CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS OF THE SEMINAR

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The following conclusions may be drawn from two and a half days of very constructive and fruitful exchanges of views.

Although Southeast Europe is in better shape than it has been for a decade, peace is not yet irreversible and self-sustaining. Since the end of the cruel wars of succession in the former Yugoslavia, all countries of the region have come a long way and the region is in better shape today than it has been for a decade. For the first time, all governments in Southeast Europe are firmly committed to Euro-Atlantic integration, the market economy and regional co-operation, as well as to the peaceful settlement of disputes. However, as the Croatian Assistant Minister for Defense Policy, Dr. Jelena Grčić Polić, said, "the delicate balance of peace is still fragile," because certain risks, such as ethnic and religious intolerance, illegal migration, trans-border crime and economic and political instability, still prevail. None of these issues, Professor Dr. Radovan Vukadinovic underlined, can be solved quickly. On a positive note, the countries of the region are deeply committed to security reform – as was so eloquently explained by the Seminar's Croatian hosts. There are signs of improvement all over the region – even in more complex situations, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina where, eight years after Dayton, serious attempts are being made to merge 'two and a half armies' into one single military structure, as Ambassador Robert Beecroft underlined. "The glass seems to be half-full, not half-empty," one participant concluded. But everywhere in the region, pressuring issues, such as fighting the illicit trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs), military downsizing, improving democratic control over armed forces, enhancing the security dialogue and effective border management, require immediate action. In this context, the question of how to reform the security sector has become more urgent than ever.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) can serve as a successful model of reform. The transformation challenges facing NATO largely resemble those that many European nations – members, partners and aspirants –

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are facing today. Mr. John Berry underlined how 'reform' figures as a key word for NATO, comprising such aspects as parliamentary oversight and democratic control over armed forces, openness and transparency, defense restructuring and capabilities, as well as other related themes. But which experiences can reasonably be transposed to non-members? Mr. Anthony Cragg pointed to the various levels of security reform that the Alliance is facing, both internally and externally. On the one hand, there is the internal reform process that aims, inter alia, to streamline NATO forces, to improve capabilities and to create greater mobility, flexibility and sustainability. In addition, the creation of NATO's reaction force and the further development of the existing security arrangements are now on the agenda. External reform requirements, on the other hand, refer to new tasks (such as counter-terrorism), the accession of new members and the development of relations with the European Union (EU). All in all, one may conclude that NATO is in a good position to adapt to the new challenges (in terms of defense planning, operational planning, interoperability and standardization). However, this transformation is still ongoing and we still need "to put flesh on the bones," Mr. Cragg said. It should also be noted that member states are still undergoing a learning process, as Dr. Rob van Eijbergen explained, or are still engaged in controversial internal debates over the role and capabilities of national armed forces. As long as NATO's reform is still ongoing, models cannot easily be transposed to other countries. In conclusion, mechanisms need to be adapted to each single country in order to meet the specific conditions and individual requirements already in place.

The Partnership for Peace (PfP) will remain the centre-piece of NATO's policy towards Partner countries in the future – **although** *its potential should be better used by further widening and deepening this important process.* So far, the contribution of PfP to the process of security and defense reform in Central and Southeast Europe has been, and will continue to be, extremely beneficial to partners. PfP has promoted openness and transparency and thus internal liberalization and democratic reform in the target countries, put substance into regional co-operation, increased bilateral co-operation between Partners and Allies and provided a forum for multilateral consultation through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). More importantly, through the Planning and Review Process (PARP), much of the experience of Allies in security sector reform, defense planning and budgeting, force restructuring and promoting interoperability has been passed on to partners. And, subsidization, training and operational assistance have also brought technical and economic benefits to partners. In view of these achievements, PfP will remain an indispensable platform for membership preparations even after the accession of seven countries to NATO in 2004, as well as continuing to bring aspirant countries closer to meeting membership requirements. However, one might think that there are better ways of using the potential of PfP, for instance by expanding

its scope (with more emphasis on democratic reform and combating terrorism and organized crime), designing more focussed and specially tailored programs for individual partners and lifting the constraints on PfP membership in order to open it to countries that are not members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). "It is obvious then," Mr. George Katsirdakis concluded, "that the potential of the Partnership is much more than we usually think."

