



UDC 32.019.5(497.11):327(100)
Manuscript received: 03.03.2012.
Accepted for publishing: 24.04.2012.
Original scientific paper

Serbian Political Thought
No. 1/2012, Year IV,
Vol. 5
pp. 107-123

Siniša Atlagić¹
Faculty of Political Sciences
University of Belgrade, Serbia

How We Introduce Serbia to the World: The Role of Serbian Diaspora in Promoting Serbia Abroad

Abstract

In the text the author starts from the concept of image in general and then the activity of creating a positive image of the country abroad by analyzing the activity of public diplomacy associated with propaganda towards foreign countries. Considering that the contribution of this activity can also be provided by Diaspora, the author examines the role of the Serbian Diaspora in promoting Serbia abroad. Weak correlation and underdeveloped communications of Serbian associations abroad, their under-representation in the institutions of the system in the country of residence, and the lack of coordinated management policies and promotional activities by the government in the homeland, are recognized by the author as the main obstacles in the way of making the Diaspora an important subject of Serbian promotion abroad.

Key words: Diaspora, image-building, public diplomacy, propaganda, Serbia

While speaking before the Serbian parliament, advising government representatives what they should do to start negotiations for the EU membership, the President of the European Parliament J. Buzek said, among other things, that on their way towards it they should demonstrate "Novak Djokovic's determination" (Tanjug 2011). By associating the country with the world's best tennis player, Buzek, as important,

¹ Assistant Professor
sinisa.atlagic@fpn.bg.ac.rs

This text is a the result of working on the project *Political Identity of Serbia in Regional and Global Context*, record No. 179076, implemented at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade, funded by the Ministry of education and science of Serbia.

emphasizes a determinant of Serbia that on the broader, international level encounters liking and acceptance. In accordance with the general psychological principle according to which the relationship to one object is transferred to other objects associated to it, the appeal of the world's best tennis player as accidentally recognized characteristic of the identity of the country he comes from could be found in basis of the idea of Serbia of people around the world. Such an important determinant of an object, in this case a country, facing a wide-scale acceptance might, roughly speaking, be qualified as a brand, and activities designed for its systematic emphasis would basically represent the foundation for building its positive image. Creating an image would therefore mean selecting and highlighting as important those characteristics of an object that could encounter liking and acceptance, and then in people's minds a spontaneous transfer of positive or negative evaluation of these elements would occur (Campbell, Converse, Miller, Stokes 1976: 59). Although analytically separable, the elements of image operate jointly in the minds of people. However, the image is not formed only in accordance with positive intentions of creators, but also according to the large number of messages people receive from other sources, based on immediately realized reality, and in particular, its representation through political and non-political sources of information - through negative publicity in the media and action of counter-propaganda. Shaping and spreading of the unpopular, negative image of Serbia in the countries of the European Union to which membership Serbia aspires, as well as in other economically powerful Western countries headed by the United States, were prominent in the course of the last two decades.² The question arising is what are the other determinants whose planned and systematic emphasizing can lead to changes in the image of Serbia, that is how to make people realize its new features, important and different from those prevailing in their perceptions of the country that, except in sports, is not known for its success in the economic field as the presupposition of progress in military, scientific/research and cultural fields.

2 One of the fresh examples of an established negative image of Serbia and Serbs in the American public has come to the fore mid 2011, on the occasion of the unsuccessful performance of a British singer Amy Winehouse in Belgrade. *The Chelsea Lately show* on American television E!, its author Chelsea Handler before millions of viewers noted with her colleagues in the studio that she had not known that people in Serbia were allowed to go to concerts, and even the Serbian Defense Minister Dragan Sutanovac was not spared the criticism, she called him a Bolshevik (TVB92, 23/ 06/ 2011.).

Public Diplomacy in Service of Image-Building of a Country

Experts in the field of economic and political persuasion in international relations tend to wonder, when it comes to the promotion of a country abroad, whether it has in its "property" so-called global economic brands.³ The presupposition is, namely, that by associating the characteristics of world famous brands with their country of origin, attitudes towards the country /countries will be formed in the minds of users. In all new situations or fields related to a country of origin of a certain brand people have no previous experience with, they will very likely resort to the existing experience and transfer the already established relationship to the new one. Some would agree, but probably only partially, with the statement that long-term effects in the promotion of a country can be generated this way. The truth is that the transfer technique described is suitable for achieving short-term effects in the activities of organized persuasion, but by using the technique of repetition of content in combination with other techniques of propaganda it is possible to establish lasting relationships between subjects of the transfer through the formation of stereotypes, followed by long-term effects.

