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CHANGE, CONTINUITY AND CONSOLIDATION:

ASSESSING FIVE YEARS OF MONTENEGRO'S INDEPENDENCE

Kenneth Morrison

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The first publication in the LSEE Papers series, Tim Judah's stimulating paper on the emergence of increased cooperation and links across the former Yugoslavia, initiated a lively debate in the region itself and also further abroad. Keen to maintain this momentum with the second issue we are delighted to present Kenneth Morrison's in-depth analysis of Montenegro in the five years since its independence. Kenneth Morrison is the author of Montenegro: A Modern History and is an unrivalled expert on the country and the wider region in which it is situated. His Paper offers an insight into Montenegro's path to independence in 2006 as well as the adjustments of the political landscape that followed.

The LSEE Papers are intended to provide a series of provocative and timely Papers to complement core LSEE activities such as academic research and public events. As part of our commitment to quality and impact we will commission contributions from eminent commentators and policy-makers on the significant issues of the day pertaining to an ever-important region of Europe.

Dr Spyros Economides

Introduction: Setting the context

On 21 May 2006, an independence referendum was held in Montenegro to determine whether the republic would remain a partner within the state union of Serbia & Montenegro (*Srbija i Crna Gora* – SCG) or become an independent state. Following a closely contested campaign, brokered by the European Union (EU), a narrow majority (55.5%) of the republic's citizens opted for the latter, heralding Montenegro's re-emergence as a sovereign state. Independence was formally declared on 5 June 2006 and thus the issue of the republic's status, which had dominated Montenegrin politics and discourse since 1997 (but most acutely since the signing of the Belgrade Agreement in March 2003), was resolved. But with independence came responsibility and new uncertainties, and the challenges presented by independence were no longer abstract. The Montenegrin government could no longer blame all their ills on political instability in Serbia, and they could no longer argue that they were inhibited from charting a genuinely independent course as a result of being tied to Serbia in an asymmetric federation (or union).[1]

While Montenegro's status had fundamentally changed, the rhetoric that had characterised the period between 1997 and 2006 (but was most pronounced between 2003 and 2006) continued unabated despite the new reality. The issue of status may have been formally resolved, but many of the antagonisms between the parties which comprised the competing pre-referendum blocs continued into the post-independence period; these being particularly manifest during constitutional debates throughout 2007. One must bear in mind that the referendum process, though peaceful and deemed by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) election monitors to be 'free and fair', was not entirely bereft of controversy.[2] The 'Yes' and 'No' campaigns had been energetically and bitterly fought by the respective blocs,

and in the wake of the referendum there had been accusations of voting irregularities and coercion. There were political casualties, blood on the carpet; winners and losers; joy for the victors, despair for the defeated.

Consequently, the country entered into this new era with a divided body politic, and a sense of embitterment among a significant minority (44.5 % of the population had voted to retain the joint state, and some within this group did not recognise the legitimacy of the result).[3] The Serbian analyst, and one-time advisor to Andrija Mandić, the President of the Serbian People's Party (*Srpska narodna stranka* – SNS) in Montenegro, warned in 2007 that "Conflicts over the constitution, the position of the church, state symbols and the relationship between the government and the opposition represent fertile breeding grounds for new clashes."[4] Not, by any standards, an ideal basis for future political stability, yet Montenegro began its life as an independent state within this political and social context.

What, then, of the subsequent years of Montenegro's independence? Well, despite concerns the country was too small to be economically viable, too politically divided to be stable, and too institutionally weak to effectively tackle endemic problems such as corruption and organised crime, issues that might mitigate their Euro-Atlantic aspirations (EU & NATO membership), Montenegro has, in spite of its evident problems, made impressive progress. As an internationally-recognised state, Montenegro became a member of the United Nations (UN) and other international institutions; it has consolidated its position among its neighbours, and has made great strides toward achieving the government's core objective – Euro-Atlantic integration. In June 2006, the European Union (EU) established relations with Montenegro and all member states recognised the country's independence. Just over a year later, in October 2007, Montenegro signed a Stability and Association Agreement (SAA). A formal application was submitted in December 2008 and the process of responding to the European Commission's (EC) detailed questionnaire on how the country's legislation conforms to the *acquis communautaire* (the EU body of law).

The EU noted the Montenegrin government's open and constructive approach.[5] That the country took such a positive approach was frequently acknowledged by the EU, which often touted Montenegro as a beacon of light in a region still beset with residual problems emanating from the chaos of the 1990s. These comments were, however, relative and framed within the wider context of the Western Balkan accession process, and Montenegro benefited from the EU's need to tell a positive story with regard to the Western Balkans, more difficult in the context of, say, Serbia, FYROM, Albania or Bosnia & Herzegovina. Nevertheless, the country's endeavours were rewarded in December 2009 when Montenegrin citizens were granted visa-free travel within the Schengen zone; an important development because it provided tangible evidence that their government's endeavours were bearing fruit. In November 2010, the EC published its *avis* (opinion) on the country's bid to become a candidate for membership. In December 2010, Montenegro was formally awarded candidate status by the European Commission (EC), a significant milestone in the wider accession process. It represented the culmination of the significant endeavours of, among others, Montenegro's Minister for European Integration, Gordana Djurović.[6]

Although there is less domestic consensus, Montenegro has made progress toward NATO membership, despite the significant opposition to the participation (from March 2010) of Montenegrin troops in an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in northern Afghanistan (a commitment undertaken to bolster their chances of membership). The country became a member of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) in December 2006, and engaged in 'membership dialogue' with NATO from April 2008. In December 2009, Montenegro joined the Membership Action Plan (MAP), the first objective of which was to submit their first Annual National Programme (ANP), which they did in September 2010.[7] While NATO membership is largely dependent upon reforms in the defence and security sector, NATO Secretary-General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, has reiterated that progress in tackling organised crime and corruption is essential for both EU *and* NATO membership.[8]

Domestically, the country seems to have forged more than a semblance of political stability. As will be shown, many individuals, parties and institutions that vociferously opposed independence appear to have accepted Montenegro's sovereignty and the realities of operating within that framework. And despite the challenges generated by both domestic and wider regional problems, among them the emotive issue of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence (and official Podgorica's recognition of it), relations between Montenegro's ethnic and national groups have remained stable. Within the Montenegrin political system there are, of course, residual problems; the most acute being the lengthy dominance of the DPS,[9] the opaque boundaries between the ruling party and the state, and the lack of a credible opposition; although, with regard to the latter, there may yet emerge a more effective opposition in the coming years, be it through splits within the ruling elite or through the mechanism of democratic elections.

Residual problems remain, yet even cynics would be hard pressed to deny that the country has thrived beyond expectations in the first years of independence. Wouldn't they? Well, while acknowledging the aforementioned achievements, they may well argue that the ostensible 'certainties' of the post-independence period, characterised by political stability, rising confidence and rapid economic growth has given way to a greater level of uncertainty. At present, EU membership *is* on the horizon, but is not imminent; meeting the EU's conditions for full membership represents a far sterner challenge than those overcome with relative ease thus far. Moreover, the external conditions are not favourable – there is, as a consequence largely of the Greek sovereign debt crisis and the subsequent flux within the Euro-zone, little appetite for further expansion among many EU member states. The path to NATO membership is, conversely, more assured but not enthusiastically embraced by the population. The country has a new prime minister, Igor Lukšić, who succeeded Milo Djukanović in December 2010. He faces many challenges if he is to fulfil Montenegro's Euro-Atlantic ambitions. Given the political and economic challenges that lie ahead, there may well be as much flux in the second five years of Montenegro's first decade of independence as that which characterised the first.

In June 2011, Montenegro will have been independent for five years. It seems, then, an appropriate time to measure developments since the May 2006 referendum. The aim of this paper is to assess this five year period by analysing the key political developments since, and how they have shaped Montenegro's political landscape. Given the limitations of a short paper, the focus is intentionally narrow. The following is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of political developments, but, rather, a selective assessment of the key events, developments and controversies that have impacted upon Montenegrin politics during the past five years. The emphasis is firmly upon the domestic political scene, with a particular emphasis on inter and intra-party dynamics. This is contextualised within the wider framework of the Euro-Atlantic integration process and, to an extent, the economy. Collectively, these factors have characterised Montenegro's first years of independence; five years of change, continuity and consolidation.

Post-referendum politics: Flux and stability

Following the May 2006 referendum and the subsequent declaration of independence, the governing Democratic Party of Socialists (*Demokratska partija socijalista* – DPS), their coalition partners, the Social Democratic Party (*Socijaldemokratska partija* – SDP) and others comprising the 'Movement for a Sovereign and Independent Montenegro' (*Pokret za samostalnu i nezavisnu Crnu Goru*) bloc, basked in the glory of their victory. In the weeks and months following the declaration of independence, the pages of (pro-government) press such as *Pobjeda* trumpeted one achievement after another: from the first recognition by an international state (Iceland being the first) to Council of Europe and UN membership. With good news to report on a near daily basis, the government benefited from a lengthy post-referendum honeymoon. Indeed, the strength of the ruling coalition increased; demonstrated by the strong showing at the post-referendum parliamentary elections in September 2006.[10] The DPS-SDP coalition won 48% of the vote, more than three times as many as its closest competitor.