Security reform appears to be a multi-dimensional process that requires a holistic approach. The reform efforts at the various levels need to be consistent with each other. First, there is the national level, where issues such as force restructuring, military downsizing and the transformation of capabilities are on the agenda. Second, bilateral assistance by NATO and its members is part of this process, mostly in the form of education and training and external advice. This form of assistance is particularly well appreciated by partners, although there appears to be a need for better co-ordination. Third, we need to think about the multilateral dimension, which affects co-operation within the framework of the EAPC, for example. Fourth, there is a regional dimension to the process, which needs to reflect the compatibility of commitments and capabilities. Every effort must be made to ensure coherence and consistency and to establish a 'mind-set' which is conducive to reform. This might also include more attention being paid in future to the wider dimensions of security sector reform, such as institution building in general. Progress in security sector reform has often been hampered by ongoing public administration problems leading to the non-implementation of commitments.

Security reform and defense planning require the involvement and support of a variety of actors, military and non-military, governmental and non-governmental. Although the defense minister and the professional military should be regarded as the key driving forces behind the reform process, transformation should not be limited to the security structures. First and foremost, the role of the political authorities is crucial when it comes to taking (sometimes unpopular) decisions and mobilizing the necessary support for a potentially lengthy and painful process. Therefore, a political leadership is needed that is firmly committed to reform and determined to drive it forward. In order to be able to pursue a coherent and unified approach, there needs to be a sense of common enterprise within the governments and administrations of reform countries and among the various departments and ministries. But public support is essential, too. In this context, the role of parliaments (political parties and individual members of parliament), the media, think tanks and security experts as well as the non-governmental organization (NGO)-sector needs to be considered. These actors also take part in the broader security debate and can thus, directly or indirectly, influence the reform process. No reform process can

be successful if it relies solely on military expertise, structures and decision-makers and neglects the important contribution made by civilian actors.

Democratic control over armed forces is a key objective of security sector reform. Civilian supervision provides instruments to "guard the guards" (Plato) and, at the same time, to prevent abuse of the military by the politicians. "In short, it is believed to be a most rational conceptual philosophy in achieving military security for a democratic country," Dr. Dragan Lozancic summarized. However, while there is no unique model for how democratic control should be exercised, it usually rests on the following pillars: a clear legal and constitutional basis, parliamentary oversight, contributions by civil and military experts and public debates on security issues, involving NGOs, research instutions and the media. Although democratic control is now recognized as a critical element in the liberal-democratic system and a legitimizing factor for the military, the democratic oversight of armed forces needs to be enhanced in many countries. Case studies of the Bulgarian and Croatian examples show that civil-military relations have considerably improved, but that they are still far from satisfactory. Civilians and the military represent two different 'cultures' and are often reluctant to communicate with each other or simply lack the necessary expertise to enter into a substantive dialogue on the subject. Sometimes, there is pressure from outside on reform countries to speed up their adaptation to the international environment without allowing them sufficient time to conduct internal debates on security issues. In general, there appears to be a lack of security expertise so that clear concepts are often lacking on the part of civilians, mainly the political parties. But NGOs are often not specialized in security, either, as Dr. Mladen Stanicic pointed out. There is insufficient dedication, qualification and expertise to ensure substantial involvement in the debate, let alone a lack of independent monitoring of government commitments and policies. Therefore, measures such as building up civilian expertise in the ministries of defense, justice and internal affairs, establishing independent audit units and ombudsmen offices, instituting civilian review boards for police forces and penal institutions and creating parliamentary committees to cover defense, policing and internal affairs, appear to be key requirements. On the other hand, the government and the military are reluctant to enhance relations with the civil sector. While openness and transparency are regarded as important aims, the legitimate interest of the state with regard to confidentiality may be a limiting factor. This is even more acute with regard to the media, which is a crucial factor in mobilizing public support for defense reform. With regard to this issue, one should not, however, be over-ambitious. As Colonel Ulrich Twrsnick and Mr. Craig Ratcliff pointed out, despite a sophisticated Public Information strategy, even the Alliance sometimes fails to get its messages across. In conclusion, substantial public debate on security matters should be encouraged, not least to make sure that you 'take the public with you' on security sector reform issues.