If the promotion of a country abroad were reduced to the fact that it has developed/is developing a "global brand", then countries like Norway could also never count on the establishment or maintenance of a good image abroad. Although this country, with less than five million inhabitants, is a member of NATO, it is not an EU member and happens to be sidelined in the decision making process of wider European importance. Norwegian language does not carry the epithet "world" and it is not used massively anywhere except in Norway. Geographically speaking, Norway is not suitable enough for the development of tourism. It does not have its own "global brand" and is not an exporter of products of popular culture. Finally, the Norwegian

3 At the beginning of last decade 108 global economic brands originating from only 14 countries were registered in the world: USA (64), United Kingdom (8), Germany (8), Japan (6), France (5), Switzerland (4), Sweden (3), Italy (3), Netherlands (2), Korea (1), Ireland (1), Finland (1), Denmark (1) and Bermuda (1). So on the list of global brands originating from the USA, among others, there are Coca-Cola, Microsoft, IBM, Disney, Gillette, McDonald's, American Express, Budweiser, Avon, Levi's, Time magazine, Jack Daniels, Hilton et al. From the UK come Unilever, Reuters, Shell, Smirnoff, Johnny Walker and others. Japan, among other things, in the world is known for its brands Toyota, Sony, Honda, Panasonic, Canon, Germany for Mercedes, Gilboa, E. (2008): "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy" Volkswagen, Nivea, Siemens, BMW, France for brand names like L'Oreal, Chanel, Danone, etc.. Through the Bacardi brand Bermuda is promoted in the world, Carlsberg is a brand from Denmark and Nokia from Finland. (Leonard, 2002:176).

Diaspora is not numerous. At a glance, these are discouraging conditions for the successful promotion of the country internationally. However, Mark Leonard, the director of the British Foreign Policy Centre, writes that on the international political stage Norway communicates more effectively than the countries such as Great Britain (2002: 169-170).

By positioning itself as an entity that contributes to achieving and maintaining world peace, and expressing it in the simple message, "Norway as a force for world peace", the country's visibility on the international political scene is much greater than expected taking into account its above mentioned starting positions. Certainly, the factor that has had crucial influence on this kind of status of Norway is its highly developed economy. It enabled the establishment of funds and their assets are directly used for work, first of all, of NORDEM (The Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights), an organization for monitoring electoral processes and conflict prevention, which annually realizes its mission in about twenty countries. Cooperation between this organization and the OSCE further contributes to the role of Norway in peace processes. Norway has been active in regional projects, particularly in the economic and social development in the Barents region. Its peacekeeping activities were noted in the Middle East and Sri Lanka, helping peoples of the Balkans in the aftermath of the conflict during the 1990s. As a symbol of success in the efforts of Norway on a peace plan came the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to the capital of this country.

Norway serves as an example of how a regulated economy of a country opens wide possibilities to the government, its various agencies, as well as NGOs, to conduct what is largely being set within activities under the name of "public diplomacy". Many definitions of this concept are seen in literature, varying in scope and elements of determination emphasized. Thus, Michael Butler, former permanent representative of the United Kingdom to the European Union defines the concept of "public diplomacy" as an activity aiming "to influence opinion in target countries to make it easier for the British Government, British companies, or other British organizations to achieve their aims", adding that "the overall image of Britain in the country concerned is of great importance" but that the essence of public diplomacy does not amount to this, as he writes "persuasion factor" The most important "factor" for influencing target countries, according to this author are "the actual policies of the British Government and the terms in which they are announced and explained by Ministers". Christopher Ross writes that he conceives activities of public diplomacy as "the public face of traditional diplomacy" that works "in coordination with and in parallel

to the traditional diplomatic effort". In his speech of 1963, Edward Murrow, former director of USIA, says that public diplomacy differs from traditional diplomacy in that it involves interaction not only with governments but primarily with non-governmental organizations and individuals (Leonard 2002: 1).⁴ Henry H. Sun writes that the application of so-called soft power in international relations, written about by Joseph Nye, has mainly been practiced through public diplomacy, and it is a part of political marketing in international relations. While revising the past definitions and trying to offer a new determination of the term "political marketing" in general, and thus political marketing in international relations, this author, among other things, writes that in the so-called marketing mix "soft power" was "the product", and public diplomacy "promotion" (Sun 2008: 174).

C. Ross, U.S. Ambassador and coordinator for public diplomacy at the State Department, in the text *Pillars of Public Diplomacy: Grappling with International Public Opinion* writes that public diplomacy can be successfully practised if the approach answers several requirements. Primarily, it is about the requirement that the promotion of the U.S. abroad is in line with the real U.S. policy based on values that public diplomacy has to explain. This means that it must be incorporated into foreign policy and involves coordinating a number of government agencies. Further, content elements of a certain message must be consistent and the message credible. Next, it is important to tailor messages to characteristics of the target group and to address not only opinion leaders but also masses through national and transnational media networks. In transfer of messages all communication channels must be leveraged- television, radio, internet, newspapers and other printed publications. In addition to these requirements, in transfer of messages and explaining U.S. values and policy the strategy of public diplomacy should include active participation of the non-governmental sector, humanitarian organizations first of all, and also special attention should be paid to the mood of the public in other countries (Ross 2003).

