others and do not blame others. You should stick to the point: I can, I should and I will do it.

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Kosovo Media Highlights

Radicals, drunk with victory, launch verbal attacks against Kosovo (*Koha Ditore*)

Commenting on the situation following the election results in Serbia, *Koha Ditore* reports that radical forces have been making inciting statements, even though their power has not been guaranteed.

Asked to comment on the possible impact of these elections on the situation in Kosovo, the radical leader Tomislav Nikolic was quoted as saying, 'What situation are you talking about, Kosovo is part of Serbia and there is nothing more to talk about.'

PM Rexhepi disappointed with position of K-Serbs in support of Seselj (*Koha*)

Koha Ditore reports that the Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi has voiced the dissatisfaction of his government surrounding the results of parliamentary elections in Serbia, which were won by the Radical Party of Serbia led by Vojislav Seselj, who is accused by The Hague tribunal for war crimes.

‘Election results in Serbia have once again proved the fragile democracy in post-Milosevic Serbia. The Serb radicalization, and the large number of votes won by the ultra-nationalist political party, shows the position of the Serb society and the failure of the so-called democratic forces in Serbia,’ it was said in a press release signed by Prime Minister Rexhepi.

EU believes Seselj’s radicals won’t be able to form government (Koha Ditore)

Koha Ditore’s correspondent from Brussels, Augustin Palokaj, notes that the European Union, despite the major concern surrounding the victory of radicals in Serbian elections, has stated that it believes that democratic forces will manage to create a democratic and pro-western government in Serbia.

‘Even though they have increased their power after these election results, the extreme nationalists won’t be able to form a government,’ said EU High Representative Javier Solana.

Shala: Elections of 1993 (Zëri)

In a front-page editorial for **Zëri**, Blerim Shala writes, ‘As if it is 1993, and not 2003! As if nothing has happened in the last ten years! We are absolutely certain that this is the joint opinion of rational Serb politicians and western diplomats, after the announcements of the results of extraordinary elections in Serbia.’

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Daci: 2004 will mark the end of the UN Mission in Kosovo (Koha Ditore)

Koha Ditore quotes Kosovo Assembly Speaker Nexhat Daci as saying that 2004 will be marked by tensions between internationals and locals. Daci also said that next year would also mark the end of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, and that during this period of time, the Kosovo Assembly will be able to adopt the Declaration for Independence.

Savic: Victory of radicals will impede the division of Kosovo (Zëri)

Zëri quotes Gojko Savic, member of the Kosovo Assembly Presidency, as saying that the victory of the Radical Party of Serbia will impede Kosovo’s division from Serbia.

Savic told the Prishtina-based *KosovaLive* news agency that if radical forces manage to form a government then that would help preserve the existing Serb territories and maybe even the expansion of Serbia.

UNMIK to hand over Chapter Five competencies today (*Koha Ditore*)

Citing officials in the Kosovo Government, *Koha Ditore* reports that UNMIK will transfer competencies from Chapter Five to the hands of the local government today.

Koha Ditore reports that the handover ceremony will be held at UNMIK headquarters in Prishtina and sticks to the date set up by former SRSG Michael Steiner.

Rexhep Hoti comments on the transfer of competencies (*Zëri*)

Commenting on the transfer of non-reserved competencies, *Zëri* quotes Rexhep Hoti, advisor to Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi, as saying, 'I would say that this is probably the biggest game that was played in the last 20 months, because the transfer of competencies from Chapter Five is a complete irresponsibility, because Kosovar institutions couldn't even have existed without Chapter Five'.

Hoti also claimed that the non-reserved competencies have belonged to the Kosovo Government ever since its establishment.

UNMIK once again breaks its promise for third round of privatization (*Zëri*)

Zëri reports that the re-launching of the third round of privatization on the website and the signing of 17 contracts of the second round of tenders has been postponed for January next year, despite the fact that there were promises that this would be done before the New Year.

Zëri also quote a reliable source as saying that the third round of privatization will be announced in mid-January next year.

Thaçi: Some ministers work for uncles and nephews (*Kosova Sot*)

Kosova Sot carries an interview with Hashim Thaçi, leader of the Kosovo Democratic Party (PDK) who, according to the paper, directly accused the head of the Kosovo Assembly of corruption in the rebuilding of the assembly building. Thaçi also reportedly accused some ministers, 'of working for uncles and nephews'.

'Kosovo cannot be an exception from the region of the corrupt world. People working in Kosovar institutions are not all saints. You can also see that some ministers are working more for their uncles and nephews, than for the Kosovo Government. In the near future, the Prime Minister will distance himself from officials of ministries,' Thaçi added.

Haradinaj proposes regional conference for Kosovo under US supervision

'Before 2005 we would like to hold a regional conference sponsored by the US that would help to establish good mutual relations between all regional countries, including Kosovo,' said Ramush Haradinaj, leader of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) in an interview with *Kosova Sot*.

Dickinson: In Kosovo, one cannot know what will happen until the end of the month (*Kosova Sot*)

‘I have learned one thing in Kosovo and that is that one cannot know what will happen here until the end of the month. What I think about standards, is that by January next year we should have the first report on the implementation phase,’ said Mark Dickinson, head of the British Office in Prishtina, during an interview with *Kosova Sot*.

