

Members of the Ministry of Defence and SCG Army on Reform

12. march 2005. - Milorad Timotić

Milorad Timotić, MA

Occasional paper No.9

During the 20 seminars on the security sector reform, organized in June 2004 in agreement and cooperation with the Ministry of Defence of SCG and the SMAF General Staff, the Centre for Civil-Military Relations applied the short questionnaire, aimed at learning what members of the Ministry of Defence and Army think about current problems in reforming the Army. There were about 440 members of the Army and MoD that participated in the seminars, and 414 participants filled out the questionnaire. Therefore, the sample of respondents consisted of 414 participants of the seminars – professional members of the SMAF and MoD. The basic parameters of the sample were; male 100%; with a university education 87.9%, with a junior college education 3.4%, with a secondary school education 8.7%; age groups from 20-30 years old 15.7%, 31-40 years old 31.6%, 40-50 years old 44.2% and over 50 years old 8.5%. Although the participants in the seminars are not representative of a randomly chosen sample of members of the Army and Ministry, considering the high number of respondents, the obtained results are a rather reliable indicator of the attitude of members of the Serbian and Montenegrin Army towards current issues on reform and its further development.

Herein, we will show the research results of the opinions and views of professional members of the SCG Army in regard to: perceptions of security threats, needs and directions of future reform of the military and defence, certain aspects of the situation in the army and opinion on the Army's participation in peacekeeping missions, as well as their attitudes towards the European Union and the Partnership for Peace.

1. Security Threats

According to professional members of the SCG Army, the security of our country is most threatened by: potential conflicts within multi-ethnic communities (73.4%), organized crime (32.1%) and economic and social conflicts and tension (29.6%) (Table 1).

Table 1

In your opinion, what most threatens the security of our country?	Total	Age				Education	
		20-30	30-40	40-50	50>	Secondary and Junior college	University
1. Possible new wars	10.9	08	09	13	14	12	11
2. Conflicts within multi-ethnic communities	73.4	82	69	74	71	84	72
3. Disintegration of the State Union of Serbia and	11.9	08	12	14	09	12	12

Montenegro							
4. Another armed aggression of NATO and/or USA	03.2	05	03	03		8	03
5. Economic and social conflicts, tensions	29.6	25	25	32	40	24	30
6. Violently ousting the democratic government	01.7	02		03	03		02
7. Local and regional terrorism	17.4	11	23	16	14	2	20
8. Organized crime	32.1	35	38	27	31	35	32
9. Cannot make an assessment	0.7		01	01			01

As for perceptions of potential public security threats, the Army and MoD fully agree with the general public in Serbia and Montenegro – the order of assessment of threats is the same, and the percents are also very close.¹ Also, it is worth mentioning that recent assessment of the worsening political-security situation in southern Serbia shows that public concern of possible conflicts within multi-ethnic communities is not unfounded. This can be confirmed by some incidents in Vojvodina, based on nationalistic motives, although they do not make a serious security threat at the moment.

2. Opinions on the Need for Military Reform

In response to the question of *whether reform of the Army should be carried out*, almost two-thirds of the respondents considered that reform of the Army should be urgently carried out. The option that at the moment there are more important matters to be dealt with was chosen by 34.4%. Since only 1.2% agree with the view that there is no need for reform, it can be deduced that there is distinct verbal support of members of the Army in carrying out reform, and more than likely, it also expresses the willingness to practically support reform.

Another important fact is that there are no greater differences in regard to the level of education of the respondents. The fact that the youngest officers and non commissioned officers are most willing to accept reform is also of value. On the other hand, the view that there are more important matters at the moment to be dealt with is most common amongst those over 50 years of age (46%). It is interesting that almost twice as many respondents in the Army than in the sample in Serbia (63.1%:33.2%) consider that reform should be urgently carried out². On the basis of this, can it be concluded that this hesitation and indolence in carrying out reform of the defence sector, including the Army, also bothers members of the Army?

The question of the state budget allocation was aimed to acquire indirectly the picture of the priorities of social development and the position of military and defence according to professional soldiers and employees of the MoD (Table 2). Since the respondents were given the possibility of choosing two answers, the total percent in the columns is more than a hundred percent.

