

Organization Attributes Sheet – Sreten Jovic Group (aka Belgrade group)

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A. When the organization was formed + brief history
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Origins: Jovic's group, sometimes known as the Belgrade group, began operations under Serbian national Sreten Jovic in late 1990, but existed prior to this, led by fellow Serbian national Ljubinko Dujic Becirevic, a former sportsman. Becirevic's death in Amsterdam (the group's original arena) in October 1990 from gunshot wounds catapulted Jovic into the leadership position of the group, from where he expanded its operations and capacity.¹
B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,
a. In general
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As pertains to Central America and the Caribbean: Drug trafficking and contract killing.²• Global activities: Drug trafficking, contract killing, cigarette smuggling, gasoline smuggling, general goods smuggling; alleged human trafficking, extortion, currency counterfeiting³• Contract Killing: Jovic business partner Pantyo "Poli" Pantev, also the owner of security and insurance firm SIK, was shot four times as he entered a hotel in Aruba, allegedly on Jovic's order.⁴
b. <i>Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drug Trafficking: Jovic's group is responsible for directly working in Colombia with Colombian cocaine manufacturers and sellers to move cocaine to Europe via Jovic's own routes.⁵
C. Scope and Size
a. Estimated size of network and membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• While exact size of network and membership remain unknown, the Group must have significant size (or excellent capacity and capabilities) in order to operate globally from South America to Europe and the Balkans.
b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group's operating area)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As pertains to Central America and the Caribbean: Colombia (drug trafficking); Aruba (contract killing)⁶• Globally: Serbia (and the Balkans in general), Netherlands, Bulgaria, Austria, Turkey, Germany and Europe⁷
D. Leader Characteristics
a. Who is/are the leader(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sreten Jovic (aka Joca Amsterdam; "European Drug King") - arrested 27 April 2009 and found guilty in connection with the execution of two contract murders.⁸• It is unknown exactly who (if anyone) has assumed leadership of the Belgrade group, or if Jovic continues to run things from prison. It must be kept in mind that the group existed before Jovic, as did the original ties to Colombian cartels (particularly to Medellin).⁹
b. Leadership timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sreten Jovic took command of the Belgrade group in October 1990 upon the death of Ljubinko Dujic Becirevic from a gunfight.• Jovic's first actual visit to South America as leader of the Belgrade group came in 1996, when he left Bulgaria for Colombia. It was then that he strengthened already existing

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

ties to Colombian criminal organizations.

c. Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)

- It appears that Sreten Jovic had (and possibly still has) firm strategic control over the group and the ultimate authority in matters. However, tactical operations, including drug trafficking operations from Colombia, are overseen by lesser group authorities¹⁰ and a widespread network of well-organized teams.¹¹

E. Organizational Structure

a. Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)

- Jovic's group would appear to be both hierarchical, networked, and cellular to a degree – see Leadership Style

b. Membership – is there formal or informal membership in the organization or network? What role do informal or nonmembers play in trafficking and other criminal activities?

- Information not found.

c. Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)

- The group appears to be, at least under Jovic, centralized strategically, but decentralized tactically and operationally – see Leadership Style.

F. Resources

a. Financial

- Although actual revenue numbers from Jovic's drug trafficking from Colombia are unknown, let alone those from his global activities, there is information that indicates that his personal and/or group financial resources are vast. In one instance, Jovic fronted \$250 million when a Bulgarian crime figure was unable to pay after ordering two tons of cocaine from Colombia, via Jovic as guarantor.¹² That Jovic was able to front that amount to the Colombians indicates that he has or is able to tap vast financial resources.
- Additionally, when arrested in Bulgaria in 2002 on behalf of Dutch authorities, Jovic attempted to pay his way out of extradition to the Netherlands: "First he paid the biggest Bulgarian mobster, Milcho Bonev, by way of an intermediary, 3 million dollars to organize his escape from the Sofia prison.... When that plan fell through, Jovic in the greatest earnest offered to personally pay off a part of the Bulgarian foreign debt in exchange for not being extradited to the Netherlands."¹³

b. Human

- Sreten Jovic is presently incarcerated, along with a number of other group members, for involvement in the execution of a contract hit on two individuals, one of whom was the editor of a Croatian newspaper.¹⁴ This will strain the group's human resources if current members are not promoted and new members not admitted, although this is uncertain given that the group's actual membership cannot be determined through open source information. It must not be dismissed that Jovic could continue to run the group from prison.

c. Logistical

i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.

