

## The International Program – Croatia



May 5, 2006

**Guests:** Ms. Nada JOSIPOVIC, Deputy Head  
State Office for Fight Against Corruption and Organized Crime

Ms. Jadranka JURINJACK, Head  
Department for State Administration System and Legislation  
Adjustment with the EU Legal System

Mr. Zorislav Antun PETROVIC, Correspondent  
Austrian Press Agency

Mr. Boric PAVELIC, Journalist/Commentator  
Novi List Daily, Zagreb

Ms. Sanja SMILJANIC, Journalist/Editor  
Economic Section of the Information Program, Croatian TV

Mr. Chris Farrell, Judicial Watch's director of research and investigations, and Tom DeVine, legal director of the Government Accountability Project, participated in a panel discussion administered by Delphi International on behalf of the U.S. Department of State entitled "Accountability in Government."

The program's objectives were, in part, to introduce Croatian decision makers to systems of ethical codes and practices in the U.S. and to explore how this works to increase transparency in government. Judicial Watch was invited to discuss the role of non-governmental organizations in monitoring government agencies.

Mr. Farrell discussed the importance of open records and sunshine laws, such as the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), in promoting transparency in government. He illustrated their importance by providing several examples of documents obtained through FOIA and the impact they have had, both nationally and internationally. Most well known are the documents Judicial Watch sought from the [Commerce](#)

[Department](#) in early 1994, which led to the discovery that trade mission seats were being sold in exchange for campaign contributions. It further exposed the infiltration of [Chinese](#) intelligence into the higher echelons of American government. Such access was made possible by the Clinton Commerce Department's illegal scheme to raise campaign contributions.

To further illustrate the way in which sunshine laws create a check on the government, Mr. Farrell discussed the recent [court ruling](#) directing the U.S. Secret Service to turn over to Judicial Watch logs detailing White House visits by disgraced Washington, DC, lobbyist Jack Abramoff. The Visitor Logs were sought pursuant to FOIA because of the White House's ambiguity in responding to the media's questions about the President's relationship with this corrupt lobbyist. The Secret Service refused to turn over the documents, forcing Judicial Watch to file suit. Without such laws, there would be no accountability.

Mr. Farrell concluded his presentation by discussing one of the most important, but less appreciated aspects of its mission: educating the public. Judicial Watch makes available to the public on its Internet site, all information it uncovers in the process of investigation. The threat of exposure in the court of public opinion is one of the most effective weapons in holding elected officials accountable to the people.