Table 2

If you were given the opportunity to manage the	Total	Age			Education	
		20-30-30	40-50	50>	Secondary and	University

state budget, what would be your priority for spending the funds?						Junior college	
1. Advancement of the school system and sciences	32.6	31	31	33	40	32	33
2. Advancement of health care	12.7	11	12	14	11	12	13
3. Advancement of the Army and country's defence	41.5	41	49	38	34	46	41
4. Development of transportation and roads	09.5	06	09	10	14	04	10
5. Advancement of culture and sport	02.5	02	05	02		04	02
6. Industrial development	49.3	59	44	48	54	54	49
7. Agricultural development	37.8	39	36	39	34	28	39

The results obtained are to a certain extent expected. Advancement of the military and defence took a very high second place on the list of priorities and 41.5% of the respondents chose it as a priority. On the other hand, an important fact is that professional members of the Army very realistically perceive the present situation in the country and they have put industrial development (49.3%) before the development of their professional field. Agricultural development took a significant place on the list of priorities with 37.8% of the respondents choosing it as a priority, followed by, advancement of the school system and sciences (32.6%). There are no noticeable differences according to demographic variables only that younger members of the Army (49%) understandably prefer that there is more funding for defence.

If the military and defence is left out, as for the remaining priorities, there is a great deal of agreement with the general sample of the Serbian and Montenegrin citizens. It is interesting that 45.2% of the respondents in Serbia would allot funds for the advancement of health care, while in the Army the corresponding percent is 12.7%³. This difference is most likely a result of better organization of medical services in the Army in comparison to the civilian health care, therefore members of the Army do not feel the urgency of this problem. This, of course, does not mean that there are not serious problems in military health care that deserve the attention of the Ministry of Defence and SCG Assembly.

3. Situation in the Army

In the following question, the views of members of the Army on the situation in the Army were investigated, its qualification in carrying out tasks, state of arms and equipment, living standard, readiness for reform and influence of secret services on political events.

The overwhelming majority of people polled (82%) consider that members of the Army are very qualified in carrying out their tasks. Socio-demographic variables do not create great differences amongst respondents. Senior officers, at the brigade command level, give the most favourable assessment of the level of training, with the greatest percent (86%) either mainly agreeing or fully agreeing with the assertion. This is

understandable because they are directly in charge of staff training so on this way, they assessed their own work and results.

On the other hand, the overwhelming majority (83%) also considers that the military is neither well armed nor well equipped. It is interesting that not even one respondent answered that they fully agreed with this assertion! The percent of those who do not agree with this assertion that the Army is well-armed in the general sample of SCG citizens is somewhat less (Serbia 51.2%, Montenegro 42.7%), because a significant number of respondents, especially females, think that they are not competent enough to make an assessment.[4](#)

The majority of respondents (71,9%) consider the living conditions of the soldiers dissatisfactory. There is a significant difference in accepting this view in relation to the level of education – highly educated respondents more readily accept this view than those with a secondary or junior college education (74% : 59%). In this way, perceptions of living conditions of the soldiers in the SMAF are similar to the assessment of the general sample of Serbian and Montenegrin citizens.[5](#)

Professional members of the Army are almost unanimous in their assessment that the living standard of military officers is dissatisfactory (96%). Almost all of the younger (23-30 years old) and oldest (over 50 years old) respondents fully agree or just agree with this point of view. Considering the high level of agreement, socio-demographic variables do not create significant differences between the respondents. Respondents in the sample of the SCG citizens have a similar point of view, only in a lower percent.[6](#) Therefore, within the society, there is agreement that military officers are not rewarded adequately in accord with the difficulty of their profession and responsibility they carry in defending the country.

Most of the participants in the seminar consider that the majority of officers favour urgent military reform (72.3%). There are more highly educated respondents who support this view than those with secondary or junior college diplomas (74% : 62%). In the age category, supporters of this assertion are the fewest amongst the group over 50 years of age, which follows the opinion of most of them that military reform is not an urgent priority.

The results shown indicate the high level of agreement of participants in the seminar regarding the assessment of some aspects of the situation in the SCG Army, and in some aspects, there is a very high level of agreement with the assessment made by the SCG public. To a certain extent, some results can serve as a parameter for the further orientation of the Army.

4. Directions of Military Reform

As the security situation in the region and in Europe dramatically changed after the fall of the Berlin wall, a need for a new, radical restructuring, organization and equipping of the armies in Europe emerged. The purpose of the following question was to investigate public views on possible directions of this development. Most respondents (75%) consider that the Army should be reduced and modernized. Most supporters of this view are in the category of 40 –50 years of age (78%) while fewer are in the category from 20 to 30 years old (68%). It is interesting that there is a higher percent amongst members of the Army that think the Army should be reduced and modernized (75%) than in the sample of the total population in Serbia (44.4%)[7](#).

The option of forming separate armies of Serbia and Montenegro was chosen by 14%, which is a somewhat higher percent than in the population samples of Serbia and Montenegro.[8](#) It is interesting that this option is

more often chosen by respondents between 20 and 30 years old (20%) and over 50 years old (23%). The rest of the options drew less than 10% polled.

