

Regime Changed, System Remains in Place in Montenegro

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Milo Djukanovic, the outgoing Western puppet who ruled and plundered Montenegro for the last three decades, betrayed everything he ostensibly ever stood for during his insufferably long public career. Everything, that is, with the single exception of his own political survival. His finely tuned antennas assisted him at every turn to make opportunistically correct choices. The end came when it no longer depended on him and his puppeteers decided that his shelf life was over.

Djukanovic will now be swept away as were Mobutu, Suharto, Mubarak, and scores of similar satraps who were allowed to misrule and steal for decades, until the inscrutable overseers decreed that their time was up. Will Djukanovic be humiliated like the deposed Mobutu who memorably showed up at a Brussels bank to withdraw some of the plundered cash, only to be told that his account was frozen pending clarification of "human rights violations" that had been alleged against him? Or will he be put on trial in a cage like Mubarak (he was, after all, chased out of office in a rough Montenegrin equivalent of the "Arab Spring," such as marked the end of Mubarak's rule)? We will find out as the scenario, which certainly is not being written in Montenegro, further unfolds.

In the meantime, [the clueless masses joyously celebrate](#) what they believe to be their electoral victory. They never learn that regimes are fungible, but that the system that oppresses them is sacrosanct and immutable. Their notion of a solution for their problems

rarely goes beyond the infantile search for a “new face.” They almost never notice that the new face, delivered to satisfy their craving for novelty, is but a mask.

In elections held on Sunday, April 2, Djukanovic was replaced by Jakov Milatovic, a virtual political unknown but with impeccable Atlanticist credentials (see [puff piece here](#)). The pretentious name of Milatovic’s party, “Europe now!”, of course makes absolutely no sense at a time when the European Union and its “values” are imploding. But it is a powerful virtue signal to the new President’s future overlords, leaving no doubt about his policy commitments.

For those who do not remember, and they should not be blamed if they don’t because Djukanovic’s public presence has been intolerably long and his chameleonic transformations too numerous to keep track of, here are some highlights of his treacheries. He began as an ardent Serbian nationalist and political ally of Slobodan Milosevic in the late 1980s. When the civil war in the former Yugoslavia began in earnest, Djukanovic was personally at the front lines, directing fire and making threatening noises against those that would soon become, in one of his future incarnations, his allies. During the 1990s, as Yugoslavia was developing survival strategies to defeat Western sanctions, Djukanovic saw an opportunity to turn national policy into a source of private profit. He kept for himself a steadily increasing cut of the proceeds of goods that under state auspices were being smuggled from neighbouring Albania and from across the Adriatic Sea not to stuff his pockets but to relieve the plight of the population that was being devastated by merciless Western sanctions.

Image: Đukanović giving a speech in 2018. (Licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0)



He liked this cash cow system so much that he continued to operate it long after sanctions were removed. He simply substituted more lucrative items such as drugs and tobacco for consumer goods.

As a result, according to no less an authority than the London “Independent,” the President of tiny, impoverished Montenegro which produces nothing of substance (“mysteriously,” as the British coyly put it) [managed to join the ranks of 20 richest heads of state](#). A business genius of such calibre, now that he is leaving politics, unless he is arrested, should perhaps be usefully hired as a consultant by failing Western banks. That just might save the financial system.

When he judged the moment opportune, Djukanovic eventually turned his back on everyone who ever helped him in his rise. He grasped very early which way the wind was blowing and that identifying with his mentor Slobodan Milosevic would put him at a severe disadvantage in amassing ill-gotten wealth and surviving politically, so he hosted Milosevic’s political opponents on his Montenegrin turf. During the 1999 NATO bombing he went a step further and brazenly hosted on territory under his rule Western intelligence operatives while his country, Montenegro, and the rest of Yugoslavia were being demolished by air strikes.

Djukanovic’s most radical betrayal, perhaps, was of his indisputably Serbian roots. He is a descendant of proudly Serbian ancestors who included a prime minister of the Kingdom of Montenegro and a commander in the nationalist anti-Axis movement of General Drazha Mihailovic. But when he grasped that the Western-engineered fragmentation of Yugoslavia

was more than merely political dismemberment and that it encompassed the ethnic break-up of the Serbian nation as well, he unhesitatingly jumped on that bandwagon, not caring that his grandfathers and uncles were turning in their graves. He reinvented himself overnight into a vociferous proponent of a distinct Montenegrin ethnicity and, absurdly enough, of language also.

Djukanovic also dutifully turned his back on Russia, Montenegro's traditional ally and protector, imposing "sanctions" on its historical patron. Montenegro's grateful attachment to Russia went so far that in 1905 it declared war on the Japanese Empire in a gesture of solidarity. To this day the declaration of hostilities against Japan has not been officially rescinded, nor has a peace treaty been signed. Djukanovic, who is poorly educated and reputed by those who know him well to be a man who does not read books, was probably unaware of this curious historical fact. Otherwise, he surely would have ostentatiously apologised to the Japanese for the insulting gesture of his patriotic forebears.

Toward the end of his interminable rule Djukanovic apparently fell victim to a delusion of omnipotence. He actually pioneered (or tried to) in his country the creation of a fake, regime-sponsored Orthodox Church to which he planned to assign the assets of the genuine, canonical Orthodox Church of Montenegro, which is in communion with and an integral part of the Serbian Orthodox Church. (Alert readers will unmistakably detect elements of the Ukrainian scenario in self-admitted atheist Djukanovic's insolent scheme.) But far from submitting to the pillage of their church, in 2020 for months the people of Montenegro staged massive, spontaneous processions in every corner of their country to protest Djukanovic's hubris. Faced with popular intransigence, the greedy tyrant was compelled to concede and withdraw the church seizure law that he had previously rammed through his puppet legislature.

That marked the start of his undoing. His sponsors realised that Djukanovic was turning into a liability. His voiceless subjects were seriously tired of him and the massive self-organised protest, though triggered by predominantly religious concerns, could easily acquire unambiguously political characteristics. Unless adroitly deflected, such a development could topple the system which for decades had served Western interests perfectly and had held Montenegro in subjection as a geopolitical pawn.

The solution was found, and his name is Jakov Milatovic. He combines all the features that are required to successfully deceive the masses and by their enthusiastic and uncritical consent to replace the discarded political dinosaur. Milatovic unquestionably is a "new face" (his previous public exposure having been minimal), he is also young (as if that mattered) and, unlike Djukanovic, he probably has read a few books in the course his life. He has also had a semblance of education (much as Andrey Martyanov would undoubtedly and rightfully sneer at it). But it was acquired in all the wrong places, given the geopolitical realities and all the known and ominous facts about how "young leaders" are groomed and "educated" in the shrinking domain known today as the West-centric "international community."

Milatovic learned everything he knows, and will soon apply it as President of Montenegro, as the beneficiary of educational grants at Illinois State University, Vienna Economic University (Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien), La Sapienza University in Rome, where he spent a year on a grant generously provided by the European Commission, and finally as a UK government grantee when he attended economics training at the University of Oxford.

Milatovic received additional preparation and instruction in programs such as Oxbridge

Academic at Oxford, numerous International Monetary Fund programs, as well as the London School of Economics and the Stanford University Leadership Academy. An impeccable CV, is it not, for things to change in order to remain the same?

Wise Montenegrin Orthodox cleric, archpriest Jovan Plamenac, was on to something when he commented the election outcome thus:

“I am glad that Djukanovic lost, but I take no joy in Milatovic’s victory!”

The Russian foreign policy establishment shouldn’t, either.

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