But in the immediate post-referendum period, the respective blocs began to fragment. Independence had only increased the sense of marginalisation for those who had voted for the preservation of the state union. The majority of those who voted against independence defined themselves as Serbs and for them the post-independence period was one of disappointment and self-reflection. The pro-union 'Movement for the Joint European State Union of Serbia and Montenegro' (*Pokret za zajedničku evropsku državu Srbije i Crne Gore*) fragmented after the referendum, and their component political parties were weak, demoralised and, in the immediate post referendum period, divided.[11] Amid the gloom, new shoots emerged, most clearly manifested by the creation of the Serb List (*Srpska lista* – SL), a coalition constructed around the Serbian

People's Party (*Srpska narodna stranka* – SNS) and led by Andrija Mandić.[12] Claiming to represent the interests of 'real' Serbs in Montenegro, their platform represented something of a departure from the approach taken by other Serb parties. They rejected the argument that Serbs and Montenegrins were two branches of the wider Serbian national corpus, stating that if Montenegrins were to assert an identity bereft of Serb political and cultural symbols, their primary objective should be "the protection of the constitutionality and full affirmation of the identity and freedom of the Serb people [in Montenegro]."[13] Their agenda was underpinned by several key demands. Firstly, that Serbs should be defined constitutionally as a distinct and equal nation (not as a 'national minority'); Secondly, that Serbs should be represented on a proportional basis (in accordance with the 2003 census results – 31.99% of the population) in state and local governing bodies; Thirdly, that they should have the right to display Serb national symbols; And finally, that there should be a constitutional confirmation of Serbian as an official language and the Cyrillic alphabet as an official script.

Undoubtedly a nationalist agenda, but cast as a defensive one, the SL gathered momentum as this message was absorbed by Montenegro's Serbs. They became, following the September 2006 election, the strongest opposition party in Montenegro with a 15% share of the vote.[14] But, of course, their success determined a split within the Serb vote. The remaining Serb parties, the Socialist People's Party (*Socijalistička narodna partija* – SNP), the party who had, since the DPS split in 1997, been the dominant Serb party, the People's Party (*Narodna stranka* – NS)[15] and the Democratic Serbian Party (*Demokratska srpska stranka* – DSS), entered into a coalition to contest the September 2006 elections. Gaining just 14% of the vote, they were victims of the electoral success of the SL.

The 'Serbian option' was politically defeated and their political representatives divided, but given the residual bitterness that still permeated, it was essential for the Montenegrin government that they be seen to accommodate the Montenegrin Serbs. Nevertheless, the over-riding perception among Serbs was that the new, independent

Montenegro was not *their* state, but a 'private state' controlled by Djukanović, his small clique within the DPS and shady businessmen. As a nation, the Serbs were, it was argued, at a distinct political *and* economic disadvantage. After all, the positive effects of the economic boom impacted primarily in central and coastal municipalities, those controlled by the DPS or SDP. Be it political or practical, the majority of the incoming FDI did not find its way to the traditionally-Serb northern municipalities, such as Pljevlja, Šavnik, Berane or Andrijevica).[16]

These northern municipalities were also home to a significant minority of Muslim-Bosniaks, many of whom had voted for independence. But the referendum had been a divisive issue for them, as the separation of Serbia and Montenegro would also render the Sandžak, an area that straddles these republics, divided by an international border.[17] The majority of Bosniaks on the Serbian side of the border opposed independence, but Bosniaks in Montenegro (the majority of whom had voted for Djukanović's DPS since 1997) supported, in the main, the independence option. For those Montenegrin Bosniaks (such as the former Montenegrin SDA leader Harun Hadžić) who did oppose independence, they were faced, paradoxically, with having to align themselves with the same political forces that had persecuted them in the early 1990s.

The good relations between Montenegro's Albanians were shaken in the wake of the arrest of several members of an alleged Albanian 'terrorist cell' located in Malesija, near Podgorica. Prior to the September 2006 parliamentary elections (during 'Operation Eagle's Flight'), Montenegrin police arrested individuals suspected of belonging to a terrorist group who, it was claimed, planned to attack key figures in the Montenegrin parliament. Criminal charges were pressed against seventeen persons suspected of 'criminal acts, terrorism, and illegal possession of arms and explosive materials' – firearms, explosive devices and ammunition were confiscated.[18] Cynics, however, suggested that the affair had been instrumentalised by state security in order to influence the electorate prior to the elections. Although that is unlikely, the subsequent fall-out damaged relations between the government and the Albanian community. Albanian leaders, such as Ferhat

Dinosha (who, it was alleged, was a target), sought to emphasise that 'Operation Eagle's Flight' was not an action aimed at Albanians.[19] But in the September elections, Albanian voters shifted away from the DPS-SDP coalition and Dinosha's Democratic Union of Albanians (*Demokratska unija Albanaca* – DUA) in favour the Albanian Alternative (*Albanska alternativa* – AA) and the Democratic Alliance (*Demokratski savez* – DS).

But, of course, one must be careful not to interpret these realignments through an ethnic lens. The post-referendum euphoria also quickly dissipated, even for some of those who *had* been an integral part of the pro-independence bloc. For them, it wasn't about ethnic or national distinctions. A rather heterogeneous group had forged a coalition based on the premise that they had the same objective – independence. The DPS, other pro-independence parties, nationalist (and non-nationalist) intellectuals, civil society activists and journalists and editorial staff from print media such as *Vijesti* and *Monitor* all rallied behind independence. While many may have been uncomfortable with such an arrangement, they supported Djukanović as the figurehead of the pro-independence bloc, and they accepted the principle of 'statehood first; democracy second', expecting that a recalibration the Montenegrin political landscape would ensue in the post-referendum period. This, it was assumed, would lead to greater democratisation which would, by extension, lead to the end of the dominance of the DPS and the advent of a democratic system with a greater equilibrium among political parties. Moreover, and perhaps naively, they expected these transformations to be driven, or at least aided, by the presence of diplomatic representatives, a small army of which arrived throughout 2006 and 2007. They were, however, to be disappointed. Of the many countries that established embassies or representatives in Podgorica following the declaration of independence, few sought to force the issue of democratic reform.

The editorial policy of *Monitor* and *Vijesti* changed dramatically within a year of independence. In their view, Djukanović, while being a legitimate vehicle for attaining independence, was the main obstacle to further reform. Articles vehemently criticising him became more frequent and bitter exchanges between editorial staff

and government officials became increasingly commonplace. This reached a zenith in September 2007 when Željko Ivanović, the editor of *Vijesti* was assaulted by three masked men in Podgorica. Almost immediately, he publicly accused Djukanović of arranging the attack upon him, stating that the assault had been a revenge for his newspaper's publication of articles criticising Djukanović (in particular with regard to the controversial award of an 'International League of Humanists' peace prize given to Djukanović in 2007).[20]

The tensions between *Vijesti* and the government remained high, but the former's position was weakened by the fact that many of their natural supporters had embarked on a different path. Many of those who had opposed Djukanović in the past had now become 'establishment' figures with newly-acquired wealth or fame; rewarded for their role during the referendum process. The role of the intellectuals and journalists was, after all, to provide justifications for independence, to provide theoretical underpinnings for the government's actions; a small, but important, factor in convincing the population of the merits and benefits of independence. By so doing, many profited, in one form or another. Careers were built upon support for the government, and the anti-war moral capital accumulated by many during the early 1990s traded instead for secure positions within the state system – some in business (e.g. as directors of state companies), some in government ministries, some within the university sector, others rewarded with greater exposure in the media.

But some who had played important roles in 2006 fell from grace soon after. Jevrem Brković, the founder of the Dukljan Academy of Arts and Sciences (DANU), was a case in point. Forced into exile in 1991 for his opposition to the Montenegrin involvement in the shelling of Dubrovnik, Brković returned following the DPS split in 1997.[21] He remained a relatively marginal figure outside his cabal of supporters in Cetinje until the early 2000s, whereupon he placed himself firmly in the service of the government. Publicly rehabilitated, even by media such as *Pobjeda* who had once cast him as an enemy of the state, he began to regularly appear (with increasing frequency

in the run up to the referendum) on Montenegrin TV, radio, and within the pages of the print media. Brković found himself at the forefront of the independence campaign. But after that objective of independence had been achieved, his brand of Montenegrin nationalism (the Dukljan variant) was considered a hazard, rather than a benefit. In November 2006, Brković was assaulted, and his bodyguard killed, in Podgorica, following the release of his book *Ljubavnik Duklje* (The Lover of Duklja), which (albeit through the use of pseudonyms) alluded to the involvement of several high-ranking officials in Montenegro's criminal underworld. Yet despite Brković's claims, there have been no charges raised against his attackers, and he faded into relative obscurity

Tensions between *Vijesti* and the government continued to increase. The major bone of contention was the granting of a public broadcast frequency to *Vijesti TV* (formed in 2008) that would allow the station to be accessible to viewers in Podgorica. Slavoljub Sčekić, the director of *Vijesti TV* argued that their inability to gain access to the public frequency network represented a case of 'harassment' and 'institutional violence' against the opposition press.[22] Moreover, the owners of *Vijesti* argued that the government were attempting to force them out of existence by starving the station of vital advertising revenue (that would be generated by wider access to the public) and the pursuit of excessive lawsuits against them.

Matters worsened following an incident involving Miodrag Mugoša (the mayor of Podgorica and high-ranking DPS official) and two *Vijesti* journalists (Mihailo Jovović and Boris Pejović). In August 2009, the two journalists photographed Mr Mugoša's official car illegally parked in front of an establishment known to be frequented by the mayor. Upon seeing this, Mr Mugoša and two of his associates arrived on the scene and a fracas ensued. According to the two journalists, the troika assaulted them. Of course, another version of events was offered by Mugoša, who claimed that his party were attacked by the two journalists. Eventually, the prosecutor's office in Podgorica raised indictments against Jovović and Mugoša's son, Miljan (who was subsequently dismissed from his post in the Montenegrin diplomatic service). Editorial staff at

Vijesti continued to claim that these indictments were raised to divert attention away from Mugoša's role in the incident, and that he himself should be subject to criminal proceedings. It demonstrated, they argued, that certain people in the DPS were 'above the law.' In April 2010, Mugoša was fined €400 for the confrontation.