In regard to this question, differences arise between participants of the seminar, professional officers and employees of the MoD and general population. In the sample of Serbia, for example, in the fourth round of research of public opinion, 34.9% of the respondents were in favour of keeping the present numerical state of the army, which is undoubtedly a reflection of the highly respected reputation of the SMAF amongst the population, and of course, insufficient knowledge on the essence of political-strategic changes in the world that have arisen in the last two decades.

The coming, unavoidable reform of the Army will undoubtedly create a surplus of military professionals, especially civilians who have to the present been in the service of the army. This topic is unavoidable for senior military staff at all levels. Considering that this refers to issues of existence of active members of the SMAF, it was important to learn what their opinion is on the best way to solve the social status of those who would be laid off from the Army. (Table 3) The results obtained are very interesting and represent a quite reliable picture of the public attitude towards the SMAF according to the options for resolving negative consequences of the future reform.

A little more than one third of the polled members of the Army and MoD consider that the best solution to the surplus staff is "administrative retirement". As expected, most supporters of this solution are in the category of 40-50 years of age (44%), and the least are in the category of 20-30 years old (23%). On the other hand, respondents of 20-30 years mostly support the offered solution of getting new professional qualification and gaining credits for private business (44%), while this answer was chosen by the average of 29% of respondents in total. The choice of young members of the army for new qualification and credits for private business is positive from the point of view of solving problems of potential staff surplus. However, the question is whether there will be surpluses in this category at all, or will they be mostly found among the members of older groups. One should keep in mind the so-called pyramid structures of professional members of the army have not been favourable for years.

Table 3

In your opinion, how should the status of surplus officers and non commissioned officers of the SMAF be resolved that will ensue upon reform of the Army?	Total	Age					Education	
		20-30	30-40	40-50	50>	Secondary and Junior college	University	
1. Administrative retirement	36.0	23	33	44	29	36	36	
2. Payment of service for those who meet the conditions	15.6	06	17	17	18	8	17	
3. Severance pay of 200 Euros per year of service	3.7	06	06	01	03	4	4	
4. Paid and organized training for new qualification	08.2	11	07	07	12	10	8	
5. Training and credit grant for private business	29.0	44	28	25	26	30	29	
6. Cannot decide	7.4	9	8	6	12	12	7	

Ranked third on the list is the option of payment of service for those who meet the conditions (15.6%), and acceptance increases symmetrically with age and 18% over 50 years of age agreed with this. The remaining options attracted less than ten percent and it is interesting that severance pay of 200 Euros for a year of service was only accepted by a very small percent of respondents (3.7%). This possibility was not attractive even for the oldest respondents – only 3% would accept this.

5. Opinion on Participation of SMAF in Peacekeeping Missions

More than half the respondents (58.2%) consider that the SMAF should be included in international peacekeeping missions. Acceptance of this view increases regularly with age and it is most distinct amongst the oldest respondents (older than 50 years – 69%), and least distinct amongst the youngest respondents (20-30 years old – 38%). One fourth of the respondents consider that the SMAF should not be involved in peacekeeping missions, and in accord with the previous results, most supporters of this view are from the category of respondents from 20 to 30 years of age (38%). Quite a high percent (16.3%) remain undecided on peacekeeping missions.

Results obtained on this question were quite surprising. It would be more logical to expect that there would be a higher percent of young senior staff interested in participation in peacekeeping missions, which implies travelling around the world, studying, and improving their knowledge of foreign languages and contact with young people from many foreign countries. This is always attractive for younger people, not to mention the possibility of better earnings and improving the financial status and living standard of their families. It would be realistic to assume that this is a consequence of the insufficient and inadequate knowledge of young officers on conditions in peacekeeping missions.

In response to the question of which international missions should our army be included in, 76.4% consider that these missions should be under the auspices and flag of the United Nations. Even if there is a high level of agreement, this possibility is more frequently accepted by highly educated respondents than those with secondary or junior college education (78% : 63%), and acceptance of this view increases with age and is most distinct in the category of 40-50 years old (84%). In the category of institutions, most supporters of this view were amongst members of the MoD and General Staff (90%). The remaining options attracted very few respondents. It is indicative that 14.1% of the respondents were not able to choose what type of mission to send our forces in. Amongst the youngest, this number exceeded one fourth of the respondents which again indicates that they are insufficiently informed, and in a certain sense, lack interest in international peacekeeping missions.