Among Ross's "pillars" of public diplomacy a request for unity of political and public-diplomatic action can be seen. This is the basic requirement set before contemporary politics and propaganda, that at the level of the propaganda function is presented as a requirement for

4 The United States Information Agency (USIA) also defined public diplomacy as "promotion of the national interest and the national security of the United States through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad" (Public Diplomacy, 2009).

propaganda to be a constitutive political element. Value orientation that C. Ross sees as the foundation for public diplomacy strategy is the basis of the strategy and political propaganda activities in the broader sense. Further, the author refers to the segmentation of the audience and the stratification of propaganda, one of the key methodological principles of political propaganda. Taking into account that, in addition to these characteristics, the subject here are organized activities undertaken in order to "influence foreign publics" (Ross 2003), then we can safely conclude that it is a form of political propaganda and political propaganda abroad.⁵

According to the definitions shown, it follows that the public diplomatic promotion of the country abroad involves the use of many forms and resources - from traditional visits of state officials and delegations, participations in international organizations and conferences, activities of embassies and representative offices, to the use of the Internet and other means of communication, engagement of public relations agencies of the domicile state, lobbying, giving interviews, statements, announcements, etc. of state officials, party leaders and prominent public figures to foreign media; the use of media, cultural centers, members of the Diaspora; providing publicity about the country, its businesses, institutions and leaders in the foreign media and organizing public meetings, rallies and demonstrations in front of the offices of a foreign country or organization, or the Diaspora and before the target authorities of foreign states, and the like. In addition to elite non-political groups as opinion leaders, including prominent businessmen, public and cultural workers, journalists, professors, scientists and experts, military officers, professional athletes and students and the like, particular non-political groups (visitors of

5 The importance of public diplomacy for the U.S. came to the fore especially after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001. Eric Brahm believes that immediately after the attacks the Bush administration, trying to explain to the world the importance of its future mission of spreading freedom (and the imminent attack on Afghanistan - S.A.), has developed a discourse reduced to the polarization of good versus bad and security versus danger who along with bad news in Iraq contributed to the spreading of negative image of the U.S. abroad and with a part of the U.S. population. Faced with accusations of the Muslim world that the war against terrorism was an excuse for a new crusade, the administration quickly recognized the importance of shoring up its image around the world, and the Middle East in particular. In a very short time, the State Department appointed Charlotte Beers (who previously led two of the world's largest advertising companies - Ogilvy & Mather and J. Walter Thompson) an Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Secretary of State Colin Powell described her role in the following words: We are selling a product. There is nothing wrong with getting somebody who knows how to sell something. We need someone who can rebrand American policy (Brahm, 2008: 4).

international events, conferences, trade fairs, exhibitions, tourists), members of their own minorities in other countries as well as non-segmented mass audiences, public diplomacy activity is aimed at holders of state and the country's political positions and functions in international organizations.

Serbian Diaspora and Image Building of Serbia- "Only Unity Saves the Serbs"

What is the role of public diplomacy in promoting Serbia abroad? Predrag Simic, former Serbian ambassador to France, says it is alarming that after the October changes, "our foreign policy closes and our public diplomacy excludes," adding that "over the past ten years we have done absolutely nothing to change the image of our country and citizens in Europe and the world" (Deutsche Welle, 2011). A similar view was expressed by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the FRY and Serbia and Montenegro Goran Svilanovic.⁶ Possible reply to those views would be that Serbia, with its scarce economic opportunities, is really not in a position to undertake more serious public diplomatic activities. It is somewhat justified, though deeper analysis of aforementioned forms and means, suggests that Serbia can still develop public diplomacy. Compared with the starting positions of Norway, Serbian most important asset in this field would be, of course, the human factor, specifically its Diaspora that now numbers nearly as much as the population of Norway⁷ However, in terms of image building of Serbia in the world it is currently a poorly utilized resource.

"Serbs in the Diaspora are ambassadors capable of improving the reputation of Serbia in the world, important for the further development of the country," said the Minister of Religion and Diaspora in the Serbian Government Srdjan Sreckovic, stating that the Serbian government during the tenure of Mirko Cvetkovic set the historical basis for a long-term partnership between the parent country and its Diaspora, first and foremost, by adopting the first Law on Diaspora and Serbs

6 G. Svilanovic argues that Serbia lacks public diplomacy, i.e. that the issue of the Belgrade officials is that "communicate with the public very little and insufficiently. Some just say ... some things for the media, while others remain by saying what they think they need to say to their interlocutors. And in that sense there is a formulation called public diplomacy, and it is precisely that communication with the public, the communication to the public through interviews, through the statements of some messages or preparation of the public for any decisions that will come." (B92, 01/03/2006).