Serwer: 2004, start of the decision on final status (*Kosova Sot*)

In an interview with *Kosova Sot*, Daniel Serwer, director of the Balkans Initiative at the US Institute for Peace, was quoted as saying, ‘The transfer of competencies has been very slow and hesitant. I am certain that the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government will make certain things that internationals are going to consider mistakes, however, this is the only way toward responsible governance’.

Rondorf: Kosovo’s status maybe in 2007 (*Kosova Sot*)

Peter Rondorf, head of the German Office in Prishtina, told *Kosova Sot* that the decision on Kosovo’s final status would not be made in 2005. ‘In 2005, we are going to see whether standards have been fulfilled. If yes, then discussions on final status will commence. This means that this process could last until 2006 or 2007, until it reaches the resolution of the final status’.

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Belgrade Media Highlights

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Radicals first in Kosovo and Metohija (*Glas*)

CeSID Coordinator for Kosovo and Metohija Milena Jaksic has announced the results of the elections from 245 processed polling stations out of a total of 248, according to which, the voter turnout was 48,71%. According to her, SRS won 41.06%, DA won 16.69%, DSS won 13.15%, SPS won 12.55%, SPO-NS won 4.56%, DS won 4.06%, G17plus won 1.25% and DHSS won 1.21%.

Central celebration at Sumadija Square (*Politika*)

As they promised at the election rally in Kosovska Mitrovica, the Radicals will hold, as the sign of victory, a central celebration at the Sumadija Square. According to Ljubomir Kragovic, current SRS MP in the Serbian Parliament, the victory rally will be accompanied with the orchestra of Branimir Djokic. The citizens of northern Kosovska Mitrovica celebrated the victory of the Radicals and chanted Vojislav Seselj's name. Cars with party signs drove through the streets of Kosovska Mitrovica, but there were no incidents. No increased presence of KFOR and UNMIK police was noticed.

Vucetic: New Parliament before Christmas (*Balkan/Fonet*)

The President of the Serbian Supreme Court Slobodan Vucetic has told *Fonet* that the constituent session of the new convocation of the Republican Parliament would have to be convened in the shortest possible period, since the "old" parliament doesn't exist. According to the Serbian Constitution, the Parliament Speaker is elected at the first constituent session and that Parliament will be able to pass decisions regarding the work if more than half of 250 MPs are verified. "What is now particularly interesting is that this Parliament Speaker will also have the status of the acting president of the Republic and will commence consultations to form the new government with those party representatives who had entered the parliament," stressed Vucetic.

Kosovo Serb leaders on election results (*Danas*)

Certain Kosovo Serb representatives consider the election results dangerous for the further development of events, because forces that are responsible for the bad situation of the Serb community in Kosovo have won. According to Kosovo Assembly Presidency member **Oliver Ivanovic**, “this was obviously the will of the citizens and we must respect it, regardless of the fact that I personally don’t like that result.” The Raska-Prizren **bishop Artemije** has said that he hopes the newly elected government will take care of the people and the state more than their parties and themselves personally. “I expect a more clear strategy in resolving the Kosovo and Metohija problem, as well as that nobody in it will be ready to sign anything to the detriment of the Serb people and Kosovo and Metohija,” said Artemije. KP AM **Rada Trajkovic**, also the candidate on the DHSS list, hopes that “two thirds of the new convention of the parliament will be made up of statehood orientated parties and MPs so the upcoming adoption of the Serbian Constitution would pass with Kosovo and Metohija within Serbia.” SPOT leader **Momcilo Trajkovic**, also the candidate on the DS list, has stated he expects “a new political climate and equal coalition government of democratic forces. **Marko Jaksic**, the President of the Union of Serbian municipalities in Kosovo and Metohija, also expects the “forming of a stable government after the elections” that will “accept the St. Nicholas Day Declaration” as the single joint Serbian political strategy for Kosovo and Metohija.”

Ljajic suggesting government of the Radicals (*Blic*)

“From the long-term point of view, it would be best for Serbia if SRS forms a government and undertakes responsibility for the most important state works. We obviously have not remembered the message from the rule of the radicals in the previous period. So we have to go through the same process again and see what from their pre-election promises can be brought to life,” Rasim Ljajic, the first candidate of the list of Together for Tolerance coalition said. “The Radicals should be given a chance to prove that a loaf of bread can be three dinars. They should also prove that they will return the Army to Kosovo, that they will cooperate with the ICTY and that Serbia will have new borders that will include Virovitica, Karlobag, Ogulim, etc., etc,” Ljajic said.

US Department’s assessments (*Vecernje Novosti*)

The US State Department has invited parties, which entered the new Serbian Parliament to reach an agreement and to form a new government as soon as possible in order to continue the reform process commenced in October 2000. The State Department expressed expectation that parties in Serbia, pledging for democratic ideals and standards, continue the process of economic, legal and military reforms. Washington demands of Belgrade full cooperation with the ICTY, support to the Dayton Accords, and the continuation of cooperation with its neighbors, as conditions for Euro-Atlantic integrations. The US government points out that it is prepared to provide aid to Serbia and Montenegro during the difficult but necessary transition process, and to work jointly with the new Belgrade government towards achieving common goals