When referring to competence in making decisions on participating in peacekeeping missions, more than half polled (59.3%) consider that the SCG Assembly should decide on this. There is indeed a significant difference amongst respondents, relating to all socio-demographic variables, which again indicates that younger respondents are not sufficiently informed. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that not even in media were there clear interpretations of the competence of state institutions in regard to making decisions on the Army's participation in peacekeeping missions. Only recently was it clearly stated that such decisions would lie within the competence of the SCG Assembly.

The percent of those who think that the SCG Assembly should decide on the participation of the Army in peacekeeping missions increases symmetrically with age and is largest in the category over 50 years of age (80%), while the fewest are in the category from 20 to 30 years of age (35%). Highly educated (61%) more

often than secondary/junior college graduates (48%) recognize that this competence lies within the SCG Assembly. One fourth of those polled consider that this should be decided by the assemblies of both member states, which is an interesting fact, because it only indicates that not even all members of the Army know (or do not want to know) that the Army and defence lie within the competence of authoritative bodies of the State Union and not the Republics.

6. Security Integrations

In response to the question *what would most contribute to the security of our country* nearly half the respondents consider that we should turn towards the West and become a member of the European Union. Highly educated respondents more often accept this option than it is amongst respondents with a secondary or junior college education (51% : 37%). Next on the list is the option of joining the Partnership for Peace, which is accepted by a little over one fourth of the respondents, more frequently those with secondary or junior college education than highly educated (37% : 25%). The remaining options attracted less than 10% of the respondents.

If the percent of those who choose *turning towards the West* is added to those who opted for *becoming a member of the Partnership for Peace*, which would methodologically be justifiable, you will get 75.6% of the respondents that support security integration of SCG in western defence integrations. It is indicative that a small percent of respondents (4.8%) that support the option of *relying on one's own forces*, which would mean that ideas of self sufficient national defence, within the policy of nonalignment, are already completely forgotten amongst the present composition of military officers. There is no doubt, on the basis of experience of former eastern European socialist countries that have become members of NATO, that also in the SCG Army, belief prevails that the existing western military alliances extend a more stable defence umbrella.

This is confirmed by the fact that 62.7% of the people polled consider that joining the PfP would be more beneficial than harmful. Socio-demographic variables do not create any significant differences amongst the respondents.

More than half the respondents (57.3%) consider that membership into the PfP would considerably increase military expenditure. Agreement with this assertion increases symmetrically with age and is the highest in the category over 50 years of age (65%), and is the least in the category of 20 to 30 years of age (46%). These responses are interesting and once again indicate that active members of the Army are uninformed of the price of joining the Partnership for Peace, being that it does not require special equipping of units nor rearming. Important issues are sufficient language proficiency and corresponding frequency for means of communication so that the activities can be properly coordinated.

One third of the respondents consider that membership into the PfP would increase dependence on the West and threaten our national interests. An interesting fact is that this view was disregarded more frequently by the oldest respondents (52%), and considerably less by the youngest (39%), which again brings up the question of how well informed they are.

The majority of respondents (69%) consider that membership into the PfP would guarantee long lasting peace in the country and neighbouring countries. A favourable fact is that more than two thirds of the members of the Army and Defence Ministry note and accept the fact that accession of SCG to the PfP would contribute to strengthening regional stability and improve defence cooperation with neighbouring countries. However, if you keep in mind that 18.4% disagree with this opinion, almost one third of the respondents do not hold a positive opinion on the implications of SCG's accession to the PfP. Once again the question is

posed, if the reason for this is that they are not sufficiently informed or is it a negative attitude towards the PfP. Maybe this question deserves the additional research and then certain activities, according to the findings.

On the whole, the opinion of members of the Ministry of Defence and SCG Army on many issues on assessing the situation in the Army and its reform is in agreement with the opinion and assessment of the general sample of the SCG citizens. A fact that deserves attention is that members of the Army, as well as the majority of citizens, consider that the path of improving and strengthening the security of the country should be sought in joining western defence integrations. This indicates a significant change in mentality of members of the SCG Army in comparison to the former Yugoslav People's Army, where the majority of members considered non-aligned policies and the concept of self-sufficient national defence to be the optimal defence solution.