7 Estimates are that between 3.5 and 4 million Serbs live outside of Serbia, including Serbs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, about 1.5 million of them.

in the region, and by constituting the Assembly of the Diaspora.⁸ In addition to this law and the Serbian Constitution, which stipulates that the Republic of Serbia shall protect the rights and interests of its citizens abroad and develop and promote relations of Serbs living abroad with the parent country, the legal framework for strengthening of relations between the homeland the Diaspora also includes acts such as the Declaration on the Proclamation of Relations Between the Homeland and Its Diaspora for the Relationship of the Highest State and National Interest, the Declaration on Migration Management, the National Youth Strategy, the National Security Strategy and others. Apart for the complaint of associations' representatives from the Diaspora that there still is a problem regarding their relation to the parent land in the matter of complicated procedure for solving status problems, obtaining a citizenship and a passport first and foremost, it appears that the state has made significant progress in terms of institutional support of Diaspora. The question that arises is how to use this change in, as stated by the Ministry of Diaspora, "partnership between the mother land and its Diaspora", for improvement of the image of Serbia abroad? In other words, how can Serbia "recruit" the Diaspora in order to improve its image in the countries where its citizens are settled?

One of the main difficulties of this plan relates to the fact that members of the Diaspora, although generally well integrated into the society of recipient countries, are under-represented in the public institutions of these countries, i.e. are not politically represented in the institutions of the system at central as well as local levels. P. Simic states that one way to improve the position of the Serbian minority and the image of Serbia is their membership in political parties of a certain state, giving the example of the Turkish community in Germany as a good example of how cultural and public diplomacy channels are utilized to provide a positive attitude towards a nation and a state. Unlike the Turks in Germany, Simic says that, for example, "We... in France we do not have people of Serbian origin in senior positions. They are mainly grouped around the parties that are favorable towards the Serbs, but without any effect on the French political scene, and have a negative attitude towards Sarkozy, which is counterproductive. For right there where the attitude towards you is negative, you need to act through public diplomacy" (Simic, 2011).

8 "For the first time the representative body of the Diaspora was established in the parent country, and was given legitimacy by the entire state leadership, the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and relevant ministers who participated in the Assembly work. We drew attention to the importance and potential of the Diaspora and thus once and for all set the institutional framework for long-term cooperation and mutual respect, says S. Sreckovic (*Vecernje novosti*, special supplement *Dijaspora*, in the text "Veze bratske, ne parolaskе", 1st August 2011).

Djordjo Prstojevic, Assistant to the Minister of Religion and Diaspora in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, agrees with Simic and is also of opinion that the situation is not different when it comes to other countries with a large Serbian Diaspora. He cites the example of Austria and its capital Vienna, which, according to the data of the Ministry of Religion and Diaspora of the Republic of Serbia, is populated by almost 200,000 people of Serbian origin who are represented in the City Hall by just one councilor. Prstojevic adds that the leadership of the Association of Serbian clubs in Vienna, bearing in mind the earlier missed chances of the Serbian minority in Austria, realized that by participating in local and federal government they may be obtain funds for financing the needs of the Serbian national community in Austria, and then for the promotion of its and Serbian interests in this country. He points out the characteristic, yet unsuccessful attempt by the President of The Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), Heinz Christian Strache to win over Serbian voters in the campaign for parliamentary elections 2008 (Prstojevic 2012).⁹

”Care” for minority communities normally comes to the forefront at the time of election campaigns. So, election headquarters often follow writings in the foreign press in order to present to the domestic public statements that should enhance images of certain political parties or candidates as political actors supported by foreign governments or distinguished world leaders. Great attention is paid to this researches, especially in the USA, with influential ethnic communities. Thus, for example, the Italo-Americans are particularly sensitive to what a particular presidential candidate is thought of in their homeland. This ”card” was also played by the Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz

9 At that time the Austrian Kurier wrote that in his struggle against Islam H. C. Strache speaks of the dictate against Serbia, hoping to attract immigrants who are integrated into Austrian society, and Christians originating from Europe before the voting, among them primarily ethnic Serbs . The Kurier daily reports that the President of the Freedom Party of Austria wants to collect points with the Serbs, the largest group of immigrants in Austria ... and that he, in contrast to the Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer categorically opposes Kosovo's independence. And nowadays Strache also wears Orthodox rosary around his wrist”, writes the Kurier, specifying the word rosary in the Serbian alphabet in parentheses.

Strache's interest for the Serbian community has not gone unnoticed by its representatives. Yes, it is true. Strache invests intense efforts to win us over, stated at the time Darko Miladinovic of the branch organization of Serbian Associations in Vienna. When asked how Strache's act was received by Austrian Serbs D. Miladinovic replied that it did not encounter a good response and this, above all, because by then the politician led politics directed against foreigners and immigrants. This simply does not seem credible now, explains D. Miladinovic (Glas javnosti, 10/02/2008). 17.5 percent of voters who voted in the elections voted for the FPÖ. With 34 seats won in the parliament, this party is the third in strength.

before the elections in Germany 1998, when he called the Turks with a vote right (at that time around 150,000 of them) to vote against the ruling Union and the chancellor Helmut Kohl, and for the Social Democratic Party and Gerhard Schroeder. The call was explained by the fact that in December 1997 at the EU summit in Luxembourg Turkey was removed from the EU list of candidate countries, for which the Turkish authorities have accused Germany (Slavujevic 2009: 210).