From the 2007 constitution to the recognition of Kosovo

Formally ratified and adopted on 22 October 2007, the constitution was fiercely debated. After protracted and heated discussions lasting six months, it was eventually supported by two-thirds of the parliament, negating the need for a referendum. The passing of the constitution fulfilled one of the criteria required for eventual EU membership, and came just one week after the signing of the SAA. Positive, yes, but debates over the constitution laid bare the continuing tensions between Serb parties and the government – the key battlegrounds being the issues of language and citizenship.[23] The new constitution recognised Montenegrin as the official language of the country, but recognised Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian as 'in official use.'[24] Cyrillic and Latin script were recognised as equal. However, the recognition of Montenegrin as the country's official language caused consternation among Serb parties; a language they claimed was a political construct. The issue of dual citizenship was also highly contentious, given different approaches that Serbia and Montenegro had adopted. Serbia allows dual citizenship, and offers citizenship to Serbs wherever they live, including Montenegro. By contrast, Montenegro has feared that this might undermine its statehood, particularly if a high proportion of people in the country took dual Serbian-Montenegrin citizenship. The constitution that was adopted was something of a compromise, but it proved inflexible enough to alienate both Serb and Albanian parties. The former on the basis that Serbian was no longer the official language and that they no longer enjoyed the right of dual citizenship; the latter largely because their demand that Tuzi (part of the Podgorica municipality) was not granted the status of a separate municipality. Amidst calls from Serb parties to protest against the adoption of the 'discriminatory' constitution, Milo Djukanović, ostensibly

in retirement, hailed the passing of the constitution as the completion of the restoration of Montenegrin statehood. The OSCE Mission in Montenegro also welcomed the adoption of the new constitution, noting that the constitution was generally in line with recommendations from the Council of Europe and OSCE institutions.[25]

Soon after the adoption of the constitution, a familiar figure returned to the political fold. Milo Djukanović, who had retired from the post of prime minister in 2006, returned to replace Željko Šturanović, who had stepped-down owing to ill-health. Critics pointed to a conflict of interests. Djukanović had, after all, spent over a year consolidating his business interests, and he owned shares in the First Bank of Montenegro (*Prva banka Crne Gore*).[26] They also suggested that he had returned to politics to invoke immunity from potential charges (for alleged involvement in cigarette smuggling) emanating from the prosecutor's office in Bari in Italy. Nevertheless, a new government was formed on 29 February. The issue of Kosovo, despite the 2008 unilateral declaration of independence, was not a major factor in the subsequent April 2008 Presidential election campaign. Only when the Montenegrin government subsequently recognised Kosovo's independence, in October 2008, was any sense of political crisis apparent. Prior to that, a lively presidential campaign pitted the incumbent, Filip Vujanović (DPS) against the three strongest opposition leaders – Andrija Mandić (SL), Nebojša Medojević (PzP) and Srdjan Milić (SNP). Called by the Speaker of the Parliament (and President of the SDP), Ranko Krivokapić, on the 17 January. The presidential election was the first presidential vote to be held since the independence referendum and under the October 2007 constitution.

Generally, the pre-election campaign was conducted bereft of the ethnic and national issues that dominated the constitutional debates, with all candidates focusing primarily on economic issues, European integration, development and social welfare issues.[27] Kosovo, while a significant regional issues, was rather conspicuous by its absence on the respective candidates' agendas (although both Mandić and Milić visited Kosovo during the campaign). However, it was Vujanović's well-organised and well-funded

campaign that drew, ultimately, the most votes. Campaigning under the slogan of *Bez dilema* (Without Dilemma), Vujanović's 'door-to-door' campaign was more visible and effective than that of his opponents. The catchy slogan did indeed suggest that there was no dilemma among voters, 52% of which voted for the DPS's candidate. Andrija Mandić finished runner-up with just short of 20%, while Medojević and Milić won 17 % and 12% respectively.[28]

Throughout the campaign, Kosovo had been largely relegated. However, when the Montenegrin government eventually recognised Kosovo and signalled their intention to establish full diplomatic relations with Prishtina, it generated significant controversy. That Kosovo had been a factor in Montenegrin politics was nothing novel; it had been an ever-present in Montenegrin politics (in 1989 and 1999) and was a particularly emotive issue for Montenegro's Serbs.[29] In the wake of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008, the Montenegrin government adopted a neutral position, with an emphasis being placed on the need for further dialogue – but appeared to shift toward the Serbian line following the visit by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, in April 2007.[30] But this perceived shift threatened to undermine relations between the government and the Albanian minority (5.03% of the population). It would be impossible to find a satisfactory 'middle way' that would placate both Montenegro's Albanian minority *and* the, significantly larger (31.99%), Serb minority.

The Serb minority opposed recognition, and the parties representing them warned that recognition could lead to 'internal instability'.[31] In the wake of Kosovo's declaration of independence, demonstrations organised by Serb parties took place in Podgorica, with Andrija Mandić subsequently travelling to northern Mitrovica to show solidarity with the Kosovo Serbs. He implored the Montenegrin government not to recognise an independent Kosovo, adding that such recognition would represent a 'historic error.'[32] It was a clear signal Montenegro's Serbs were united over the issue, and would not be inactive in the event of recognition.

Conversely, however, procrastination over recognition generated resentment among Montenegro's Albanians, who interpreted what they perceived to be an unnecessary delay in the recognition of Kosovo as 'anti-Albanian'. Relations between the government and the Albanians were, on the whole, good, and Albanians were well integrated into Montenegrin state structures. Some Albanian parties, however, had sought greater levels of autonomy in certain spheres. In terms of education, linguistic parity at all levels of education was a key issue, largely due to the fact that, in Montenegro, university education is offered only in Serbian (or Montenegrin). The second bone of contention was the status of the predominantly Albanian area of Tuzi. The third issue was the use of national symbols. Albanian leaders consistently argued that Albanian symbols should be used more liberally and expressed dismay that their flag could not be raised on the Tuzi council building. But these issues were more matters of practicality than of emotion; the issue of Kosovo was different. Nevertheless, no Montenegrin Albanian leader, despite their support for an independent Kosovo, publicly called for separation or incited separatism among Montenegro's Albanians.[33] Nevertheless, Albanian politicians urged the Montenegrin government not to delay recognition, stating that they would continue to lobby for the recognition of Kosovo.

Regional and international factors were also crucial, particularly given Montenegro's progress towards EU candidacy. Close to home, the Montenegrin government were eager to avoid antagonising (again) their traditional ally, Serbia, with whom they enjoyed only lukewarm relations since the referendum in May 2006. But they were equally eager to preserve good relations with those countries (particularly the US and UK) that had already recognised Kosovo, and were 'encouraging' others to do likewise.

Serbia's President, Boris Tadić, and Foreign Minister, Vuk Jeremić, appealed to the Montenegrins to support Serbia's appeal to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to raise their case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), warning that recognition would be seen in Serbia as a 'stab in the back.'[34] A parliamentary resolution tabled in the days prior to the UNGA meeting, however, stated that Montenegro would pursue a policy

in keeping with their 'Euro-Atlantic orientation', was a relatively unambiguous signal that they may be preparing to just that. The Montenegrin leadership delayed until the UNGA had voted on the matter, but on 9 October, having voted in favour of Serbia's request to refer the case to the ICJ, they announced (in concert with FYR Macedonia) that they would formally recognise Kosovo as an independent state. Anticipating the controversy that would inevitably follow, Djukanović sought to justify the action his government had taken.[35] Presenting Kosovo's independence as a *fait accompli*, he argued that Montenegro could no longer deny the 'political reality' of an independent Kosovo, simultaneously appealing to citizens to recognise that it was logical to play the long game. It was implied, moreover, that recognition would bring 'benefits' (an allusion, no doubt, to an acceleration of Montenegro's EU and NATO membership). However succinct, it was not an argument accepted by Serbia, which immediately declared the Montenegrin ambassador in Belgrade, Anka Vojvodić, *persona non grata*. Nor were such 'pragmatic' arguments accepted within the, albeit divided, Serb bloc.

Seeking to capitalise on the anger that was generated by recognition (and the lack of public consultation in advance of the decision), the opposition called on those who did not advocate recognition to demonstrate against what they deemed an illegal and undemocratic act. During the demonstrations, the largest of which was held in Podgorica on the evening of 13 October, they set out their three key demands: that the government reverse their decision; that a referendum on recognition be held; and that early parliamentary elections be scheduled before the end of 2008. A series of speakers made their case in front of a responsive crowd. The atmosphere was tense but peaceful, but as the evening wore on, the atmosphere darkened. In scenes reminiscent of the attempted storming of the government building by pro-Milošević groups in January 1998 following Djukanović's victory over Momir Bulatović in the 1997 Presidential elections, protestors attempted to storm Montenegro's parliament building. The police reacted, using tear gas and baton charges to disperse the crowds.[36] In the aftermath, each side sought to pin responsibility on the other, with government officials claiming that 'agitators' from Belgrade had been instrumental in orchestrating the violence.

Opposition leaders argued that the violence had been orchestrated by Montenegrin state security in an attempt to discredit the demonstrators.[37]

The exchanges between the government and the opposition became increasingly adversarial and antagonistic. Acting, it was claimed, in the interests of Montenegro's citizens, the government banned further demonstrations. This was not an undemocratic act, they argued, but one which was required to avoid further violence and ensure citizens' security. In response, opposition deputies boycotted parliament and Andrija Mandić embarked upon a well-publicised hunger-strike which lasted almost two weeks.[38] Both his hunger strike and his supporters' subsequent 'long march' from Berane to Podgorica received significant media coverage.[39] The Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC), too, entered the debate. The Metropolitan of the SPC in Montenegro, Amfilohije Radović, declared that he 'respected Andrija's sacrifice', while simultaneously warning that the actions of the Montenegrin government were helping to create the conditions for further conflict in Kosovo.[40] Yet despite the fiery rhetoric, and the best efforts of the opposition to maintain momentum, the intensity waned soon after Mandić ended his hunger strike.