1 See: *The Serbian and Montenegrin Public on Military Reform – IV round*, CCMR, Belgrade, July 2004, p. 63

2 Same, p. 74

3 Same, p.75

4 See: "*Serbian and Montenegrin Public on military Reform – III round*" CCMR, Belgrade, April 2004, p.50

5 Same, p.52

6 Same, p.78

7 See, p. 78

8 See in more detail, *Serbian and Montenegrin Public on Military Reform*

- **Members of the Ministry of Defence and SCG Army on Reform**

12. march 2005. - Milorad Timotić

Milorad Timotić, MA

Occasional paper No.9

During the 20 seminars on the security sector reform, organized in June 2004 in agreement and cooperation with the Ministry of Defence of SCG and the SMAF General Staff, the Centre for Civil-Military Relations applied the short questionnaire, aimed at learning what members of the Ministry of Defence and Army think about current problems in reforming the Army. There were about 440 members of the Army and MoD that participated in the seminars, and 414 participants filled out the questionnaire. Therefore, the sample of respondents consisted of 414 participants of the seminars – professional members of the SMAF and MoD. The basic parameters of the sample were; male 100%; with a university education 87.9%, with a junior college education 3.4%, with a secondary school education 8.7%; age groups from 20-30 years old 15.7%,

31-40 years old 31.6%, 40-50 years old 44.2% and over 50 years old 8.5%. Although the participants in the seminars are not representative of a randomly chosen sample of members of the Army and Ministry, considering the high number of respondents, the obtained results are a rather reliable indicator of the attitude of members of the Serbian and Montenegrin Army towards current issues on reform and its further development.

Herein, we will show the research results of the opinions and views of professional members of the SCG Army in regard to: perceptions of security threats, needs and directions of future reform of the military and defence, certain aspects of the situation in the army and opinion on the Army's participation in peacekeeping missions, as well as their attitudes towards the European Union and the Partnership for Peace.

1. Security Threats

According to professional members of the SCG Army, the security of our country is most threatened by: potential conflicts within multi-ethnic communities (73.4%), organized crime (32.1%) and economic and social conflicts and tension (29.6%) (Table 1).

Table 1

In your opinion, what most threatens the security of our country?	Total	Age					Education	
		20-30	30-40	40-50	50>	Secondary and Junior college	University	
1. Possible new wars	10.9	08	09	13	14	12	11	
2. Conflicts within multi-ethnic communities	73.4	82	69	74	71	84	72	
3. Disintegration of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro	11.9	08	12	14	09	12	12	
4. Another armed aggression of NATO and/or USA	03.2	05	03	03		8	03	
5. Economic and social conflicts, tensions	29.6	25	25	32	40	24	30	
6. Violently ousting the democratic government	01.7	02		03	03		02	
7. Local and regional terrorism	17.4	11	23	16	14	2	20	
8. Organized crime	32.1	35	38	27	31	35	32	
9. Cannot make an assessment	0.7		01	01			01	

As for perceptions of potential public security threats, the Army and MoD fully agree with the general public in Serbia and Montenegro – the order of assessment of threats is the same, and the percents are also very close.¹ Also, it is worth mentioning that recent assessment of the worsening political-security situation in southern Serbia shows that public concern of possible conflicts within multi-ethnic communities is not

unfounded. This can be confirmed by some incidents in Vojvodina, based on nationalistic motives, although they do not make a serious security threat at the moment.

2. Opinions on the Need for Military Reform

In response to the question of *whether reform of the Army should be carried out*, almost two-thirds of the respondents considered that reform of the Army should be urgently carried out. The option that at the moment there are more important matters to be dealt with was chosen by 34.4%. Since only 1.2% agree with the view that there is no need for reform, it can be deduced that there is distinct verbal support of members of the Army in carrying out reform, and more than likely, it also expresses the willingness to practically support reform.

Another important fact is that there are no greater differences in regard to the level of education of the respondents. The fact that the youngest officers and non commissioned officers are most willing to accept reform is also of value. On the other hand, the view that there are more important matters at the moment to be dealt with is most common amongst those over 50 years of age (46%). It is interesting that almost twice as many respondents in the Army than in the sample in Serbia (63.1%:33.2%) consider that reform should be urgently carried out². On the basis of this, can it be concluded that this hesitation and indolence in carrying out reform of the defence sector, including the Army, also bothers members of the Army?

The question of the state budget allocation was aimed to acquire indirectly the picture of the priorities of social development and the position of military and defence according to professional soldiers and employees of the MoD (Table 2). Since the respondents were given the possibility of choosing two answers, the total percent in the columns is more than a hundred percent.