Despite being far from refuting the conclusions of Simic and Prstojevic, representatives of the Assembly of Serbs in France are, as it seems, on a good way to avoid mistakes of their compatriots in Austria. Namely, at a time when the current president of France officially announced his candidacy for presidential elections scheduled for April 2012, representatives of the Serbian Diaspora met at the Elysee Palace with his political and diplomatic advisers in connection with Serbia's candidacy for membership in the EU, on which the European Commission should decide a month and a half before the elections in France. In a statement issued by the Assembly of Serbs in France it says, among others, that Sarkozy's advisers stressed that France would support Serbia in acquiring the candidate status for the EU because it is in the interests of France and the whole region "and not just because of the 300000 voters of Serbian origin in France" (Tanjug 2012). It seems that, among others, activities of Armenians in France can serve as a good example to both Serbs in France and Serbia.¹⁰

Slavisa Orlovic writes that the Serbian Diaspora in America is, "generally speaking disunited" and as such is "an under-utilized resource" (Orlovic 2012). Nonetheless, with the establishment of the Congressional Serbian-American Caucus in the autumn of 2004 matters related to the promotion Serbian interests in the U.S. got the institutional framework.¹¹ Several visits of U.S. senators and congressmen to Belgrade have been organized, several public hearings have been held where representatives of Serbian interests appeared, the Senate unanimously adopted the resolution supporting a compromise solution acceptable

10 In cooperation with the political representatives of their parent country of three million, a numerous and well organized Armenian Diaspora in France (about 1.5 million) has, among other things, by taking advantage of the circumstances in relations between the EU and Turkey, influenced an adoption of an enforceable parliamentary resolution in January 2012 in France, according to which according to which the Turkish massacre of Armenians from 1915 was characterized as genocide. According to this law it is legally punishable (with one year imprisonment and a big fine) to deny that Armenians were victims of a genocide.

11 Among the initiators of the establishment of the Serbian Caucus in Congress the Serbian Unity Congress, an international organization dedicated to preserving Serbian heritage, also had a prominent role.

to both Belgrade and Pristina, several resolutions unfavorable to Serbia have been prevented, among them the one about the independence of Kosovo of October 2004.¹² Denis Kolundzija believes that the nature and the extent of the roles of "Serbian" congressmen primarily depends on the willingness to realistically assess our capabilities, and affect activities of the Serbian caucus in the Congress accordingly. According to him, this is exactly what the Serbian Embassy in Washington was involved in during the first years of the Caucus (Dnevnik 2011).¹³

As for the electoral potential of American voters of Serbian origin Sasa Gajic finds that the Serbian Diaspora opting for one of the candidates can be of great importance in a few key "swing states". He takes the example of the American presidential elections of 2004 and states that although there may be no talk as to the Serbs "enabling Bush's victory," without their plebiscite help it would certainly be called into question in several of these states. According to the author, the opting of the Serbs against John Kerry and his strongly anti-Serbian

12 The U.S., however, were among the first countries that recognized Kosovo's independence in 2008. Dnevnik states that, given the cemented attitude of the administration in Washington, it is illusory to hope that the Caucus may influence the U.S. government to reverse this decision (5th November 2011, in the text "Srpski kokus: Lobiranje za evroatlantske integracije").

How hard it is for small countries to win the support of the government in Washington, despite actions of their well-organized lobbies testifies the example related to Armenian Diaspora. Namely, during Bill Clinton's mandate the Congress was preparing a draft resolution close to that recently adopted in French parliament in terms of content. The procedure was, however, stopped at the intervention of President Clinton, for he thought that because of the events in the distant past, according to him, relations should not deteriorate with Turkey, a regional force of special importance and a loyal American ally in NATO. The Turks, according to the weekly NIN, had a strong argument - cancellation of an agreement worth 4.5 billion dollars they had with U.S. arms suppliers. George W. Bush, in his presidential election campaign, said that the Armenians were victims of the genocidal campaign, and that the U.S. would fittingly recognize the tragic suffering of the Armenian people. He did not forget the promise upon entering the White House, especially when he was reminded about it by influential American Armenians, but he inherited the same contractual military obligations to the Turks and the same strategic commitment towards Turkey. There was a deadlock, and C. Powell, the head of diplomacy said that a congressional resolution on the suffering of the Armenians would not be constructive because it would not be of any assistance either to victims or the living in resolving current problems (NIN, 24th May 2001).

13 Serbian public was informed about the initiative of the Serbian-American Congressional Caucus on the occasion of Serbia's candidacy for full EU membership by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior I. Dacic, who attended the traditional Prayer Breakfast in Washington in early February 2012. He stated that he was informed about the latest initiative by Dan Burton, Serbian caucus Chairman, and explained to him that a group of congressmen is preparing a letter to be sent to the U.S. administration and top officials from the EU to push for a positive decision on the admission of Serbia to the EU (Tanjug, 02/02/2012).

team led by Richard Holbrooke turned the Diaspora of other Orthodox nations in these hesitant countries toward conservatives. However, Gajic does not state empirical research data substantiating these claims. In the U.S. election game Orlovic distinguishes the individual action of a prominent senator and a member of the Serbian Caucus George Voinovich, who has "played an important role in the last presidential campaign of George W. Bush" (Orlovic 2012).