What this course of events revealed, if nothing else, was that the opposition remained beset by deep differences (not least on the issue of Kosovo). If anything, Kosovo, a highly emotive issue for some, but less for others, served to divide rather than unite them. Conversely, recognition of Kosovo proved beneficial for the government on not one but two fronts. Domestically, they could argue that the demonstrations were evidence that the state was under threat from extremists and measures (that would increase the government's control) could justifiably be implemented to protect citizens. They appeared resolute while the opposition, having proved incapable of articulating a unified message, appeared weakened.[41] Local elections, held in Kotor, following recognition signalled that the DPS had indeed escaped the controversy relatively unscathed, winning twice as many votes as the runners-up (SNP).[42]

The decision to recognise Kosovo may have ingratiated the Montenegrin government to London and Washington, but did little to stem pressure emanating from Brussels (the latter having no formal position on the issue). Despite making progress in the EU accession process, criticism over the government's lack of will in tackling the problems of corruption and organised crime, the questionable independence of the judiciary, had increased in intensity throughout 2008 and were emphasised in the 2008 EC progress report. If the Montenegrin government had assumed that the decision to recognise Kosovo would give them breathing space *vis-à-vis* issues of EU conditionality, they had miscalculated. Nevertheless, there was an overarching acknowledgement that the issue of Kosovo *was* a thorny one for the Montenegrin government, and they had demonstrated courage in taking the decision.[43] There may have been no tangible benefit from recognition, but it earned Montenegro credit among key states (the US, UK and Germany) that would now consolidate their support for Montenegro's EU accession. The Montenegrin government had, perhaps rather by luck than judgement, conspired to use Kosovo to their advantage.

Forging effective opposition

The only opposition leader to capitalise from the Kosovo recognition crisis was Srdjan Milić, the President of the SNP. The party, and its leader Predrag Bultović, were demoralised and defeated after the referendum, and it was unclear whether the SNP, seemingly a spent force, could recover. The 2006 parliamentary elections appeared to confirm that the party was indeed in terminal decline; the SNP-NS-DSS coalition gathering only 14% of the vote. But recover they did, under Milić's capable stewardship. The SNP, erstwhile associates of Slobodan Milošević and foremost articulator of the pro-union argument, would, in Milić's view, have to adapt to survive. Thus he distanced the party from NS and DSS (its traditional ideological bedfellows) and shifted toward a social democratic position, which embraced both EU accession and NATO membership. This strategy appeared to generate little tangible success during the presidential elections, but Milić's measured comments during the Kosovo controversy indicated that the SNP had passed through a definitive transformation.

Others were also re-positioning their parties within the domestic political framework. Andrija Mandić, perhaps understanding that the SNS's current stance negated it becoming a mainstream party, signalled his intention to form a new political party, one that would draw together moderate strains within the SL. Mandić sought to forge a pro-European profile, hoping that by doing so he could broaden his party's (and his) appeal. But this, of course, meant that he had to marginalise those elements within the SL which might inhibit such a significant ideological shift. Those marginalised reacted badly to Mandić's new initiative, claiming that he had 'sold out' Serbs, accepted Montenegrin independence, and blatantly contradicted his post-referendum rhetoric. But while Mandić could survive attacks coming from the right of the SL, he needed the support of his own party (SNS). This, however, was not entirely forthcoming, and

a number of prominent party members, including Novak Radulović, left the SNS, claiming that Mandić had destroyed the true spirit of the party.

Mandić's potential coalition partners, PzP, were also in some difficulty. Their own intra-party crisis reached its zenith when a number among their ranks, including the former deputy chairman, Goran Batrićević, left the party to form the Democratic Centre (*Demokratski centar* – DC). The breakaway had its roots in disagreements about both the party's orientation and Medojević's role within it. Batričević argued that Medojević had drawn too close to the SNP and SNS, had been compromised during the Kosovo demonstrations. Moreover, it was alleged, Medojević's 'autocratic style' had alienated many within the party.[44] Batrićević's DC subsequently entered a coalition with the Liberal Party (*Liberalna stranka* – LS), both parties stressing that neither would enter any kind of pact with the DPS in the event of early elections.

In January 2009, with the opposition in disarray, the government called early elections, despite the fact that they were not due for 18 months. Having just submitted their application for EU membership, the government stated that they were going to the polls early in order to attain a further four-year mandate, time enough to complete the next stage of the EU accession process. Cynics were quick to argue that the elections were called early, not for the aforementioned reasons, but because by so doing the government could secure a new mandate before the effects of the global economic downturn became apparent. Even if such accusations were unfounded, the economy was a key, and potentially problematic, issue for the government. Having grown steadily since 2000 (when Montenegro forged an economic policy quite different from its then federal partner Serbia), the economy grew rapidly after independence. Montenegro became a member of both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in January 2007, and thus had access to finance from either organisation. Yet, there was little need. Between 2002 and 2008 Montenegro enjoyed the fastest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in the region. Unemployment levels dropped significantly (from 33% in 2002 to 10.8% in 2008), the country had a budget surplus

and foreign debt was reduced from 42.6% of GDP in 2005 to just 27% in 2008.[45] FDI levels had also increased significantly, and by the time (in July 2007) *The Observer* had trumpeted Montenegro as 'Europe's New Golden Coast', investors from Ireland, the UK, and (primarily) Russia flocked to the country.[46] As consequence, Montenegro's development further fed the economy, the country's export market grew and further economic growth was supported by significant expansions in construction, tourism and the services sector.

The flow of money into Montenegro was lightning fast. This, coupled with an aggressive and rapid privatisation process, created a new, and often brash, *nouveau riche* at the expense of many ordinary citizens. The coastal town of Budva, awash with Russian money, and a number of elaborate – and at times bizarre – constructions (such as the so-called 'Russian Village' above Sveti Stefan) were erected (some of which had no planning permission in place before construction began). But this, often tasteless, ostentation and the sudden appearance of shiny new glass and steel buildings (particularly in Podgorica and on the coast around Budva) masked underlying problems. The current account deficit expanded sharply during 2006, to more than 30% of GDP and consumer debt increased significantly.[47] The economic boom and the growing consumer and commercial confidence which existed in 2006-2997 began to evaporate by 2008, as the economy began to feel the impact of the global economic downturn.[48] The property market slumped and businesses struggled to stay afloat as banks ceased lending.

The most potent manifestation of the seriousness of the crisis, however, came in the form of the gloom that enveloped the *Kombinat Aluminijuma Podgorica* (KAP) plant. In December 2005, KAP was privatised, with 65% of its shares being bought by Salomon Enterprises Limited (later re-named the Central European Aluminum Company – CEAC), owned by the Russian billionaire, Oleg Deripaska. The sale of the shares generated controversy; the final deal allegedly struck in a private meeting between Deripaska and Djukanović.

Initially, all was well – independence coincided with high aluminum prices, but the decreasing market value of aluminium and the expense of running the plant determined that KAP was losing an estimated €200,000 daily. The Montenegrin national electricity supplier (*Elektroprivreda Crne Gore* – EPCG) at one stage threatened to cease supplying electricity to the plant over unpaid bills, although it did not act upon it. The government were under pressure to act. Given that the KAP plant was one of the largest employers in Montenegro and accounted for a 15% of the country's total GDP, a closure of the plant could generate significant discontent (it is estimated that 10,000 people directly or indirectly relied on KAP for their incomes). In June 2009, having had an offer of financial aid to CEAC declined, the government opted to partially renationalise, by buying back a substantial stake in the plant.[49]

The March 2009 election campaign took place, therefore, in a context of growing concern about the gathering economic storm and the potential implications for the Montenegrin economy.[50] At a time when the government were more sensitive than normal to social issues, the spectre of economic crisis was still sufficiently abstract to make a tangible impact on the political scene. The DPS-led 'European Montenegro' (*Evropska Crna Gora*) coalition was returned to power in the parliamentary election, the coalition comprising of the DPS, its long-standing junior partner, the SDP and a number of minority parties, garnered more than 50% of the vote, with the coalition winning 48 seats (in the 81-seat) parliament, an increase compared with the 41 that it won in the previous parliamentary election in 2006. The opposition, seeking to capitalise on the resentment generated by the Kosovo recognition, failed to make headway. They proved incapable of forging a coalition, largely due to individual parties giving primacy to their own, rather than the collective, interest. The SNP, who were the subject of speculation that they may be willing to enter a future coalition with the DPS, were particularly rigid in this regard. Having assessed that the divisions within NOVA and PzP rendered them unreliable coalition partners, they opted to run alone, with the objective of reclaiming the position it once held for a decade as Montenegro's

leading opposition party. They calculated correctly, winning 16 seats in the parliament, an increase of 5 since the 2006 election.

By contrast, PzP won only five seats, less than half of those won in 2006. Early optimism that they might become a force capable of challenging the DPS's dominance remained unfulfilled. Seeking to undermine the DPS by focusing on alleged corruption and links to organised crime proved an ineffective strategy, and regardless of the increasingly difficult economic climate they could not convince voters to back them. NOVA, meanwhile, could only garner 9% of the vote, giving them 8 seats in parliament. Nevertheless, endeavours to forge a working opposition coalition continued unabated. Particularly active was Nebojša Medojević, who sought to bring together opposition political parties, NGOs and other non-parliamentary structures into a broad coalition front that would challenge the ruling coalition, a strategy that would, albeit slowly, bearing fruit. The coalition was formed (comprising NOVA, SNP, PzP, DSS & NS) in time to contest the approaching local elections in May 2010.