Table 2

If you were given the opportunity to manage the state budget, what would be your priority for spending the funds?	Total	Age			Education		
		20-30	30-40	40-50	50>	Secondary and Junior college	University
1. Advancement of the school system and sciences	32.6	31	31	33	40	32	33
2. Advancement of health care	12.7	11	12	14	11	12	13
3. Advancement of the Army and country's defence	41.5	41	49	38	34	46	41
4. Development of transportation and roads	09.5	06	09	10	14	04	10
5. Advancement of culture and sport	02.5	02	05	02		04	02
6. Industrial development	49.3	59	44	48	54	54	49
7. Agricultural development	37.8	39	36	39	34	28	39

The results obtained are to a certain extent expected. Advancement of the military and defence took a very high second place on the list of priorities and 41.5% of the respondents chose it as a priority. On the other hand, an important fact is that professional members of the Army very realistically perceive the present situation in the country and they have put industrial development (49.3%) before the development of their professional field. Agricultural development took a significant place on the list of priorities with 37.8% of the respondents choosing it as a priority, followed by, advancement of the school system and sciences (32.6%). There are no noticeable differences according to demographic variables only that younger members of the Army (49%) understandably prefer that there is more funding for defence.

If the military and defence is left out, as for the remaining priorities, there is a great deal of agreement with the general sample of the Serbian and Montenegrin citizens. It is interesting that 45.2% of the respondents in Serbia would allot funds for the advancement of health care, while in the Army the corresponding percent is 12.7%³. This difference is most likely a result of better organization of medical services in the Army in comparison to the civilian health care, therefore members of the Army do not feel the urgency of this problem. This, of course, does not mean that there are not serious problems in military health care that deserve the attention of the Ministry of Defence and SCG Assembly.

3. Situation in the Army

In the following question, the views of members of the Army on the situation in the Army were investigated, its qualification in carrying out tasks, state of arms and equipment, living standard, readiness for reform and influence of secret services on political events.

The overwhelming majority of people polled (82%) consider that members of the Army are very qualified in carrying out their tasks. Socio-demographic variables do not create great differences amongst respondents. Senior officers, at the brigade command level, give the most favourable assessment of the level of training, with the greatest percent (86%) either mainly agreeing or fully agreeing with the assertion. This is understandable because they are directly in charge of staff training so on this way, they assessed their own work and results.

On the other hand, the overwhelming majority (83%) also considers that the military is neither well armed nor well equipped. It is interesting that not even one respondent answered that they fully agreed with this assertion! The percent of those who do not agree with this assertion that the Army is well-armed in the general sample of SCG citizens is somewhat less (Serbia 51.2%, Montenegro 42.7%), because a significant number of respondents, especially females, think that they are not competent enough to make an assessment.⁴

The majority of respondents (71,9%) consider the living conditions of the soldiers dissatisfactory. There is a significant difference in accepting this view in relation to the level of education – highly educated respondents more readily accept this view than those with a secondary or junior college education (74% : 59%). In this way, perceptions of living conditions of the soldiers in the SMAF are similar to the assessment of the general sample of Serbian and Montenegrin citizens.⁵

Professional members of the Army are almost unanimous in their assessment that the living standard of military officers is dissatisfactory (96%). Almost all of the younger (23-30 years old) and oldest (over 50

years old) respondents fully agree or just agree with this point of view. Considering the high level of agreement, socio-demographic variables do not create significant differences between the respondents. Respondents in the sample of the SCG citizens have a similar point of view, only in a lower percent.⁶ Therefore, within the society, there is agreement that military officers are not rewarded adequately in accord with the difficulty of their profession and responsibility they carry in defending the country.

Most of the participants in the seminar consider that the majority of officers favour urgent military reform (72.3%). There are more highly educated respondents who support this view than those with secondary or junior college diplomas (74% : 62%). In the age category, supporters of this assertion are the fewest amongst the group over 50 years of age, which follows the opinion of most of them that military reform is not an urgent priority.

The results shown indicate the high level of agreement of participants in the seminar regarding the assessment of some aspects of the situation in the SCG Army, and in some aspects, there is a very high level of agreement with the assessment made by the SCG public. To a certain extent, some results can serve as a parameter for the further orientation of the Army.

4. Directions of Military Reform

As the security situation in the region and in Europe dramatically changed after the fall of the Berlin wall, a need for a new, radical restructuring, organization and equipping of the armies in Europe emerged. The purpose of the following question was to investigate public views on possible directions of this development. Most respondents (75%) consider that the Army should be reduced and modernized. Most supporters of this view are in the category of 40 –50 years of age (78%) while fewer are in the category from 20 to 30 years old (68%). It is interesting that there is a higher percent amongst members of the Army that think the Army should be reduced and modernized (75%) than in the sample of the total population in Serbia (44.4%)⁷.

The option of forming separate armies of Serbia and Montenegro was chosen by 14%, which is a somewhat higher percent than in the population samples of Serbia and Montenegro.⁸ It is interesting that this option is more often chosen by respondents between 20 and 30 years old (20%) and over 50 years old (23%). The rest of the options drew less than 10% polled.