The above-mentioned campaign of the Turkish government before the elections in Germany 1998 was run by the media from Turkey, but they were joined by Turkish newspapers printed in Germany. At first it seems that in similar or different prospective campaigns members of the Serbian Diaspora abroad, as well as their media, could also play a significant role. Namely, the results of the research "Media in the Diaspora, Media for the Diaspora," conducted in 2007 by the Belgrade Media Center in cooperation with the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) showed that for as many as the half of Serbs living abroad media from Serbia are the main source of information in general. According to Suzana Ignjatovic from the ISS, a majority of survey respondents said that they know which Serbian media programs are intended for the Diaspora and that, in this sense, the national public service programs are in the lead. When it comes to the most important content of the Diaspora media, the results of this study, as a whole, show that the most represented are "events in Serbia" and are followed, respectively, by cultural programs, music and entertainment, sport and "news about the local Serbian community."¹⁴ The founders of the Serbian media in the region are mostly Serbian community organizations or states in which these media are based, while the media of the European or transatlantic Diaspora emerged largely on the initiative of individuals and, less often, organizations. Although Diaspora media have a relatively good relationship with the media of the parent country, the attention especially is drawn to the fact that nearly 80 percent of the media in the Diaspora have not established any mutual cooperation (Dikovic 2008).

This is an indicator of a more serious problem that those well acquainted with the situation in the Serbian Diaspora point out, and which S. Orlovic indicates in the case of the U.S. - disunity. The rift in the Serbian Diaspora and the tension in the relations of some of its

14 If you observe the results obtained for different media categories, in connection with contents that are being broadcast, more than two thirds of the Serbian Diaspora media from the countries in the region deal with issues of Serbia, and the same percentage monitors events in the local Serbian community. Program contents in the Serbian media overseas are mostly related to the local community, while the media of our Diaspora in Europe are primarily directed toward the host country, developments in Europe and Serbia, and far less to the local community (Dikovic, 2008).

organization and the relevant ministry in Belgrade became prominent during the last year's second session of the Assembly of the Diaspora and Serbs in the region. Thus, dissatisfied with the work of the Assembly, Violeta Brahus resigned from the office of the Assembly's Vice-President and a delegate from Switzerland. "Immediately following the last year's first session of the Assembly of the Diaspora and Serbs in the region I informed the base in Switzerland, delegates, the presidency of the Assembly and the Ministry of Diaspora that I disagreed with the choice of the presidency, because such an election sent a message to Serbs in the Diaspora and the homeland that the transatlantic Diaspora does not exist and that, at least according to this, there are Serbs in Europe only" (RTS 2011).¹⁵

The disunity of the Diaspora is also pointed out by A. Milosevic, the director of the Serbian Institute for Public Diplomacy in Brussels, an institution little known to our professional public. Stating that the needs of the Serbian Diaspora have long surpassed organizing only in cultural clubs and football sections, she notes the split of old, so called umbrella organisations, and new organisations of the Serbian Diaspora, whereby the former "complicate the work of every new organization." The work of new organizations in the Diaspora, according to A. Milosevic, is difficult because of the "lobby that controls the entire Diaspora," which consists of "umbrella organizations and their representatives who have the monopoly and the advantage in obtaining funds" (Dikovic 2008). The people from the competent ministry say that Serbian communities in countries where they are numerous organise in so called umbrella associations precisely in order to achieve stronger influence with the authorities of the country of residence, and provide easier access to funds for financing the needs of minority communities. In this way, government representatives in the parent country will also know the "address" which brings together the largest number of Serbs in the country and from which the requirements that must be considered come. Then, when it comes to donations, we can expect financial responsibility of various organizations, although extremely modest financial means are committed for projects co-financed by the Ministry

15 The Presidency included, after the formation, in addition to Violeta Brahus, Dr Slavomir Gvozdenovic from Romania on behalf of the Serbs in the region, and Mica Aleksic from France. Otherwise, the discontent over the course and the effects of session was summed up by Dragan Stanojevic, a representative of the Serbs from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, with the words: It began with nothing and ended with nothing. He reproached that although scheduled, the action plan of the Assembly was not adopted, nor was the rule book on its work specified, although its changes had been required. Because of a dispute over the agenda and demands of a group of delegates to dismiss the Presidency of the Assembly, its work was practically blocked (Dikovic, 2008).