The results of Montenegro's municipal elections, held on 23 May 2010, appeared to demonstrate that the country's politics continues to follow a familiar script. But while the seemingly resounding election victory of the 'Coalition for a European Montenegro' (*Koalicija za Evropsku Crnu Goru*), led by the DPS, may have, on a superficial level, seemed convincing, the result obscured the bigger picture. Increasingly nervous about the momentum of the opposition, the government called the municipal elections for 23 May against the wishes of the opposition who wanted the elections held on 6 June. The latter's objection was that the government would use the coincidence of the election campaign with the fourth anniversary of Montenegrin independence to subtly remind the electorate of the DPS's key role in delivering independence. And indeed, the leadership of the DPS-led coalition did just that; their rhetorical cornerstone being 'safety in continuity'. The inexperienced, and 'anti-Montenegrin' opposition, they argued, could not be trusted to govern at any level in these tough economic times. Nebojša Medojević, cast as an ambitious charlatan motivated by his own desire for power, was

singled out as a case in point.[51] And such attacks were not merely limited to opposition politicians. On the eve of the elections, Milo Djukanović alleged that one of the Serbian President Boris Tadić's closest advisors had been tasked with providing financial and logistical assistance to the opposition, with a view, in Djukanović's words, to 'reversing Montenegro's independence'.[52]

The 'Better Montenegro' (*Bolja Crna Gora*) coalition, consisting of 12 parties, but led by the PzP, NOVA and the SNP, contested the elections following months of negotiations. The coalition, also supported by NGOs and other non-governmental structures, appeared to have little to unite them but their almost pathological hatred of the ruling elite. Nevertheless, they went to great lengths to emphasise their commonalities, whilst playing down clear differences. They attacked the government's record of managing the country's economic affairs, their alleged lack of strategy for mitigating the effects of the economic crisis and inefficiency of state institutions in the fight against organised crime. While the term 'change' was omnipresent, Medojević, adorned in his now-characteristic white shirt with rolled-up sleeves *a-la-Obama*, stuck to traditional rhetoric, speaking at length about the alleged links between Djukanović and organised crime. These public pronouncements represented a risky gambit for Medojević, and it remains unclear whether his actions attracted or repelled voters.

Yet, despite the efforts of the opposition, the DPS weathered the storm. The party claimed victory in seven of the 14 contested municipalities, including the traditional opposition strongholds of Andrijevica, Kolašin and Žabljak, increasing their overall share of the vote. The opposition, who on the eve of the election had predicted a 'landslide' in their favour, claimed victory in Pljevlja and the SNP, who ran independently in some municipalities, did so in Plužine. The opposition drew further encouragement from the fact that the presence of a strong opposition coalition stopped the DPS from acquiring an absolute majority in the capital, Podgorica. In the light of these results, however, it remained unclear *who* will become the symbolic leader of the opposition. Increasingly, the SNP President, Srdjan Milić, has emerged as the most

likely. In December 2010, the three main opposition leaders embarked upon a tour of European capitals (Brussels, Berlin and London) to make their case. Whether they can unite as a serious challenger to the DPS remains, however, unclear.

The rise and fall of Milo Djukanović

Milo Djukanović is the most charismatic, pragmatic, single-minded, (politically) intelligent and ruthless politician to emerge in Montenegro, certainly in the past few decades. His ability to adapt quickly and decisively in fluid political situations, his instinct for political survival, and his ability to outwit his political opponents is impressive. These qualities have determined his longevity as *the* dominant political figure in Montenegro. The phenomenon of Djukanović can – to some extent – be understood by how he is perceived among his countrymen. Even his most vehement critics acknowledge that he possesses qualities (bravery, strength, ruthlessness, charm, physical presence) that are highly regarded in Montenegrin society. He has become, according to the Bosnian weekly *Slobodna Bosna* 'The New Montenegrin Vladika.'[53] And there has, since 1997 at least, little in the way of a challenge to this dominance. As the symbolic leader of the independence bloc, he both generated (and had bestowed upon him) the image of 'the father of the nation', personifying the quest for independence. Retiring from politics for a short time in 2006 (to concentrate on his business interests), he returned to take the role of Prime Minster in 2008, he nevertheless remained a powerful figure operating from behind the scenes.[54] Indeed, during his brief sabbatical he retained the chairmanship of the DPS and was generally assumed to be pulling the strings from behind the scenes.[55] And, of course, although he has recently stepped-down as Prime Minister, he has, again, remained the chairman of the DPS.

Djukanović is a divisive figure, worshiped by his admirers and despised (almost pathologically) by his detractors. But whether belonging to the former, latter or (more rarely) neutral camp, there exists a grudging respect for his achievements. In short, it is hard to make the case that he has been anything but a factor for stability in times of

great flux, and when the country needed strong leadership. He has forged a semblance of political stability and brought Montenegro to the cusp of the government's core objective of Euro-Atlantic integration.[56] Yet, however much one may admire Djukanović's undoubted qualities, it is inherently unhealthy for one individual to wield so much unchallenged power and influence.

However impressive his political pedigree, it hasn't been all plain sailing. Djukanović has been dogged by persistent allegations of links to the Italian mafia, the Balkan underworld and alleged criminals such as Andrija Drašković and the Swiss-based Serbian businessman, Stanko 'Cane' Subotić. This has fuelled the perception among EU officials that he may not have the will to push the reforms required to meet the EU's strict criteria.[57] Thus, Washington and Brussels had a paradoxical relationship with Djukanović: He was a man they could communicate effectively with, a man they trusted, a man who they knew possessed the clout to make things happen. Yet, his reputation was tarnished by all of the aforementioned associations.

Accusations that Djukanović had been involved in the illicit cigarette smuggling business date back to 2001, when articles appeared in the Croatian weekly *Nacional* implicating him. Almost simultaneously, the former Italian finance minister, Ottavio del Turco, publicly accused Djukanović of being closely linked to organised crime, being the lynchpin in the illegal mechanisms that controlled the smuggling of cigarettes in the Balkans, and having provided safe haven for Italian criminals in the Montenegrin town of Bar. By July 2002, the public prosecutor in the Italian port city of Bari, Guisseppe Scelsi, initiated investigative proceedings against the Montenegrin president. The accusation was that Djukanović (in concert with the Italian mafia and the cigarette manufacturers R. J. Reynolds and Philip Morris) smuggled large amounts of untaxed cigarettes into the EU from the port of Bar in Montenegro – generating significant profits for all the participants.[58] These profits, claimed Djukanović, were not channelled into private hands, but used to pay for the state's running costs during the period of UN-imposed sanctions – a matter, not of profit, but of patriotic duty.

Djukanović surprised even his critics when he travelled to Bari in March 2008, where he was questioned by Italian prosecutors.[59] The matter appeared to be at an end.

But in October 2009, Ratko Knežević, a London-based Montenegrin businessman, one-time head of the Montenegrin trade mission in the United States, and a former associate of Djukanović gave a series of interviews to *Vijesti* and the Belgrade daily *Blic* in which he reiterated claims that the Djukanović had been a pivotal figure in a criminal organisation which included the former head of the Serbian secret service, Jovica Stanišić (on trial in The Hague on war crimes charges), and Stanko 'Cane' Subotić (who was indicted for tobacco smuggling in Serbia). Knežević claimed the group controlled the cigarette smuggling racket throughout Southeast Europe. More controversially, however, Knežević implied that the 'cartel' was responsible for ordering murders, including those of Ivo Pukanić, the owner of the Croatian weekly *Nacional*, his colleague Niko Franjić, who were killed in a car bomb in Zagreb in October 2008, and Duško Jovanović, the editor of the Montenegrin daily *Dan*, who was shot dead outside his office in Podgorica in 2004. Both Pukanić and Jovanović had investigated and written extensively about the alleged criminal activities of several high-profile Montenegrins, Djukanovic being foremost among them.[60] Eventually, the Serbian Special Prosecution indicted Sreten Jočić (aka 'Joca' Amsterdam), along with two of his accomplices in October 2009 on charges of organising Pukanić's murder. No link with Djukanović has ever been established.

Nebojša Medojević (PzP) also spoke publicly, and at some length, about Djukanović's alleged links with organised crime. In addition to his regular accusations that Milo Djukanović was an instrumental player in the cigarette smuggling trade in the 1990s, he also alleged that the Šarić brothers (one of whom, Darko, was wanted by Interpol and the Serbian government on drug trafficking charges) had funded the DPS's election campaign in Žabljak in August 2009.[61] Medojević also claimed that the Montenegrin businessman, Branislav Mićunović, had forged close links with Darko Šarić and had used his links with Montenegro's political elite to ensure that the latter evaded

arrest in Montenegro. Highlighting organised crime and corruption cases was not without consequences; in February 2010, Medojević was attacked outside his home in Podgorica. He claimed that the assault represented a clear warning from the mafia to cease his crusade against organised crime structures in Montenegro.

But what effect did these rumours have on Djukanović? These accusations had, after all, been circulating for years. But Knežević's intervention brought the uncomfortable subject to prominence once again, and in a meeting between Mr Djukanović and US Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg in New York, the latter raised concerns that that such rumours were damaging for the Montenegrin government. Whether the continued controversy over these matters was a causal factor, on 21 December 2010, Milo Djukanović announced that he would be stepping down as prime minister, with the mandate passing to the Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Igor Lukšić. Tired of politics, Djukanović claimed he was doing so to concentrate on his business interests.[62] Once again, as in 1989 and 1997 (two moments of cathartic political change; namely, the 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' and the DPS split), change was facilitated, not through the mechanism of democratic elections, but from *within* the existing structure of power.[63] As Cohen points out, "democracy in Montenegro must still be tested by the fundamental experience in succession of leadership and political parties – and not just a temporary sabbatical from political power on Djukanović's part."[64]

The fact remains that Montenegro holds the unenviable record of being the only state in Southeast Europe that has been governed, uninterrupted, by the same political party (albeit with internal purges) since the first democratic elections in 1990. To some extent, the party *is* the state, and the DPS's well-established control over the instruments of it awards them a significant advantage over the opposition. Their budget for election campaigns alone significantly outstrips their closest competitors, and in elections voters continue to support the DPS because they are the likely victors. After all, the patronage of those in power is crucial to employment (particularly those who work in the public sector) and social advancement. Moreover, no opposition politician has yet

emerged that has been charismatic enough to challenge Milo Djukanović. Given this, political change in Montenegro may have its limitations, and may only be possible if there is a split within, or significant defection from, the DPS.