In regard to this question, differences arise between participants of the seminar, professional officers and employees of the MoD and general population. In the sample of Serbia, for example, in the fourth round of research of public opinion, 34.9% of the respondents were in favour of keeping the present numerical state of the army, which is undoubtedly a reflection of the highly respected reputation of the SMAF amongst the population, and of course, insufficient knowledge on the essence of political-strategic changes in the world that have arisen in the last two decades.

The coming, unavoidable reform of the Army will undoubtedly create a surplus of military professionals, especially civilians who have to the present been in the service of the army. This topic is unavoidable for senior military staff at all levels. Considering that this refers to issues of existence of active members of the SMAF, it was important to learn what their opinion is on the best way to solve the social status of those who would be laid off from the Army. (Table 3) The results obtained are very interesting and represent a quite reliable picture of the public attitude towards the SMAF according to the options for resolving negative consequences of the future reform.

A little more than one third of the polled members of the Army and MoD consider that the best solution to the surplus staff is "administrative retirement". As expected, most supporters of this solution are in the category of 40-50 years of age (44%), and the least are in the category of 20-30 years old (23%). On the other hand, respondents of 20-30 years mostly support the offered solution of getting new professional qualification and gaining credits for private business (44%), while this answer was chosen by the average of 29% of respondents in total. The choice of young members of the army for new qualification and credits for private business is positive from the point of view of solving problems of potential staff surplus. However, the question is whether there will be surpluses in this category at all, or will they be mostly found among the members of older groups. One should keep in mind the so-called pyramid structures of professional members of the army have not been favourable for years.

Table 3

In your opinion, how should the status of surplus officers and non commissioned officers of the SMAF be resolved that will ensue upon reform of the Army?	Total	Age					Education	
		20-30	30-40	40-50	50>	Secondary and Junior college	University	
1. Administrative retirement	36.0	23	33	44	29	36	36	
2. Payment of service for those who meet the conditions	15.6	06	17	17	18	8	17	
3. Severance pay of 200 Euros per year of service	3.7	06	06	01	03	4	4	
4. Paid and organized training for new qualification	08.2	11	07	07	12	10	8	
5. Training and credit grant for private business	29.0	44	28	25	26	30	29	
6. Cannot decide	7.4	9	8	6	12	12	7	

Ranked third on the list is the option of payment of service for those who meet the conditions (15.6%), and acceptance increases symmetrically with age and 18% over 50 years of age agreed with this. The remaining options attracted less than ten percent and it is interesting that severance pay of 200 Euros for a year of service was only accepted by a very small percent of respondents (3.7%). This possibility was not attractive even for the oldest respondents – only 3% would accept this.

5. Opinion on Participation of SMAF in Peacekeeping Missions

More than half the respondents (58.2%) consider that the SMAF should be included in international peacekeeping missions. Acceptance of this view increases regularly with age and it is most distinct amongst the oldest respondents (older than 50 years – 69%), and least distinct amongst the youngest respondents (20-30 years old – 38%). One fourth of the respondents consider that the SMAF should not be involved in peacekeeping missions, and in accord with the previous results, most supporters of this view are from the

category of respondents from 20 to 30 years of age (38%). Quite a high percent (16.3%) remain undecided on peacekeeping missions.

Results obtained on this question were quite surprising. It would be more logical to expect that there would be a higher percent of young senior staff interested in participation in peacekeeping missions, which implies travelling around the world, studying, and improving their knowledge of foreign languages and contact with young people from many foreign countries. This is always attractive for younger people, not to mention the possibility of better earnings and improving the financial status and living standard of their families. It would be realistic to assume that this is a consequence of the insufficient and inadequate knowledge of young officers on conditions in peacekeeping missions.

In response to the question of which international missions should our army be included in, 76.4% consider that these missions should be under the auspices and flag of the United Nations. Even if there is a high level of agreement, this possibility is more frequently accepted by highly educated respondents than those with secondary or junior college education (78% : 63%), and acceptance of this view increases with age and is most distinct in the category of 40-50 years old (84%). In the category of institutions, most supporters of this view were amongst members of the MoD and General Staff (90%). The remaining options attracted very few respondents. It is indicative that 14.1% of the respondents were not able to choose what type of mission to send our forces in. Amongst the youngest, this number exceeded one fourth of the respondents which again indicates that they are insufficiently informed, and in a certain sense, lack interest in international peacekeeping missions.