of Religion and the Diaspora, at least having in mind the opulence of the Serbian Diaspora.¹⁶ Around a fifth of these projects, such as Days of Serbia in Barcelona, Serbian Week in the UK, Days of Serbian culture in Milan, Days of Serbian culture in Paris and others, was of importance not only for strengthening ties between the parent country and the immigrants, but also for the promotion of Serbia abroad. These are channels of cultural diplomacy that in practice, as well as in analyses and discussions on public diplomacy are put in the background. However, according to Simic, the improvement of the image of Serbia in France during his term as ambassador was influenced more by "a guest performance of a choir such as the Collegium Musicum in the French Senate, or in the Saint Louis Cathedral and the tomb of Napoleon than many ministerial visits" (Simic 2012). Cultural cooperation is, according to Sonja Liht in her analysis of the contemporary Serbian-American relations, something more attention should be paid to. According to Liht, it "reaches out to some people, not necessarily to the White House, but promotes what we have... neglected all these years, and that is a mobilization of friends" (Liht 2012). In the absence of a large number of experts in public diplomacy out in the field - those language-capable, media-savvy, policy-wise, accessible and persuasive officers who understand the country they are serving (Ross 2002: 77) - the role of individuals - "friends" in the field of culture, science, sports or business are irreplaceable. Interpersonal communication by prominent individuals in particular is provided within a circle of friends and colleagues, and their appearances in the media are an important way of improving the country's reputation abroad.

The role of individuals in Diaspora seems to be irreplaceable in the business sphere. Economic channels, as previously discussed, are an important factor in terms of public diplomacy of a country. However, this aspect, in which the role of tourism it is necessary to consider, is the subject of a wider analysis that goes beyond the scope of this paper.

16 According to the decisions of the Ministry of Religion and Diaspora on co-financing of projects that contribute to preserving and strengthening links between the home country and the Diaspora and the home country and the Serbs in the region a total of 30 million dinars (20 million for the Serbs in the region and 10 million for European and overseas Diasporas) was oriented towards it in 2011, anticipated to be distributed to a total of 74 projects (39 regional and 34 for Serbs from Europe and overseas countries) which amounts to more than 4,000 Euros per project. (accessed on 2nd February 2012) Otherwise, the Serbs from the Diaspora annually send to relatives in the homeland about \$ 5 billion that places Serbia in the top of according to the inflow of money from abroad. The share of foreign currency remittances from the Diaspora makes about 15.5 percent of GDP of Serbia. Equivalent per capita, it follows that every citizen of Serbia annually receives approximately \$ 700 from abroad (*Vecernje novosti*, special supplement *Dijaspora* in the text "Rasejanje seje devize", 1st August 2011).

Media in Serbia at times make different lists of Serbian businessmen in the world whose wealth is measured in billions of dollars. However, one Rebecca MacDonald, the owner of Just Energy, the electricity and gas supplier company to more than 1.5 million consumers in the U.S. and Canada, one Milan Mandaric, the owner of English football club Leicester and a board member of several world-renowned banks, and Mirko Latinovic, a businessman from Moscow, whose company is currently working on the reconstruction of the seat of the State Bank of Russia, and others are little known to Serbian public, and their cooperation with the homeland and its promotion abroad, as it seems, is restricted to their own initiative.

Although there is a lot of evidence supporting the fact that there is not enough awareness in the parent country of the importance and potential of the Serbian Diaspora, especially when it comes to the possibilities of promoting Serbia in the world, generally speaking, the relationship between the homeland and Serbian immigrant organizations has changed for the better over the last decade. This is indicated by institutional solutions regulating this relationship, and their coordinated, although sporadic activities on the promotion of Serbia abroad and lobbying in its favour. These "promotional strikes" are effective only if they are part of a broader strategy of political and propaganda activities, i.e. a long term program of political action as the coordinated management of policy and organized persuasive activities. Judging by the actions of representatives of the Serbian authorities after 2000, the backbone of this strategy in Serbia should be a European integration plan. In this context, the fact that while Serbia is making efforts to achieve EU membership, according to the Strategy of Preserving and Strengthening of Serbia's Relations with Diaspora and Serbs in Region, more than a million Serbs already live and work in EU countries could be of great importance. (2011: 35). In view of this, the state of Serbia, at the beginning of addressing its Diaspora resources seriously, should first insist with representatives of its European Diaspora on its enlargement in organizational terms, that is, on the integration of numerous smaller organizations into large scale ones. These could, in cooperation with representatives of powerful political parties, as well as through a wide range of activities of civil society organizations, for they are registered as such, pursue the interests of Serbia.

In other words, when it comes to the political life of European societies the Serbian Diaspora has to come out of isolation. A similar pattern could be implemented when it comes to the overseas Diaspora, with the aim of improving the status of the Serbian minority and the reputation of Serbia in the country of residence. Representatives of

the Serbian Diaspora, especially the delegates of the Assembly of the Diaspora and Serbs in the region, should also, inter alia, initiate public opinion researches on the image of Serbia and the Serbs, or the analysis of media content on Serbia and the Serbs in "their" countries, with the aim of identifying and following the basic problems regarding the image of Serbia and present suggestions for its improvement. In cooperation with the Serbian government they should analyze "models" of successfully organized Diasporas - Armenian, Italian, Turkish and others. Certainly, the precondition of all the above is the economic and socio-political recovery of the parent country. It would soon produce a so-called. band-wagon effect, that is reinforce a sense of satisfaction and pride in originating from Serbia among the Serbian Diaspora and, with more vigorous financial incentives by authorities in the homeland, motivate them to participate in various activities of its promotion on a large scale. Until that happens, such activities apparently remain in the hands of individuals - enthusiasts.

Bibliography

- (2011) Strategija očuvanja i jačanja odnosa matične države i dijaspore i matične države i Srba u regionu. Beograd: Ministarstvo vera i dijaspore.
- "Austrijski političar sa srpskom brojanicom". [newspaper] Glas javnosti 10 February 2008.
- "Srpski kokus: Lobiranje za evro-atlanske integracije". [newspaper] Dnevnik, 5 November 2011.
- "Turci i Jermeni podelili Zapad". [weekly] NIN, 24 May 2001.
- "Veze bratske, ne parolaskе". [newspaper] Večernje novosti, special supplement Dijaspora 1 August 2011.
- Atlagić, S. (2011) "Politička propaganda – različita shvatanja pojma i funkcije". *Politička revija*, 10 (4): 491-510, Beograd: Institut za političke studije.
- Brahm, E. (2006) "Propaganda." In: Burgess G. and Burgess H. (eds) *Conflict Information Consortium*, Colorado: University of Colorado, Boulder, [online]. Available at: <http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/propaganda> [Accessed 24 March 2012].
- Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E. and Stokes, D. E. (1976) *The American Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Diković, J. (2008) "Šta je pokazalo istraživanje mediji u dijaspori, mediji za dijasporu.", [online]. Available at: <http://www.srpskadijaspora.info/vest.asp?id=9439>, [Accessed 24 March 2012].
- Gajić, S. (2004): "Zašto je pobedio Džordž Buš." [online]. Available at: http://starisajt.nspm.rs/Komentari_stariji.htm, [Accessed 13 April 2012].
- Gilboa, E. (2008) "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy". *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (1): 55-77, London: Sage Publishing.

- Gonesh, A. and Melissen, J. (2005) *Public Diplomacy: Improving Practice*. Clingendael, Netherlands: Institute of International Relations.
- Kleiner, J. (2009) *Diplomatic Practice: Between Tradition and Innovation*. London: World Scientific Publishing.
- Leonard, M. (2002) *Public diplomacy*. London: The Foreign Policy Centre.
- Leonard, M. (2002) "Diplomacy by the Other Means". *Foreign Policy*, (132): 48-56, Washington: Washingtonpost, Newsweek Interactive, LLC
- Liht, S. "U Americi imamo više prijatelja nego u bilo kojoj drugoj zemlji." [online]. Available at: <http://208.131.145.245/index.php?vrsta=tribina&kategorija=&tekst=24&naredba=prikaz>, [Accessed 20 March 2012].
- Lišanin, M. (2011) "Normativni vs. stvarni model kreiranja i realizacije spoljne politike u politickom sistemu Srbije". *Srpska politička misao*, 31 (1): 187-208, Beograd: Institut za političke studije.
- Nye, J. S. Jr. (2008) "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power". *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science, Public Diplomacy in a Changing World*, 616 (1): 94-109, London: Sage Publishing
- Odluka o sufinansiranju projekata koji svojim kvalitetom doprinose očuvanju i jačanju veza matične države i Srba u regionu. (2011), [online]. Available at: <http://www.mzd.gov.rs/cyr/Projects/AllProjects.aspx?id=121>, [Accessed 21 March 2012].
- Orlović, S. "A naš lobi u Americi." [online]. Available at: <http://www.politika.rs/pogledi/Slavisha-Orlovic/t7829.lt.html>
- Prstojević, D. (2012) author's interview.
- Ross, C. (2002) "Public Diplomacy Comes of Age". *The Washington Quarterly*, 25 (2): 75-83, Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- Ross, C. (2003) "Pillars of public diplomacy". *Harvard Review*, August, [online]. Available at: <http://ics-www.leeds.ac.uk/papers/vp01.cfm?outfit=pmt&folder=7&paper=1649>, [Accessed 20 March 2012].
- Simić, P. "Od kvaliteta naših odnosa sa Vašingtonom će zavistiti i brzina razvijanja odnosa sa EU". [online]. Available at: <http://208.131.145.245/index.php?vrsta=tribina&kategorija=&tekst=24&naredba=prikaz>, [Accessed 20 March 2012].
- Slavujević, Z. (2009) *Političko komuniciranje, politička propaganda, politički marketing*. Beograd: Grafocard.
- Snow, N. and Taylor, P. M. (eds) (2009) *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, Routledge: Taylor & Frances.
- Sun, H. H. (2008) "International political marketing: a case study of United States soft power and public diplomacy", *Journal of Public Affairs*, 8 (3): 165-183, Malden, USA: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd.
- Von Eschen, P. M. (2005) "Enduring Public Diplomacy". *American Quarterly*, 57 (2): 335-343, Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press.
- Watanabe, Y, McConell, D. L. (eds), (2008) *Soft Power Superpowers: Cultural and National Assets of Japan and the United States*. Armonh, New York: M. E. Sharpe.