Rumours of a possible split within the party were the subject of intense speculation throughout 2010. In the knowledge that Djukanović would step-down, two factions emerged within the party, both of which had their eyes on the succession process. Djukanović endeavoured to consolidate the position of loyalists within the DPS; investing significant energy into ensuring that primacy would be achieved by his chosen successor(s). Two became ascendant; namely Igor Lukšić and Duško Marković (the former head of Montenegro's state security). The former was more 'marketable' and thus the more likely *heir apparent*, with the latter designated the role of internal party whip. Indeed, Djukanović's decision to designate Marković the post of 'minister without portfolio' was almost certainly an attempt to discipline party deputies who may be inclined to seek to acquire power. In short, his strategy was thus: empower close allies and marginalise potential opponents, and by doing so shape the internal composition of the upper echelons of the DPS, one that would remain under his influence even in the event of his formal departure.

But not all within the DPS leadership advocated Lukšić's appointment, or the way in which the succession process was handled. Montenegro's President, Filip Vujanović and Deputy Prime Minister, Svetozar Marović both resisted Djukanović's efforts to dictate terms.[65] Both endeavoured to improve their position when circumstances allowed but were ultimately unsuccessful. Having struggled to convince the key party members, they retreated in the face of determined opponents. By the time Djukanović formally retired on 21 December, the succession of Lukšić was assured. Svetozar Marović stepped down on the same day. Vujanović remained in post, but weakened and unlikely to possess enough support within the DPS to mount a challenge in the future. Within days the Main Board of the DPS had rubber-stamped Lukšić's elevation to the role of prime minister. The matter of succession had reached its conclusion.

Igor Lukšić is perceived, at least externally, as a reformer, an individual who belongs to a new political generation, untainted by the dark days of the 1990s, and not a one-time Communist youth *apparatchik*. Brussels will hope, or rather expect, that he will quickly and robustly push through reforms. Successful candidate status, confirmed in December 2010, perhaps overshadowed the conclusions of the November EC report on Montenegro's accession progress. While broadly positive, the report highlighted seven key priorities, among them reform of the public administration, strengthening the rule of law, improving the anti-corruption legal framework and implement the government's anti-corruption plan, strengthening the fight against organised crime, enhancing media freedom and implementing anti-discrimination frameworks.[66]

The criteria are demanding and reaching these ambitious objectives will require strong political will and significant flexibility. Nevertheless, the process must begin, and the difficult reforms, ones that may have been resisted or impeded thus far, will have to be pushed through before Montenegro can become a member-state. There will be tough decisions to take, and there will be political casualties. And even if the government commit to implementation with brevity, it may take nigh on a decade to meet the conditions. In these early days, however, Lukšić has endeavoured to demonstrate his commitment to tackling corruption and organised crime, one of the key stipulations set out in the November report. In this regard, he took immediate action. He sent a very strong signal that he was serious, although these ostensibly anti-corruption measures also had a domestic political motivation.

On 24 December, the mayor, Rajko Kuljača, and the deputy mayor of the coastal town of Budva were among ten arrested on charges of corruption linked to the so-called 'Zavala case', an alleged corruption affair which involved politicians, construction companies and spatial planners.[67] The deputy mayor of Budva was, significantly, Dragan Marović, the brother of Svetozar Marović, a potential political challenger within the DPS. Following the arrests, the latter said he believed that they were politically motivated, and that he urged the authorities to "arrest me, convict me and send me to the darkest

prison if that is what is good for Montenegro and in accordance with its laws."[68] Yet it appears that this is unlikely to happen; the Montenegrin State Prosecutor's office announced in late December that he will only appear as a witness in the Zavala case.[69] Lukšić, however, stated that the Budva arrests were "not an improvisation", but part of a wider process necessary to meet conditions for EU membership.[70]

Lukšić has, simultaneously, sought to demonstrate that he is not 'Milo's man' by forging his own distinct identity. But it is questionable whether he will pursue, or will be able to pursue, a course different from that of his predecessor. This was, after all, a well organised succession from within the DPS, not one facilitated through the mechanism of democratic elections. And, of course, one should not disregard the clout Djukanović will still possess.[71] He remains the chairman of the DPS (and will likely continue in this role after the upcoming party congress in May 2011) and still enjoys strong support among the key figures within it. Djukanović has also ensured that Lukšić is flanked by his closest allies. Both Milan Roćen and Duško Marković, staunch Djukanović loyalists have been given very senior roles in the government; the former retaining his post as foreign minister, the latter has replaced Svetozar Marović as deputy prime minister. Moreover, Djukanović has not ruled out a return as a presidential candidate in 2013, or at some other stage. In short, he will remain a significant presence, prime minister, president or otherwise. This, for better or worse, is what political change looks like in Montenegro – at least for the time-being.

Conclusion: Achievements and challenges

To assess Montenegro's progress as an independent state, one has to first place it in a wider historical context. The country has passed through significant traumas in the 20th century – the First World War, the exile of the Montenegrin royal dynasty, the loss of statehood following the Podgorica Assembly in 1918, occupation and bitter civil war between 1941 and 1945, bitter recrimination following the 1948 Tito-Stalin split (support for the latter was particularly pronounced in Montenegro); all took place within four decades but before a period of stability when Montenegro was a republic within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslav (SRFY). But by 1991, the country had all but collapsed, and in the subsequent chaos, Montenegro became mired in the wars that accompanied Yugoslav succession. As a consequence, Montenegro (as a republic within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) was subject to United Nations sanctions and a period of relative international isolation. In 1997, a cathartic split within the dominant party (the DPS) led, ultimately, to a subsequent division of the body politic into pro-union and pro-independence blocs. One could be excused for concluding that independence could not be delivered without conflict. Yet, perhaps against the odds, it was. Moreover, almost five years since the May 2006 referendum, Montenegro's subsequent progress has exceeded expectations.

The country is now a formal EU candidate and has made good progress toward NATO membership. There is no doubt, therefore, that Euro-Atlantic integration will remain the cornerstone of the government's foreign policy. The former will take prominence over the latter, particularly in the light of the award of candidate status; although Montenegro will almost certainly join NATO before it does the EU. There is, of course, still much work to be done, particularly if Montenegro is to meet the rigid membership

conditions set by the EU. Addressing and effectively dealing with the key problems outlined by the EC in the November 2010 report will require strong political will and even a commitment to face up to some of those powerful individuals whose interests would be threatened by genuine reform. This will be neither easy nor possible without significant political flux. It may, therefore, be many years before the country can take the steps necessary to secure full EU membership. Moreover, it may be determined as much by the political landscape within the EU as it will be determined by the speed and trajectory of political reform in Montenegro.

Beyond the Euro-Atlantic agenda, economic issues will remain a priority. The post-referendum boom was essentially reversed by the onset of the global economic downturn, and the economy contracted sharply in 2009. This decline led to the government engaging in discussions with the IMF, although no loan agreement was signed. Since then, the economy has staggered along. A total of 244 companies filed for bankruptcy in the first nine months of 2010, almost double the amount that had done so in 2009. Under these circumstances, the government have been forced to sell-off further state resources (such as a controlling share of EPCG to the Italian public utility company, A2A) to generate much-needed funds. It has also proved difficult to attract FDI, and that which has been generated pales into insignificance compared to levels which flooded into the country in 2006-2007. There are some positive signs, however. In September 2010, Montenegro raised its first international bond (raising €200 million), which economic analysts interpreted as a growing confidence in the market of the country's macroeconomic stability.[72] Nevertheless, the budget deficit remains relatively large and the broader economic situation remains tenuous. A cautious optimism, and with it a modicum of confidence, has returned but there are still challenges ahead.

Domestically, the political scene has been marked by change, continuity and relative stability. There has been a minor recalibration of the Montenegrin political landscape, numerous splits, re-alignments and the creation of new parties and coalitions. Most

of these have taken place among and between opposition parties, while, by contrast, the governing DPS-SDP coalition has remained relatively stable. Again, political change has emanated from *within* the system, rather than through the mechanism of democratic elections. The DPS remains the dominant party in the country, a fact made clear by their victories in the March 2009 parliamentary elections and the May 2010 local elections, and there seems little chance that that will change in the near future. Given this, what, if anything, can anything new be expected of the Lukšić-led government? The composition of the new cabinet is suggests that while there is a symbolic change at prime ministerial level, there is little substantial change beneath it. Lukšić seems like a breath of fresh air, the personification of a new approach; engaging with the opposition, trade unions and the NGO sector. But the new prime minister is surrounded by Djukanović loyalists, and he will have only limited room for manoeuvre and limited scope for forging an independent policy.

Problematically, there is little challenge to the dominance of the DPS. The opposition remains relatively fragmented, although they proved capable of working together in the May 2010 local elections. The coalition-building that took place prior to those elections will almost certainly continue and, if it proves durable (which is by no means assured), it could present a challenge at the next parliamentary elections, scheduled for 2013. However, any coalition is only as strong as the weakest link in the chain, and the SNP may be that weak link. They have, after all, a strong base of support and are much closer to the DPS than other opposition parties. It may seem remote now, in light of the creation of a new government, but should Lukšić pursue policies that create conflict within the DPS, the party could split again. In such circumstances, the SNP could be a pivotal factor in the creation of a 'reformed' DPS or a new political party.

In the final analysis, however, Montenegro has made significant progress since the May 2006 referendum. The tensions surrounding it were very real, and conflict (even if only of a low intensity) was a real possibility. The country faced significant challenges in the first years of its independence, challenges that could have proved insurmountable. Yet,

five years hence, the problems that seemed so acute in 2006 have been largely overcome. Montenegro has consolidated. Yet, there is no room for complacency; myriad challenges lie ahead, and while the foundations have been laid for Montenegro's European future, there is much yet to be done before that future is secured.