Enhancing professionalism is at the core of any defense and security reform. In the words of one participant, such professionalism calls for openness and flexibility (with regard to former assumptions that may be wrong), the courage to promote alternative solutions and a commitment to ensure implementation. Again, achieving professionalism entails a variety of building blocks. First, defining the aims and tasks of armed forces by making a risk assessment and an evaluation of the possible contribution that the armed forces can make to combating these risks (as compared to civilian components, the police and other structures). Second, providing the appropriate military capabilities to fulfil these tasks. In this context, combat functions, training and infrastructure should be regarded as the component parts of one coherent package of capabilities. Third, making a realistic cost evaluation – every defense program needs to be affordable and priorities need to be set in light of limited resources. Fourth, ensuring a firm commitment by the political and military leadership to implement decisions. The core of effective defense planning and reform lies in the optimum use of and close co-operation between civilian and military expertise.

With regard to the new security challenges, defense restructuring should aim at higher quality instead of large force design. From a regional point of view, nationally balanced force structures aimed at defending one's home territory are still viewed as being indispensable. Conversely, there is some reluctance towards restructuring that relies on 'niche capabilities' (such as expeditionary capabilities and peacekeeping forces). However, as Professor Dr. Bent-Erik Bakken explained, in view of restricted and often shrinking budgets, defense restructuring always implies a trade-off between quality and size: the bigger the force size, the poorer the equipment and manning quality. At the same time, the new overseas security environment would seem to prioritize expeditionary high-intensity operations that require quality instead of a large force design for defensive purposes. Against this background, NATO is striving for high readiness and interoperable and deployable forces that can be used out of area. Nevertheless, in view of limited budgets and changing international requirements, high quality will, sooner or later, win over size. At the same time, new security threats (including, for example, natural disasters, terrorism and organized crime) point to the need for defense capabilities to become more and more 'civilianized.' Now that nearly everything can be used as a weapon, capabilities need to be adapted accordingly.

The unprecedented efforts to adapt the security sector to the new environment imply a growing need for more tailored expertise and thus new training methods. As Mr. Pierre Conesa underlined, the military and defense elite needs to develop new qualifications (such as intervening in regional crises, preparing for non-military threats and other complex situations, including terrorist attacks). In addition to military expertise, more and more civil

competencies are needed and more synergy should be created between civil and military experts. In order to deal effectively with the new threats, as well as to ensure improved communication between the military, politicians and the public, more attention needs to be paid to the education of civilian defense experts, as Dr. Ljubica Jelusic explained. One might, therefore, think of innovation in the field of education and training. For instance, more training should be provided with regard to specific functions, such as coordination, public information, medium-level force planners and civilian expertise to oversee armed forces. In addition, more synergy should be created between training facilities and colleges and, in particular, joint courses that bring together civilian and military experts. Last but not least, additional efforts should be directed towards ensuring the implementation of security sector reforms and strengthening the ability of the local civil society to monitor such reforms.

       There is a clear need for more ownership in regional co-operation. Defense reform needs to take into account the regional context of security conditions. A large number of security issues are regional, not national, in nature and should be addressed on a co-operative basis. Task sharing promises greater efficiency and effectiveness of security forces within a given regional environment. Thus it brings concrete benefits to participating states. Also, regional co-operation is an indispensable component of and a precondition for Euro-Atlantic integration; it is a founding principle of the Alliance itself. But whilst the necessity of regional co-operation in general is widely recognized, the Southeast European nations are still reluctant to put such co-operation into practice, in particular when it comes to security and defense matters. Co-operation is viewed as a burden on budgets, time and the capacity of the participating states and there is little interest or enthusiasm on the part of the general public. Consequently, most co-operation takes place within the existing multilateral co-operative frameworks, such as the Stability Pact, the Southeastern Defense Ministerial (SEDM), the South-East European Co-operation Process (SEECP) and the Southeast Europe Initiative (SEEI). There are few indigenous initiatives at the lower or middle level or on a bilateral basis. Therefore, the countries in the region should strive towards developing a sense of ownership of the process. One concrete suggestion for putting such ownership into practice could be the creation of a network of experts and think tanks in the region. Such a network would carry on the professional debate on security reform and promote practical co-operation in security matters.

       In conclusion, security and defense reform in Central and Southeast Europe represents an all-encompassing and dynamic process involving a broad range of actors and dimensions. At this stage, there is every reason to believe that this process will be successful in the future.