When referring to competence in making decisions on participating in peacekeeping missions, more than half polled (59.3%) consider that the SCG Assembly should decide on this. There is indeed a significant difference amongst respondents, relating to all socio-demographic variables, which again indicates that younger respondents are not sufficiently informed. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that not even in media were there clear interpretations of the competence of state institutions in regard to making decisions on the Army's participation in peacekeeping missions. Only recently was it clearly stated that such decisions would lie within the competence of the SCG Assembly.

The percent of those who think that the SCG Assembly should decide on the participation of the Army in peacekeeping missions increases symmetrically with age and is largest in the category over 50 years of age (80%), while the fewest are in the category from 20 to 30 years of age (35%). Highly educated (61%) more often than secondary/junior college graduates (48%) recognize that this competence lies within the SCG Assembly. One fourth of those polled consider that this should be decided by the assemblies of both member states, which is an interesting fact, because it only indicates that not even all members of the Army know (or do not want to know) that the Army and defence lie within the competence of authoritative bodies of the State Union and not the Republics.

6. Security Integrations

In response to the question *what would most contribute to the security of our country* nearly half the respondents consider that we should turn towards the West and become a member of the European Union. Highly educated respondents more often accept this option than it is amongst respondents with a secondary or junior college education (51% : 37%). Next on the list is the option of joining the Partnership for Peace, which is accepted by a little over one fourth of the respondents, more frequently those with secondary or junior college education than highly educated (37% : 25%). The remaining options attracted less than 10% of the respondents.

If the percent of those who choose *turning towards the West* is added to those who opted for *becoming a member of the Partnership for Peace*, which would methodologically be justifiable, you will get 75.6% of the respondents that support security integration of SCG in western defence integrations. It is indicative that a small percent of respondents (4.8%) that support the option of *relying on one's own forces*, which would mean that ideas of self sufficient national defence, within the policy of nonalignment, are already completely forgotten amongst the present composition of military officers. There is no doubt, on the basis of experience of former eastern European socialist countries that have become members of NATO, that also in the SCG Army, belief prevails that the existing western military alliances extend a more stable defence umbrella.

This is confirmed by the fact that 62.7% of the people polled consider that joining the PfP would be more beneficial than harmful. Socio-demographic variables do not create any significant differences amongst the respondents.

More than half the respondents (57.3%) consider that membership into the PfP would considerably increase military expenditure. Agreement with this assertion increases symmetrically with age and is the highest in the category over 50 years of age (65%), and is the least in the category of 20 to 30 years of age (46%). These responses are interesting and once again indicate that active members of the Army are uninformed of the price of joining the Partnership for Peace, being that it does not require special equipping of units nor rearming. Important issues are sufficient language proficiency and corresponding frequency for means of communication so that the activities can be properly coordinated.

One third of the respondents consider that membership into the PfP would increase dependence on the West and threaten our national interests. An interesting fact is that this view was disregarded more frequently by the oldest respondents (52%), and considerably less by the youngest (39%), which again brings up the question of how well informed they are.

The majority of respondents (69%) consider that membership into the PfP would guarantee long lasting peace in the country and neighbouring countries. A favourable fact is that more than two thirds of the members of the Army and Defence Ministry note and accept the fact that accession of SCG to the PfP would contribute to strengthening regional stability and improve defence cooperation with neighbouring countries. However, if you keep in mind that 18.4% disagree with this opinion, almost one third of the respondents do not hold a positive opinion on the implications of SCG's accession to the PfP. Once again the question is posed, if the reason for this is that they are not sufficiently informed or is it a negative attitude towards the PfP. Maybe this question deserves the additional research and then certain activities, according to the findings.

On the whole, the opinion of members of the Ministry of Defence and SCG Army on many issues on assessing the situation in the Army and its reform is in agreement with the opinion and assessment of the general sample of the SCG citizens. A fact that deserves attention is that members of the Army, as well as the majority of citizens, consider that the path of improving and strengthening the security of the country should be sought in joining western defence integrations. This indicates a significant change in mentality of members of the SCG Army in comparison to the former Yugoslav People's Army, where the majority of members considered non-aligned policies and the concept of self-sufficient national defence to be the optimal defence solution.

¹ See: *The Serbian and Montenegrin Public on Military Reform – IV round*, CCMR, Belgrade, July 2004, p. 63

[2](#) Same, p. 74

[3](#) Same, p.75

[4](#) See: "*Serbian and Montenegrin Public on military Reform – III round*" CCMR, Belgrade, April 2004, p.50

[5](#) Same, p.52

[6](#) Same, p.78

[7](#) See, p. 78

[8](#) See in more detail, *Serbian and Montenegrin Public on Military Reform*