- It has been said that Jovic was engaging in currency counterfeiting,¹⁵ although the type(s) of currency and other details remain unknown in open source information.

ii. Key routes

- Jovic's group utilizes several routes, which, it is important to note, have altered over time, indicating a capacity to adapt logistically. Known routes include:
- From Colombian/South American ports -- Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Panama, and Mexico -- to the Spanish Canary Islands. From there, it goes to other

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ports, such as Rotterdam in the Netherlands, Hamburg in Germany, Marseille on the Cote d'Azur, and Piraeus, as well as Scandinavian, Italian, and Belgian ports.¹⁶

- Apart from the main smuggling route through the Canary Islands, there is also a direct line between South America and Europe, where Serbian criminal organizations have a significant share of the market. Their strong positions are due in a large measure to good cooperation with the Albanian mafia, both in smuggling cocaine from South America and in using the Albanian connection inside Europe.¹⁷
- An additional route may be: Colombia-West Africa-Egypt-Turkey-Balkans-EU.¹⁸
- An older route appears to have been: Colombia-Italy-EU.¹⁹
- The centers for receiving the shipments are ports in Montenegro and the Netherlands.²⁰

d. Transportation

i. Land

- It appears that Jovic's group utilizes land transportation and infrastructure primarily in Europe and the Balkans.²¹

ii. Sea

- Jovic's group relies on ships and maritime infrastructure to move drugs from Colombia to both intermediate destinations (such as West Africa) and final destinations of the Balkans and Europe.

iii. Air

- Jovic's group may use aircraft to move the drugs once they cross the Atlantic from Colombia.²²

iv. Intermodal container

- Information not found.

G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities

a. Corruption

- It is often reported that Jovic has ties to the Serbian state and security apparatus, going back to when Slobodan Milosevic was in power. It is perhaps significant to note that he allegedly worked directly for Milosevic starting in 1992, and when he was arrested on 27 April 2009 for the two murder charges, he was living in the villa of Milosevic.²³ He has also been tied to at least one prominent Bulgarian state official.

b. Concealment

- Information not found.

c. Deception

- Information not found.

d. Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)

- Information not found.

H. Prior / Existing Relationships

a. Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual)

- **Colombian criminal organizations** (exact organizations unknown in open source) – strong cooperation, as this is Jovic's source for cocaine to Europe and the Balkans. There appears to be no note in open source information of disagreements or disputes.
- **America Group (Serbia-Montenegro)** – Jovic may be very close to the America Group, both having allegedly worked with a powerful Montenegrin mafia boss (who remains unnamed in numerous open source documents).²⁴
- **Darko Saric group** – relationship of great conflict, as Jovic's group and Saric's group

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often clashed with one another and engaged in a series of assassinations of members of one another's groups. Despite this conflict, Jovic may have worked under or alongside Saric for a time, given Saric's immense underworld power and connections.²⁵

- **Albanian criminal organizations** (exact organizations unknown in open source) – Jovic has “strong business contacts” with Albanian criminal groups. Some of Jovic’s success and strong position in Europe may well be tied to this sound cooperation with the Albanians, “both in smuggling cocaine from South America and in using the Albanian connection inside Europe.”²⁶
- **Dutch criminal organizations** (exact organizations unknown in open source) – there appears to be great conflict between Jovic and some criminal organizations in the Netherlands, stemming from Jovic’s early days there as well his continued control of the Dutch underground market thereafter.²⁷
- **Criminal groups in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Malaysia** - According to the Bulgarian General Directorate for Combating Organised Crime, Jovic set up good connections with narcotics mobsters in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Malaysia.²⁸
- **Other cooperative criminal connections** - has **excellent contacts with the cartels in South America**, the source of cocaine shipments to Europe. The centers for receiving the shipments are ports in Montenegro and the Netherlands. **Jovic cooperates with Bulgarian, Turkish, and Albanian gangs, as well as those all over Europe and America. He has operatives in most European countries, who have excellent contacts with the mafia in Turkey and Colombia.** They are in charge of providing huge quantities of narcotics, which are then distributed in the streets by way of a widespread network of well-organized teams.²⁹

b. Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc.

- **Bulgarian prime minister Boyko Borisov** – In late April 2009, Jovic told a judge in Belgrade that during his stay in Bulgaria he enjoyed the protection of Borisov, the then chief secretary of the Interior Ministry and current leader of Bulgaria's center-right Citizens for Bulgaria's European Development (GERB) party³⁰ and who has since become Bulgaria’s prime minister.
- **Serbian state/security services** - There are allegations that Jovic’s links to Serbian state security apparatus run deep. When he was arrested in Bulgaria in 2002, a valid Serbian secret service ID card was found on his person.³¹
- **Slobodan Milosevic** – In a 1992 meeting with Milosevic, Jovic was asked to organize smuggling routes to aid Serbia in beating the international sanctions that were then in place on the country.³² When he was arrested on 27 April 2009 on the two murder charges, Jovic was living in the villa of Milosevic.

c. *Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.*

- There is no indication that Jovic’s group dealt or intends to deal with known terrorist groups.

I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)

- Ethnicities of the former Yugoslavia (particularly Serbia and Montenegro)

J. Technical Sophistication

- Information not found.

K. Penchant for Innovation

- Information not found.