*Appendix I: Montenegrin Parliamentary Election Results, September 2006**

Party/Coalition	Votes	% of vote	Seats
Coalition for a European Montenegro (DPS-SDP)	164,737	48.62	39
Serbian List	49,730	14.68	12
SNP–NS–DSS Coalition	47,683	14.07	11
Movement for Changes (PZP)	44,483	13.13	11
Liberal-Bosniak Coalition (LS-BS)	12,748	3.76	3
Democratic Alliance in Montenegro (DSCG)	4,373	1.29	0 (1)**
Democratic Union of Albanians (DUA)	3,693	1.09	0 (1)**
Civic List (GL)	2,906	0.86	0
Albanian Alternative (AA)	2,656	0.78	0 (1)**
League of Communists of Montenegro (SKCG)	2,343	0.69	0
New Democratic Force (FORCA)	2,197	0.65	0
Democratic Party of Montenegro (DSCG)	1,286	0.38	0
Total	**338,833**	**100**	**76 (+3)**

Note: The electoral threshold in Montenegro is 3%, meaning that electoral lists (be they political parties, coalitions or civic groups) receiving under this percentage of the total votes cast, are crossed out, and the MPs within the assembly are split amongst the remaining lists.

*All election data gathered from Republička izborna komisija Crne Gore, Podgorica.

**Albanians in Montenegro are subject to a special arrangement which guarantees them 3 seats in the Assembly.

*Appendix II: Montenegrin Parliamentary Election Results, January 2009**

Party/Coalition	Votes	% of vote	Seats
European Montenegro (DPS-SDP)	168,290	51.94	47
Socialist People's Party of Montenegro (SNP)	54,545	16.83	16
New Serb Democracy (NOVA/NSD)	29,885	9.22	8
Movement for Changes (PzP)	19,546	6.03	5
People's Coalition (DSS-NS)	9,448	2.92	0
For a Different Montenegro (LS-DC)	8,777	2.71	0
Party of Pensioners and Disabled People in Montenegro	7.691	2.37	0
Democratic Union of Albanians	4,747	1.46	0 (1)*
Serb National List	4,291	1.32	0
'Together As One: Bosniaks & Muslims'	3,498	1.08	0
FORCA	2,939	1.19	0 (1)*
Albanian List (DS-AA)	2,898	0.89	0 (1)*
'Albanian Coalition – Perspective'	2,619	0.81	0 (1)*
Fatherland Serbia Party	2,446	0.75	0
Montenegrin Communists	1,594	0.49	0
Party of Democratic Prosperity	805	0.25	0
Total	**323,990**	**100**	**76 (+5)**

*Appendix III: Montenegrin Presidential Election Results, April 2008**

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of vote
Filip Vujanović	Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS)	171,118	51.89
Andrija Mandić	Serbian List (SL)	64,473	19.55
Nebojša Medojević	Movement for Changes (PzP)	54,874	16.64
Srdjan Milić	Socialist People's Party (SNP)	39,316	11.92
Total		**336,900**	**100.00**

Appendix IV: Montenegrin Census Results 2003

Nationality	Number	% of Population
Montenegrin	267.449	43.16
Serbian	198.414	31.99
Bosniak	48.184	7.7
Albanian	31.163	5.03
Muslim	24.625	3.97
Croat	6.811	1.1
Roma	2.601	0.42
Others	8.367	1.2
Did not declare	27.715	4.1
No data	10.532	1.6

Source: 'Rezultati popisa u Crnoj Gori', Monstat, December 2003.

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1 For an overview of the historical dynamics of the 'Montenegrin Question', see Milorad Popović, *Crnogorsko pitanje*, Plima/Dignitas, Cetinje & Ulcinj, 1999. For an assessment of how these dynamics played out in the political landscape of Montenegro in the 1990s, see Milan Popović, *Crnogorksa alternativ*a, Vijesti, Podgorica, 2000.

2 OSCE Press Release, 'International Referendum Observation Mission: Referendum on State Status, Republic of Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro), 22 May 2006.

3 For an analysis of the referendum campaign and its aftermath, see Kenneth Morrison, *Montenegro: A Modern History*, IB Tauris, London, 2009, pp.205-220.

4 Miša Djurković, *Montenegro: Headed for New Divisions?* Conflict Studies Research Centre, UK Defence Academy, Balkans Series, 07/11, p.11.

5 European Commission: Opinion on Montenegro's application for membership of the European Union, Brussels, 9.11. 2010, COM(2010) 670, p.4.

6 Djurović was, rather unceremoniously, sidelined when the responsibilities of the Ministry for European Integration was merged with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the new name of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. This change was confirmed when the new government was formed in December 2010. Milan Roćen retained the post of foreign minister and will head the new ministry.

7 See Government of Montenegro, 'Annual National Programme, Podgorica, 16 September 2010. According to a CEDEM poll conducted in Montenegro in July 2010, 40% say they would vote against NATO membership, 32% would support it, while 28% said they did not know. CEDEM Newsletter 30, May-September 2010, p.12.

8 *Pobjeda (Podgorica)*, 11 December 2010, p.4.

9 The OSCE have also noted on more than one occasion the "continued blurring of division between the Montenegrin state and the governing party." See, for example, OSCE/ODIHR, Republic of Montenegro: Presidential Election, 6 April 2008, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Warsaw, 1 September 2008, p.7.

10 See Appendix I for the 2006 election data.

11 Splits and divisions had characterised Serb politics in Montenegro since 1997. The pro-Milošević faction of the DPS, led by Momir Bulatović, left the party (or were, rather, purged from it) to form the SNP. In the same year, the SNS was created by members of the NS who opposed their party leader, Novak Kilibarda's decision to enter into a coalition with Milo Djukanović's DPS. Furthermore, in 2002, several members of the SNS, including Ranko Kadić, left to form the DSS.

12 For a brief overview of Mandić's own view of the Montenegrin political scene after the referendum, see Andrija Mandić, 'Šta posle referenduma', in Želidrag Nikčević, *Prava Srba u Crnoj Gori*, Focus, Beograd, 2006, pp.53-55. For an outline of the Serbian List's pre-2006 election platform see, Miša Djurković, 'Izborni program' Ibid, pp.67-71.

13 Party Program of The People's Party of Montenegro (SNS), December 2006, p.3

14 Republika izborna komisija Crne Gore, 'Izborni rezultati: 2006'. See Appendix I.

15 In 2007, the People's Party (NS) produced a hefty *Bijela kniga* (White book) documenting what they claimed were significant irregularities with the referendum process. See Narodna stranka, *Bijela kniga: referendum u Crnoj Gori 2006*, Narodna Misao, Podgorica, 2007.

16 The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) research confirms this pattern. See UNDP, *National Human Development Report: Montenegro – Society for All*, UNDP/ISSP, Podgorica, 2009, pp.78-81.

17 The Serbian Sandžak comprises six municipalities (Priboj, Prijepolje, Nova Varoš, Sjenica, Novi Pazar and Tutin, whilst the Montenegrin Sandžak comprises five (Bijelo Polje, Berane, Plav, Pljevlja, and Rožaje). Since the May 2006 referendum, the Sandzak has been divided by an international border.

18 Mina News Agency, Podgorica, 11 September 2006

19 *Republika* (Podgorica), 12 September 2006, p24.

20 In a ceremony in Budva in 28 May 2007, the Sarajevo-based International League of Humanists awarded both Milo Djukanović and Svetozar Marović peace prizes for the positive role they played during the 2006 referendum. *Vijesti*, however, were very critical, noting that both men were key in organising the 1991 attack on Dubrovnik. The editorial on the day after the award ceremony (written by the director of *Monitor*, Miodrag Perović) stated unambiguously that "neither Djukanović nor Marović have anything to do with humanism and have, moreover, never expressed any regret over the things they did during the early 1990s." See *Vijesti*, 29 May 2007, pp.1-2.

21 For an autobiographical account of the events surrounding Brković's exile see, Jevrem Brković, *Dnevnici*, DANU, Podgorica, 2007.

22 *Vijesti* (Podgorica), 20 August 2009, pp.1-2.

23 For an excellent analysis of the evolution of citizenship policy in Montenegro, see Jelena Džankić, 'Transformations of Citizenship in Montenegro: a context-generated evolution of citizenship policies', CITSEE Working Papers Series, March 2009.

24 The Constitution of Montenegro and the Constitutional Law for the Implementation of the Constitution of Montenegro (Article 13), 19 October 2007, p.2.

25 OSCE Mission to Montenegro: OSCE Mission congratulates Montenegro on adoption and proclamation of new constitution, Podgorica, 22 October 2007, www.osce.org/montenegro/49069

26 For an in-depth analysis of the controversies surrounding the bank, see Institut Alternativa, 'The Case of the First Bank: Experiences for Supervisors and other Decision Makers', Podgorica, June 2009.

27 OSCE/ODIHR, Republic of Montenegro: Presidential Election, 6 April 2008, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Warsaw, 1 September 2008, p.3.

28 See Appendix III for election data.

29 Monitor (Podgorica), 22 February 2008, p.14. For in-depth analyses of how the issue of Kosovo affected Montenegrin politics during the disintegration of Yugoslavia see Veseljko Koprovica & Branko Vojičić, Prevrat 89, Liberalni Savez Crne Gore (LSCG), Podgorica, 1994; Branka Magaš, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Verso Press, 1993; Nebojša Čagarović, 'Montenegrin Identity: past present and future', in *The Journal of Area Studies*, No.3, 1993, pp.129-136.

30 Economist Intelligence Unit, Montenegro: Country Report, July 2007, p.13.

31 *Vijesti* (Podgorica), 22 June 2008, p.6.

32 *Dan* (Podgorica), 28 June 2008, p.3.

33 Kenneth Morrison, *Montenegro: A Modern History*, pp.125-127.

34 *Vijesti* (Podgorica), 17 September 2008, p.4

35 Montenegrin journalist, Esad Kočan, sardonically noted that, "The authorities in Pristina should erect, at Gazimestan, a monument of gratitude to the people who have done the most for Kosovo's independence today – Slobodan Milošević, and his Montenegrin followers. Djukanović deserves to get two busts: one for being in Milošević's ranks when the routes to Kosovo's independence were being traced, and the other because he has accepted the consequences of his pioneering policy with the recognition of the state of Kosovo." *Monitor* (Podgorica), 17 October 2008, p.11.

36 *Vijesti* (Podgorica), 15 October 2008, p.2.

37 *Dnevnik* (Novi Sad), 14 October 2008, p.4, See also *Vijesti* (Podgorica), 15 October 2008, p.3.

38 *Dan* (Podgorica), 20 October 2008, p.1.

39 *Večernje* Novosti (Belgrade), 20 October 2008, p.4.

40 *Dan* (Podgorica), 27 October 2008, p.1.

41 Despite the evident setbacks, the opposition continued to attempt to forge a united front (with a view to creating a coalition that could challenge the DPS). In November 2008 they initiated a series of roundtables with NGO's universities and trade unions to discuss potential alternatives and to discuss joint action against the government. While these attempts bore little fruit, they established a foundation for later cooperation. See Economist Intelligence Unit, Montenegro: Country Report, January 2009, p.18.

42 The DPS won 15 out of 33 seats, four more than they had won in the previous Kotor elections in 2004, and were (by a margin of 9 votes) by far the strongest party in the municipal assembly. What is unclear, however, is whether voters were declaring their satisfaction with the DPS or were expressing their dismay with the opposition's ineffective response to the Kosovo recognition controversy (PzP, for example, received only 533 votes). See *Monitor* (Podgorica), 14 November 2008, p.9.

43 In January 2011, there were calls by some opposition MP's to reconsider Montenegro's recognition of Kosovo in the light of the EC's adoption of Dick Marty's controversial report on Kosovo. However, Lukšić stated that the adoption of the report should not be linked to the stance towards the foreign policy of the [Montenegrin] government. *Vijesti* (Podgorica), 27 January, 2011, p.3.

44 *Vijesti* (Podgorica), 29 December 2008, pp.1-2.

45 Veselin Vukotić, 'Lessons for Small Economies: The Case of Montenegro', in Will Bartlett & Vassilis Monastiriots, *South Eastern Europe after the Crisis: a new dawn or back to business as usual*, LSEE – Research on South Eastern Europe, European Institute, LSE, London, 2010, p.97.

46 *The Observer* (London), 15 July 2007, p.33.

47 Economist Intelligence Unit, Montenegro: Country Report, July 2007, p.8.

48 Veselin Vukotić, 'Lessons for Small Economies: The Case of Montenegro', p.97.

49 The government was forced to provide loan guarantees of €49 million in November 2009 to cover KAP's debt to commercial banks and finance the cost of redundancies. CEAC agreed to hand over half its holdings to the government and withdraw claims for €300 million in damages over allegations that the government falsely evaluated the assets of the company before the 2005 takeover. The global market value of aluminium increased throughout 2010, mitigating further problems. But the issue of KAP continues to hang in limbo, lurching from one crisis to another.

50 The Montenegrin government developed an innovative, if controversial, idea to attract more foreign investment. In August 2009, they unveiled their proposals for an 'economic citizenship plan' that would grant citizenship for those willing to invest at least 500,000 Euros in Montenegro. Critics argued that this mechanism would attract criminals seeking to circumvent legal processes in their own countries and, moreover, that it would only consolidate Montenegro's pre-existing reputation as a haven for criminals. The proposals followed the equally controversial announcement that the Montenegrin government had given citizenship to the former Thai Prime Minister, Thaksin Shiniwatra (who, having been overthrown in a military coup in 2006, was wanted for myriad criminal offences in Thailand), on the basis that he would invest in Montenegro's tourist industry. Following sharp criticism from the EU, the Montenegrin government shelved the plan.

51 *Pobjeda* (Podgorica), 17 May 2010, p.4.

52 *Dan* (Podgorica), 18 May, p.4. See also *VIP News Daily Report* (Belgrade), 24 May 2010, p.4.

53 *Slobodna Bosna* (Sarajevo), 11 December 2008, p.21. From the 16th century, Montenegro was ruled by *Vladike* – Orthodox bishops (and later prince-bishops). They were drawn from families of exemplary note and from many different Montenegrin tribes (until 1697 – thereafter they were drawn solely from the Petrović family). They represented the main (and highest) source of authority and sought to unite Montenegro's tribes in the face of Turkish aggression, often with some difficulty. See Kenneth Morrison, *Montenegro: A Modern History*, pp.17-19.

54 Some opposition politicians were sceptical about Djukanović's return. Ranko Kadić, the President of the DSS claimed that the purpose was to "implement accession to NATO and to recognise the false state of Kosovo." See *Bezbjednosti* (Podgorica), October 2008, p.17.

55 *Monitor* (Podgorica), 29 February 2008, pp.8-10.

56 In a surprisingly frank interview in 2008, the President of the SNP, Srdjan Milić, claimed that despite the dominant political rhetoric being pro-Euro-Atlantic integration, "99% of politicians in Montenegro have no idea what Euro-Atlantic integration really means – including me." *Bezbjednosti* (Podgorica), October 2008, p.11.

57 For a more detailed account of the relationship, both business and personal, between Djukanović, Subotić and Drašković, see *Monitor* (Podgorica), 8 June 2007, pp.8-10, and *Vreme* (Belgrade), 22 March 2007, pp.16-21.

58 Misha Glenny, *McMafia: Crime without Frontiers*, The Bodley Head, London, 2008, p.36. See also *Monitor* (Podgorica), 30 November 2007, pp.12-14.

59 In his controversial book 'Mafia Export', the former Italian MP, Francesco Forgione, who led the Italian parliament's anti-mafia commission between 2006 and 2008 claimed that Djukanović as one of the key players in the cigarette smuggling trade in the Balkans. He also claimed that Djukanović had invoked the immunity granted to him by his position of prime minister.

60 For a succinct analysis of the Pukanić affair, see *Monitor* (Podgorica), 31 October 2008, pp.12-14.

61 *Vijesti* (Podgorica), 17 February 2010, p.2.

62 Exactly how wealthy Djukanović has become as a result of his business interests is a matter of some conjecture. In May 2010, the British daily *The Independent* claimed that he was one of the twenty richest political leaders in the world, in a list that included the King of Thailand, the Sultan of Brunei, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and Silvio Berlusconi. See *The Independent* (London), 19 May 2010, p.24.

63 For an analysis of the events surrounding the 'anti-bureaucratic revolution in Montenegro, see Kenneth Morrison, *Montenegro*, pp.81-88 and Nebojša Vladisavljević, *Serbia Antibureaucratic Revolution*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008, pp.160-166. For an in-depth (almost day-by-day) account of the 1997 DPS split, see Ljubiša Mitrović & Aleksander Eraković, *Sto dana koji su promijenili Crnu Goru*, Daily Press, Vijesti, Podgorica, 1997.

64 Lenard Cohen, 'Detours on the Balkan Road to EU Integration', Current History, March 2009, p.128.

65 Svetozar Marović began his political career in 1989, one of the dubiously-titled 'young, handsome and intelligent' troika comprising Momir Bulatović, Milo Djukanović and Marović himself. He later became President of the joint state of Serbia and Montenegro and a key member of the pro-independence bloc, but is perhaps best known as the architect of the *Rat za mir* (War for Peace). He provided ideological justifications for Montenegro's attack on Konavle and Dubrovnik in 1991 in his column in the daily *Pobjeda*, then Montenegro's only newspaper. See Helsinki odbor za ljudski prava u Srbiji, *Dubrovnik: Rat za mir*, Svedočanstva, Beorgad, br.24, 2006.

66 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011, Brussels, 9.11. 2010, COM(2010) 660, pp.25-26.

67 See MANS, 'European Commission censures Montenegro for corruption in the urban development sector, 13 November 2010, www.mans.co.me/en/arhiva/2010/11/european-commission-censures-montenegro-for-corruption-in-the-urban-development-sector/

68 Some of the government's most vocal critics were also cynical about the motivations for the arrests. The renowned Montenegrin scholar, Milan Popović, stated that "Had people in camouflage knocked at dawn on Djukanovic's door as well as Svetozar Marovic, we might think the rule of law had finally arrived." See Milka Tadić-Mijović 'Budva Dragnet Raises Hackles in Montenegro, Balkan Insight, 10 January, 2010.

69 The Montenegrin NGO, MANS has argued that the decision not to prosecute Svetozar Marović confirms their suspicions that the Zavala investigations "were not aimed at genuinely getting to the bottom of this case or bringing to account its key players," MANS Press Release, 29 December 2010. www.mans.co.me/en/arhiva/2010/12/failure-to-pursue-svetozar-marovic-in-zavala-affair-is-scandalous-mans/. To compound these suspicions, the former spatial planning minister, Branimir Gvozdenović, was appointed general secretary of the DPS in January 2011.

70 *Vijesti* (Podgorica), 30 December 2010, p.1.

71 In the 22 December issue of the daily *Vijesti*, numerous notable Montenegrin commentators and analysts (such as Esad Kočan, Svetozar Jovicević and Žarko Rakčević all stated they believed that the change in leadership was merely superficial and that Djukanović would continue to pull the strings from behind the scenes. See *Vijesti* (Podgorica), 22 December 2010, pp.1-5.

72 RFE/RL, Balkans Service, 18 September 2010.

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CHANGE, CONTINUITY AND CONSOLIDATION:

ASSESSING FIVE YEARS OF MONTENEGRO'S INDEPENDENCE

In 2006, Montenegro broke away from its union with Serbia and declared independence. At the time, many observers were sceptical about its future. The smallest of the six republics that made up Yugoslavia, there were real questions about its ability to survive on its own. Five years later, what progress has it made? This paper assesses the key political developments that have taken place since independence and analyses how the political landscape in Montenegro has evolved. It also examines the crucial question of how the political situation has shaped the wider framework of Montenegro's Euro-Atlantic integration process. Collectively, these factors have characterised Montenegro's first years of independence; a period marked by an interesting mix of continuity, change and consolidation.

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