L. Activities in United States

- a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
b.	<i>Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
c.	Linkages with US groups
	i. Market/transaction links
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
	ii. Stable supplier
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
	iii. Franchise arrangement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
	iv. HQ and Branch office
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
M. Evaluations	
a.	Strengths
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International connections – to other criminal entities as well as often prominent officials from various state and security apparatuses
b.	Weaknesses and vulnerabilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incarceration of leader Jovic may prove to be a weakness/vulnerability that could make the Belgrade group irrelevant, however this remains to be seen given at least three factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jovic/Belgrade group is believed to have significant ties to figures in the political elites and security services of numerous countries (particularly in Serbia, where Jovic is incarcerated, he might still enjoy the personal protection of the current prime minister of Bulgaria). • Jovic's/Belgrade group's use of a decentralized operating style could mean that the group is still well poised and capable enough to continue drug trafficking from Colombia. Similarly, this could also mean that a new leader/new leaders will move or possibly have already moved into positions of higher authority in the group to take over Jovic's more strategic role. • Historical precedent: Jovic was arrested in Bulgaria in 2002, and while waiting for Bulgaria to extradite him to the Netherlands, Jovic was alleged to have ordered some assassinations from jail.³³ Upon his release in 2006, he successfully resumed full control of the Belgrade group.
c.	Additional insights
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Other Notes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

¹ "Croatian Weekly Details Criminal Career of Top Balkan Narco Boss Jovic" *Zagreb Nacional* , Apr 28, 2009, OSC: EUP20090527073001.

² Ibid., and Padejski, Djordje. "Jovic Arrested In Pukanic Case," *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project*, April 28, 2009.

http://www.reportingproject.net/new/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=260&Itemid=43.

³ "Croatian Weekly Details Criminal Career of Top Balkan Narco Boss Jovic" OSC: EUP20090527073001.

⁴ Padejski.

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- ⁵ “Joca Amsterdam – Most Powerful Balkan Criminal,” *Dalje.com*, October 30, 2008. <http://dalje.com/en-croatia/joca-amsterdam---most-powerful-balkan-criminal/197882>; and “Croatian Weekly Details Criminal Career of Top Balkan Narco Boss Jovic” OSC: EUP20090527073001.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ “Croatian Weekly Details Criminal Career of Top Balkan Narco Boss Jovic” OSC: EUP20090527073001.
- ⁸ Padejski.; and Kampschorr, Beth. “Serbia: Alleged Gangster Gets 15 Years,” *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project*, 2011.
- ⁹ “Serbian 'Drug Barons' Said To Have 'Strong Ties' With Colombian Cocaine Traders,” *Belgrade Blic*, March 27, 2006, OSC: EUP20060327047003.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ “Police 'Source' Says Two 'Drug Cartels' Operate in Serbia, Details Foreign Ties,” *Belgrade Blic*, May 24, 2007, OSC: EUP20070525047007.
- ¹² “Croatian Weekly Details Criminal Career of Top Balkan Narco Boss Jovic,” OSC: EUP20090527073001.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Markov ić-Subota, Tamara. “Jovic suspected for uniting in crime and murder,” *Blic.rs*, April 30, 2009. <http://english.blic.rs/In-Focus/4344/Jovic-suspected-for-uniting-in-crime-and-murder->.
- ¹⁵ “Croatian Weekly Details Criminal Career of Top Balkan Narco Boss Jovic,” OSC: EUP20090527073001.
- ¹⁶ “Serbian 'Drug Barons' Said To Have 'Strong Ties' With Colombian Cocaine Traders,” OSC: EUP20060327047003.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ “Map: Narko Veze Sretena Jocica I Likvidacije za Koje se Vezuje,” *Blic.rs*,. http://etleboro.blogspot.com/2009_05_01_archive.html.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ “Police 'Source' Says Two 'Drug Cartels' Operate in Serbia, Details Foreign Ties,” OSC: EUP20070525047007.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ “Croatian Weekly Details Criminal Career of Top Balkan Narco Boss Jovic,” OSC: EUP20090527073001.
- ²⁴ “Serbia: Source Says 'Drug Baron' Saric Has Own Coca Plantations in South America,” *Belgrade Blic*, February 15, 2010, OSC: EUP20100217047004.
- ²⁵ “Source: Rising Mob Boss Bojovic Planned Killing of Two Serbian Police Officials,” *Belgrade Blic*, June 17, 2010, OSC: EUP20100620012001.
- ²⁶ “Serbian 'Drug Barons' Said To Have 'Strong Ties' With Colombian Cocaine Traders,” OSC: EUP20060327047003.
- ²⁷ “Croatian Weekly Details Criminal Career of Top Balkan Narco Boss Jovic,” OSC: EUP20090527073001.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ “Police 'Source' Says Two 'Drug Cartels' Operate in Serbia, Details Foreign Ties,” OSC: EUP20070525047007.
- ³⁰ “Serbian Gangster Reveals Growing Power of Balkan Mafia,” OSC Feature, June 16, 2009, OSC: FEA20090618861940.
- ³¹ “Croatian Weekly Details Criminal Career of Top Balkan Narco Boss Jovic,” OSC: EUP20090527073001.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid.