

# **THE WESTERN BALKAN CANDIDATES FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP**

A Report by the Staff of the  
Centre for European Security Studies

David Greenwood (Editor)

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### The Western Balkan Candidates for NATO Membership and Partnership

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## PREFACE

The 'Western Balkans' is a geographical designation invented in 1999 by the European Union (EU) to cover the countries targeted as 'potential candidates' for entry to the EU by inclusion in its Stabilisation and Association Process. It covers five states: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro (formerly the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia).

Three of these countries – Albania, Croatia and Macedonia – are also candidates for NATO membership and are engaged, as they have been for some years, in active and assisted preparation for accession. The two union-states are currently seeking admission to NATO's non-members' club – the Partnership for Peace, or PfP – as an initial step on the path to Euro-Atlantic integration. To later join the Organisation proper is a declared goal of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH, for short). It is not, at least for the time being, a stated policy objective of Serbia and Montenegro (SCG).

It is these aspirations *vis-à-vis* NATO that are the subject-matter of the present study. The original aim of the inquiry was two-fold: (a) to examine and evaluate the membership credentials of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia, and the partnership credentials of BiH and SCG; and on that basis (b) to assess the preparedness of the aspirants for, respectively, accession (to NATO) and admission (to PfP). In addressing these topics, however, it became apparent that factors other than 'credentials' might – perhaps should – enter the policy reckoning; and that, in the case of the would-be Partners, one matter certainly does, viz. catching and despatching named war crimes indictees. Some attention has therefore been paid to these issues. There is a fuller exposition of the purpose and (extended) scope of the exercise in a brief Introduction (Chapter I).

This report was submitted to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in July 2005. Most material presented here was gathered and drafted in early 2005. As a result, some developments that took place later are not discussed. However, the most important of these are not related to NATO but to the relationship between the EU and the five Western Balkan countries. Therefore we are of the opinion that the main conclusions concerning aspirations to and readiness for NATO membership are as valid today as they were half a year ago.

What appears in the following pages is the product of our research on the above themes. In the course of what we called our NATO Credentials Study (NCS) – so designated because of its family resemblance to an earlier NATO Enlargement Study (2001) – we did substantial documentary or desk research,

much of it on valuable input from a number of correspondents in the Western Balkans. We also made several research trips to the region in order to gather other material and conduct interviews, the latter a rich source of information and insights. Each of the five countries was visited at least once in 2004-2005. One or more of us also went on NCS business to NATO Headquarters in Brussels, to the OSCE in Vienna, and to a meeting on South-Eastern Europe convened by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and held in Dubrovnik.

The resultant work here is described, on the title page and elsewhere, as a Report. This is because it has been written to inform policy, and policy-makers – plus those who advise them – are the target readership. This in turn explains the absence of copious footnotes and other scholarly small-print. We have thought it right, though, to include some key references and to identify the source of most direct quotations from the open literature and official documents, including some unpublished or yet-to-be published material kindly made available by our unfailingly helpful contacts and correspondents in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tirana, and Zagreb.

We are grateful to all who have contributed to our research, in whatever way and on whatever basis. At the same time we absolve all of them of any responsibility for the use we have made of their inputs. It is we, as authors, who are to be held to account for the facts, judgements and opinions in this document.

Finally we have a couple of practical debts to acknowledge about which we can be specific. The first is to Margaret McRobb who typed large amounts of the final draft of the Report. The second is to our colleague Joke Venema who prepared the text for publication.

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# I INTRODUCTION

The first and second waves of post-Cold War NATO enlargement by-passed the Western Balkans. Next time, though, it will be different. Three countries of the region – Albania, Croatia and Macedonia – want to join the Organisation as soon as possible and are preparing for accession by taking part in the Membership Action Plan (MAP) process. Indeed, currently they are the only states so engaged. A fourth country, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has membership aspirations also. However this state, or quasi-state, must first meet the conditions set for its admission to NATO's non-members' club – Partnership for Peace (PfP). No less keen to earn the recognition that PfP status confers is Serbia and Montenegro (SCG) which, as one country or two, may seek membership in due course.

When exactly NATO will issue its next invitations to accede – heralding the third wave of post-Cold War enlargement – is not yet clear. It could be as early as 2006. This means that the serious appraisal of candidates should begin in 2005. Hence the present study, whose purpose is to contribute to that scrutiny.

The Report examines the progress that the Western Balkan countries have made on their individual roads to NATO and evaluates their respective membership or partnership *credentials*. In the case of the MAP-states, the focal question is: are any (or all) of this trio ready – or soon likely to be ready – to proceed to accession? In the case of the PfP candidates, we ask: should they now be allowed into the non-members' club, and have they got what it takes to follow the MAP course thereafter?

While these questions are central to the analysis, there is another that demands attention: in appraising the Western Balkan candidacies, should NATO take account of South-Eastern Europe's especially sensitive security *circumstances*? This is pertinent because, whereas in Central and Eastern Europe it made sense to insist that, as a general rule, transition and stabilisation should precede integration, in this corner of the continent at the present time such an approach might be neither practical nor wise. In important respects integration here is a condition of stability rather than the other way around.

## 1. Scope of the Study

Providing the basis for our examination of credentials and discussion of circumstances are the candidacy conditions that NATO has prescribed. They are of two kinds.

(1) Would-be members must meet key eligibility criteria of a *politico-strategic* nature, namely a functioning, law-governed democracy and market economy, a commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes (and no outstanding disagreements with neighbours), and a commitment to respect for minority rights (plus political freedoms and human rights generally). There is a presumption that aspirants are sovereign nation-states – consolidated political communities in which all citizens enjoy equal rights – under governments with unchallenged jurisdiction inside secure borders.

(2) There are expectations and requirements of a *military* nature. These relate to (a) capability, covering the candidate's capacity to contribute to both NATO's peacetime order of battle and forces for actual operations; and (b) organisation, embracing both the capacity to fashion an appropriate, affordable and acceptable defence effort and a commitment to practise democratic-style civil-military relations in running it.

These conditions were first set out in the seminal *Study on NATO Enlargement* (1995) and subsequently elaborated in the original MAP prospectus (1999).

Our core assessments of the Western Balkan countries' credentials concentrate on the second of these broad categories and on the 'organisation' element within it. To be precise, the Report examines the immediate past record, current standing and potential position of the states in four key areas

- the promotion and practice of 'democratic-style *civil-military relations*';
- the encouragement of supportive *public attitudes* to NATO (the key to a domestically acceptable defence effort);
- the pursuit of *military education* reform (the key to preparation of the military profession itself for NATO membership);
- and
- the establishment of an effective *defence organisation* and decision-making processes (offering some assurance that the candidate country is making, and can continue to make, military provision appropriate in its strategic circumstances and affordable in the light of its economic prospects).

We deal with 'capability' matters only incidentally, principally because what applicants have to offer here is monitored by a Planning and Review Process (PARP) that NATO conducts with both membership candidates and some partners. (Obviously when it comes to evaluation we also draw a distinction between the MAP-states and PfP aspirants, as appropriate.)

The need to pay attention to regional circumstances arises because of the conditions listed under category (1) above. On a strict reading of these, none of the five countries of interest – with the possible exception of Croatia – would qualify for consideration. Weakness of institutions and administrative capacity is evident in Albania (and, indeed, throughout the area). Ethnic divisions continue to trouble Macedonia. BiH and SCG are barely functional union-states, the former for most practical purposes a full international



protectorate, the latter a partial one (in Kosovo). However, the question arises: given the algebra of South-East European security, are individual states' shortcomings the only factors that should enter the politico-strategic reckoning? Arguably not. Regional stability is important too. Achieving this goal, though, requires attention to issues – most of them to do with the position of minorities – that link all the countries of the neighbourhood. Success here, therefore, requires tackling the diplomatic equivalent of a complex set of simultaneous equations which may be more amenable to solution if all parties have fulfilled, or are clearly en route to fulfilling, their European vocation. This is the 'integration as a condition of stability' argument that the European Union is being urged to recognise in its dealings with the Western Balkan states. We think NATO should take note of it also, as the United States already has by supporting the Albanian, Croatian and Macedonian candidacies under the aegis of an Adriatic Charter.

## **2. Structure of the Study**

The Report is divided into four Parts. In Part A there is a discussion of the basis on which NATO has hitherto said it will assess would-be members' (and partners') claims to consideration for accession (admission) plus remarks on their relevance in South-Eastern Europe today (Chapter II). In other words there is more here on 'circumstances' and 'simultaneous equations'. This is followed by an overview of where the Western Balkan MAP-states now stand (mid-July 2005) in relation to the organisational aspects of preparedness plus observations on the PfP candidates' situation (Chapter III). That is to say, in these pages 'credentials' are summarily scrutinised.

Our individual country assessments are in Part B (the three MAP-states) and Part C (the 'PfP pair'). Albania is the subject-matter of Chapter IV (written by David Greenwood). Croatia is covered in Chapter V (drafted by Peter Volten), Macedonia in Chapter VI (the work of Jos Boonstra). Chapter VII deals with BiH (Greenwood, assisted here by Merijn Hartog), Chapter VIII with SCG (Greenwood again, in this case with Boonstra's help). We draw attention to authorship here for two reasons: first, to underscore that this text is a collective effort; and, secondly, to explain why Chapters IV-VIII are not completely uniform in style or emphasis or, indeed, structure (the order of treatment of our key areas of interest).

In Part D we offer our evaluation and conclusions. The five country assessments are summarised in Chapter IX and our overall Conclusion is Chapter X. These two final Chapters – like the lead-in Chapters I-III – were drafted by David Greenwood.



**PART A CREDENTIALS AND CIRCUMSTANCES**



## II BASES OF ASSESSMENT

The three Western Balkan MAP-states' claims to consideration for NATO accession will be evaluated by every existing member-state to decide whether one or more (or none) should be invited to join. The corollary holds: there is no way that an aspirant can *qualify* for such an invitation. The Organisation has set out its main expectations and requirements, including formal eligibility criteria. However, it reserves to itself the right to decide whether or not a candidate country meets these and whether or not, on that basis, the aspirant can be considered ready to enter the final accession process. Even then a candidate will be invited to proceed only if a strategic cost-benefit calculation indicates that its entry would generally enhance regional security and stability. In principle the converse applies: even though not completely 'ready' a country might be allowed in if NATO thinks that its inclusion would clearly make an important positive contribution to these goals.

Admission to Partnership for Peace (PfP) is also at NATO's discretion, but the entrance examination is less demanding. Indeed, at the programme's inception and until the end of the 1990s, the Organisation was happy to welcome any (then) CSCE state willing to subscribe to the programme's goals, procedures and institutional arrangements. No specific conditions were laid down for particular would-be partners. Latterly, NATO has been more discriminating. For the two Western Balkan union-states, some specific entry tests have been prescribed.

### 1. What NATO expects and requires...

*...of membership candidates*

The formal eligibility criteria for membership were initially outlined in the 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement*. According to this document they include the following.

- A functioning democratic political system and a market economy.
- Treatment of minority populations in accordance with OSCE guidelines.
- Resolution of all outstanding disputes with neighbours and a commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes generally.
- [The ability and willingness to make] a military contribution to the alliance and achieve interoperability with other members' forces.
- Democratic-style civil-military relations.

The language of this checklist allows wide discretion in interpretation. NATO has ignored calls for exact statements (although, as explained later, an official has clarified what 'democratic-style civil-military relations' means).

In any event, these 'criteria' are in fact only pre-conditions for candidacy. The decision to invite an aspirant state to finalise accession is a *political* choice of the existing membership. The 1995 document is quite clear on this, as the following edited quotation shows.

'Decisions on enlargement will be for NATO itself...There is no fixed list of criteria...Enlargement will be decided on a case-by-case basis...Allies will decide by consensus whether to invite each [would-be member] to join *according to their judgement of whether doing so will contribute to security and stability in the North Atlantic area at the time such a decision is made.*' (Emphasis added.)

The italicised clause here confers total discretion and absolves the present membership of any obligation to provide a detailed explanation of their choice or choices.

The freedom of manoeuvre that NATO thus gave itself in 1995 has not been affected by the MAP procedure which it instituted in 1999. Individual states' Annual National Programmes (ANPs) comprise five so-called Chapters covering:

- I *Political/Economic* circumstances
- II *Defence/Military* considerations
- III *Resources* issues
- IV *Security* status
- V *Legal* matters

Appraisal by NATO is done according to this categorisation, taking into account – especially in relation to Chapter II – not only what the aspirant country describes in its ANP but also the content, and fulfilment, of its Individual Partnership Programme (IPP) submitted within the Partnership for Peace (PfP) framework. The MAP procedure thus fulfils a number of functions. It embodies updated eligibility criteria, consistent with but in some respects going beyond earlier prescriptions. It is a practical medium for telling participating states whether – and in what respects and to what extent – they appear to be meeting (or failing to meet) 'expectations and requirements'. It helps in the planning of allied assistance in remedying revealed shortcomings. However, *none of this affects the discretionary nature of the choice that the existing membership will eventually make about who should be invited to accede* (in 2006, or whenever).

Put bluntly, no matter how diligent a candidate's preparations, member-states will act 'according to their judgement' and will have uppermost in their minds the implications of their decision(s) for overall 'security and stability in the North Atlantic area at the time'. No less important, though, the strategic cost-benefit calculation – focusing on 'circumstances' rather than 'credentials' –

could work to the Western Balkan candidates' advantage, especially since security and stability in Europe will be at the heart of it.

### *...of the Balkan PfP aspirants*

When launched in 1994 PfP had a straightforward purpose: to provide a context within which non-member states – notably former adversaries – could develop a relationship with NATO while the existing allies were as yet undecided about enlarging the Organisation. The forms of co-operation envisaged were related to *objectives*. There were no entry *requirements* as such. In order to be designated 'partners' all that governments had to do was sign-up to a short PfP Framework Document that set out the programme's goals. They had to declare an interest in pursuing the purposes of the exercise, but they did not have to demonstrate that they were seriously engaged in such endeavour. Nor were specific conditions laid down for particular would-be subscribers.

Given these undemanding terms the first recruits were enlisted within weeks. By the end of 1994 those on the roster were Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Later signatories were Austria, Belarus and Macedonia (in 1995), Switzerland (1996), Ireland (1999), Croatia (2000) and Tajikistan (2002). Of these 30 countries, no fewer than 10 have subsequently become NATO members – three in 1999, seven in 2004 – so that there are now just 20 Partners, including the three Western Balkan MAP-states.

The progression to membership of one-third of the *partenariat* is testimony to the skill of those who have overseen its evolution and enhancement.

- Through the second half of the 1990s participants took PfP more or less *à la carte*, on the basis of Individual Partnership Programmes (IPPs). However, many opted to join military exercises and training activities on offer, paving the way for contributions first to the post-Dayton Implementation Force (IFOR) and the follow-on Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in BiH, subsequently to the force placed in Kosovo following the 1999 crisis and conflict (KFOR), and latterly to deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq. Around one-half of the early Partners also submitted to a Planning and Review Process (PARP) introduced to guide states' force reduction, rationalisation and restructuring efforts and incorporating, from 1996, specific interoperability objectives.
- After 1999, when the MAP discipline was introduced for those with early membership ambitions, PfP was enhanced in a number of ways,

notably in the PARP area. A procedure akin to NATO's Defence Review routine was developed, encouraging nations to declare Partnership Goals analogous to the Force Goals to which full members commit.

- Following the 2002 Prague Summit there was further enhancement, the key innovation being introduction of a 'Partnership *Action Plan Mechanism*'. This came in two variants: a joint or collective form, pioneered by a Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism (PAP-T, for short); and an invitation to interested states to draw up a two-year Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) related to their domestic reform agenda – essentially a 'super IPP' (or 'MAP-lite' perhaps).
- At the 2004 Istanbul Summit a second collective programme was launched covering defence institution-building (PAP-DIB), an initiative welcomed by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) as reaffirmation of its conviction that 'effective and efficient state institutions under civilian and democratic control are fundamental to stability in the Euro-Atlantic area' (Chairman's Statement, 29 June 2004).

The same Statement recorded that the EAPC had welcomed the presence of the Heads of State of BiH and SCG at its meeting as observers, and that they had been urged 'to meet the outstanding conditions set for PfP membership by Allies'. Needless to say, this was not what the guests had hoped to hear. However, while the evolution of PfP has meant that it has more to offer than used to be the case, gaining admission has become less straightforward than it used to be. For the Western Balkan pair, NATO has imposed a threshold conditionality: full co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and in particular delivery to The Hague of indictees Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic.

We have more to say about the ICTY issue in the final section of this Chapter. For the time being suffice it to note the effect of endorsement of the 'threshold conditionality' in Istanbul at a time when effort was pledged to engage the states of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Admission to PfP has been denied to two countries who could derive great benefit from it while opening-up new opportunities to regimes that have shown little interest in those they have already had.

At least NATO had the good sense not to add insult to injury in Istanbul. The Summit Communiqué applauded BiH's 'significant progress in defence reform' and commended SCG similarly. Moreover member-states undertook to assist the countries by including them in selected PfP activities, and tailored co-operation programmes have been developed. (See Communiqué, paras 33-35). Through these, the Western Balkan aspirants will be able to build their



NATO connections, and pre-qualify for MAP status, even though formal entry to the *partenariat* continues to be withheld.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Key credentials

In this context, BiH and SCG will have to pay attention to many of the same issues as MAP-states Albania, Croatia and Macedonia. As noted in Chapter I, and leaving aside the (personnel and documentary) security conditions and legal matters that aspirants must address, for the MAP-states NATO's expectations and requirements may be grouped under two headings.

- *Politico-strategic*: covering the first three items on the 1995 checklist summarised earlier [p.11] plus additional considerations introduced in the 1999 MAP prospectus (like acceptance of NATO's Strategic Concept); and
- *Military*: covering the last two items on the 1995 list as extensively elaborated in the MAP procedure; and divisible into (a) considerations of military capability, viz. the would-be member's capacity to contribute to NATO's peacetime order of battle and forces for actual operations (including peace-support missions and other contingency tasks) and (b) considerations of military organisation viz. the demonstrable ability to fashion an appropriate, affordable and domestically acceptable defence effort and a commitment to practise 'democratic-style civil-military relations' in running it.

As further explained in Chapter I, the emphasis in the present investigation is on the second element in the second of these groupings – the 'organisation' questions to which other studies of candidates' readiness typically pay scant attention. What are the matters on which a would-be member has to satisfy the assessors under this heading? What has a candidate to do to show that it is 'ready' on these counts? Four main issues invite attention.

The meaning of '*democratic-style **civil-military relations***' is something over which NATO has allowed a veil of ambiguity to lie. However, an official has sought to clarify 'what it means to achieve healthy civil-military relations and democratic control of the armed forces' (Marco Carnovale in *NATO Review*, 45, 2, 1995); and a respected independent analyst has addressed the subject also (Jeffrey Simon in the US military journal *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Summer 2000 issue). These elaborations are not authoritative. They do, though, indicate the

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<sup>1</sup> For the full text of the Istanbul Summit Communiqué and other documents produced at or for the meeting – including the EAPC Chairman's Statement and a prospectus for the PAP-DIB initiative – see the *Reader's Guide to the Istanbul Summit* published by NATO's Public Diplomacy Division.

matters of interest to NATO. Combining them to yield a composite test, an aspirant should be able to show that it has established:

- *a clear division of authority between the Head of State (typically a President) and the Head of Government (Prime Minister) and the latter's security-sector ministers* enshrined in a written constitution or public law (and, among other things, explicitly designating who controls the military, promotes officers in peacetime, has emergency powers in crises and the authority to declare war);
- *peacetime governmental or executive direction of general staffs and commanders through defence ministries*, with the ministry clearly responsible for all key choices about the size, shape, equipment and deployment of the armed forces (and accountable officials having the decisive voice);
- *legislative oversight of the defence organisation* – primarily but not exclusively exercised through ‘the power of the purse’ – which (a) is both comprehensive and thorough, and certainly goes beyond perfunctory (rubber-stamp) approval of what the executive proposes, and (b) engages, through committees, the main opposition parties, and (c) is supported by knowledgeable parliamentary staff and ‘outside’ expertise;  
and
- *a popular perception of civilian and democratic control of the armed forces*, with (a) military staffs clearly answerable to civilian office-holders (and not the ‘law unto themselves’ that they might once have been) and (b) those civilian office-holders themselves clearly accountable to the elected representatives of the society-at-large.

The last item of this demanding test is interesting because it highlights the desirability of popular confidence in those to whom responsibility for safeguarding the state's and citizens' security has been entrusted.

The same item of this ‘test’ helps explain the NATO interest in **public attitudes** in candidate countries: to defence and the armed forces generally, NATO and the membership question particularly. It has been made clear to the Western Balkan countries, as it was to all earlier aspirant states, that there should be an informed national debate on their candidacy and that broad popular support for membership should be evident. Governments should also have taken steps to promote public awareness of the issues at stake. In short, the existing allies seek some assurance that membership itself, the fulfilment of membership obligations and the costs of membership are *acceptable* to a would-be member's population.

Needless to say, NATO also attaches importance to preparing the military profession for service in modern, interoperable armed forces functioning under civilian direction (and democratically accountable). Interoperability is, of course, a key element in the military capability assessment that the Organisation makes as part of ‘readiness for entry’ appraisals. The point here is that the

interoperability of human capital – the individual members of the military profession – is crucial for successful integration as well. Candidate countries should therefore have sound **military education** systems in place, which usually means reformed systems, with adequate provision for ensuring that their personnel ‘speak the same language’ as current member-states. This covers language training as such – especially English-language instruction – and education related to security affairs in general and to NATO’s strategies and tactical doctrines, standard operating procedures and terminology in particular. Sound human resources management is important also, to ensure that the state’s educated manpower is used to best advantage.

The fourth basis of assessment within the scope of this study is the effectiveness of the aspirant state’s **defence organisation** and decision-making processes. Sought here is the assurance that a candidate country can make military provision – pre- and post-accession – that is *appropriate* to the strategic circumstances (including NATO membership) and *affordable* in the light of its likely economic circumstances in the short- and medium-term future (affecting the availability of resources for defence). Important, too, is that on these matters considered judgements should have been made following due deliberation, preferably within an integrated defence ministry that provides a single locus of decision making. The key question, therefore, is whether the Western Balkan States under review here are (or soon will be) mounting defence efforts which satisfy these conditions and have (or soon will have) established structures and processes that can ‘deliver’ in future.

Although arguably a ‘capability’ rather than an ‘organisation’ issue, it is clear that, in NATO’s eyes, an element in appropriate provision is the subscription of forces to current peace-support missions (broadly defined) and the capacity to contribute to future contingency operations (on a UN, OSCE, NATO or EU mandate). Therefore we allude to the Western Balkan candidates’ present activities in this connection and to forces that might be available in future.

Each of the MAP-state profiles which make up Part B of this work (Chapters IV-VI) addresses the four major themes just enumerated. The issues are also touched on in the pieces on the PfP aspirants in Part C (Chapters VII and VIII). The conclusions of these essays are summarised and reviewed in Part D (Chapters IX and X). In the chapter which follows the present one we offer an initial conspectus of the current situation of the Western Balkan states (July 2005) on a *thematic* basis (Chapter III). This overview serves as a prologue to the national profiles and a concise general perspective complementary to the *country-by-country* material presented later.

### 3. Politico-strategic circumstances

The focus in Chapter III is on the Western Balkan countries' credentials. Here and throughout the remainder of the text, however, there are references to the region's politico-strategic and security circumstances. The question is whether – and, if so, to what extent – these should enter the reckoning in appraising the candidacies.

The subject demands attention because policy-makers and policy analysts (especially the latter) have been much exercised lately in considering how to facilitate (a) the resolution of some outstanding regional problems plus (b) the Western Balkan countries' early integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, essentially by treating these two issues as the related matters that they are. The policies, procedures and timetables concerning entry to the EU have come under the greatest scrutiny, but many of the arguments advanced here also apply *mutatis mutandis* in the NATO membership/partnership context.

Relevant, too, is the fact that in several instances international policy-makers have proved willing to abandon strategies that were clearly not advancing the cause of regional stability. Examples include easing Croatia's path to early EU accession; opting for a twin-track approach to dealings with Serbia and Montenegro in their preparations to join the Union; recognising the bankruptcy of insistence on 'standards before status' in planning for Kosovo's future; and ensuring that 'full cooperation' with the ICTY should not become a totally paralysing conditionality (as NATO has done in development of tailored cooperation programmes for BiH and SCG).

That said, on the whole the flexibility that the Brussels institutions have shown has taken the form of *ad hoc* responses to dilemmas largely of their own making. It is independent experts who have done most to elucidate South-Eastern Europe's policy predicaments – as, for example, in the essays written for a 2004 publication of the EU Institute for Security Studies (ISS); and it is battle-hardened political and diplomatic heavyweights, with the analytical support of some of the best minds in the region, who have produced the most comprehensive and coherent grand strategy for dealing with those predicaments – in the work of an International Commission on the Balkans (ICB) that reported in April 2005.

The ISS symposium is noteworthy for numerous insights, not least recognition that, in comparison with the Central and East European states embraced by EU and NATO enlargement to date, the Western Balkan region consists of 'a problematic cluster of countries that not only face, individually, deeper political and economic difficulties, but are also inextricably bound up with each other by historical, ethnic, political and economic ties'. Yet they seek Euro-Atlantic integration for the same reasons: 'an overarching framework for regional security, to overcome a history of external domination and internal mutual animosities; a decisive stimulus of social and economic modernisation,

to end long marginalisation from the European mainstream; and a powerful external guarantee of sound governance, locking in democratic norms and constraining corrupt and rapacious political élites'. Because of their circumstances and recent history, though, what the Western Balkan states need is accelerated integration and not – as was basically the case in Central and Eastern Europe – a lengthy progression through 'sequenced phases...of stabilisation, transition and integration'. Put simply, in this area 'integration is a condition of stabilisation, rather than the other way around' and 'the phases...need to proceed simultaneously for their mutually reinforcing effects to work'.<sup>2</sup>

The ICB Report echoes these themes. In an eloquent Foreword, Chairman Guiliano Amato warns against underestimating the region's 'immense structural challenges, constitutional problems, open status issues, a dire economic situation and political instability' and sympathises with its citizens' doubts about the future. 'Additional efforts and a shift in...thinking are required', he writes, 'in order to solve outstanding issues and accelerate the transition process.' His Commission has shown the way by developing an ambitious blueprint for action to clarify – and, in due course, realise – a credible 'vision for integration' into the EU. Among other things, this addresses the challenge that the Union 'has the capacity to absorb only reasonably functioning and legitimate states but now that Croatia appears on the verge of the full accession process there are no more of these left in the region'. Thus 'the classical enlargement model that worked for Central and Eastern Europe...simply does not fit the conditions prevailing in the Balkans', the Commission says. Its answer is commitment to a comprehensive '[EU] member-state building' strategy for all the Western Balkan countries based on firm accession road-maps; and, of direct relevance to the present study, NATO membership for them.<sup>3</sup>

In this connection the ICB would like to see MAP-states Albania, Croatia and Macedonia given an early 'positive signal' on their membership prospects ahead of invitations to accede at a 2006 NATO Summit. The supporting argument is that 'NATO played the role of a fast integration track for the Central and East European countries and it should do the same for the Balkans'. As for the PfP aspirants, the Commission says that 'in order for NATO enlargement to fulfil its regional role, the Alliance should offer membership in the...programme to SCG and BiH as soon as possible'.

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<sup>2</sup> Judy Batt (ed.) and others, *The Western Balkans: moving on*, Chaillot Paper No. 70, (Paris: ISS, 2004). All quotations in this paragraph are from the Editor's Introduction, pp. 7-19.

<sup>3</sup> *The Balkans in Europe's Future*, Report of an International Commission on the Balkans (established and supported by a consortium of private foundations), April 2005. All quotations in this paragraph and the next two are from this document.

Significantly, it does not believe that ICTY-related conditionality should continue to stand in the way of this. Indeed, it thinks the time has come to evaluate the Tribunal's impact. The Commission's own conclusion here is that 'full cooperation should remain mandatory for the opening of accession negotiations to the EU and NATO [but] the existing levels of good cooperation with ICTY are satisfactory when it comes to joining PfP and signing Europe Agreements'. Later in the April 2005 Report it says that 'ICTY threshold conditionality should move away from its focus on specific individuals...[and] compliance should now be understood more broadly than simply the need to bring certain individuals to justice'.

What all this implies for our appraisal of the Western Balkan candidacies is clear. In evaluating the membership/partnership credentials of the states under scrutiny we should at the very least be aware of the politico-strategic circumstances and recognise that in entering judgements on whether a would-be member/partner is 'ready or not' the impact on the dynamics of change in South-Eastern Europe can, and should, enter the reckoning.

### III ORGANISING NATIONAL DEFENCES: AN OVERVIEW

None of the MAP-states under review has impeccable membership credentials. Their hopes of getting early invitations to accession – in 2006/7 or whenever – do depend, therefore, on NATO in effect relaxing its entry requirements because of South-East European ‘circumstances’ (for all the reasons put forward in the studies mentioned at the end of the previous Chapter) or, expressed another way, facilitating their entry for the sake of regional security and stability (the strategic cost-benefit calculation).

On the face of it the three states’ lack of preparedness is surprising. After all, each of them has had a fairly long exposure to the MAP discipline: six years in the cases of Albania and Macedonia, a couple of years less in the case of Croatia. This is more than any of the seven invitees of 2002 had.

On closer examination, though, it is not really surprising. In *Albania*, for example, the make-up and mind-sets of a one-party state survive, albeit with Democrats and Socialists now in no-holds-barred competition for the right to rule. Corruption and criminality therefore persist, together with a suspect judiciary and an inefficient bureaucracy. So the pace of recent reform has been glacial. Moreover, as is apparent from the flawed conduct and disputed results of the national ballot held on 3 July 2005, the country has yet to show that it can stage genuinely free and fair elections. Some similar problems have also impeded reform in neighbouring *Macedonia*. In addition, of course, the authorities here have had to devote most of their time and energy lately to careful implementation of the accord that brought the country back from the brink of all-out civil war in 2001. Thus in some ways it is remarkable that this candidate has made the headway that it has. Regarding *Croatia*, what is striking is how little concrete progress has been made: to date the principal accomplishment to record is the appearance of a detailed promissory note on armed forces’ reform. The country’s leaders appear unwilling, or perhaps they are unable, to impose necessary change on a military in which many senior officers are evidently ‘in denial’ about the need for change, just as they are about the unsavoury aspects of their troops’ conduct during the Homeland War and the culpability of the commanders responsible for it.

In this Chapter we review these three countries’ preparedness – or lack of it – in terms of the aspects of ‘organising national defences’ enumerated in Chapter II. As explained earlier, this is a synoptic view complementary to the country-by-country treatment in Part B of the Report. Under each of the thematic headings we comment also on the state of play in the two PfP aspirant states assessed in Part C, even though for them NATO membership is a more distant prospect.

## 1. Civil-military relations

Each of the Western Balkan MAP-states has the constitutional and legal basis for civilian and democratic control of its armed forces and on the whole practice accords at least nominally with the customary formal prescriptions. In each, though, there is some ambiguity about the definition of roles and responsibilities in the higher executive direction of defence and about the equanimity with which the top brass accept it, while in none does the legislature exercise effective oversight of the security sector and thereby hold the government fully to account for all that it does (policy accountability) and all that it spends (financial accountability). There is also a general lack of transparency in the conduct of defence affairs, at least when compared to good practice in more mature democracies.

So far as 'roles and responsibilities' are concerned, lack of clarity is most evident in *Croatia*, where lines of authority are reportedly confused, even chaotic. It is a potential problem also in *Macedonia*, but thus far has not been allowed to become one. It could present difficulties in *Albania* if there were a Head of State disposed to use the Presidency as an independent power-base, but there are safeguards against this and, greatly to the country's benefit, the present incumbent has used the office for peacemaking and consensus-building within Tirana's volatile political community.

Imposition of civilian control on the high command has been a challenge in many transition states where the military have become accustomed to being a law unto themselves or have come to be held in particularly high esteem in the society (for whatever reason). Several countries have tales to tell of skirmishes, battles, even turf wars involving the politically-headed and largely civilian staffed defence ministry on the one hand, the top brass and the (usually) exclusively uniformed General Staff on the other. Moreover, conflict can persist even when the two have supposedly been brought together in a single civilian-led organisation. Almost invariably the heart of the matter is a determined resistance to intrusion put up by high-ranking officers who regard running the defence effort – once the very broadest strategic direction has been given – as a task that should be the exclusive business of men in uniform (and usually it is males, suitably bemedalled). What we would call civilian control, they regard as unwonted civilian interference. Thus even where nominally the military are clearly subordinate to civilian authority, they may exercise decisive influence – and, therefore, hold the balance of effective power – in many fields, from defence planning to budget execution. Among the countries under review here, this appears to be the case in *Croatia* in more or less all matters except grand strategy. It may be the case in *Albania* also. In *Macedonia*, however, all the indications are that the primacy of politics is acknowledged by the top military and that throughout the bureaucracy 'suits' and 'uniforms' work together well.



There is more to legislative oversight than routinely scrutinising statutes prior to enactment, endorsing key policy statements and passing the annual budget. Nowhere in the Western Balkans do elected representatives do much more than this, however, and even then they are typically content to play a 'rubber stamp' role. This is true in *Albania*, despite efforts by the defence ministry to develop dialogue with deputies, and by NGOs and others to help relevant committee members acquire oversight skills. It is true in *Macedonia* as well, though here parliamentarians do at least appear to know what is expected of them. In *Croatia* they do not: in defence affairs the presumption is that the military professionals know best. Several factors explain why enforcing accountability is thus underdeveloped in all three states. They include some which affect the willingness of individuals to 'shed light on power, less power corrupts' (party discipline, deference to the top brass) and some which affect their ability to do so (lack of specialist knowledge, lack of professional staff support, lack of access to independent 'outside' expertise). There is an institutional dimension here too: parliamentary procedures do not always facilitate timely critical input.

Finally under this heading, three observations are in order on civil-military relations in the PfP aspirant countries.

(1) Because both are union-states neither BiH nor SCG has what might be called 'settled' arrangements for the higher (civilian) direction of defence and the armed forces. Final dispositions regarding roles and responsibilities in running the Armed Forces of *BiH* must await final decisions on exactly how much authority is to be exercised at the state-level and how much (if any) shall continue to be exercised at the Entity level. In *SCG*, the current centrally-placed authority is a cumbersome construct; but it is difficult to see how it might be improved until the constituent republics have decided whether they want to create a properly functional federation or opt for functional separation.

(2) On the effectiveness of civilian direction, accepting 'the primacy of politics' seems unlikely to be a problem for the senior officers appointed to serve on the newly-established Joint Staff and Operational Command in *BiH*. Observers tell us that in *SCG* there are uniformed personnel at the MoD who similarly understand why this is necessary in a democracy, but that this is emphatically not the case throughout the General Staff or the state-union's army as a whole. Indeed, quite the contrary: many Milosevic-era appointees remain in place who both resent and resist 'unwonted civilian interference' and pay only lip-service to the need for military reform (or do not bother to do even that).

(3) The two partnership candidates stand in equally sharp contrast when it comes to provision for legislative oversight. In *BiH* a state-level 'watchdog' committee, formed at the end of 2003, has been active since then in keeping the country's defence transformation process under critical review (and has been well advised in doing so). Furthermore, the state-level defence minister has been attentive to its members' views. In *SCG*, a counterpart body exists,

set up in 2004, but it does not function satisfactorily. The defence minister has testified before it. However, a correspondent tells us that many in the military 'have negative attitudes towards [the] legislature and "watchdog" committees since they perceive them as a threat'. The same source adds that even the support apparatus in parliament is unhelpful: it employs 'compromised people from [the] Milosevic period' and a recently-created department for the defence and security sector 'plays [an] extremely negative role and all the employees of this new formed Department are anti-reformists'. 'Open status' issues aside, it is clear that BiH has progressed significantly further than SCG along the road to practising 'democratic-style civil-military relations' in the conduct of its defence business.

## 2. Public attitudes

Some detailed information on public attitudes in the Western Balkan countries – to NATO generally and on the membership issue particularly – can be found in the country profiles that make up Parts B and C of this Report. Here we make just a few headline points.

In *Albania* there has been consistently high élite and popular support for the country's NATO membership quest for more than a decade. Polls have regularly recorded approval ratings of up to 90 per cent for pursuit of this 'ultimate strategic goal'. Such unanimity is striking in itself. However, two other facts are noteworthy. First, there was no discernible diminution in support for the objective after the failure to receive an invitation to accession at the 2002 Prague Summit. Disappointment barely dented popular sentiment. Secondly, a contributing factor to the sustained support for NATO is almost certainly the complex mix of dividends that Albanians believe that joining should yield. These include not only the obvious ones, like political recognition and security guarantees (Article V and all that), but also important domestic pay-offs. This is the obvious inference from the remarks of a long-standing campaigner for entry and a long-serving head of Albania's pro-NATO ginger group who just happens now to be the nation's Head of State. In 2004 President Alfred Moisiu wrote that his fellow countrymen 'perceive Alliance membership *as a key step towards* development of a stable democratic system.' (Emphasis added.) In the context of the present inquiry the italicised phrase provides interesting 'local' corroboration of the argument cited earlier, that the Western Balkan states seek Euro-Atlantic integration in order to obtain – among other things – 'a powerful external guarantee of sound governance, locking in democratic norms and constraining corrupt and rapacious political élites'. It also reinforces the observation that follows this argument, namely that in this region 'stabilisation, transition and integration...need to proceed simultaneously for their mutually reinforcing effects to work'. (See p. 19 and note 2 above). This prescription in

turn is, of course, the foundation of our own reasoning – hinted at already and reiterated later – that evaluation of the Western Balkan candidacies must incorporate an imaginative strategic cost-benefit calculation based on recognition of South-East European ‘circumstances’ and, in particular, awareness of what ‘mutually reinforcing effects’ might accomplish in this area.

There is solid all-round support for gaining accession to NATO in *Macedonia* as well, and it is similarly based on interest not only in the treaty-based security guarantee that would come with joining but also in key collateral benefits. These include consolidation of both (a) the Republic’s independent and sovereign statehood and (b) a plural democracy in which all citizens’ political freedoms and human rights are assuredly honoured and respected. As in Albania, it is likely that these expected by-products of membership go a long way towards explaining why there is what amounts to national consensus – on the goal itself and the steps necessary to attain it – sharp though ethnic divisions remain in Macedonia.<sup>4</sup> (We might add here, though, that there is a lot less of the raw ethnic tension that almost tore the country apart in 2001. This is attributable to the success of ‘the Ohrid process’. That success has also enhanced Macedonia’s chances of acceding to NATO; and accession would, of course, mean ‘locking in’ the still-fragile stability that the process has brought. In short, the post-2001 Macedonian experience shows that ‘mutually reinforcing effects’ do work.)

The NATO interest in public attitudes has been explained earlier: ‘the existing allies seek some assurance that membership itself, the fulfilment of membership obligations and the costs of membership are acceptable to a would-be member’s population’; and, further, they desire that there should have been ‘an informed national debate on [its] candidacy and...broad popular support for membership should be evident’ (Chapter II, p.16). As this is written [mid-2005], *Croatia* fails this test on all counts. Societal interest in NATO is waning. Opinion polls reveal decreasing support for joining. There has been no ‘great debate’ on the national candidacy and the powers-that-be in Zagreb have done very little to provide the public with the information to sustain one. These are facts. They stand in stark contrast to a strong strand in popular sentiment in Croatia which deeply deplores the fact that NATO (like the EU) has not already allowed the state to rejoin the European mainstream (as neighbouring Slovenia has). After all this country fought for its independence, fought hard, fought largely alone, and – on this view – fought heroically. The Brussels institutions, however, not only refuse to reward ‘post-conflict and “victorious liberators” status’ but demand that the national heroes be delivered to the ICTY to stand trial for alleged misdeeds committed in what was a struggle for national survival. In particular they want General Ante Gotovina who has been specifically named – along with Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic – in

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<sup>4</sup> See the survey data summarised in Tables VI.2 – VI.4 below (on pages 66-67).

several UN Security Council Resolutions. Public opinion in Croatia, though, will not countenance compliance. Polls show support for the General and his refusal to surrender running at 80 per cent (of respondents), a strength of feeling which explains why the Zagreb government did not pay a domestic political price for the March 2005 postponement of EU accession talks because it had failed to 'deliver' him. If this foreshadows 'Gotovina or NATO' headlines – like those proclaiming 'Gotovina or the EU' which appeared at this time – it does not augur well for Croatia's NATO membership prospects since, on current indications, the Alliance like the Union will insist on its own interpretation of 'full cooperation' with the ICTY as a threshold conditionality for accession.<sup>5</sup>

This conditionality is what has stood in the way of admission to PfP for both BiH and SCG, with the 'delivery' of Karadzic and Mladic at issue here. In the case of these states' partnership aspirations and these individuals, however, public attitudes have not posed the dilemma afflicting the Croatian authorities. In both countries there is solid support for the PfP quest and no general disposition to accord the fugitives 'hero' status. For the pursuit of NATO membership, though, while there is popular enthusiasm in *BiH* by all accounts, in *SCG* there is at present none whatsoever.

### 3. Military education

'It is the country that joins NATO not the Army'. Hence the importance attached to societal preparedness for entry, plus political preconditions, in gauging a state's readiness to accede. The preparedness of the military profession itself is important too, however, because successful integration in the Alliance requires not only interoperability as generally understood – in relation to ships, artillery pieces and fighting vehicles, aircraft, communications and logistics systems – but also the interoperability of human capital, i.e. the individual officers and men (and women) of a candidate's armed forces (and defence institutions generally). As expressed earlier, 'candidate countries should therefore have sound military education systems in place, which usually means reformed systems, with adequate provision for ensuring that their personnel "speak the same language" as current member-states' (Chapter II above, p.17).

*Croatia* has begun to pay attention to this requirement, but the country's military profession is really not much better prepared for NATO entry than society-at-large. Steps have been taken to restructure the military education system. Greater emphasis is being placed on graduate recruitment. Imaginative changes have been made at the Military School in Zagreb. Provision for the training of civil servants in security-sector work has been

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<sup>5</sup> The quoted phrase in this paragraph and the poll figure, plus the headline mentioned, are from Amadeo Watkins, *Croatia at a Crossroads: The EU-ICTY Debate*, Balkan Series 05/15, March 2005 (Camberley: Conflict Studies Research Centre, 2005).

improved also. No less important, a so-called 'Dynamic Plan' for personnel recruitment and development is being implemented over 2005-2010 because up to now there has been no coherent human resources management system, covering personnel planning and career progression, within either the MoD or the armed forces themselves. Praiseworthy though this effort is, however, from the accession standpoint it was begun late in the day and it may be some years before the benefits are apparent.

In view of the length of time that it has spent in supposedly active preparation for NATO membership *Albania* has not been quick off the mark in this area either. It was not until July 2004 that final approval was given to an updated comprehensive training concept to be implemented in five 'troop schools'. The country's new Military University – replacing the three former colleges for Land Forces, Naval Forces and Air Forces – did not open its doors until September 2004. The streamlining of officers' further education, at the national Defence Academy, is only just getting underway. Nor has the reformed NCO Academy been functioning for very long. On a more positive note, though, provision for language training is good: it is offered in a dedicated centre and within designated 'priority units' for multinational operations. (The latter also have preferential treatment when it comes to choosing who shall be sent for instruction abroad.) In addition, Albania has acted to end advancement in the military on the basis of party loyalty or local connections, developed a useful 'personnel restructuring and force management' scheme, introduced a new pay system, and devised a 'strategy to advertise the military service as a viable profession'. This is progress.

Like its western neighbour, *Macedonia* too has been a MAP-state since 1999 and, like Albania, has taken its time to focus on preparing members of the military profession for entry to NATO – in this case, to be sure, because of more pressing preoccupations.

Now, though, the country is engaged in remodelling its military education system, through extensive structural and curriculum reform, based on an explicit 'strategy' for change. Sound plans have been made for the Military Academy, the armed forces' Training Command and other institutions. On top of that, a comprehensive human resources 'strategy' has been devised to ensure, at least in theory, the best use of trained manpower, military and civilian. We say 'in theory' because, so far as we are aware, the practice of reserving key jobs at the MoD for political nominees has not yet been abandoned in favour of a merit-based appointment/promotion system. In all planning in this context, moreover, the authorities in Skopje have to take account of the obligation – fundamental to 'the Ohrid process' – to take more Albanians into the Republic's armed forces until their number is proportional to the overall number of Albanians in Macedonia.

On provision for military education in BiH and SCG, we have only a couple of short comments. The first is that in *BiH*, at the all-important state

level, there is currently none. This deficiency will have to be made good, as part of fuller integration of the union-state's forces, if Sarajevo is serious about its NATO membership aspirations. The second comment is that in SCG, while joining the Alliance is clearly a distant prospect, it is inconceivable that Serbia and Montenegro should accede – as one country or two – without root-and-branch reform of the entire set-up, involving the most careful attention to what and by whom the next military generation is taught as well as where and how.

#### **4. Defence organisation and the decision-making apparatus**

No attempt has been made to prioritise the four aspects of preparedness for joining NATO covered in this work. It is clear, though, that in the post-Cold War 'second wave' of enlargement member-states attached very high importance to this final one. Certain 2002 Prague invitees gained entry despite barely satisfactory civil-military relations (Bulgaria), public attitudes (Slovenia) and arrangements for military education (Slovakia). However, each of the successful candidates was able to convince the North Atlantic Council (a) that it could make military provision – pre- and post-accession – appropriate to its strategic circumstances (including Alliance membership) and affordable in the light of its economic circumstances (affecting the availability of resources for defence); and (b) that it had the institutional capacity to continue to do this thereafter, implying the existence of a sound defence decision-making apparatus within an integrated defence ministry.

Accordingly, in order to be able to evaluate the Western Balkan MAP-states under this heading, we have to ask whether they are (or soon will be) mounting defence efforts which satisfy the first condition; and whether they have (or soon will have) established structures and processes that meet the second. The phrases in brackets are important here. Albania, Croatia and Macedonia have all conducted reviews of their defences lately. Each has prepared a prospectus on policy and provision based on that work. While these documents differ considerably – in size, scope and style – they have one notable thing in common: all three have a lot less to say about what has actually been done than about how good things are going to be.

At the heart of the prospectus produced by *Albania* is the model for a suitably streamlined defence organisation. Accompanying it are plans for the future, in terms of force structure and force levels, from which it is apparent that tough choices – even ruthless ones – have been made in the key area of mission priorities.<sup>6</sup> On the face of it, the schedule for implementation of the force restructuring and rationalisation involved is a practicable one, although the (outgoing?) Socialist administration that drew it up did sound the obligatory

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<sup>6</sup> See the diagrams and manpower table in Chapter IV.

cautionary note on funding. Still, whatever the complexion of the government formed after the 3 July 2005 election, it should be able to build to the blueprint if it so wishes. (It might, of course, feel obliged to wholly or partly discard its predecessor's work). Regarding 'institutional capacity', it will have the benefit of a coherent Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution System whatever it decides to do.

Making sense of defence decision-making structures and processes in *Croatia* and discovering exactly what the future configuration of the Croatian Armed Forces (CAF) might look like is a daunting dual challenge.

(1) On the decision-making apparatus, the problem is that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is bifurcated. It comprises the General Staff (GS) and a mainly civilian-staffed 'management portion' that nominally works with the military but which the top brass think should work for them. The two co-exist, but are frequently at odds: on policy and programmes, for example. Thus in 2004/5 the Assistant Minister doing MAP business in Brussels was anxious – with NATO membership in mind – to advance (or 'manage') an early and irreversible shift in the mission priorities of the national armed forces from stand-alone territorial defence of the Homeland to participation in multinational contingency operations. Not only did she encounter resistance to this within the organisation but in early 2005 was 'moved on'. According to the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) text, the ministry is to be reorganised (sometime in 2005-2009). However the SDR's authors do not, as one might have expected, foresee creation of a fully-integrated department. Rather a key goal is to shrink the civilian-led 'management portion' while the GS 'will continue to be organised within the framework of the MoD' – all of which looks like coded language for enhanced autonomy for the uniformed military.

(2) On the size and shape of the CAF, the policy prospectus foreshadows appropriate provision, in the sense that we used the word earlier. In particular it commits Croatia to that 'irreversible shift' in mission priorities which the GS resisted. However, the document is long on generalities, short on specifics. It says that implementation of its prescriptions will take place in two phases. Matters to be addressed in the first (2005-2009) include 'development and adoption' of a new defence strategy and development plans; 'development of a study' on combat capabilities for the Navy and Air Force; 'putting the personnel management system into order'; and 'development, acquisition and implementation' of an MoD information system. In the second phase (2009-2015) the intention is to 'gradually' achieve the 'targeted capabilities' of the defence system, the 'targeted budget structure' and the 'targeted personnel structure' of the armed forces.

The institutional reform predicted looks like a triumph for the GS rather than a victory for common sense, while the substantive part of the SDR text is a catalogue of deferred decisions masquerading as an action plan.

There is an altogether greater sense of urgency in *Macedonia* which recently completed its own SDR (same title, so same abbreviation). Here the exercise focused on rationalisation of the structure of the Armed Forces of Macedonia (ARM) to produce units for participation in NATO-led operations and for peace-support operations generally.<sup>7</sup> It yielded firm decisions on a realistically modest list of 'declared forces' – sensibly reflecting the country's 'niche capabilities' – plus a 'dynamic transformation plan' for implementation of those decisions. This envisages that 90 per cent of units will have been restructured by the end of 2005, the rest a couple of years later. The plan is more or less on schedule. On the institutional side, Macedonia has streamlined its overall defence organisation, and within both the MoD and the ARM military and civilian staff co-operate satisfactorily (by all accounts). An up-to-date planning, programming and budgeting system will be fully operational soon. What has been accomplished here has earned deserved approbation from the NATO Advisory Team in Skopje and from NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer himself.

What the Western Balkan PfP aspirants have done under this heading can be summarised very briefly.

In *BiH* a Defence Reform Commission has been working since mid-2003, mainly on transformation of the (indigeneous) Armed Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina plus creation of central institutions to manage them. The latter are now functioning: a state-level Ministry of Defence, Joint Staff and Operational Command. Work is in hand to develop coherent planning processes at the national level. Once these exist it might not take long to settle finally the shape, size, equipment and deployment of (appropriate and affordable) integrated forces.

In *SCG* the defence ministry's 'wiring diagram' has been redrawn and a blueprint for reshaping the state-union's forces has been produced and is being implemented. However there are all sorts of doubts about both the effectiveness of the decision-making apparatus and the prospects of completing the force reduction, rationalisation and restructuring exercise. On the first count the principal problem is obstructionist elements in the military outside the ministry. On the second count, it is the uncertain future of the dysfunctional state-union itself.

The contrast between the two countries is striking. Whereas in Sarajevo the challenge is to achieve success in the integration of forces, in Belgrade it is to prevent – or, failing that, to manage – their possible disintegration.

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<sup>7</sup> See Fig. VI.1 on p.73 below.



## **PART B THE MAP-STATES: COUNTRY ASSESSMENTS**



## IV ALBANIA

Following years of self-imposed isolation, Albania has been striving to enter the European mainstream for more than a decade now. The country joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council – forerunner of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council – in 1992 and was one of the first states to sign-up for PfP, in February 1994, at which time it declared NATO membership to be its ultimate strategic goal. Through the mid-1990s, with this in mind, it reorganised its armed forces, sent a lot of officers for a Western military education and took part in many PfP exercises. It also made facilities available to support UN and NATO-led operations in the former Yugoslavia, as it has continued to do. Thus during the 1998/99 Kosovo crisis and conflict, Albania provided invaluable logistical support, and accommodated a huge influx of refugees; and it still hosts the Headquarters of Communication Zone West which supports KFOR. Moreover, the country played a constructive role in relation to the events of 2001 in Southern Serbia and Macedonia, making the Macedonian crisis the first ethnic conflict in South-Eastern Europe where the insurgents were not backed by their ‘home’ country. Tirana has behaved with similar circumspection in relation to post-1999 incidents in Kosovo.

Such commitment and co-operation have been rewarded over the years. When Albania experienced its political crisis in 1997 – prompted by the collapse of fraudulent pyramid investment schemes and resulting in a total collapse of state authority – the outside world responded with humanitarian assistance, delivered under the protection of an Italian-led multinational force (in Operation Alba). When a new government took office in mid-1997 – faced with the task of rebuilding state institutions, including the military – economic aid and help with political reconstruction were provided. As part of the latter, NATO developed a tailored assistance effort focused on rebuilding the military. This encompassed (a) establishing the conceptual framework for ‘new model’ armed forces, (b) starting a structural reorganisation, and (c) managing such problems as ammunition storage and ordnance disposal plus the security of depots (following the wholesale looting of stores that had taken place at the height of the crisis). Albania has received special attention ever since that ‘first aid’ effort, using the machinery of a NATO liaison office in Tirana, Task Area Teams and bilateral programmes.

Perhaps because of this attention, throughout the later 1990s domestic support for NATO membership was high (and still is). However, the country was never a leading candidate for the post-Cold War ‘second wave’ of NATO enlargement and, predictably, failed to secure an invitation to accession at the 2002 Prague Summit. It had not yet got its ‘new model’ armed forces in place, within a robust framework of democratic control mechanisms. Nor had it

progressed much in democratic development generally, in reform of the judiciary and public administration, or in the elimination of corruption and criminality. Disappointment in Prague did not, though, undermine national ambition. Since 2002, in military matters at least Albania has worked hard to strengthen its membership credentials, through the MAP process and with the encouragement of American support for its own candidacy – and those of Croatia and Macedonia – expressed in an Adriatic Charter (signed in 2003).

## 1. Civil-military relations

In the run-up to Prague 2002 all sorts of concerns were voiced about the state of civil-military relations in Albania, partly because little evidence had yet emerged of a genuine commitment in the country to sound arrangements for civilian control and legislative oversight of the armed forces, democratic accountability and transparency in the conduct of defence affairs generally. Given the nation's recent history this should not have been surprising. In the Communist era 'civilian control' meant *Party* control or even *individual* direction by the leader (Enver Hoxha's style). In the post-communist period it meant a watered-down version of the same thing. Control of the military – in the matter of appointments, strategic direction and policy formulation – was certainly in civilian hands. It was applied, however, through the exercise of *personal* power by the defence minister. Nor did this change after the events of February-March 1997. That violence was followed in July by the 'Kalashnikov' election. Victory went to the Socialists who had provoked the earlier anarchy (and looting). The post of defence minister was given to Sabit Brokaj who had organised and led the protest. Brokaj then used the office as a *private* power-base in the customary manner.

Albania adopted a new Constitution in 1988 incorporating formal provision for 'democratic control' (including legislative oversight and budget transparency). Four years later, however, the view in Brussels was that practical arrangements required 'ongoing attention'; and even local officials conceded that the country had implemented only 'some of the basic features of a democratic, transparent, and civilian controlled defence planning system' and that much more needed to be done. Independent observers in the country were more dismissive, pointing out (for instance) that even specialist parliamentary committees were not 'seriously involved in overseeing the activity of the armed forces' and that most 'reforms and measures...have been approved without any prior discussion'.

For the powers-that-be in Tirana, therefore, disappointment in Prague was a wake-up call to action in this field. Since then there has been welcome clarification of areas of responsibility and lines of authority in the higher direction of defence plus some effort to improve legislative oversight.

On higher direction, Albania's latest submission to the OSCE as part of the information exchange on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security (2005) summarises the current position as follows:

- The President of the Republic is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. He is also the Chairman of the National Security Council (NSC), which has a consultative and advisory role on security and defence issues.
- The Council of Ministers is the highest executive body. It proposes laws on defence, executes the laws approved by the Parliament, defines the main approaches of national policy, and issues normative acts with temporary legislative power.
- The Prime Minister is the highest executive power authority. He develops and presents the main approaches of state policy including defence policy, and is responsible for their implementation.
- The Minister of Defence is a member of the Council of Ministers and the National Security Council. He is the highest authority of the Ministry of Defence. The Minister of Defence is responsible for the direction and control of the Armed Forces, the accomplishment of their mission, the management of the defence budget and the fulfilment of defence policy objectives.
- The Chief of General Staff is the highest military position and holds the highest rank in the Armed Forces. He is responsible to the President, Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence for the training and combat readiness of the Armed Forces as well as for the direction and organisation of joint military operations.
- The three Services Commanders are responsible for training, planning and conducting operations of their subordinate forces based on the General Staff's Joint Plan of Operations.

Civilian control has thus been achieved, the submission says, through the offices of the President (politically impartial and civilian), Prime Minister (civilian), and Minister of Defence (civilian). Updated legislation underpins practical arrangements. The latest relevant statute is one *For Some Changes in the Law for Responsibilities and Authorities of Strategic Command and Control in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania* which was approved by Parliament in February 2004.

So far as legislative oversight is concerned, the document sent to OSCE in Vienna says that

'Parliament approves the laws on the Armed Forces organization and activity, the size of the forces, the defense budget and the development programs. Parliamentary Commissions, especially the Defense Commission, are "the eyes and the ears" of the Parliament on defense issues.'

This is formal language, and not particularly enlightening. However, in March 2005 Defence Minister Pandeli Majko assured us that he and his officials take pains to engage elected representatives in the affairs of his department and take seriously their executive obligation to reveal, explain and justify what they do (policy accountability) and what they spend (financial accountability). They are also committed to the promotion of greater transparency in conduct of the ministry's business. Whether Albanian Parliamentarians are as conscientious concerning their mirror-image responsibility to hold the government to account is another matter. In the past – even the recent past – deputies were generally content to play a 'rubber-stamp' role, especially those of the party in office. Observers say this is changing, but solid evidence is hard to come by.

Significantly, the Albanians have not claimed that there has been a transformation in the national political culture regarding transparency and accountability. In a late-2004 draft of the country's (first ever) Defence White Paper – scheduled for publication in mid-2005 – the chapter on 'democratic control' runs to fewer than one-and-a-half pages. The section on this subject in the 2004 ANP (for MAP) consists of a bare four paragraphs. The last of these reads as follows.

'Regular reports to the Parliament (Defence Commission), publishing all the laws [and other statutory instruments concerning] the Albanian Armed Forces as well as information books [on their] activity have increased transparency within the Parliament, the Government and within the public.'

As in the 2005 submission to the OSCE, however, this is *pro forma* language, suggesting that there are no striking developments to advertise.

## **2. Public attitudes**

Well over a decade has passed since Albania first announced that it wished to join NATO (in 1992). Data from attitude surveys and opinion polls show that throughout this period there has been solid popular support for the membership quest. As President Alfred Moisiu wrote in early 2004

'[B]oth public and political opinion in Albania perceive Alliance membership *as a key step towards* development of a stable democratic system and a functioning market economy.' (Emphasis added.)

This explanation of popular support is interesting in the context of the present study because it underscores the validity of the 'integration as a condition of stability (and transition)' thesis.

At the same time the Albanian Head of State acknowledged that his country could not expect to receive an invitation to accession as a kind of loyalty bonus or charitable gesture.

'[We] will not be invited to join NATO simply because of the level of public support or for our contribution to NATO-led peacekeeping operations. Rather...it will be in recognition of much hard work and the successful conclusion of a long and comprehensive reform process to bring our standards in line with those of the Alliance.'

In that connection, Mr Moisiu wrote, the country 'is determined to work to meet all NATO membership criteria, in particular reform of the Armed Forces'<sup>8</sup>

### **3. Military education/personnel management**

Albania is putting in a lot of work to bring its national military education arrangements up to date and up to standard, along lines finally approved in 2004.

At the system's foundation is the new Skanderbeg Military University which in September 2004 admitted its first cadets to a four-year degree course. This institution has replaced the three former colleges for Land Forces, Naval Forces and Air Forces (which students attended for three years). Provision for further officer education – at what the Albanians call their Defence Academy – is being overhauled, by revising both the content and duration of courses, to make the set-up more compatible with NATO practice. For example, the length of the General Staff Officer Course is to be reduced from two years to one. The country also now has a functioning NCO Academy which runs four 'sequential and progressive' courses for NCO promotion and career development with a throughput of up to 500 personnel per year.

Functional and individual speciality training for officers, NCOs and career enlistees is provided at five so-called troop schools in accordance with a coherent concept – embracing basic training, advanced individual and unit training – that was approved in July 2004. The Basic Training Brigade is now active. It has the capacity to handle over 2500 personnel per year.

Language training is the responsibility of a dedicated Foreign Language Centre within the Training and Doctrine Command. This facility conducts intensive courses for up to 300 officers and 100 NCOs annually. There is special provision for English language instruction for 'priority units' assigned to or earmarked for NATO/PfP operations, some of which have their own language laboratories and self-study centres.

Personnel of these units also have priority when it comes to selecting individuals/sub-units for education and training abroad. Each year around 300-350 officers and NCOs are sent overseas. Host countries include the United

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<sup>8</sup> The inset quotations in this paragraph and the preceding one are from A. Moisiu, 'The Albanian Dream', *NATO Review*, Spring 2004, reproduced in *Historic Change in the Balkans*, a hardcopy special issue of the journal published in December 2004 (pp. 54-55).

States, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Greece, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Canada and France. On the whole those trained abroad are nowadays properly used when they return (which was not always the case). This is an instance of the greater attention to 'human resources management' in defence that Albania has paid of late.

Another example – and a very important one – is the effort the country has made to make advancement in the military on the basis of party loyalty or local connections a thing of the past. Legislation was passed at the beginning of 2004 laying down fixed rules for career progression. Authority for rank promotion is now vested in a centralised Career Commission. Responsibility for the nomination of personnel for particular appointments rests with the Minister of Defence for Colonel and General Staff positions and is delegated to the Chief of General Staff and Force Commands for all other duty assignments.<sup>9</sup>

Steps are also being taken to ensure 'equivalency of ranks to functions' (as the ANP for 2004-2005 puts it). A personnel restructuring and force management plan has been developed that should reduce 'discordances' to 14 per cent by the end of 2006. The intention is to get rid of them altogether as soon as possible thereafter.

Further recent developments of note include the introduction of a new pay system (implemented in January 2004) and a 'strategy to advertise the military service as a viable profession' (ANP language again). These should help ensure the recruitment of sufficient career NCOs and other ranks to sustain the manning pattern envisaged following the fundamental force reduction, rationalisation and restructuring exercise that is currently being completed in Albania on the basis of an implementation schedule running to 2010.

Following recent cuts the numbers involved are small. In the second half of the present decade the overall strength of the armed forces (including civilians) will remain more or less constant at around 16,500. However, the make-up of the total will change as illustrated in Table IV.1 overleaf.

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<sup>9</sup> In the second half of 2005 we shall see how robust these particular reforms are. There was a general election in Albania on 3 July. The OSCE said that the ballot only partly complied with international standards and, as this text was being finalised, over 200 accusations of electoral irregularity were under investigation. Nevertheless it seemed likely that the next government would be formed by Sali Berisha, leader of the centre-right Democratic Party (the losers in 1997). If this is indeed the case, the hope must be that the passing of power will not on this occasion be accompanied by a purge of the high command and the wholesale installation of Berisha loyalists.



Table IV.1 Force Development 2006-2010

No.	Personnel	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	Officers	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
2	NCOs	4500	5000	5200	5400	5500
3	Professionals	2600	2800	3000	3200	3400
4	Conscripts	4400	3800	3400	3000	2800
5	Civilians	1900	1800	1800	1800	1800
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16400</b>	<b>16400</b>	<b>16400</b>	<b>16400</b>	<b>16500</b>

The important changes are the increases in lines 2 and 3 and the decrease in line 4.

**4. Defence organisation**

In planning for the future Albania has been attentive to the need to make provision appropriate to the country’s strategic circumstances, even to the extent of anticipating NATO membership. Its 2005 submission to the OSCE says the following.

‘We have reviewed the missions, structures, and concepts of operation of services and major commands. These are based on the concept of national security in the framework of NATO collective security, with due regard also to the lack of a major conventional threat in the Balkan region, the potential for regional crises, and the attempt for the creation of a European security and defense identity.’

In terms of overall organisation the outcome of this review is depicted in Fig. IV.1.

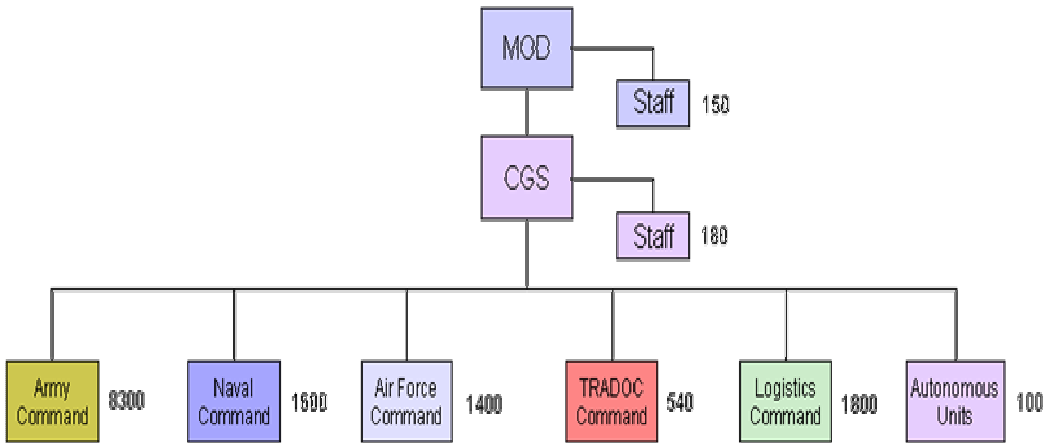


Fig IV.1

The numbers in this presentation indicate the manpower distribution of uniformed personnel (cf. Table IV.1).

The anticipation of NATO membership is apparent from the composition of the Land Forces component of this structure as depicted in Fig. IV.2 below. Although the nominal mission of the ground forces remains ‘to protect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order of the Republic of Albania’ the fact that the key front-line formations are a Rapid Reaction Brigade and an Engineer Brigade plus a Commando Regiment indicates that the country has chosen to place most emphasis on capabilities for contingency operations. This applies to all active units, including one active battalion in the reserve

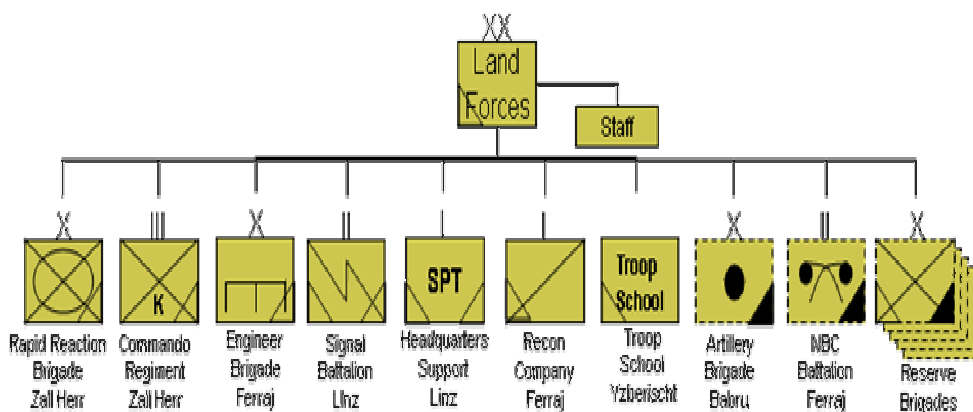


Fig IV.2

Artillery Brigade and an active company in the reserve NBC battalion. Retention of the Reserve Infantry Brigades suggests reluctance to abandon all capacity for territorial defence; but it is significant that the mission and organisation of these formations is ‘under review’.

Reorganisation of Albania’s small-ship Navy has yielded the set-up shown in Fig.IV.3 below. Each district comprises a home port with one group of combat ships and one group of Coastguard vessels. The ‘Troop School’ is the former Naval Academy.

There are modest – and therefore practicable – plans for naval equipment modernisation over the next several years, with the emphasis on improving the capacity to perform Coastguard missions, notably search and rescue, maritime surveillance and environmental protection, plus ‘trafficking interdiction’.

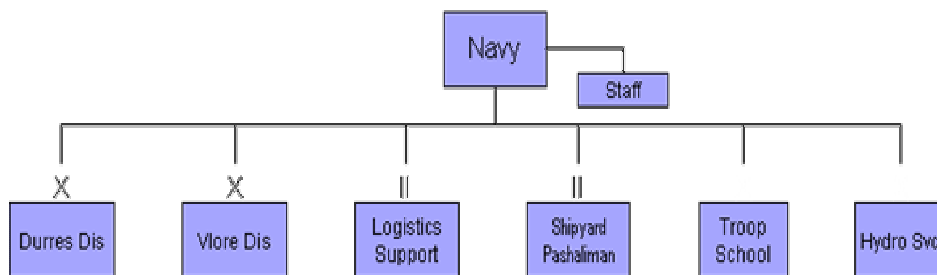


Fig IV.3

The target 2010 Force will have a 1400-strong air arm organised as shown in Fig.IV.4 below. The core capabilities are the multi-purpose helicopter regiment that will be used mainly for combat support; the air defence brigade, with fixed and mobile systems but no manned interceptors; and the Air Surveillance Centre. The service will have just one active air base, at Rinas International Airport (the 'Air Detachment' here), and two reserve facilities (Gjader and Kucova).

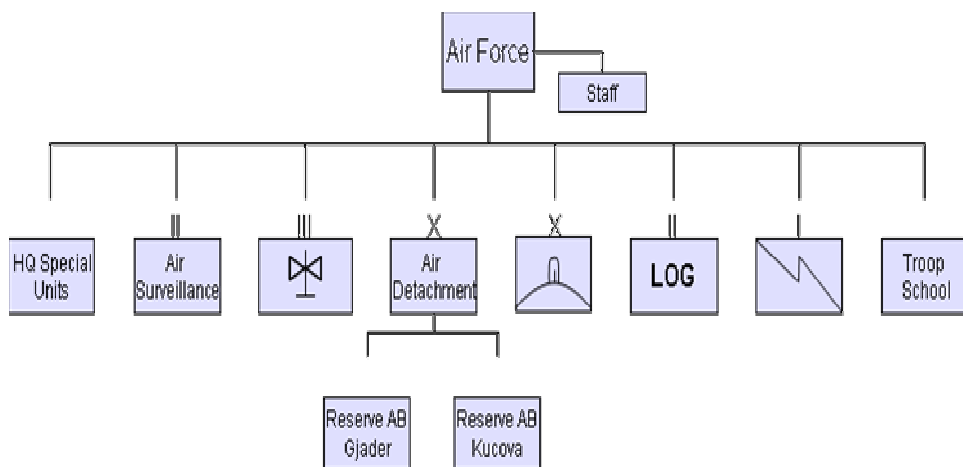


Fig IV. 4

While Albania has thus worked out how its armed forces should be configured, and is restructuring accordingly, the country has a big backlog of equipment modernisation needs. There are plans to clear this, of course; but in what official documents call 'a fiscally constrained environment' the process will take many years, even with significant assistance from partners and allies. Resources management should, however, get better as time goes by. A new Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution System (PPBES) is being put in place.

## 5. Assessment

Evaluating the Albanian candidacy is problematical. In 2002 the country was assessed as falling below the NATO accession threshold on virtually all counts, and that judgement was not contested by Tirana. There is no doubt that in military terms Albania now has stronger membership credentials. Whether the threshold has been cleared is less certain.

We have noted welcome clarification of lines of authority in the higher direction of defence and there has been some improvement in provision for legislative and wider societal oversight of military affairs. The recent leadership's commitment to promoting accountability and transparency in security matters has not been in question. All this denotes progress towards consolidation of 'democratic-style *civil military relations*': but the process is not yet complete.

*Public attitudes* to NATO membership remain consistently supportive. In this respect Albania is better prepared for accession than some of the Prague 2002 invitees were. (Slovenia springs to mind.) The question is: for how much longer will the powers-that-be in Tirana be able to count on solid popular support for the cause?

Under the *military education and personnel management* heading our assessment of recent reform is wholly positive. The question here is whether new arrangements will survive a change of government and then work as envisaged. We think that they probably will, but only time will tell.

So far as *defence organisation* is concerned, much the same applies. Albania has made sensible plans for the future in terms of force structure and force levels. They are built around sound mission priorities, and the timetable set for their implementation appears practicable (notwithstanding the 'fiscally constrained environment' of which official documents speak). A functioning PPBES should ensure satisfactory resources management as transformation proceeds. All this, however, is 'work in progress' and it remains to be seen whether good intentions will be wholly realised, especially in the field of equipment modernisation.

It remains to be seen also whether the Berisha-led government that is expected to take over from the Socialists will endorse, and continue implementation of, its predecessor's plans. The Democrats are no less committed than the Socialists to gaining NATO (and EU) membership for Albania. Therefore the likelihood is that they will.

In conclusion it is clear that, if NATO insists on 'standards before accession' as it has in the past, it could find grounds for postponing a membership invitation for Albania yet again. On the other hand, we think that the country will now do what it has said it will do to put its defences on a sound and sustainable footing and should therefore in this respect be 'ready' to join in the not-too-distant future. That being the case, and taking South-East

European circumstances into account, we see merit in the recommendation of the International Commission on the Balkans (ICB) that – on the argument that ‘NATO played the role of a fast integration track for the Central and East European countries and...should do the same for the Balkans’ – Tirana should be given an early ‘positive signal’ on membership prospects ahead of an invitation to accede at the next NATO Summit. It has to be said, though, that Albania did itself no favours in mid-2005 by revealing that it has still not yet attained the level of political maturity that allows the conduct of genuinely free and fair elections.



## V CROATIA

Although theirs is a fledgling democratic state, Croatians are already impatient with Western institutions. Why has the European Union (EU) only just agreed to open accession talks? Why has NATO still not asked their country to become a member, since it would clearly be a reliable and valuable asset for the Organisation in a restive region. On this second issue people are not only losing patience, they are becoming indifferent. Polls show dwindling support for NATO membership. In a 2004 survey fewer than 40 per cent of respondents were in favour of joining.

While all countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have at one time or another claimed distinctiveness, in the eyes of many Croatians their case *is* different, perhaps even unique, and should be met with far broader and deeper understanding in the 'West'. For a thousand years Croatia dreamt of independence and for centuries was Europe's (Catholic) frontline state *vis-à-vis* a threatening civilisation. Then the country was assembled into a Federation by necessity and, unlike most CEE nations, had to live through 'home-grown' communism in addition to Serbian tutelage. To gain statehood, the argument continues, Croatia had to fight its Homeland War in the 1990s and stood alone against Serbian aggression (unaided because of a Western arms embargo). The army had to be built from scratch from hundreds of thousands of volunteers around a kernel of professional military. This genuine 'People's Army' proved pivotal in nation-building and is still revered for fulfilling that long-time dream.

Why, then, is Croatia regarded like any other Western Balkan country? Is the country paying the price for Western appeasement of Serbia? Certainly there is little resemblance to the others at the moment: there is stability within Croatia; and, apart from Slovenia, economic performance outdoes that of any neighbouring country and living standards are much higher than elsewhere in the region. Moreover, the country contributes to stability in the area as an exemplary active participant in every existing regional forum for co-operation. NATO membership would show the 'others' that Croatia is on the right course. In addition, it would serve NATO's security interests in South-East Europe. Unfortunately, many are quick to add, such considerations have never been part of NATO strategic thinking, if such a thing has ever existed.

Evidently, it takes a staunch patriot and nationalist to parade these arguments. Yet they illustrate more general resentment. Extreme left and right voice most of the bitter remarks; but many members of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and the war veterans' organisations sympathise. After all, a lot *has* been accomplished. There is a modern Constitution and related laws. Governmental structures and democratic institutions are functioning. Defence

reform is progressing and has been reported to Brussels in Annual National Programmes (ANPs) as part of the MAP process since 2002.

All this is true to a certain extent, just as the hurt feelings are in part justified. It is, however, not really helpful for Croatia's case to overlook the many things still to be done and neglect the fact that it is largely thanks to Western insistence and 'conditionality' that the authorities have been able to overcome political strife and (nationalist) opposition and agree on reform imperatives. The transition of Croatia is particularly difficult and that should be recognised and perhaps better understood. But the fact that constitutional and legal arrangements are in place, however essential that may be, does not mean by itself that the polity and society, as they function, have it 'right'. There is a lot of unfinished business. That said, the country's political leaders are focusing on the right course. They are determined to join NATO. At the same time, while the head in Zagreb knows where to go, the body has yet not fully healed – psychologically and physically – and the population still needs wise guidance.

The difficult start of reform in the security and defence field stems not only from the legacy of a huge war machine, but also from the dictatorial rule of President Franjo Tudjman until his death in 1999. During his reign after the war, the military were transformed from a nation-building force into a praetorian guard and yes-men for regime security. Tudjman abused the heroic image of the military and created an intricate network between them and his party (HDZ). The pride of Croatia supported the nationalistic ideology and was completely subject to the Commander-in-Chief in all security matters, as were the secret services. Security and defence matters were in fact indistinguishable since enemies of the regime could be found both inside and outside the country. In turn the military enjoyed many benefits, like high salaries; and the unwarranted and extremely fast promotion of wartime officers produced 'instant generals', who enjoyed preferential access to privatisation projects and real estate acquisition – often from Serbs who had left the Eastern part of Croatia – thus becoming a privileged caste in the society. Every act of the HDZ and its military supporters was considered 'politically correct'; opposition was dubbed 'subversive' (and a conspiracy with the West).

Military provision remained at unaffordable levels – taking 10-14 per cent of the state budget – and territorial defence continued to be the cornerstone of strategy. Tudjman hired and fired at will, ruling the country through a Presidential Council of National Defence that was held accountable to the Head of State who was himself accountable to nobody. The Ministry of Defence was top-heavy with thousands of officers, no less than seven deputy-Ministers (in the year 2000) and hardly any civilians. The 'instant generals' had no scruples about removing and replacing the professional military in order to secure their perks and power while resisting any change in the power structure. For them, loyalty to the regime counted rather than competence.



Increasingly, this authoritarian, corrupt and xenophobic regime isolated itself internationally, and sought little contact with Western institutions. In particular, calls for compliance with the demands of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) were ignored and condemned as illegitimate and totally unfair to the national heroes who had fought a *defensive* war for the liberation of Croatia. To concede that such a war involved 'criminal' acts by the military and to co-operate would have amounted to national betrayal.

By the end of the 1990s, however, opinions in society-at-large were moving in a different direction. The regime had alienated a majority of the population. The time was ripe for democratic rule and for ending the corrupt, self-enriching politics of the old-boy network. This included the army which was less and less seen as the people's army. The parliamentary elections of January 2000 and the Presidential elections one month later brought hope. The HDZ was defeated and a coalition government led by Ivica Račan's Social Democratic Party (SPD) was formed while an HDZ moderate, Stipe Mesić, became President. (Mesić had stepped down as a party leader in 1994 when he heard about the behaviour of the Croatian army in Bosnia.) However, although a new era started, the heterogeneity of the ruling coalition soon took its toll. The parties did not form a working administration. The government was unable to offer a clear direction and implement (often half-hearted) reforms. A functional democracy had not yet been established. Opposition and nationalistic forces – including the politicised military – took advantage, putting a brake on change. The government lasted just one term, until the elections in November 2003.

Yet it would be unfair to dismiss this administration's efforts as failure. The Constitution was amended in 2000 and the President and the government courted both NATO, signing the PfP agreement in May 2000, and the EU, paving the way for the positive *avis* of the Commission about Croatia's application for membership (in 2004) and the prospect of opening entry negotiations (sometime in 2005). Nor did the government bow before the strong anti-reform lobby in the security and defence sector. In 2000, President Mesić sacked the serving generals who signed a letter of protest against co-operation with the ICTY, thereby putting distance between the political leadership and the military. In 2002, the government passed two basic documents – the Defence Act and the Security Services Act – as well as five defence-related statutes, including a Law on Defence. None was perfect, but they helped to clean up the 'mess' at the MoD (as one former Assistant Minister recalls). Most importantly, the laws set the scene for democratic, civilian control and for defining the roles of three main institutions – the Presidency, the Cabinet and the Parliament.

Also adopted in 2002 were the National Security Strategy and Defence Strategy. These clarified the legal questions and committed Croatia to

promoting compatibility with NATO's rules and procedures and greater transparency in defence affairs. As a result, later that year, the country was accorded MAP status, facilitating further defence reforms (with access to feedback from Brussels). Thus Rancan's government left the stage with a more democratic and internationally respected Croatia, and probably beyond the point of no return en route to Euro-Atlantic integration.

Its successor – a coalition under a 'new look' HDZ – reaped the benefit. In 2003, spurred by new leader Ivo Sanader, HDZ transformed itself into a regular European conservative party. Then, by putting a nationalist gloss on the pro-integration vision for Croatia in the November 2003 election campaign, it did enough to prevail over the parties of the by now visibly dysfunctional coalition-in-office. It won 66 seats (out of 152) and found six miniscule parties willing to side with it to produce a (slender) majority government. As Prime Minister, Sanader immediately set about securing EU candidate status for the country, achieving that objective in mid-2004 along with the promise of a 2005 start-date for entry talks – subject to one proviso.

The EU insisted that Croatia should first deliver to The Hague the country's highest-profile ICTY indictee, General Ante Gotovina, who is charged with ethnic cleansing during the Homeland War. Croatia failed to do this ahead of the first date set for opening talks in mid-March 2005 – the authorities said they had no idea where the fugitive was – and the start-date was accordingly postponed (over the objections of Austria and Hungary, incidentally). At the time of writing [July 2005] Gotovina remains at large and the country's EU candidacy in limbo.

Until this setback, Croatia was clearly in what one observer calls 'a virtuous circle of domestic reform and reward from the EU'. So a pertinent question is: can the country deliver enough reform in the defence field to elicit the reward of an invitation to join NATO in 2006 or 2007? It is not impossible. Two years before the 2002 Prague Summit newly-formed governments in both Romania and Slovakia inherited defence organisations in which during previous years reform had been virtually absent or at best sluggish. Yet they got their act together. Under strong leadership, particularly that of determined Defence Ministers – and in close co-operation with the MAP interlocutors in Brussels – both countries accomplished enough to secure NATO membership. Can Croatia do likewise? Maybe: but, if the present Report's assessment is right, it is a tough challenge.

## **1. Civil-military relations**

For example, as already noted, the first post-Tudjman government put in place the legal framework for 'democratic-style civil-military relations'. However,

Croatia has not yet made full practical provision for effective accountability and all-round transparency in the conduct of its defence affairs.

The so-called 'semi-presidential' system under Tudjman's 1990 Constitution became 'super-presidential' rule under which the President was accountable to nobody. The revised constitution of 2000 and 2001 abolished the all-powerful Presidential Council of National Defence and introduced a counter-signature formula involving the Prime Minister's consent to decrees with the status of law plus parliamentary approval. The exclusive power of the President was thus eliminated, but confusion was added.

A directly-elected president does not really need the legislature's sanction for his nominations of officials: but here parliamentary agreement is required for appointment of the heads of security services. Normally, it is the government that picks such officials – including the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) – and the role of elected representatives is to oversee ministries' and departments' activities. Here, though, the President is portrayed as guarantor of a democratic political process and controller of the legality of security services and power ministries such as Defence, precisely because these had so often been manipulated during Tudjman's reign. Yet at the same time the Law on Defence stipulates that the President is the Commander-in-Chief; and its Article 7 lists no less than 22 specific tasks of the President. He gives his consent (strategic matters, defence plans) or he determines (command of the armed Forces), in other cases he gives his opinion (nomination of the Minister of Defence), and sometimes he appoints and relieves (military officers including the CGS). In other words, the President is explicitly and directly involved in political and operational responsibilities of the government (Prime Minister) and the MoD (both minister and high command). This not only impairs his ability to act as the 'guardian of guardians', it also confuses the division of roles and responsibilities between him and the executive and within the government and ministries.

Article 8 of the Law on Defence lists the tasks of the Government: lawmaking and preparing policy and spending plans. In this substantive functional area, the President has no direct influence. Nonetheless, he chairs the National Security Council and directs – together with the ministers involved (defence, foreign affairs, internal affairs and justice) – all *security*-related organisations and agencies. To add more confusion, the ministers are bound to act according to the Council's decisions. In the case of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Defence (Art. 10) and those of the General Staff (Art. 11), the overlap is overwhelming. Probably its most disturbing feature is the fact that the CGS is appointed (and can be relieved of his duties) by the President and in practice considers the Commander-in-Chief his direct superior, while the Minister of Defence is responsible to the Supreme Commander as well as his Prime Minister and answerable to Parliament.

Everything might function well; but if, and only if, the various political leaders and GS act in harmony and pursue the same policies. Generally,

however, personal frictions – or simply the imperatives of *cohabitation* – complicate the decision-making process (though the President, once elected, does have to give up his party membership). Also in the MoD, the arrangement invites bureaucratic in-fighting. In an apparent attempt to manage tensions between the minister and the CGS, the minister is entitled by Article 12 to issue a special order – with the consent of the President – to regulate relations between the GS and the ‘administrative part’ of the ministry. This is curious. It can only mean that the MoD is not even formally an integrated organisation and it testifies to a *de facto* separation of the ministry’s civilian or mixed civil-military departments from the key locus of decision-making, namely the uniformed military in the GS. In sum, institutional arrangements for executive direction are weak, even chaotic, and their functioning is very much dependent on the individual players and their personal relations.

Turning to legislative oversight, the Croatian Constitution refers to ‘civil control’ rather than ‘democratic control’; but the final word nonetheless lies with Parliament and its Committee for Internal Politics and National Security. (There is also a Council for Democratic Control of Security Services explicitly focusing on the sensitive sector of the security services.)

The title of the Committee for Internal Politics and National Security – the defence ‘watchdog’ – clearly reflects old preoccupations with regime security and internal security as well as responsibility for national defence issues. Its current chairman is a former Minister of Interior who is seen, not surprisingly, as part of the old boy network with a past clouded in secrecy. Security and defence are still seen as a single issue-area and, for example, security and intelligence funding still falls on the military budget and apparently evades ‘democratic control’.

When it comes to exercising oversight of defence and the armed forces, the Committee shows limited interest and has thus far declined to establish a dedicated sub-committee for these matters. They are seen as the domain of the revered military and acknowledged experts. The Committee is empowered to call on the Minister of Defence, even the President, to provide information or annual reporting. That right is rarely used, however. Even the outcry of the Minister of Defence in October 2004 – that the ‘proud army of ten years ago does not and cannot function given the means and capabilities’ – was simply ignored. The Committee had been informed about the dreadful state of the army in a classified document before, but did not take action. Some parliamentarians even suggested that such reports contained too much information, putting the security of the state at risk. Final documents coming from the MoD are approved as a matter of routine; but consideration of such forwarded texts, inviting parliamentary input, is apparently eschewed. In short, transparency and accountability are formal rather than substantial.

In any event there is a lack of expertise in Parliament and little understanding of the drastically changed concepts of security and defence.

There is support for NATO membership among elected representatives, but for reasons that are unclear. On top of that, the watchdog committee lacks knowledgeable staffers. A couple of generalists, with a background in law, currently help members; but it is not clear how deferential they are to the chairman (or whoever) and, therefore, whether their analysis and advice is impartial. They are certainly not experts. Nor do they provide the committee with an institutional memory. It is said that the main problem is the lack of financial resources, but it rather looks like a lack of priority on the part of parliament itself. Expertise and professional support are not really sought by the main instrument of 'democratic control'; and decision-making on defence matters is still confused with old-time regime security worries and structures.

Another factor may help explain mixed results in reforming civil-military relations. The first post-Tudjman government not only faced huge challenges, but its two defence ministers each served less than two years, a very short time for setting reform priorities and ensuring their implementation. The current HDZ-led government is just more than one-and-a-half years in power. Furthermore, practice in virtually all post-communist regimes is that a change of minister – or even head of department – is accompanied by the wholesale introduction of new and typically inexperienced staff. Given the dearth of available knowledge about defence issues outside the military plus the impact of individual rather than institutional arrangements, such turnover simply makes it difficult to get things done. The same holds for parliament to some degree. One term in the legislature is not enough for an elected representative to acquire the arts of oversight. The need for knowledgeable staffers is clear once again.

## **2. Defence organisation**

Creating a sound defence organisation should not be a difficult task for a would-be NATO member, at least not in theory. A brief description would be as follows: study practice in NATO countries of long standing and assess particularly the experience of countries that have acceded recently; prepare the documents and the apparatus, plus plans and procedures, to implement the model; analyse how the template has been adapted to accommodate varying historical, political and economic conditions, and strategic cultures; then translate this assessment into refinement of a comprehensive national blueprint. Broadly speaking, this is how a country like Slovakia proceeded in its crash programme prior to the 2002 Prague Summit. On paper, it looks logical and easy but the Slovaks – Bulgarians and Romanians too – can testify that successful implementation may be anything but straightforward.

To begin with, establishing a clear chain of command from the (civilian) minister and balancing political and operational considerations within the

decision-making process can be difficult, sometimes very difficult. Given the lack of clarity as to the division of roles and responsibilities at the highest political level in Croatia – and the impact thereof on the functioning of the MoD – the challenge is daunting. Add to this the legacy of the past and the prominent position of the military and the task becomes Herculean. As has been pointed out, the Croatian MoD is not an integrated organisation but consists of two parts with complicatedly overlapping roles and responsibilities: the (civilian-led) ‘administrative body’ as the departmental bureaucracy and the GS as the powerhouse of the military top brass.

When the present Minister of Defence, Berislav Roncevic, took office – with, initially, an able American-educated Assistant Minister, Dr Jelena Grcic Polic – he found an unhappy and beleaguered military. The status of officers had been put in question over the past years and many felt threatened by the prospect of all-round force reductions and drastic cuts in the sprawling departments of the GS (a ‘safe haven’ since the war). Life was not as before. Once comfortable salaries had not been increased for years. Among the professional military upfront, many had misgivings about civilian intrusion in their affairs. The misuse of the military until 2000 had put them on the defensive; and the perception of decisions imposed by politicians without even seeking a professional view had soured their attitude to civilian direction (and oversight). Deficiencies in training and education, as well as the poor state of mostly obsolete equipment, had undermined job satisfaction, shattering the forces’ traditionally high *esprit de corps*. The disenchanted shied away from any kind of co-operation with the MoD. Opportunists took advantage to gain advancement there.

It is difficult to gauge the depth of wounded pride, but a reality check is in order. Recent governments have done their utmost to depoliticise the military and promote professionalism. They have engaged the military in the Euro-Atlantic integration effort, notably in actively seeking NATO membership, presenting the forces as an asset in foreign and security policy *vis-à-vis* the West.

Reform may be painful, but the need for it was and is beyond doubt. Here political leadership is imperative: like that shown by President Mesić in bringing together the Prime Minister and the civilian leadership of foreign and defence ministries in May 2004 to urge defence policy-making and planning in full accordance with NATO integration requirements. Basically, this meant farewell to the sacred and cherished concept of territorial defence (plus ‘standing alone’) and a radical shift towards the requirements and force posture for collective defence and multinational co-operation in contingency operations.

According to Dr Polic, this shift is ‘irreversible’ and has been communicated to NATO, in ANP correspondence and orally. The only thing in doubt among political leaders concerns the pace of transformation and the timing of reforms needed for its implementation. It is said that President Mesić

prefers a prudent and gradual approach and that is certainly the opinion of his own nominees at the GS – the Chief, General Lucic, and his Deputy, General Baric. During her spell at the MoD Assistant Minister Polic was more in a hurry and sought to maintain the political momentum for meeting the requirements in time; but she was ‘moved on’ early in 2005. Minister Roncevic is reportedly relaxed about the tempo of defence reform: his lack of conviction due perhaps to his lack of experience in defence matters. (Roncevic is first and foremost a party-man and as such probably more aware of the grass-roots feelings in HDZ, especially regarding co-operation with the ICTY, as well as the mixed views on these matters in the smaller coalition parties.)

Because of these differences, personal relations among those at the top in the MoD are far from ideal. The Minister avoided meeting Assistant Minister Polic when she was working for him and refuses to be seen with the CGS in public. Needless to say, Dr Polic, the driving force behind the (proposed) plans and policy, was no ally of the CGS; and her ‘administrative part’ of the Ministry faced – and doubtless still faces – the power of the CGS who can call on the President’s support if necessary.

Not surprisingly, therefore, political intent has outpaced actual reform so far. In early 2004, the government promised to produce a Strategic Defence Review (SDR) – a Defence White Paper – which was not finalised until early 2005. During its preparation the status of this prospectus was lowered in order to overcome the requirement of a two-thirds majority in Parliament for key documents. It is now called a guideline for planning up to 2015 (which requires a simple parliamentary majority). However packaged, the SDR is pivotal, prescribing necessary changes in the MoD and GS plus plans and policy for defence and the Armed Forces.

Even as an internal draft, the SDR figured prominently in the 2004-2005 MAP submissions to NATO, asserting the ‘irreversible’ course towards integration and collective defence in the framework of the Alliance. That is as far as it goes, though, because several issues remain to be resolved, including core concepts for reforming the armed forces, and detailed plans have yet to be agreed.

One major issue concerns the size and composition of the armed forces, particularly its main component, the army. Regarding size, there has already been a manpower rundown to a [late 2004] total of c.25,000 personnel (all arms, and including civilians). Since 2003 alone some 10,000 military and more than 1600 civilians have left the defence organisation, in large part through a Separated Personnel Care and Transition Program (SPECTRA). There is still more contraction to come. For 2005 it is envisaged that just under 3000 military and nearly 1000 civilians will be ‘separated’; in 2006 as many again will follow (c.2000 uniformed, c.2000 civilians). The target size of the nation’s armed forces stipulated in the final version of the SDR is 16,000 active military personnel and 2000 civilians, along with a ‘contract reserve’ of 8000 members.

The SPECTRA operation is apparently a success, but not without problems. The fact that anyone can make take advantage of the programme means that the best and brightest may also leave; and badly needed engineers, computer specialists and doctors *have* left. There is also criticism that money is spent even after people have found employment.

Regarding 'composition' – the force structure – by and large the military favour a territorial defence organisation with large formations (and consequently many high ranking officers). The SDR calls for fewer, smaller and rapidly deployable units to conform to the needs of NATO in peacekeeping and peace-enforcing activities. (Croatian territory would be safeguarded by the North Atlantic Treaty's Article V pledge for collective defence.) However, adaptation has been slow. Despite past rationalisation, brigades still number over 60, mostly hollow units with obsolete equipment.

Each of four armies is organised around one professional guard brigade and is expected to operate independently in its assigned area (which is typical for territorial defence). The SDR foreshadows reduction of the number of professional guard brigades to two, each with around 3000 men. As for equipment, the army still has over 250 tanks and almost 150 armoured vehicles. The Racan government had even agreed to build and deploy new tanks! The present administration has cancelled this acquisition and will buy a (wheeled) infantry combat vehicle. There is still a long way to go, however, if Croatia is to field the interoperable, rapid deployable forces that the planners and NATO call for.

Manning is an issue as well, because the 'conscript versus professional army' question arises. Some officers consider the idea of ending 'national service' outrageous; others doubt whether Croatia can afford a professional army. The fact is that there has not been real study or debate on the subject. Hence there is no clear majority for either choice among specialists, parliamentarians or in society at large. This stalemate might have been expected to preclude a clear-cut selection, but the final version of the SDR says that in proceeding to the armed forces' targeted size 'the conscript component will gradually be discontinued'. (Reserve forces have already been re-organised. One category, Type B, has been abolished, while the number of Type A reservists – 'equally useless', according to a top MoD planner – has been sharply cut.)

The authorities have probably opted for abolition because the existing conscript system is deeply flawed. First, military service is only six months, hardly enough to drill or train draftees. Secondly, an increasing number of young men are more interested in the option of alternative public service (almost 10,000 per year). It has therefore been suggested that the period of such service be upped to 8 months. Thirdly, the availability of this option complicates force planning, since no-one can anticipate the number likely to enter the army. Finally, military service is fairly liberal or indulgent towards



those called up and the latter are overwhelmingly indifferent. After some time in uniform, they do not take orders anymore or, worse, disappear at will, without risking repercussions.

Personnel policy is the key issue in many respects. Downsizing is not the same as reform. Having the right person in the right post is necessary before anything else can be undertaken in the reform process. Military planners like to focus on modernisation and acquisition and to field impressive trained forces. Proficiency is hard to achieve, however, given the age structure within the armed forces, following the explosive recruitment during the Homeland War and the resulting inverted personnel pyramid with too many chiefs and no Indians (and few coming in). Other factors complicating improvements include the lack of real professionals together with outdated education and training programmes; and, of course, shortage of money. The last is mentioned even though 70 per cent of the defence budget goes on personnel. (Funds for operations and 'exploitation' take nearly all the rest, leaving virtually nothing for procurement.)

### **3. Military education**

In these circumstances, investment in human resources and personnel reform assumes great importance. Croatia has paid insufficient attention to it. The quality of the servicemen and civil servants – those at home and those sent abroad (to NATO HQ, for example) – is a prerequisite for success across the reform agenda. In shrinking the forces the country has not sufficiently taken into account the qualitative requirements of its defence organisation. Badly needed experts, among them the brightest and best, have gone, while those remaining often lack a professional background other than what they learned in the Homeland War. Moreover, the number of recruits and junior officers is too low to redress structural imbalance in the officer corps, which present promotion patterns are doing little, if anything, to correct.

The roots of the poor educational structure, of course, go back to the war when Croatia lacked an indigenous organisation. Everybody who wanted to join the armed forces was more than welcome regardless of school education or vocational skills. Although various educational programmes have been started, their success has been diminished by the selection criteria and the use made of graduates afterwards. In choosing people for study abroad, for instance, language skills have often been more important than qualifications for the course or the improvement of knowledge and skills in high demand. Upon returning from a course, officers have been put in positions having little or nothing to do with their newly-acquired abilities. For this and other reasons only one-third of military personnel meet the educational requirements for the rank or position they occupy.

The fact that there is no proper personnel planning and career system in place and the period needed for recruitment of new personnel and cadets mean that it will be a long time before the organisation as a whole is up to the tasks facing the MoD and Croatian Armed Forces. The best that can be said is that a start has been made. For one thing, plans have been drafted for changes in the regulations for promotion. As of 2005 the higher ranks will face more demanding requirements than has been the case so far; and it has been stipulated that an officer who has not been promoted after spending eight years in one rank will have to leave. Hopefully, the plans will be realised.

The new security environment and technological as well as psychological demands of new missions like peacekeeping cry out for changes, up-to-date (permanent) education and new curricula at various institutions. Further, professionals in the GS and security services should not only act in support of the efforts undertaken but also promote enlargement of Croatia's security community, including civilians inside and outside the MoD. Of paramount importance is that the government and Parliament fund the educational programmes and encourage the institutions to adopt the right curricula and use well-qualified security teachers. The esteem in which the professional military are held must be justified in future by evidence of their solid understanding of the intricacies of the *métier* – something that needs to be recognised also in Parliament and the society at large.

Another positive point is that many officers in the MoD – the 'administrative part' – are now recruited after they have finished an academic education and a crash military course. These competent people are invaluable for the reforms envisaged and their contribution, together with reform-minded professionals, should be taken into account in shaping a single merit-based career planning system for the MoD. That is now foreseen in a Mid-Term Dynamic Plan of personnel recruitment and development for 2005-2010 (in parallel with SPECTRA which is supposed to be completed by 2010).

The new generation of officers and civil servants may be involved in the courses offered at the University of Zagreb which is strengthening its capacity for teaching military and strategic topics. Co-operation is with the Faculty of Political Science, from which many experts are being recruited, and can only be encouraged. So can the fact that this Faculty's staff co-operate with NGOs, including the influential Institute for International Relations, creating a useful 'security community'. Welcome, too, is the word that the MoD will introduce military teaching modules at universities where cadets are educated.

At this level, changes are already underway. Since 2003, recruits have been able to enter the Military School in Zagreb where they stay as a class but, individually, follow courses at different faculties. They receive some military training during the weekends and a six-month basic military education after graduation. The MoD pays for the education and requires military discipline from the cadets during their time at the School. The cadets sign up for eight

years after graduation as compensation for the expense incurred. In 2003 sixty cadets were enrolled: in 2004, another sixty. As to the education of civil servants, a Central Administration Office has been established which provides basic and advanced courses as of 2005. The purpose is to familiarise junior officials with specific military subjects, the organisation of the MoD and its management; and, at the advanced level, to give middle-rank personnel the opportunity to learn directly from senior civil servants and officers in the ministry who have a degree and at least five years' experience in their current position.

By these innovations the present government has recognised the need for policy-makers and planners to have a broader and deeper understanding of security. Although SDR has only just been adopted officially, it is clear from all conversations at the MoD and elsewhere that the exceedingly limited number of security experts who were responsible for producing the guidelines ought to be – but probably will not be – greatly increased. On top of that, the prospectus must be understood and supported by many people throughout the organisation. As earlier experience with countries in transition has shown, the leadership's determination is crucial, because big organisations – defence ministries and armed forces included – resist change.

Nor is it only institutional resistance that has to be overcome: political gamesmanship is a hindrance too. For example, in 2004, as Minister in charge of veterans policy, the presidential candidate opposing incumbent President Mesić, Mrs Jadranca Kosser, raised the official number of veterans of the war from the 400,000 already registered to nearer 600,000. The newly-designated would benefit, of course; and in garnering their votes so would she, the press noted cynically. (In the event Mrs Kosser lost in the second ballot.) Experience with the MAP process has shown how important NATO's role and that of its member states is in supporting the 'realists' in the aspirant states. This and other examples of 'democracy' in practice show that not only in defence organisation but also in political reform NATO has an important part to play in Croatia.

#### **4. Public attitudes and debate**

A most serious shortcoming of the Croatian government and Parliament is the lack of communication with the population about NATO. Struggling to consolidate their power base and to get agreement on defence reform, the few dozen decision-makers involved – and the government as a whole – keep their cards close to their chest. Nobody is pressed by elected representatives who prefer to leave defence matters to the military experts. Some may be silent in light of the dilemma of having to choose between unequivocal support for Euro-Atlantic integration (swallowing some sensitive demands) on the one hand, consolidation of the domestic position of HDZ or the coalition on the other.

In general, Croatia's citizens appear disappointed about the fact that NATO shows no eagerness to let their country in, and are perhaps even frustrated with the lack of respect for what Croatia has accomplished against the odds. National pride is a cultural phenomenon, not a partisan issue claimed by one group or another. Prime Minister Sanader and some others are trying to overcome this problem, but they are prudent and careful in not looking (too) weak *vis-à-vis* Western demands as to co-operation with ICTY, including the case of General Gotovina, improvement of the judiciary or the settlement of refugees. These matters are mentioned at every opportunity by Western representatives, as NATO's Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer did during his visit to Croatia in October 2004. These critical remarks, however, are not really picked up by government and raised in the domestic debate. Sometimes suggestions are aired, even at high levels, to the effect that General Gotovina is innocent; and the wrongdoings of Croatian army units are still a neglected or avoided subject in the media as well as among the general public. Initiatives from, for example, some war veterans to address the issues are not supported at the political level. Cleaning up the past, looking ahead and promoting well-informed debate are apparently difficult in the democratisation process here.

Whatever the motives and reasons for not pursuing a vigorous public information campaign, the result is *decreasing* support for NATO among the population (down to under 40 per cent), as well as for the EU (from a high of 75 per cent in 2003 to under 50 per cent). In the case of NATO, the people are not informed about the advantages of joining. The public see that membership might have been useful during the late 1990s to deter aggression by former enemies (Serbs). They are not convinced that the Organisation is still useful, since there are now no evident enemies. In so far as threats exist for NATO, in particular terrorism, Croatians may have a difficulty – as some in member-states do – in comprehending how one can reconcile the conviction that animates current US foreign policy and strategy on the one hand, the mixed stances of the Europeans on the other. In this respect, the war in Iraq is confusing as well and has not whetted Croatian appetites for joining NATO. The idea of contributing a platoon of Special Forces to the coalition there, suggested by the former Defence Minister to strengthen US-Croatian relations, fell on deaf ears in his own party and evoked no enthusiasm elsewhere. More fundamentally, resonance of 'standing alone' may still be heard and too few (official) attempts are made to change the tune of national defence into an internationalist refrain.

It is hard to see how a serious discussion on NATO and defence issues can start without the participation of the people's representatives in Parliament. Of course, there are more pressing subjects to be addressed and many more needs that capture the voters' attention. Some of the thirty or so public institutions in Croatia could do more. However, none is really specialised in security and military matters. The Institute for International Relations covers a

much wider range of subjects, and what is probably the only NGO that concentrates on the security business, the Centre for Peace Studies, has limited means and is treated by officials with some scepticism. This Centre has grown out of the Anti-War Campaign of the 1990s and continues to be critical of efforts to ignore some of the things that the Croatian military did then. Thus, it can happen that a judge – against all evidence – acquits persons of having tortured Serbs in Split; but the Centre stands pretty much alone in questioning this in public. As noted already, the excesses of the army remain a sensitive subject. A psychological move has not fully been made since the conflict, which is primarily seen as a ‘just’ war in which there were neither offensive actions in Bosnia nor atrocities perpetrated by fellow countrymen. Coming to grips with the past has always proven to be difficult anywhere, but the government could do more of what its Prime Minister has done before in his own party and turn the page in public debate towards the Euro-Atlantic community and what the future holds.

Unfortunately, media coverage of these issues – and the defence reform efforts – is limited and superficial in spite of the fact that access to information through the MoD services or seminars has been improved. To be sure officials are far more ready to discuss security policy than was the case before 2000. It seems, however, that this is not a concerted, agreed approach of the executive as a whole. Certainly no distinct initiative has been taken to highlight the advantages of NATO membership or to explain the real stakes, pros and cons. Yet there are reform-minded and determined people in the government. Perhaps NATO, through MAP, should enlist their support for launching a well-informed effort to publicise what the Alliance is and what it stands for. The time for half-hearted reform in Croatia is running out and, without public support, the muted consensus among the top leadership and parliamentarians is of little avail. It would be better if it were presented forcefully, so as to acquire democratic backing and legitimacy. And soon.

## **5. Assessment**

As in the case of Albania, evaluation of the Croatian membership candidacy is anything but straightforward. In an effort to strengthen its credentials for accession the country has performed a comprehensive review of its national defences, and the outcome – incorporated in a final document on the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) – became known in the first quarter of 2005. However, the relevant text raises almost as many questions as it answers because, as noted earlier, it constitutes guidelines for the next decade’s defence decision-making and not a record of concrete decisions actually taken. It is therefore less helpful than we had hoped it would be. In that respect it reinforces the abiding impression that, for all the national impatience at the failure of NATO

and other international organisations to recognise Croatia's worth and potential, the country is less well prepared for Alliance membership than it would like everyone to think.

We have noted that the first post-Tudjman government put in place the legal framework for 'democratic-style *civil-military relations*', but Croatia has not yet made provision for effective accountability and all-round transparency in the conduct of its defence affairs. Institutional arrangements for executive direction are weak, even chaotic, and their functioning is very much dependent on the individual players and their personal relations (which have not always been harmonious of late). As for legislative oversight, the key watchdog committee shows limited interest and on most matters is content to defer to the military and acknowledged experts. Elected representatives can summon the Minister of Defence, even the President, to provide information or annual reporting. However, they rarely do this. In short, democratic control is formal rather than substantial.

There is not a lot of popular discussion on defence issues either, and hence little understanding of the benefits (and costs) of NATO membership. Thus *public attitudes* are not a plus point for the Croatian candidacy as they are for both the Albanian and the Macedonian. Support for joining is actually decreasing, and it will probably take a bold public information campaign to prevent further deterioration.

The military profession is not much better prepared for NATO entry than society-at-large. We have noted the lack of a proper personnel planning and career system within the MoD and the nation's Armed Forces, a deficiency that a Mid-Term Dynamic Plan of personnel recruitment and development for 2005-2010 is designed to correct; and it is only recently that reform of the *military education* set-up has been tackled in earnest, with greater emphasis on graduate recruitment, innovative reform at the Military School in Zagreb, and new provision for the training of civil servants in the requirements of security-sector work. The attention that the present government has paid to human resources management is therefore commendable, but it will be some time before Croatia reaps the benefits.

Our evaluation of Croatia's *defence organisation* and decision-making processes is cautious and qualified. As set out in Chapter II above, our basis of assessment for a candidate country here is the capacity to make military provision – pre- and post-accession – that is appropriate to its strategic circumstances (including NATO membership) and affordable in the light of its likely economic circumstances in the short- and medium-term future (affecting the availability of resources for defence). Important, too, is that on these matters considered judgements should have been made following due deliberation, preferably within an integrated defence ministry that provides a single locus of decision making. The key question, therefore, is whether Croatia is (or soon will be) making provision for defence that satisfies these

conditions and has (or soon will have) established structures and processes that offer assurance that the country can continue to do so in the future.

Our evaluation under this heading is cautious for two main reasons. First, while the long-awaited SDR text foreshadows appropriate provision, reflecting the 'irreversible shift' in mission priorities for the Croatian Armed Forces (CAF) mentioned earlier, it is still only a blueprint for decisive transformation of the Croatian defence apparatus. Implementation will take place in two phases: a 'first mid-term period (2005-2009)' and a 'second mid-term period (2009-2015)'. This timetable clearly shows that the preferences of the advocates of prudent and gradual change have prevailed. It is certainly not a crash programme. Secondly, while the document says that the MoD will be reorganised, it does not foresee creation of a fully-integrated department: in fact the intention is to shrink the civilian-led 'management portion'; and, although the General Staff 'will continue to be organised within the framework of the MoD', the top brass will presumably emerge with their autonomy undiminished if not enhanced. Relations between the two components will be governed, the SDR says, by regulations to be developed in 2005 and implemented in 2006. Final judgement on decision-making structures and processes must therefore be postponed until then.

Our evaluation is qualified with respect to readiness for NATO entry because in practical terms the SDR prospectus is really just a detailed promissory note. This is apparent from the following (abridged) quotation from the document's Conclusion.

'Goals for the first mid-term period (2005-2009) are: development and adoption of a new defence strategy; implementation of a new MoD and CAF organisation structure...;development and adoption of defence development plans; achievement of the targeted MoD and CAF size; achievement of targeted capabilities and required levels of interoperability for forces declared for NATO;...development of a study on required Navy and Air Force combat capabilities; putting the personnel management system into order; long-term stabilisation of the defence budget;...development, acquisition and implementation of the MoD information system.

In the second mid-term period (2009-2015) it will be necessary to : realize full interoperability of ready forces; gradually achieve the entire targeted capabilities of the defence system; realize the targeted personnel structure of the CAF; complete the process of abandoning non-perspective [redundant] property; achieve the targeted budget structure.'<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> These paragraphs are from an English-language version of the Final Draft of the SDR Final Document (dated 2 March 2005).

Croatia will clearly be ready to join NATO when this transformation process is finally completed. Inviting the country to accede before that, however, involves offering a hostage to fortune: that Croatia will do what it is saying it will do. There are, of course, precedents for accepting promissory notes – Slovakia's and Romania's in 2001-2002, for example – but Zagreb's does require taking a great deal on trust.

Having said that, we think this is a risk the Alliance should run, while continuing to support the realists in Croatia and maintaining pressure for political reform in general as well as defence and wider security-sector reform specifically.



## VI MACEDONIA

In the third of the Western Balkan MAP-states the good news is that defence reform is heading in the right direction; or as the state news agency put it – reporting on a meeting of the Security Council of the Republic of Macedonia held on 17 January 2005 – developing ‘according to the prescribed dynamics’. The country’s economy is weak. Unemployment is high. Corruption is widespread. Tensions between ethnic Macedonians and Albanian citizens have been alleviated but not eliminated. At the defence ministry, however, attention is firmly focused on preparation for NATO membership, in the hope – if not yet the confident expectation – that an invitation to accede might be forthcoming in 2006 or 2007.

Such recognition is fervently sought because it would mark a big step forward on the path to Euro-Atlantic integration. This goal is the country’s overriding external policy priority, for obvious reasons. Integration would bring a sense of security and some prospect of prosperity, which experience elsewhere suggests can be a powerful solvent of ethnic divisions. In other words, Macedonia’s leaders clearly understand that theirs is a case where – to repeat a formulation from our Introduction – integration is a condition of stabilisation and not the other way around.

That understanding was reached in 2001, when the country survived a crisis that brought it to the brink of full-scale civil war. Catastrophe was averted then by timely international intervention, and the drawing-up of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (August 2001). It is this accord which has held the country together since, thanks to careful implementation. For that, credit is due to the post-2002 coalition of the Socialist Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and the smaller Liberal Democratic Party (LPD) under Prime Minister Crvenkovski (SDSM) and successors and DUI leader Ali Ahmeti. Influential too, until his early 2004 death in a plane crash, was President Boris Trajkovski. (Following this tragedy, Crvenkovski was elected Head of State, and succeeded as Prime Minister first by Hari Kostov, later by former Defence Minister Vlado Buckovski).

As for the ‘prescribed dynamics’ of military reform, Macedonia has conducted a Strategic Defence Review and begun implementing its prescriptions, a new Defence White Paper has been produced (but not yet published), reorganisation of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and reshaping of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia (ARM) are underway. Change has occurred, or is foreshadowed, in a number of the areas covered by our assessment, as the following sections show.

## 1. Civil-Military Relations

### *Constitutional and legislative provision*

Macedonia is a parliamentary democracy established under a 1991 Constitution that formally defines the division of responsibilities between the President and the Government, the executive and the legislature. In practice the legislature plays a subordinate role; it is the Presidency and the Government that in most cases have the first and last word on policy. While the National Assembly has a strong constitutional position – only the Assembly can dissolve itself and call for new elections – it is often satisfied to rubber-stamp government initiatives and their implementation. This applies across the board, in our area of interest as elsewhere. However, so far as defence reform and progress towards NATO membership are concerned, there are no major disagreements between government and opposition anyway.

Although the executive is firmly in charge in Macedonia, the Constitution is somewhat vague on the relation between the President – being the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces – and the Government, including the Defence Ministry. A 2001 Defence Law sheds some light on respective roles and responsibilities but the relationship between President and Prime Minister probably depends mostly on the interest and expertise of the individuals in office.

There are ambiguities also about relations between the MoD/ARM and some other constitutional players. Art. 27 of the Defence Law states that the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces (CGS) 'is appointed and discharged by the President of the Republic'. It goes on to say that the Chief 'reports to the President of the Republic and to the Minister of Defence'. Thus, although the General Staff (GS) is organisationally integrated in the MoD, there might arise a situation in which the Minister and the President disagree on reports submitted by the CGS. The direct link to the President in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the ARM is nevertheless regarded as essential by the top brass, although they do not contest the day-to-day direction of the Minister.

The Constitution stipulates that a civilian should head the MoD. As a member of the Government, the office-holder is obviously accountable to the Prime Minister; but running a department that incorporates the GS implies obligations to the President also. In effect, therefore, the Minister performs his duties in a 'system of dual accountability' (an observer tells us). Such confused lines of authority are untidy but not unique. They exist wherever both Head of State and Head of Government are directly elected. (France and Romania spring to mind; so, closer to home, do Bulgaria and Croatia.)

*The military, the administration and society-at-large*

Over the last decade Macedonia's civilian leaders have learned to respect military expertise, while – with the growth of competence among civilians – the military have come to understand that healthy civil-military relations require subordination to civilian direction. Here and there, though, there is still some resistance to change and to working under civilian leadership, notably among those affected by restructuring. In a more general sense there are also feelings within the ARM that the military was betrayed by incompetent politicians during the 2001 crisis. One commentator tells us that this 'trauma' stems from a perception that if the Ministers of Interior and of Defence had not been bickering on who does what, and if the ARM had been able to act decisively, the forces could have done a better job in ending the main hostilities quickly.

Defence is regarded as one of key ministerial posts in the Macedonian cabinet due to the importance of security issues and the quest for NATO membership. Since independence, however, few appointees have stayed in the job for long. Vlado Buckovski, the present Prime Minister, is the exception. He held the post for two years; and there are hopes that his successor – Jovan Manasievski of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), a former Minister of Labour and Social Policy – will retain the office for long enough to see the reform agenda through its next critical stages.

The military is regarded as different but not separate from society. Although a few minor privileges for army personnel are still in place (housing for instance), overall the military is dealing with the same daily economic problems as the rest of the population. Moreover, on the whole, the ARM is seen as professional, apolitical and impartial as can be seen from the tabulation below. (Needless to say, among ethnic Albanians the number of people that distrust the ARM is much higher than these figures suggest; but the perception of the military as a rather conservative ethnic Macedonian institution seems to be changing.)

Table VI.1

Survey, January 2004 (Random sample of 1200 respondents)		
How much do you trust the Army?	I trust it completely	48.80
	I trust it partly	37.90
	I do not trust it at all	13.30
Total		100.00

Source: Institute for Sociological Political and Juridical Research (ISPJR), Skopje, Macedonia.

### *Accountability and transparency in the security sector*

The attitude of the MoD towards the National Assembly and more specifically the main oversight body is pragmatic. Officers and officials appear regularly before the committee when they are asked to do so and inform the legislature to the best of their knowledge. Unfortunately many elected representatives lack the incentive to be critical. 'The executive knows best' is the presumption: and anyhow opposition and ruling parties agree on those reforms focused on gaining NATO membership. Moreover, 'obstructing' consensus by being independently critical – on corruption within the ARM for instance – could hurt a political career.

Current arrangements for legislative oversight of defence and security date from September 2002. The 'watchdog' is a 13-strong Defence and Security Committee. Its present head is Tito Petkovski, an experienced SDSM politician and the main political rival of SDSM leader and former Defence Minister, now Prime Minister, Buckovski. The body meets regularly and uses independent experts as necessary. Most legislators understand their duties in holding the government to account and at least a few have relevant expertise. Some have recent military combat experience. Individual members use independent researchers and journalists to get the most up-to-date knowledge. Still, there is much room for improvement; resources are limited and there is a shortage of well-educated and professional staff.

Another Standing Committee that should have a complementary role is the Committee for Supervising the Work of the Security and Counter-Intelligence Directorate and the Security Services. However, one member informed us that this Committee only exists in name. It is not functioning because the chairman and former 'hawkish' Minister of Interior, Ljubo Boshkovski, is in custody on war crimes charges. There is also no effective oversight of the military security service, apparently because of a lack of clarity about who should exercise scrutiny.

Even Petkovski's committee is less effective than it could be, mainly because elected representatives obediently follow the lines set out by the party leadership. We were told that personal loyalty to and dependence on party leaders – or the leader of a certain fraction within a party – tends to count for more than due diligence in holding the executive to account.

Macedonia published its first Defence White Paper in September 1998. At the time this was regarded as a big step forward since the document gave a good overview of policy, military reform initiatives and budgetary projections. It was welcomed domestically and – in its English-language version – internationally. As noted, at the time of writing a new and equally informative text exists. The MoD has the intention of establishing clearer timeframes for publishing regular documents and posting them on its website (also in English); more frequent updates would of course be welcome. One reason for the irregular – and often delayed – appearance of policy documents is the fact that

the Ministry is overburdened with work on NATO submissions such as those required by the PARP exercise (which is very specific and time consuming), PfP material and the Annual National Programme within MAP.

In 2005 Macedonia expects to spend just over 100 million Euros on defence. This is in line with a multi-year plan (2003-13) in the SDR that is generally regarded as realistic (projecting a budget increase of less than 30 million Euros over eight years). While the outcome of budgeting for defence is thus known, there is not much transparency about the process itself. Matters may improve as the MoD gains experience with its Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution system (PPBE). To date information about proposed resource allocation seems to have been shared only with the NATO Advisory Team (NAT) in Skopje which assists by making detailed suggestions. Although such help is welcome and co-operation between the MoD and its outside advisors is in general regarded as satisfactory, some are disappointed that the Ministry makes so little use of Macedonian experts.

#### *Informed public debate*

There is no lack of internal debate on security and defence-related matters in Macedonia, because of the salience of the issues. The discourse is sustained by a growing number of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) active in this subject-area, including some well-established Albanian-orientated institutes. A few independent institutes analyse government policy critically. Many organisations, however, are not fully independent but indirectly connected to the government or to a major political party, which makes them less critical (but still useful). These institutions' events often turn out to be occasions for publicity or advocacy.

Now and then debate impinges directly on policy. This was the case in 2004 when – under public pressure – a draft Law on Crisis Management was heavily criticised by independent experts. Some were afraid that the draft Law gave the military the opportunity to play a role in securing the regime instead of the state. The Minister of Defence withdrew his draft from Parliament and a roundtable was organised by a University-based institute (in co-operation with an international organisation) to explore possibilities of improving the legislation. A revised statute has now been enacted.

The media play a rather influential role in Macedonia. There are about seven daily national newspapers that all cover security and defence issues. Some newspapers are Albanian-orientated, others are indirectly linked to a political party or to the coalition in power; but none is controlled by the Government. Journalists are especially interested in reporting outside criticism (by NATO or EU representatives or experts for instance) and exposing scandal. Due to the broad coverage of security matters – especially the quest for NATO membership – most citizens are well informed and talk about these issues in

their families and at work. (The quality of coverage is not uniform, however. There is a need to enhance the training of journalists on security-related topics, one commentator tells us.)

## 2. Public Attitudes

### *Public Opinion on European security affairs/NATO membership*

Most Macedonians are in favour of NATO membership as the accompanying tabulations show. Support is strongest among the Albanian community. Ethnic Macedonian support faltered following the ‘NATO intervention’ in the 2001 crisis but has since recovered and continues to grow. (See Table VI.2)

Table VI.2

Would you like Macedonia to become a NATO member? (Percentages)

Survey	2001 May		2001 October		2003 March		2004 January	
	Mac.	Alb.	Mac.	Alb.	Mac.	Alb.	Mac.	Alb.
Yes	62.5	78.0	53.2	84.0	58.7	84.1	67.0	88.8
No	20.2	3.6	33.0	7.5	24.4	7.0	16.9	1.1
Don't know	17.4	18.4	13.7	8.3	16.9	8.9	16.2	10.1

Source: ISPJR

Overall, almost three-quarters of the population are in favour of membership according to the January 2004 poll but the proportion varies markedly depending on party affiliation, as is apparent from Table VI.3 here.

Table VI.3

Would you like Macedonia to become a NATO member? (Percentages)

Survey of Jan. 2004 N=1200	General	Macedonian	Albanian	SDSM	VMRO-DPMNE	DUI	DPA
Yes	72.1	67.0	88.8	74.2	59.3	88.7	92.2
No	13.3	16.9	1.1	11.9	24.2	1.6	3.9
Don't know		16.2	10.1	13.9	16.5	9.7	3.9

Source: ISPJR (Local language abbreviations for political parties.)

The basis of support is diverse also. Ethnic Macedonians see membership as a safeguard against developments in Kosovo that could spill over and destabilise the country. It is also seen as the key to consolidating independent and sovereign statehood thereby putting to rest the ‘four wolves’ theory – that a weak Macedonia surrounded by Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia is

vulnerable to these neighbours' claims on (parts of) its territory. The Albanian community probably believes that NATO membership will be instrumental in helping the country to develop into a mature democracy in which their rights are honoured and respected.

There is every reason to believe that attitudes to NATO will remain positive. One observer tells us that the Macedonian population is well informed and able to make a distinction between the intrusive role NATO played as a conflict mediator in 2001/2 and the potential benefits of becoming a NATO member state and achieving the country's strategic goals. Furthermore, the authorities want citizens to understand the meaning of membership and to support the integration policy. They have contemplated an awareness-raising campaign.

However, the new White Paper says that the level of support for the membership quest has already risen over 2004-2005 by over ten percentage points (Table VI.3).

*Public opinion on the national armed forces and military reform*

Aggregated data indicate that the armed forces are one of the country's most respected institutions. However, diversity is evident here too. According to an October 2004 poll, among ethnic Macedonians trust in the ARM is high (76.1 per cent of the sample) while among the Albanian community it is low (23.7 per cent of respondents). Significantly, though, the gulf here is not apparent when the question posed concerns support for the Macedonian MoD's reform agenda. On this subject differences reflect party-political positions; and there is a sizeable number of 'Don't Knows'. (See Table VI.4)

Table VI.4

Do you support the programmes of the Ministry of Defence for reforming Macedonian defence? (Percentages)

<b>Survey</b>	General	Macedonian	Albanian	SDSM	VMRO-DPMNE	DUI	DPA
<b>January 2004</b>							
Yes	54.00	54.80	46.40	71.50	37.60	56.50	37.30
No	15.40	17.40	10.90	5.40	29.40	10.50	13.70
No opinion	30.60	27.80	42.70	23.10	33.00	33.10	49.00

Source: ISPJR (Local language abbreviations for political parties.)

It would be wrong to place on all these figures a weight of inference that they will not bear. Still, it would appear that, sharp though ethnic divisions remain in Macedonia, there is what amounts to national consensus on both NATO membership as an objective and the steps that must be taken to attain that goal.

### 3. Military education

In appraising candidates' credentials, NATO looks for such broad societal support for joining plus popular understanding of what membership entails. It is equally, if not more, interested in the preparedness of an aspirant's armed forces generally and in their military education especially.

#### *Rationalisation and structural reform*

Awareness of this explains the attention Macedonia is paying to an overhaul of military education and training arrangements based on a comprehensive 'Strategy' document. The aim is to establish an integrated system and to improve human resources management. The programme features plans for both the national Military Academy 'General Mihailo Apostolski' and the ARM's Training Command plus the 'Dr Joseph Kruzel' Centre (which is principally a civil servant training facility).

Change at the Academy will take place in 2005-7 when it will be functioning below capacity because of the shrinking ARM's lower demand for graduates. As to whether a small country like Macedonia needs an Academy, this question has been raised – by members of the NAT among others – on the grounds that officer cadets' academic training could be done in universities. But we assume here that the Apostolski institution will survive, albeit with fewer permanent staff. Within Training Command rationalisation is already underway, based on the integration of several centres into one (excluding aviation training).

The 'Strategy' plan reportedly envisages a future Academy with two tasks: (a) professional military training and (b) research and development. Under the former heading it will offer courses for uniformed personnel at all levels plus opportunities for both military and civilian staff of the ARM and MoD to learn together at different stages. There might be openings for staff of other 'security-related' ministries as well (plus, possibly, journalists and others). Foreseen in the research and development area is establishment of a Centre for Doctrines and Lessons Learned that would work on the development of documents and manuals for the ARM and do research on NATO compatibility.

So far as we can gather no change is expected in the use that the ARM makes of foreign training opportunities. Cadets are sent for brief one-month training sessions to Italy, France or Turkey. Selected officers go to the NATO Defence College in Rome, the Marshall Center and NATO School in Germany, the War College in the United States and a few do postgraduate studies in Turkey (for Macedonia's future Generals). (Whether best use is made of those who study abroad on their return is another matter.)



### *Curriculum reform and institutional co-operation*

In 2004 the Military Academy started updating its curriculum to incorporate – next to knowledge on defence and the military – also instruction in defence planning, crisis management, intelligence and so on. A fully NATO-compatible curriculum should be in place by mid-2006. By this time there should also be a new look to the currently underdeveloped and rather traditional NCO instruction provided by the Training Command. Hopefully, new curricula – both at the Academy and the Training Command – will devote more attention to teaching students about the changing political and military environment in South-East Europe and the new roles of the ARM (peacekeeping etc.).

The need for closer co-operation between different ministries on security issues has prompted interest in educational co-operation. The MoD and Internal Affairs Ministry held a joint exercise in November 2004 and plans are being developed for co-operation between the Military and the Police Academy. For a time there was even talk of a merger of the two: basic training would be identical; after it, students could choose to specialise on police or military issues. Co-operation between ministries and education facilities is especially important for implementing the new Law on Crisis Management and also in the process in which border guard units are being transferred from the MoD to the Interior Ministry. (This transition will be completed in 2005 with the transfer of the border guards at the SCG and Albanian segments of the Macedonian frontier. The border guards at the Greek and Bulgarian segments of the frontier are already under the control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.)

It is possible to foresee not only organisational but also a ‘cultural’ change in the coming years regarding higher military education and in improving education for civilian members of the security community – personnel in the MoD and ARM, but also elected representatives from the Committee on Defence and Security. Senior courses on civil-military relations, democratic control, crisis management and conflict prevention could be laid on at the Academy. Instruction on civil-military relations for military personnel generally is a possibility.

### *Foreign language training*

Language training for MoD and ARM personnel currently takes place in different locations: the Academy, Training Command and the ‘Dr Joseph Kruzel’ Centre. The ‘Strategy’ advocates co-ordination by one facility (although no concrete plans exist as far as we know). At the Military Academy cadets are obliged to follow classes in two foreign languages, one of them being English; and NCO courses at the Training Command also oblige students to learn English. Officers and MoD personnel that deal with NATO or multinational arrangements like the South-East European Brigade (SEEBRIG) are tested on their English language skills. Knowledge of English is also one of the key criteria for soldiers

that apply to be sent to peacekeeping missions e.g. the contingents in Afghanistan and Iraq [2005].

### *Human resources management*

The latest White Paper states that 'the Army needs to restructure itself into a small, mobile and efficient army filled with dedicated, well-trained, highly motivated and disciplined professional force'. It also pledges 'equal opportunities for all, and forces that reflect the ethnic balance in society'. This last obligation is the biggest problem the ARM faces in manning. How to shrink the ARM and personnel levels at the MoD while recruiting more Albanians in order to implement the Ohrid Framework Agreement? Clearly this process takes time and careful handling. Some fear that too many Albanians may be recruited to the ARM not on quality but on quotas. The SDR states that the percentage of ethnic Albanians in ARM in 2004 was 8.6 per cent and should rise to 13.2 per cent by the end of 2005 and to 25.2 per cent in 2007. Positive discrimination is the watchword. It is, though, a practice that carries dangers, e.g. of ethnic imbalances in particular ranks. Different forms of affirmative action may be necessary before full proportional representation is achieved.

It does not help that Macedonia's MoD has only recently formulated a Human Resources Strategy (September 2004). Although the first priority is fair representation of the ethnic communities there is also need for a system that puts 'the right person in the right place'. Most high-level bureaucrats are still proposed by the ruling political parties and not appointed on the basis of proven competence. Fortunately some improvement is noticeable: for instance the MoD organises internal application rounds for personnel to be sent to Macedonia's diplomatic representations abroad; and this method could be introduced for job openings within the defence organisation itself. There *is* a system of promoting military personnel according to NATO practice, but no experience yet with performance evaluation.

Although educational opportunities are improving in the ARM, living conditions within the military are not. Because salaries are low and fringe benefits mostly absent many talented young people are not interested in a military career. Still the ARM and the MoD are not short of recruits because of the huge unemployment in Macedonia and the feeling among many young people that the Army offers some job security. At the same time many people within the MoD are worried about their job and try to cling on to current positions. An exception to the rule is when vacancies arise with international peace missions and Macedonian's representations abroad, international organisations and elsewhere. For these positions the competition is fierce which gives the MoD the possibility to select those with good language skills and other qualities. Such opportunities are limited, however, and the military

sector in Macedonia often sees its best educated and experienced young people leave to take up jobs outside the country.

#### **4. The defence organisation**

##### *The Ministry of Defence and the ARM*

The Ministry is responsible for policy-making (strategic level) and the GS for operational planning. We were told that these two tasks do not mix in Macedonia although the MoD provides political guidance to the military leadership. Still, Macedonia has made serious progress in integrating civilians and military officers into one organisation. Joint working groups – consisting of ‘suits’ and ‘uniforms’ – were established to handle different aspects of the SDR; and (then) Minister Buckovski held weekly meetings with the CGS. Although in daily practice the GS seems fully integrated in the MoD the problem of accountability of the highest ranking officer remains. (See s.1 of this Chapter.)

The present ARM structure comprises the GS – including the usual G-1 to G-7 divisions – land forces command, air force and air defence commands, logistics, and training. It is undergoing transformation, however, as explained below (and illustrated in Fig. VI.1).

##### *Defence Reform: the SDR*

The 2003 National Security and Defence Concept explains why Macedonia wants to become a fully-fledged NATO member, while the 2003-4 SDR outlines how this goal will be pursued through defence reforms. The SDR has been organised as a three-stage exercise. Stage 1 – assessment of defence and security objectives – and Stage 2 – identifying and determining missions and capabilities of the ARM – are completed. The third and crucial stage – implementation – is very much work-in-progress designed to transform the ARM into a small, modern and well-equipped military that can deal with future tasks and challenges.

In 2004 Macedonia outlined eight main priorities for the coming years, most of them addressed in the SDR and some of them objectives alluded to already in this examination. They are (a) harmonisation of capabilities of the defence system and ARM with regard to new risks and threats; (b) allocation of resources within the defence budget to NATO standards; (c) full interoperability with NATO forces; (d) development of a Force Management Policy; (e) proportional ethnic representation in the MoD and ARM; (f) implementation of the PPBE system in 2005; (g) development of a personnel management system; and (h) development of logistical and training & education concepts that will support the new structure.

Most of these priorities are connected to clear timelines and should be achieved before or by 2007 (by which time the country anticipates full NATO membership). Other reforms – not all mentioned in the priorities – will only be fully implemented by 2013, such as full equi-proportionate representation of the Albanian and other minorities in the ARM and the complete modernisation of ‘non-declared forces’.

The plans elaborated upon in the SDR are regarded as realistic by both the MoD and the NAT (which was, for all practical purposes, a partner in the planning process). The NAT consists of about ten advisors from different NATO member states. It is located within the MoD and in that way works intimately with MoD staff. It assists the Ministry – and also the GS directly – with advice on security sector reform, help in PfP-related work, including PARP guidance, and on implementation of the Annual National Programme (ANP) within MAP. It also monitors progress made. The Team is appreciated for its disinterested guidance.

The American management consultants Booz Allen Hamilton also tender advice. Their people are held in less high esteem. Macedonia was more or less obliged to hire this ‘private’ company in order to receive official US expert assistance; and the aid package includes funding for procurement of American equipment. Booz Allen advises with this in mind. On top of that some Macedonian ‘insiders’ think that the firm’s staff are in no hurry to complete their well-remunerated work, and that the tempo of SDR implementation is suffering accordingly.

The SDR’s Stage 3 is all about reduction, restructuring and rationalisation. The total active strength of the MoD and ARM – including civilians, but excluding conscripts – is to fall from c.9000 (late 2004) to c.8700 in 2007. This looks like a minor reduction but two points have to be noted: first, the shrinkage follows big personnel cuts in 2003 and 2004; and, secondly, to compensate for the intended abolition of conscription, the number of rank-and-file volunteers (‘professional soldiers’) is to rise by almost 2000. Moreover, there is to be major surgery at the top. To command the slimline ARM’s formations will require just half-a-dozen generals: there used to be 14 or 15. (The ARM’s reserve component will go down also, to fewer than 5000.)

The ‘new model’ force structure comprises a Joint Operational Command, replacing the existing land forces command and integrating the former air force and air defence commands, a Logistic Support Command and a Training Command. Forces for Special Operations (SO), an Electronic Surveillance Centre (ESC) and an Air Surveillance Operational Centre (ASOC) – under the direct control of the GS – complete the set-up. See Fig. VI.1 overleaf.

Rationalisation of the force structure has a clear purpose: to produce units for participation in NATO-led operations (of whatever sort) and for peace-support operations led by NATO, the EU or OSCE. The MoD has – to use its

own terminology – a ‘determined list of declared forces’ and a ‘dynamic transformation plan’ for them. The timetable for realisation of the blueprint is ambitious: 60 per cent of units to be restructured by mid-2005; a further 30 per cent by end-2005; the remaining 10 per cent by end-2007. The plan appears, however, to be more or less on schedule and in line with the ‘prescribed dynamics’.

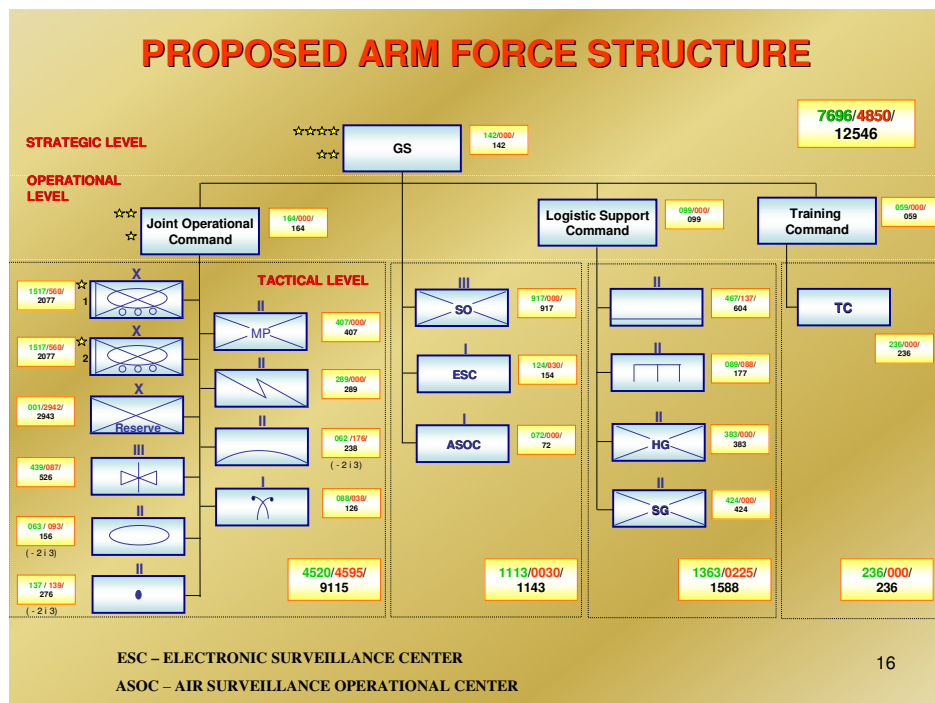


Fig. VI.1

Obviously, transformation also involves rationalising and, as resources permit, modernising the ARM's stock of equipment. Major assets disposed of include the land forces' remaining T-55 tanks and the air force's Su-25 aircraft plus other items identified during the SDR process. Surplus materiel is to be transferred to other state institutions or sold. Prioritised re-equipment will benefit declared units for NATO-led/PfP operations, the special operations unit and projects for information support plus helicopter purchases. In expenditure projections, 'equipping' – as the Macedonians call it – is assigned a rising share of the budget to 2007 as follows (percentages):

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007
Percentage	14.0	15.8	18.0	20.3

Through the period 2008-2013 (the present planning horizon) the intention is to hold the proportion at or around 20 per cent. If this can be done it should be possible to realise the objective of having most of the 'declared forces' equipped

and operational to NATO standards by the end of 2006. Moreover, with its PPBE system presumably well established by then, there appears every likelihood that the MoD will be able to sustain an appropriate, affordable and acceptable defence effort thereafter.

## 5. Assessment

During a May 2004 visit to Macedonia's National Assembly, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer congratulated the government on progress made in the area of defence reform. With regard to the SDR he stated that 'Allies have been impressed with both the determination and realism with which this difficult process has been pursued'. Others share this opinion. For example, the leader of the NAT in Skopje says that 'this country has made great strides in defence reform and in its general path to NATO...[and] the MoD stands as an example to other ministries in pursuing reform in a concrete and practical manner'. All this is encouraging. Broadly speaking, it is in line with our own assessment of what Macedonia has accomplished to date and how the country is approaching the run-up to the next NATO Summit.

For all the 'great strides' that have been taken, however, the state cannot yet count on getting an invitation to join NATO in 2006 and 2007 (or whenever). There is unfinished business in several areas relevant to preparedness for membership.

Our examination of *civil-military relations* highlighted some of these. Macedonia is fortunate that, on the whole, the media cover security-related affairs well, that its independent NGOs appraise defence policy and plans competently and critically, and that the military appear generally to understand their role and place in a democratic society. However, arrangements for the legislative oversight of security affairs are less satisfactory than they appear at first sight. The Committee on Defence and Security is not as effective it could be; another 'watchdog' commission is in suspended animation; and some areas of activity such as intelligence escape scrutiny altogether. Furthermore, while civilian executive direction is assured, there are ambiguities in the Constitution and Defence Law that could be problematical if, say, President and Prime Minister were from opposing parties (or factions) and at odds on an important military matter.

*Public attitudes* towards NATO membership, and towards what has to be done to maximise Macedonia's chances of obtaining it, are sufficiently positive for one to say that popular support is not a problem. It is uneven, though, and may or may not be deep-rooted. As for the costs of membership (and preparing for membership), these appear to be well understood, a price citizens are willing to pay despite the many other pressing claims on national resources in an under-performing economy. We expect support generally to be sustained

through 2005. In sum, when NATO's member-states come to make their definitive appraisal of the Macedonian candidacy, the aspirant's societal preparedness should not be an issue.

Nor should the preparedness of the military profession itself, provided that the country can put its *military education* system in good order through structural and curriculum reform. Sound plans have been made for the Military Academy – or a new Security Education Centre (?) – and for the ARM's Training Command. All that remains is to bring them to fruition as soon as possible. Regarding human resources management generally, however, there are a couple of question-marks. The first concerns fulfilment of the Ohrid Agreement's provision that the number of Albanians in the ARM should be proportional to the overall number of Albanians in Macedonia. This may be easier said than done. The second concerns the reservation of key jobs at the MoD for political nominees, a practice that brings burdens of incompetence and turbulence (since a game of 'musical chairs' is played after elections, and sometimes in-between). Macedonia would be better served by a merit-based promotion system for civil servants, with appropriate education and training – at home or abroad – at successive stages of an official's career. Hopefully, the new Human Resources Strategy will address this issue.

Despite this handicap, in streamlining its *defence organisation* Macedonia has earned the accolades cited at the start of this section. Admittedly, the all-important third stage of the SDR is 'unfinished business'; but the NAT, for example, thinks that on the whole the 'dynamic transformation plan' and its timelines are realistic. Such confidence appears well founded. Within both the MoD and the ARM 'suits' and uniforms' co-operate satisfactorily, and benefit from useful external advice (even though not all of it is disinterested). The Ministry's PPBE system will be fully up and running soon. It is difficult to find fault with the blueprint's prescriptions for force structures, force levels, equipment and deployment. Among other things they reflect sensible structural choices, highlighting 'declared forces' with niche capabilities that reflect the ARM's strengths. (By all account the 'Wolves' and 'Scorpions' have performed with credit in Iraq.) Contraction-with-professionalisation is a neat formula for managing the next phase of personnel rundown. The schedule for stripping-out obsolescent equipment and embarking on prioritised investment seems to have been carefully thought through.

If all goes well, then, in terms of its military credentials, by 2006/7 Macedonia should be at least as well prepared for NATO membership as its Adriatic Charter partners and in some respects better prepared. The appointment in January 2005 of a National Coordinator for NATO Integration signalled Skopje's determination to secure an invitation to accession then.





**PART C      THE PFP CANDIDATES: COUNTRY ASSESSMENTS**



## VII BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Reporting in April 2005 the independent International Commission on the Balkans argued for the earliest possible admission to PfP of both Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Serbia and Montenegro (SCG), on the grounds that 'NATO played the role of a fast integration track for the Central and East European countries and it should do the same for the Balkans'. We concur in this judgement. Further in this connection, the Commission took the view that ICTY-related conditionality should not continue to stand in either aspirants' way. We agree.

In this Chapter and the next, however, the emphasis is not on how admitting the two Western Balkans' aspirants to PfP might contribute to acceleration of the wider region's Euro-Atlantic integration. Nor is general criticism of the ICTY a central theme. Rather the focus is on the individual countries' partnership credentials and on how the prerequisite for their admission upon which NATO firmly insists – that they should deliver to The Hague the ICTY's most notorious indictees – has to some degree become a paralysing conditionality, and in some respects an unfair one.

Underlying our analysis is a keen awareness of the importance attached to securing PfP status by both BiH and SCG. For the leadership in both countries admission is sought partly, perhaps mainly, for its *immediate and symbolic significance*. Their exclusion to date has marked them out as abnormal among Eurasian states, somehow less worthy than (say) Belarus or Kazakhstan. It is desired also, though, because entry is seen as having *longer-term and practical value*. Most obviously, it is viewed as a necessary first step towards full incorporation in the evolving European security community or, strictly, the Euro-Atlantic 'system' (since what goes with PfP participation is representation on the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)). As for further moves in this direction, both BiH and SCG could thereafter contemplate entering the MAP process en route to NATO membership. The leadership in Sarajevo certainly has this objective in its sights. It is talked about in Belgrade also, though for many Serbs applying to join NATO – allying with those who in 1999 were bombing their cities – would, at least for the time being, be a step too far.

Fundamental to our examination also is the view that the essential eligibility of the Western Balkan aspirants for admission to PfP is not – or should not be – an issue. By the standards applied for most of the past decade both certainly have the basic qualifications for admission, especially now that BiH has acquired a state-level defence personality while SCG appears to have passed the point of no return in effecting structural reform of its armed forces. (See the argument, and the nominal roll of partners, in Chapter II of the present Report, at pp. 13-15.)

Moving on from these general observations, what of BiH's partnership credentials? Is the country now ready for admission to NATO's non-members' club (and for joining the EAPC)? Does it have what it takes to follow the MAP course thereafter?

## 1. Partnership credentials

Today these are serious questions in a way that they would not have been in the early years of the present decade. Then there were many respected commentators who thought it unlikely that post-Dayton BiH would ever acquire enough of the attributes of a unified state to act as such in international security affairs. Almost all significant power continued to reside at the level of the two Entities. There were effectively three separate, oversized and inordinately expensive armies in the country: that of Republika Srpska, then still subsidised by Serbia; and the nominally unified forces of the Federation, divided in practice into Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Muslim (Bosniak) components. Politics remained sharply polarised and confrontational. Within the state a fragile tranquillity prevailed, principally because there was a multinational peacekeeping force to keep an eye on developments (SFOR) and a strong 'outside' agency – the Office of the High Representative (OHR) – empowered and prepared to make decisive interventions as and when required.

There are fewer sceptics now, principally because there has been a clear shift in the centre of gravity of defence policy-making and planning – and of the higher direction of the military – from the Entities to the state level. Since early 2004 there has been a state-level Minister of Defence – Nikola Radovanovic, a Bosnian Serb – and since early 2005 there has been a functioning, and more or less fully staffed, national Ministry of Defence (MoD) in Sarajevo. Whereas hitherto a small central secretariat was responsible for co-ordination as necessary of the (indigenous) armed forces *in* BiH, it is now possible to speak of the Armed Forces *of* Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This is no mean accomplishment; and it is instructive to review how change was brought about.

(1) Work by the OHR and SFOR, aimed at ending the military division of the state and preparing for integration of forces, produced its first concrete result in May 2001 with the Tri-Presidency's approval of a *BiH Defence Policy* text. This was quickly followed by an official declaration of interest in joining PfP, to which NATO's Secretary-General responded by outlining key requirements for admission.

(2) What was decisive in prompting serious effort to meet these was the revelation in August 2002 that defence-related institutions of Republika Srpska had illegally exported arms technology to Iraq (the Orao affair). The OHR was able to use this episode to advance the integration agenda.

(3) A further message from Lord Robertson – to the new Tri-Presidency that took office after the October 2002 elections – underlined the importance of, among other things, creating a functioning state-level command and control structure.

(4) A flurry of activity followed in 2003, explicitly focused on having a solid case for admission to PfP at the mid-2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul.

In January 2003 a statement entitled *Defence Targets of BiH – Mission and Pledges* was prepared for the (post-Dayton) Peace Implementation Council, and disseminated as ‘A Message to the People of Bosnia and Herzegovina’. A credible PfP candidacy – ‘as early as possible and within 18 months’ – was the key goal.

In May the OHR took the important step of setting up a Defence Reform Commission (DRC) to chart a detailed road-map to this end, with definite milestones. It set about its work immediately.

In late September the DRC issued a comprehensive Report. Carrying the title *The Path to Partnership for Peace*, this document contained a key chapter on implementation of a definitive 47-item prospectus for state-level defence reforms plus a series of actions for strengthening legislative oversight.

Specific tasks were defined in an October 2003 letter signed by the High Representative, Lord Ashdown, and the country began addressing them at once.

Thereafter regular progress checks were conducted against a tough schedule of ‘Benchmarks and Milestones for PfP Accession – 1 July 2004’. Most of them were met by that date or very soon after.

(5) Thus by the time of the Istanbul Summit all necessary state-level legislation and regulations had been adopted and the Entities had passed all relevant legislative and constitutional amendments. Furthermore, key personnel benchmarks had been met, notably the appointment of a state-level defence minister and deputies (as noted earlier). So had some major institutional targets, like the establishment of the Security Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly (which in fact held its inaugural meeting at the end of 2003). The processes of staffing the state’s defence ministry, the Joint Staff and the Operational Command were well advanced.

The scope of the ‘Benchmarks and Milestones...’ checklist reflected a significant feature of the DRC exercise pre-Istanbul. While nominally focused on making BiH ‘ready’ for PfP, it is clear that the authorities in Sarajevo – and the OHR especially – used the desire for the recognition that admission would bring to set in train a far-reaching transformation of the security set-up in the country in accordance with their own vision and their own ‘beyond Dayton’ agenda. Certainly the mandated changes went beyond what minimal compliance with any declared PfP *acquis* would require, and well beyond

anything expected of the states which in the mid-1990s responded to the original open invitation to join the Partnership.

So much is apparent if the DRC's point of departure is compared to the present situation of certain *partenariat* members of long standing. The September 2003 Report of the Commission opened with the assertion that BiH 'is not currently a credible candidate' for PfP. It went on to enumerate – and identify actions to remedy – a number of 'deficiencies' attributable to (then) existing 'arrangements' and the 'excessive size' of the country's armies. The list included

- 'lack of adequate State-level command and control of the armed forces' – a deficiency shared by Moldova certainly, by others possibly;
- 'insufficient democratic oversight and control of the armed forces, especially by parliaments' – a criticism that could be levelled at almost all the present Partners;
- 'lack of transparency at all levels for defence matters' – a similarly widespread shortcoming;
- 'non-compliance with international obligations, primarily OSCE politico-military accords' – where, again, BiH is anything but unique, since few states have an exemplary record on (for instance) observing the OSCE's 1994 Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security or upholding the confidence- and security building provisions of the Vienna Document 1999;
- 'excessive, deteriorating arms at too many locations' – a problem in several PfP countries, including Albania, Belarus, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, and Ukraine, to name just half-a-dozen;
- 'waste of human and financial resources in the defence sector' – of which many more than half-a-dozen could be accused;
- and
- 'forces sized and equipped for missions no longer appropriate for the security situation' – another criticism that could be applied to all but a few on the present nominal roll of Partners.

In view of the foregoing, as we have observed, the basic eligibility of BiH for PfP membership could not be – and was not – an issue at Istanbul. Indeed on several counts policy and practice in the country actually compared favourably with the PfP norm before the changes initiated in late 2003/early 2004.

What is more, as noted, by mid-2004 the country had fulfilled – or was on the verge of fulfilling – all of those requirements laid down for it directly related to PfP objectives (i.e. leaving the ICTY issue aside). This was the result of the rigorous implementation schedule already mentioned. It also reflected a decision to base the transformation prospectus on higher standards than those required for PfP 'credibility' alone. This was taken because *partnership* does not represent the limit of the Sarajevo reformers' ambitions for BiH. The September 2003 DRC Report urged the state to make an 'explicit commitment'

to seeking *NATO membership*. The steps it prescribed, the DRC said, had been specified expressly to ‘facilitate future changes’ such as those that might be required under MAP discipline.

No less important, by mid-2004 ‘transformation’ had already greatly advanced the ‘beyond Dayton’ agenda at home. Perhaps the most remarkable outcome was (and is) the support for change from Republika Srpska (RS), given the opposition to military integration shown by Banja Luka hitherto. The Entity’s defence élites – including the armed forces’ leadership – appear to have at last concluded that the security interests of RS will be best served, and their own future prospects best assured, within the BiH state framework. This acknowledgement of the supremacy of the *state* in defence matters amounts to a seismic shift in attitudes the significance of which may not have been fully appreciated. Doubtless it owes much to the commitment of Defence Minister Radovanovich who as a DRC member – he was the Representative of the President of RS – helped frame its recommendations and who is now playing a central role – arguably the central role – in implementing them. It is helpful, too, that Mr Radovanovich is also leading follow-on work under a reconstructed DRC of which he is an active Co-Chairman (alongside a NATO nominee).

Contrary to many expectations, to date implementation seems to have been more troublesome in the Federation (FBiH) than in RS. While the principle has been accepted that the FBiH Army should in future be regarded as a provider of troops to the centrally commanded and administered Armed Forces of BiH, practicalities like the nomination of individuals to serve in the state-level MoD and on the Joint Staff have proved difficult because safeguarding Bosniak-Croat ‘balance’ in appointments is a stumbling block. (Obviously the hope is that over time – ideally, before too long – the benefits of appointing on merit will come to be recognised, so that this question will loom less large in future personnel policy calculations.)

In light of all of the above, it was a disappointment for BiH that no invitation to PfP was forthcoming in Istanbul. It was not a surprise, however. On a late-May 2004 trip to Sarajevo NATO Secretary-General De Hoop Scheffer had reportedly put the country’s chances of admission at close to zero. His cryptic explanation was ‘war criminals first, PfP later’.

We consider the ICTY issue in a moment. What it is important to note here is that, while denying BiH admission to PfP at the Summit, NATO had the good sense to applaud the country’s recent reforms and reward notable accomplishment by offering the opportunity for participation in selected PfP activities. The Alliance also undertook to develop a comprehensive Tailored Cooperation Programme (TCP) for BiH and this is now up and running. On top of that it has since made assistance with further defence reform the primary task of the NATO presence in the country that remains following the end-2004 termination of the SFOR mission on hand-over to a European Union Force (EUFOR).

There were two important domestic consequences of disappointment in Istanbul. First, denial of PfP status for less than satisfactory cooperation with the ICTY – and, in particular, failure to deliver arch-villain Radovan Karadzic to The Hague – gave High Representative Ashdown the pretext to a) remove from public office a long list of RS political personalities of suspect loyalty and b) initiate state-wide police reform. Secondly, Sarajevo decided to maintain the momentum of transformation by in effect turning the DRC into a standing Commission – under local/NATO co-chairmanship – and to persevere with progress checks on the continuing process of military reform. This it has duly done.

Thanks to the latter decision, BiH has further strengthened its PfP credentials over 2004-2005, to an extent that makes the country's continued exclusion from the club both an anomaly and an injustice. It is anomalous if the point of reference is the other members of the *partenariat*, as earlier comments show. It is unfair because the failure to apprehend Karadzic is not entirely the fault of the powers-that-be in Sarajevo.

On this last point, it is generally supposed, to be sure, that the wartime leader is at large in BiH. However, the presumption is that he moves among Serb communities within which he is revered as a hero and whose citizens discuss his whereabouts openly in a deliberate campaign of disinformation. Moreover, it is known that he enjoys the personal protection of well-armed bodyguards – the so-called *Preventiva* – who are dedicated enough, and capable enough, to exact a toll in casualties on whoever might try to seize him. As a result, the attempts that have been made – planned and led by SFOR/EUFOR, most of them – have been few and far between. One reason for this is the reluctance of commanders to put their troops at risk, an inhibition on which we have their personal testimony. And we are not talking here of minor military undertakings. Press reports of an April 2004 operation in Pale, for example, say that it involved some 40 crack troops with helicopter support, mainly American but including British and other NATO forces supported by BiH police. Like all others before and since, this operation failed: but clearly not because of deliberate non-cooperation by the authorities in Sarajevo. Yet it is the latter's wholly laudable state-building effort that exclusion from PfP harms.

Caution in pursuing Karadzic is understandable anyway, given the possible domestic repercussions of a botched action. For example the aforementioned April 2004 operation entailed a heavy assault on a Serbian Orthodox church and its rectory. The explosion used to gain entry seriously injured a priest and his son. Several hundred Bosnian Serbs took to the streets in protest. Had the local hero been caught – or, say, injured or killed 'while resisting arrest' – the number might have run into thousands, with who knows what consequences.



## 2. Membership potential

Removal of the ICTY-related ‘threshold conditionality’ that stands in the way of BiH’s admission to PfP, together with satisfactory realisation of its post-Istanbul TCP, would bring the country’s NATO membership aspirations to the forefront of attention. In our judgement, as a result of the initial and follow-on DRC effort, early graduation to MAP status would be a realistic expectation, given further consolidation of state-level institutions – in the security field and generally – plus their gradual assumption of powers now vested in the High Representative. Thereafter progression to Alliance membership might not be inordinately protracted, thanks to what has already been accomplished under the rubric of ‘transformation’.

For example, the rudiments of sound *civil-military relations* are already discernible. Arrangements for the higher (civilian) direction of the Armed Forces of BiH have been worked out, complicated though they necessarily are in an adolescent union-state. Provision for legislative oversight has been made: we have noted the creation of a Security Commission of the state-level Parliamentary Assembly and that it first met in 2003; and we understand that it has been conscientiously active since then, keeping ‘transformation’ under scrutiny (with the benefit of guidance, from OSCE officials and others, plus the all-important cooperation of Defence Minister Radovanovic).

So far as *public attitudes* are concerned, there has been solid élite and popular support for the effort to gain admission to PfP; and the DRC’s September 2003 conclusion – that BiH should make an ‘explicit commitment’ to seeking NATO membership – was generally welcomed. Noteworthy also are the remarks of High Representative Ashdown. In a late-2004 interview, he said that ‘if there is one issue that everybody in every ethnicity, every political party and every corner of the country is agreed upon, it is that Bosnia and Herzegovina’s ultimate destination is Europe’: so there is a clear understanding across the society that ‘the only possible future for this country is via integration in Euro-Atlantic structures’.<sup>11</sup>

A prerequisite for successful integration in NATO is proper preparation of the military profession for Alliance membership, to ensure ‘the interoperability of human capital’ (Chapter II above, at p.17). *Military education* is therefore a particular challenge for BiH which at present lacks state-level training institutions.

There are, however, a state-level *defence organisation* and decision-making structures in place. The Joint Staff and Operational Command are functioning, and work is in hand to develop coherent planning processes at the national level – easier said than done, in view of the scope for turf warfare,

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<sup>11</sup> Interview in the Special Issue of *NATO Review* published under the title *Historic Change in the Balkans*, p.38.

conflicts over proportional representation of ethnicities, and so on. Given success here, though, it should not take long to settle the shape, size, equipment and deployment of integrated Armed Forces of BiH – partly because basic preparatory work was done some years ago (by SFOR), partly because the authorities in Sarajevo will have plenty of assistance at their disposal.

### **3. Ready or not?**

To sum up: we think that BiH is certainly ‘ready’ for admission to PfP, and has been since mid-2004. The state has sound partnership credentials, and they are getting stronger all the time as defence reform proceeds. All that stands in the way of the country’s formal acceptance into the *partenariat* is the ICTY-related conditionality upon which NATO insists – ‘war criminals first, PfP later’ – which in this instance means delivering the elusive Radovan Karadzic to The Hague.

To its credit the Alliance, recognising that to allow this single issue to preclude all engagement with Sarajevo would be absurd, has found ways to circumvent the prerequisite. The result, though, is another absurdity: access for BiH to most of the practical benefits of the programme without the accolade of Partnership status. Like the International Commission on the Balkans that reported in April 2005, we therefore think that ‘ICTY threshold conditionality should move away from its focus on specific individuals...[and] compliance should now be understood more broadly’. That would make possible an entirely defensible determination that, in BiH’s case, the state-level authorities are doing all they can reasonably be expected to do by way of cooperation with the Tribunal. Admission to PfP could follow.

As for BiH’s longer-term NATO membership aspirations, we think that once the PfP hurdle has been surmounted the country – with help from its friends – could progress to MAP-state status fairly quickly, thanks to the impressive DRC-led transformation that has taken place since 2003 and is, indeed, a continuing process.

## VIII SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Ahead of the mid-2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul, SCG entertained high hopes of admission to PfP but no great expectations. Realists knew that the ICTY threshold conditionality would apply, principally on account of the country's failure to deliver General Ratko Mladic and other indictees to The Hague, and that the case against eight NATO members outstanding at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), brought over actions in 1999, would amount to another disqualification. At the same time, there were some grounds for optimists' hopes. As in BiH, armed forces' reform – or at least necessary preparation for it – had proceeded apace in the run-up to the Summit; and it seemed reasonable to expect that this effort would earn some recognition. In the event it did: like BiH, the state-union was offered the opportunity to take part in 'selected PfP activities' plus a new, more comprehensive and diversified, Tailored Cooperation Programme (TCP) to follow a modest one already running.

Even in going this far, however, NATO's Heads of State and Government had to overcome a certain apprehension about SCG's future directions following the strong showing of nationalist parties in the (Serbian) parliamentary elections of 28 December 2003. The consequence of that was political turmoil from which there emerged eventually a curious minority coalition government comprising (a) Vojislav Kostunica's populist Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) as 'senior partner' and (b) the vanguard reformers of G17+ whose leader Miroljub Labus became Deputy Prime Minister and whose luminaries were appointed to head some key ministries. The cause for concern was that this administration depended (as it still depends) on the support of Slobodan Milosevic's old crew, the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), in face of the fervently nationalist opposition Serbian Radical Party (SRS) which is the largest single party in the republic's legislature (under Tomislav Nikolic, because party leader Vojislav Seselj is detained in The Hague).

In the first half of 2004 there was deep pessimism about what the new political set-up might mean for reform. At least one institutional observer of the SCG scene – the well-regarded and well-resourced International Crisis Group (ICG) – thought that the process could grind to a halt, essentially because the balance of political power rested with purveyors of 'the Milosevic lie' that Serbia's economic difficulties (and other problems) are the result not of endemic corruption and criminality but of necessary wars, NATO's 1999 bombing and much malicious meddling by foreigners (states and international organisations). The populists and nationalists simply refuse, the ICG said, to confront the country's past. They particularly disparage the ICTY as a dispenser of "victor's justice" and believe that, in general, Serbia is wilfully maligned and woefully misunderstood.

This prognosis appeared in a hard-hitting Report published in late-March 2004 in which the ICG argued that in these circumstances those engaged in helping SCG's rehabilitation should shed their illusions and get tough, imposing stiffer terms on their assistance. It urged the United States to 'continue and strengthen' aid conditionality. It said that the European Union should 'make economic aid...subject to a formal review of...achievement of specific benchmarks'. It recommended that conditionality should also apply to international financial institutions' assistance and that the donor community generally should 'demand greater accountability from the Serbian government on capital investment projects' plus all spending in Kosovo. Of particular interest for our own study, the Report said that NATO should 'adhere to the policy of not admitting Serbia and Montenegro to Partnership for Peace until it drops its lawsuit against NATO and cooperates fully with the ICTY'.<sup>12</sup>

In at least one respect, though, the ICG's prognosis and prescription were flawed (in our opinion). It ignored incontrovertible evidence that *so far as the armed forces are concerned* times have changed. They started changing around three years ago – which is when interest in joining PfP was first expressed – and some fundamental reforms were enacted by the post-Djindjic administration in mid-2003, riding the wave of outrage that followed the former coalition leader's assassination. As this abated, and the government struggled to retain support, there was a hiatus in the closing months of the year. However, on taking office in March/April 2004, the new government's team at the defence ministry returned to the previous year's unfinished business and, in a few months, advanced the reform agenda impressively.

## 1. Partnership credentials

The result is that SCG had respectable credentials for admission to PfP at Istanbul; and they have become stronger since.

The driving force at the start of the country's military transformation, in mid-2003, was (then) Minister of Defence Boris Tadic. In a few months, Tadic successfully

- set about laying the groundwork for a comprehensive programme of reform by unambiguously subordinating the General Staff to his ministry (in May);
- got rid of some uncooperative top brass, notably Deputy Chief of Staff General Vladimir Lazarevic and Head of Military Intelligence General Radoslav Skoric (in August), and altogether axed around one-third of all

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<sup>12</sup> *Serbia's U-Turn*, Europe Report no. 154 (issued by the ICG on 26 March 2004). ICG has since issued an update on this paper *Serbia: Spinning its wheels*, Europe Briefing no. 39 (23 May 2005) to which we refer later.

serving officers of flag rank (on the authority of the Supreme Defence Council);

- initiated thereby a shift in thinking within the military from the old prioritisation of *regime* security to a more appropriate emphasis on *national* security; and
- developed a mid-term plan of reforms, covering preparation of not only a basic defence strategy for the state-union and a White Paper detailing force reduction, rationalisation and restructuring, but also schemes for reorganising both the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff.

The timetable laid out in this plan slipped in the run-up to the end-2003 election and immediately after. By all accounts Boris Tadic became heavily preoccupied with the troubles of the ruling coalition and, in particular, those of the Democratic Party (DS), not to mention his own personal political ambitions. (He succeeded to the leadership of the party, and in mid-2004 won SCG's presidential election.) However, what is important for present purposes is that the prospectus was not discarded. It remained to be taken up by Kostunica's coalition government.

Taken up it was, as soon as the new defence ministerial team was finally in place under ex-diplomat Prvoslav Davinic, with supporting G17+ nominees. On the whole Davinic must have liked what he saw, because the bureaucracy was launched on a programme of work to realise more or less exactly what his predecessor had intended. Moreover, from the outset business at the Ministry of Defence was done – is still being done – with a palpable sense of purpose. Initially there was lost time to be made up in an effort to make the PfP candidacy as credible as possible pre-Istanbul.

By the eve of the mid-2004 Summit headway had been made in a number of important areas.

- A core policy statement – *The Defence Strategy of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro* – had been completed and approved by SCG's Supreme Defence Council.
- Preparation of the long-promised *White Paper on Defence* was all but done.
- Work was well advanced on a scheme for reorganisation of the Ministry of Defence (with provision for a number of General Staff departments to be integrated in the future structure).

That SCG had accomplished in weeks what might have been expected to take months was duly commended in Istanbul, leading to the promises of assistance already mentioned.

With that help the reform process has continued, albeit at a reduced tempo. One reason for loss of momentum is that, although defence is state-union responsibility, this does not mean that decision-making for defence is immune to the tensions that characterise relations between the constituent Republics. Among other things, these explain the time it has taken to produce

the key *White Paper on Defence*, a document which finally appeared in April 2005 (as a comprehensive policy prospectus, published in a bi-lingual Serbian/English format so as to be accessible to both a domestic and international readership).

A thorough review of the *White Paper* is beyond the scope of the present study. It is pertinent to point out, though, that the text is itself a noteworthy statement of SCG's partnership credentials. It contains material on the country's security environment; on defence policy, resources and capabilities; and a chapter on the 'Defence System of Serbia and Montenegro' that incorporates explanation of institutional arrangements for 'managing' the system, including a section on the need for 'democratic and civil control'. A final chapter on 'Defence System Reform' records recent actions under this heading which, the document says, have 'created important preconditions for the continuation of reform'.

Looking ahead, in this same chapter the *White Paper* carries an outline of 'priorities in development of the Army' which, the text says, has been 'operationalised' in three phases.

- Phase One (already accomplished) entailed (a) organisational changes, involving 'disbanding, transforming, regrouping, whereby the number of commands units and institutions has been reduced by 30 per cent', (b) reduction of armaments and military equipment ('outdated weapons and equipment have been phased out'), (c) reduction of the number of 'locations' [garrisons], and (d) reduction of the number of personnel (officers – by 26 per cent, NCOs – 12 per cent, other ranks – over 30 per cent)
- In Phase Two (2005-2006) 'the reform process will speed up through the establishment of a modern organisation on the strategic and operational levels, and the continuation of the rational restructuring of the Army on the tactical level'. More units are to be disbanded or transformed and more outdated armaments and military equipment discarded.
- In Phase Three (2007-2010) 'the planned cycle of reform of the Army will be completed, and the rate of modernisation of armaments and military equipment will be increased considerably'. The envisaged force structure will have (a) 'response forces...modernly equipped, trained and manned to a highest degree', (b) main defence forces, (c) territorial forces, plus (d) logistic support. However, the *White Paper* says that continued professionalisation of the Army 'will lead to a gradual disbandment of the main defence forces, and their role will be taken over by the response forces and territorial forces'.

What the policy prospectus has to say about 'air force and anti-aircraft defence units', and about the Navy, is fairly cryptic. The former will be 'unified within the

framework of air force bases'. The latter will be 'organised in the form of maritime and coastal units, and inland waterway units'.

So much is positive in terms of SCG's readiness for admission to PfP. It is true that producing blueprints for rationalisation is not the same thing as implementing and consolidating reform. It is true also that redrawing the defence ministry's 'wiring diagram' – with former General Staff functions embedded in an integrated structure under clear civilian direction – does not guarantee that day-to-day civil-military relations will be immediately harmonious. Certainly SCG has a great many 'old hands' who, as one correspondent puts it, are 'generally not in favour of military reforms and they are trying to obstruct it' or who are 'in favour of Euro-Atlantic integrations when they speak in public but essentially they do not do anything in reality to facilitate reforms'.<sup>13</sup> In our judgement, however, the likelihood is that SCG should be able to deliver against what the *White Paper* has invoiced. Enough political players realise that the country's interest requires that it should. (Obviously successful realisation of the blueprint as sketched does depend on the survival of the state-union. However, while a 'velvet divorce' – if matters come to that – would create a host of practical problems for defence transformation, it would not invalidate the rationale for what is envisaged.)

On the subject of 'delivery' it is, of course, largely to get help in implementing the reform prospectus that SCG pressed its PfP candidacy in the run-up to the 2004 Istanbul Summit, even in the face of more or less certain 'disqualification'. It is also why leading personalities in the country continue to lobby for admission. Looked at from another perspective, the costs of continued exclusion are irksome. For example, officials in Belgrade say that a host of inconveniences, like the inability to exchange documents freely, restrict the extent to which they can tap the experience of neighbours willing to share lessons learned in reshaping their own national defences. The same officials also point out that SCG itself has potentially useful knowledge to share, especially in areas such as civil emergency planning. (Based on what was done during the NATO bombing in 1999, 'we know all about keeping two million citizens supplied with water', one source noted wryly.)

The argument thus returns to the ICTY 'threshold conditionality' issue: the denial of PfP status because, in the judgement of the arbiter in these matters, Chief Prosecutor Carla del Ponte, SCG has yet to demonstrate full cooperation with the Tribunal and, in particular, continues to give sanctuary to former Bosnian Serb commander General Ratko Mladic. Other indictees have been arrested and extradited or have surrendered to the ICTY, including some senior officers. Indeed, there has been a steady stream of these latterly. At the

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<sup>13</sup> This is also the view of the ICG. In its May 2005 briefing – cited in the previous footnote – it says that the army has not been 'cleared of Milosevic personnel' and remains one of SCG's 'unreformed centres of power' (p.7).

beginning of February 2005 General Vladimir Lazarevic turned himself in and by the end of the month two other generals had surrendered. In March four more indictees gave themselves up. In April General Sreten Lukic and former Chief of Staff General Nebojsa Pavkovic followed suit. However, as the Chief Prosecutor and others see it, delivery of smaller fry cannot compensate for failure to land the big fish.

The view in The Hague (and Brussels) is that full cooperation is an obligation not an option. Still, this formulation is open to interpretation: how full is 'full'? In Belgrade it is argued that former President Milosevic was sent to The Netherlands; and others have followed, not all of them 'small fry' either. Moreover, the Serbian government has said repeatedly that, if and when it gets reliable information on the whereabouts in Serbia of the most-wanted 'big fish' still at large, appropriate forces will seize him. In the context of SCG's partnership quest, this obviously does not amount to 'full cooperation' as NATO understands the term: on the other hand nor does it constitute outright non-cooperation.

In view of popular sentiment in the country, the authorities in SCG have to weigh the likely political consequences of doing more. For example, a successful seizure of Mladic, followed by his swift shipment to The Hague, would undoubtedly be exploited, across the country, by the nationalist rabble-rousers of the SRS (and SPS) and might even invite retribution. Two G17+ writers have pinpointed the dilemma as follows.

'Clearly, cooperation with the ICTY is important and must continue. However, care must be taken not to undermine Serbia and Montenegro's nascent democratic institutions. Zoran Djindjic, the late Prime Minister who was murdered in March 2003, may have paid the ultimate price for his cooperation.'

The same authors also argue that 'even moderate Serbs find it unacceptable that their country is effectively held to ransom by this issue', especially since nobody seems to know for sure whether Mladic really is living in Serbia and the multinational forces in BiH over the last several years have failed to track down either Radovan Karadzic or Mladic in spite of the intelligence-gathering resources at their disposal. In addition the writers note that 'most Serbs find it hard to view the ICTY as an impartial body, given the overwhelming preponderance of Serb indictees'.<sup>14</sup>

Our own conclusion here is straightforward. Like the International Commission on the Balkans (ICB) we think that SCG should be formally admitted to PfP as soon as possible, not so much 'in order for NATO enlargement to fulfil its regional role' – the ICB's central argument – but because the country has essential partnership credentials and because

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<sup>14</sup> Pavle Jankovic and Srdjan Gligorijevic, 'Burying the Hatchet', a piece in the collection of articles and interviews published under the title *Historic Change in the Balkans* cited earlier, pp.50-53.



admission would strengthen the hand of reformers in Belgrade and speed the reform process. Further, and all things considered, we think that Carla del Ponte should not continue to be accorded *de facto* veto power on this matter.

## 2. Membership eventually?

The second question we undertook to ask about the Western Balkan PfP aspirants is: 'have they got what it takes to follow the MAP course thereafter?' – i.e. following success in gaining admission to the *partenariat*. (Chapter I, p.7)

For several reasons it is somewhat premature to put the question in the SCG case. It is difficult, for one thing, to imagine the country embarking on assisted preparation for NATO membership until the future of the state-union itself is resolved one way or another. We have heard the arrangement described as 'chronically dysfunctional' overall and, significantly, Brussels has had to concede that only by dealing with Serbia and Montenegro separately can momentum be maintained in the process of preparation for EU membership (the 'twin track' approach).

It is difficult also to imagine how accession to NATO could realistically be contemplated while the status of Kosovo remains unresolved, as an SCG province under international law and according to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, but still under UN administration and policed by a multinational force (KFOR) which is still the biggest NATO-led operation anywhere.

No less important, as yet there is no broad societal support for NATO membership in either of the constituent republics. In early-2004 polling, two-thirds of respondents – nearly 70 per cent in Serbia and well over 50 per cent in Montenegro – believed that the state-union should join PfP. More than two-fifths thought that participation would bring more benefits than costs to the country. However, about one-half of those polled – 56.2 per cent in Serbia, 50.2 per cent in Montenegro – did not wish SCG to join NATO. More strikingly, when asked about their level of trust in NATO, those replying positively amounted to a mere 4.3 per cent of respondents in Serbia and a derisory 3.2 per cent in Montenegro, proportions doubtless influenced by memories of 1999 and perceptions of the Alliance forces' failure – or even lack of interest – in providing a satisfactory level of physical security for ethnic Serbs in Kosovo.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Statistics as reproduced in Jankovic and Gligorijevic, *loc.cit.* in the previous footnote, from opinion polls carried out by Belgrade's Centre for Civil-Military Relations. The very latest research shows even higher support for the PfP quest – over 75 per cent of respondents to one poll – a correspondent tells us. It is highest among Democratic Party (DS) and G17+ members apparently (though not surprisingly) but high also – around 60 per cent – among members of the opposition parties in Serbia (a figure that our contact finds hard to believe).

Despite these inauspicious indicators, eventual membership is evidently a longer-term aspiration at least in progressive circles in Belgrade. In his Foreword to the *White Paper on Defence*, Defence Minister Davinic writes as follows.

‘By acceding to Euro-Atlantic integrations, first of all the Partnership for Peace programme, we shall increase the level of security in the region, increase the defence ability of Serbia and Montenegro and promote European and Euro-Atlantic values.’ (Emphasis added.)

This language clearly reflects a vision and, also, a commitment to policies that will further SCG’s inclusion in the international community – as one state or two, with or without Kosovo – rather than its continued exclusion from it.

### 3. Ready or not?

To sum up: we think that SCG, like BiH, is certainly ‘ready’ for admission to PfP. The state has satisfactory partnership credentials, and they will get stronger if all the changes described in the final chapter of the April 2005 *White Paper on Defence of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro* can be delivered as invoiced. Formal acceptance into PfP was refused at NATO’s 2004 Istanbul Summit – and has not been offered since – essentially because Ratko Mladic remains at large. The ICTY’s Chief Prosecutor says he is in Serbia: the SCG government says there is no hard evidence of this but that if they discover his whereabouts in the country they will seize him.

We think that holding SCG to ransom on this issue – the perception in Belgrade – should cease, difficult though it may be for NATO to contemplate this. However, insistence on ‘full cooperation’ with the ICTY as this is understood in The Hague and Brussels is doing more harm than good. The core rationale of the Tribunal is to establish that war crimes are a matter of individual, not collective, guilt. It is a perverse irony, therefore, that whole societies – in both BiH and SCG – are bearing the burdens of hard-line interpretation of the principle that cooperation is ‘an obligation not an option’.<sup>16</sup>

Most important, though, we share the apprehension of those in SCG who fear that their country’s continued exclusion from PfP can only fuel conspiracy theories at home, provide further ammunition for extremists, and delay the process of ‘clearing’ from the security sector those obstructionist elements which represent the ideological legacy of the Milosevic era. Early admission, on

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<sup>16</sup> We say this while acknowledging the validity of the ICG’s observation on SCG that neither Prime Minister Kostunica nor Serbian President Tadic has yet ‘found the insight and the courage to condemn publicly their own people’s war crimes, their perpetrators and the legacy with which they have burdened this state’. (The most they have done is to deplore all war crimes.)

the other hand, would strengthen the hand of reformers and enhance the chances of realising the vision they hold of full Euro-Atlantic integration for their country, including NATO membership when the time is right.



**PART D            EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS**



## IX THE WESTERN BALKAN CANDIDATES

This Chapter has a two-fold purpose: first, to appraise the three Western Balkan MAP-states in terms of their preparedness for NATO membership, based on our examination of their candidacies in the country profiles in Part B of this Report (Chapters IV-VI); and, secondly, to consider the partnership credentials of the two PfP aspirants in the region using the material in Part C (Chapters VII and VIII).

What follows therefore consists principally of a collation of our summary assessments of the five states on a *country-by-country* basis. The reader will recall that there is a *thematic* overview in Chapter III above, which is where concise comparisons among the five can be found with respect to the aspects of preparedness to which particular attention has been paid, viz. civil-military relations, public attitudes, military education, and defence organisation.

### 1. Albania

At NATO's 2002 Summit in Prague the North Atlantic Council decided not to invite Albania to join the Alliance. The country was assessed as falling well short of 'expectations and requirements' for accession on just about all counts. Tirana accepted the judgement with good grace. It came as no surprise.

Some things will again weigh heavily against Albania when its case is next considered in 2006 or 2007 (or whenever). The basic political prerequisite for NATO (and EU) entry is that a candidate should be a law-governed democracy with a market economy. This country is not. The rule of law is not universally respected: in 2004 the EU postponed talks on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement because of the Socialist government's failure to tackle corruption and organised crime. All the signs are that there will be a new administration following the election of 3 July 2005, led by the centre-right Democratic Party which fought on an anti-corruption platform. Whether the electoral pledge will be honoured, however, remains to be seen. Meanwhile the election itself revealed all the imperfections of Albanian democracy. Intimidation and vote-buying were much in evidence. Thousands of names were mysteriously missing from the voting register. In short, the ballot was neither free nor fair. As for the market economy, while small-scale free enterprise flourishes in Albania, the *monopols* retain their grip on key trade sectors.

This is the bad news. The better news is that, so far as the military prerequisites for NATO accession are concerned, since 2002 Albania has done a lot to improve its membership credentials.

- There has been progress towards better *civil-military relations*, notably in clarifying lines of authority and responsibility related to the higher direction of defence and in facilitating legislative oversight of the armed forces. (At the same time, there is more to do.)
- *Popular attitudes* towards NATO remain positive and levels of élite and popular support for joining are high. The preparedness for accession of Albanian society is therefore not in question.
- The military profession itself is probably better prepared for membership than it has ever been; and if recent improvements in *military education and personnel management* work as intended it should become progressively better prepared.
- In matters of *defence organisation* Albania has made sensible plans for the future in terms of command arrangements, force structure and force levels. These reflect wise choices about mission priorities. They are not over-ambitious, and the timetable set for their implementation appears practicable. At the defence ministry routines have been developed to promote rational resource allocation and efficient resources management as transformation proceeds.

On the reshaping of the Albanian defence effort there is, of course, no guarantee that all good intentions will be wholly realised, especially long-term plans for equipment modernisation. However, there is no obvious reason why they should not be.

In light of the foregoing, it is clear that if NATO insists on 'standards before accession' as it has in the past, it could easily find grounds for postponing a membership invitation for Albania yet again. That the country has once more failed to show that it can hold free and fair elections is symptomatic of disturbingly retarded democratic development. On the other hand, it is obvious that the Albanians are well on the way to getting their defences on a sound and sustainable footing within a satisfactory framework of democratic control and that there is robust popular support for the NATO candidacy. From a purely military standpoint, therefore, the country should be 'ready' to join in the not-too-distant future.

Whether it is actually invited to join could thus turn on whether the existing member-states approach their decision with South-East European 'circumstances' in mind and, in particular, whether they accept one or other (or both) of the main arguments that have been presented regarding how this might best be done. The first of these is the thesis of the European Union Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS) that in South-Eastern Europe it is unrealistic to require that (democratic) 'transition and stability' must precede 'integration': the phases should instead run simultaneously to allow 'mutually reinforcing effects' to work. The second is the brain-child of the International Commission on the Balkans (ICB) and says that, since NATO successfully provided a 'fast integration track'



for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, it can – and should – do the same for the Balkans.<sup>17</sup>

What both the ISS and ICB say is persuasive. The conclusion that the Commission draws – that Albania, Croatia and Macedonia should therefore be given an early ‘positive signal’ on their membership prospects ahead of invitations to accede at a 2006 NATO Summit – is accordingly one in which we see considerable merit. In the Albanian case, though, we would endorse it only with the proviso that both the ‘positive signal’ and any subsequent invitation to membership should be accompanied by some sharp words on the importance of respect for the rule of law generally and, crucially in a plural democracy, for the independence and integrity of the electoral process.

## 2. Croatia

As a latecomer to the MAP process, Croatia was not considered for an invitation to join NATO at the 2002 Prague Summit and was not singled-out for special recognition at the next gathering of Heads of State and Government two years later in Istanbul (though many in the country apparently think it should have been). The chances of success in Zagreb’s membership quest next time are better, especially if the Western Balkan candidacies are evaluated in the light of South-East European ‘circumstances’ and the ICB’s fast track argument finds favour with existing member-states. However, strictly on ‘credentials’ the Croatian case is not a strong one.

It is not a strong one even though the country has performed a comprehensive review of its national defences. The outcome of this exercise – a final document on the Strategic Defence Review (SDR), published in the first quarter of 2005 – raises almost as many questions as it answers. This is because it lays out guidelines for the next decade’s defence decision-making rather than elaborating a concrete action plan. In that respect it confirms the impression that – to repeat our earlier language – ‘for all the national impatience at the failure of NATO and other international organisations to recognise Croatia’s worth and potential, the country is less well prepared for Alliance membership than it would like everyone to think’.

The evidence is there for all to see. It stands out whichever aspect of preparedness is examined.

- Concerning *civil-military relations*, while Croatia’s first post-Tudjman government put in place the requisite legal framework, the country has not yet made provision for effective accountability and all-round transparency in the conduct of its defence affairs. Institutional arrangements for executive

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<sup>17</sup> There are full citations for the ISS and ICB studies on p.19 of this Report (notes 2 and 3 respectively).

direction are confused, even chaotic. They afford individual actors room for mischievous manoeuvre. As for legislative oversight, the key watchdog committee shows limited interest and on most matters defers to the military and acknowledged experts. It has powers but does not use them. Democratic control is formal rather than substantial.

- *Public attitudes* to NATO generally, and membership particularly, are lukewarm. Support for joining is actually decreasing. A public information campaign might prevent further deterioration, but the government appears disinclined to mount one. It is an interesting reflection on popular sentiment in Croatia that polls show support for ICTY indictee Ante Gotovina and his refusal to surrender to be double that for NATO membership (which, as things are at present, will be denied so long as the fugitive is still at large).
- The military profession is not much better prepared for NATO entry than society-at-large. It is only recently that reform of *military education* has been tackled in earnest. There is no proper personnel planning and career system within the MoD and the Croatian Armed Forces (CAF), although a 'Mid-Term Dynamic Plan' for 2005-2010 may correct this.
- Evaluation of Croatia's *defence organisation* and decision-making processes must be cautious and qualified. Whether Croatia is (or soon will be) making appropriate and affordable provision for defence and has (or soon will have) structures and processes to ensure that it can continue to do so in the future – these are difficult questions. They are problematical because, while the SDR text foreshadows generally appropriate provision (based on sensible mission priorities for the CAF) it is still only a prospectus for the gradual transformation of Croatian defence (in two phases, viz. 2005-2009 and 2009-2015). Further, reading between the lines, it looks as though an envisaged MoD reorganisation could strengthen the hand of the uniformed military.

The SDR prospectus is a promissory note, with distant redemption dates. There is absolutely no doubt that the Republic of Croatia will be ready to join NATO if and when transformation is completed. Inviting the country to accede before that, however, involves trusting that the Croatians will do what they are saying they will do and that the top brass will not use their considerable influence to overturn some decisions in order to safeguard cherished missions and capabilities.

Still, this may be a risk that, when the time comes, NATO should be prepared to take. It has accepted promissory notes before. Slovakia's and Romania's in 2001-2002 spring to mind. More to the point, though, is the possibility noted earlier: that when the North Atlantic Council next looks at the Western Balkan candidacies it might well be interested not so much in the individual states' credentials, actual or potential, but rather in whether the circumstances in South-Eastern Europe require that they be offered membership. The Alliance leaders could do this invoking the 'fast integration

track' argument as enunciated by the ICB or the 'mutually reinforcing effects' thesis propounded by the ISS, or, indeed, by reference to their own assertion – in the 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement* – that, at the end of the day, the decision whether to invite a would-be member to join comes down to their judgement 'of whether doing so will contribute to security and stability in the North Atlantic area at the time such a decision is made'.

In the case of Croatia, as in the case of Albania, we understand the logic here. However, we would urge that any 'positive signal' and subsequent invitation to membership for Croatia should likewise come with a message. In this instance it might state that the country would be well advised to step up the tempo of military transformation and make sure that the process is not vulnerable to obstructionist elements in the high command. In addition, it could add that, as an ally, Croatia really should come to terms with the fact that some of its conduct in the Homeland War was not beyond reproach, and get rid of any other chips on its shoulder about the nation's recent treatment at NATO's hands.

### **3. Macedonia**

The other original MAP-state not to be invited to join NATO in 2002 (besides Albania) was the Republic of Macedonia. Not surprisingly, because when the North Atlantic Council met in Prague the ink was barely dry on the Ohrid Agreement that, on the one hand, marked the end of more than a year of crisis and conflict in the country and, on the other, allowed a necessary healing process to begin. In 2002 it would have been impossible for Macedonian delegates to the Summit to claim that they represented a sovereign nation-state – understood as a consolidated political community in which all citizens enjoy equal rights – ruled by a government with unchallenged jurisdiction inside secure borders: in short, that their country fulfilled the most fundamental prerequisite for serious consideration.

Times change. On the whole 'the Ohrid process' has been successful. On the whole Macedonia is tranquil, even though ethnic divisions remain and in places tension is palpable. At least renewed inter-communal conflict seems unlikely, barring spillover effects from fighting at the country's borders, i.e. in Kosovo or Southern Serbia. Thus the Republic's NATO candidacy is now a serious one. Moreover it has respectable membership credentials, in our areas of interest and generally.

Important and well-informed people have said so. During a May 2004 visit to Macedonia's National Assembly, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer congratulated the government on progress made in the area of defence reform. Referring to the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) that it had conducted – same designation as Croatia's and so, necessarily, the same

abbreviation – he said that Allies were impressed with ‘the determination and realism with which this difficult process has been pursued’. The leader of the NATO Advisory Team (NAT) in Skopje says that the country ‘has made great strides in defence reform and in its general path to NATO...[and] the MoD stands as an example to other ministries in pursuing reform in a concrete and practical manner’.

Our assessment accords with these, though we think there is unfinished business in some areas relevant to preparedness for membership.

- In the field of *civil-military relations*, Macedonia is fortunate that the military appear generally to understand their role and place in a democracy. Furthermore the institutions of civil society understand theirs: for instance, the media cover security-related affairs well and independent NGOs appraise defence policy and plans competently and critically. Legislative oversight of security affairs, though, is less satisfactory than it appears. The Committee on Defence and Security is not particularly effective, another ‘watchdog’ commission is dormant, and some areas of activity escape scrutiny altogether. Civilian executive direction of defence is assured, but there are ambiguities in the relevant constitutional and legal provisions that could be problematical if, say, the Head of State and the Head of Government were from different parties (or factions) and disagreed on an important subject.
- *Public attitudes* towards NATO membership, and towards maximising Macedonia’s chances of obtaining it, are positive. Poll data show popular support for the candidacy to be high and rising, and (crucially here) this applies across all ethnicities. It is testimony to the government’s commitment to maintaining national consensus that it nevertheless plans an awareness-raising campaign in the run-up to the next Alliance Summit (whenever that might be). For Macedonia societal preparedness should not be an issue there.
- If the country can put its *military education* system in order through structural and curricular reform, the preparedness of the military profession itself should not be an issue either. Sound plans have been made and all that remains is to realise them. Concerning human resources management generally, two matters require attention. One is being addressed: fulfilment of the Ohrid Agreement’s provision that the number of Albanians in the Armed Forces of Macedonia (ARM) should be proportional to the overall number of Albanians in Macedonia. The other is not, so far as we are aware: this concerns the reservation of key jobs at the MoD for political nominees, a practice that means a game of ‘musical chairs’ is played after elections, and sometimes in-between, and one which ought to give way to a merit-based promotion system.

- Macedonia has streamlined its *defence organisation*, earning praise in the process (see previous page). The all-important implementation stage of the SDR remains work-in-progress. However the NAT, for example, likes the 'dynamic transformation plan' for the ARM and considers its schedule realistic. It helps that within both the MoD and the ARM civilian and military personnel work well together, and that a planning, programming and budgeting system will be fully up and running soon. Essential prescriptions for the force structure, force levels, equipment and deployment are 'appropriate' and should be 'affordable'. Certainly they reflect sensible structural choices. The watchwords for managing the next phase of personnel rundown are contraction-with-professionalisation (while recruiting more Albanians). There is provision for stripping-out obsolescent equipment and starting prioritised investment as and when resources permit.

Our bottom-line assessment of the Macedonian candidacy, therefore, is that provided all goes well the Republic should, by 2006/7, be at least as well prepared for NATO membership as its Adriatic Charter partners and in some respects better prepared.

That evaluation is based on appraisal of the country's much-improved credentials. If 'circumstances' enter the reckoning, the case for offering NATO membership to Macedonia sooner rather than later is absolutely irrefutable. The ISS desire to generate 'mutually reinforcing effects' is one that finds evident resonance in Skopje, because integration would assuredly help consolidate stabilisation here (and facilitate the remaining stages of transition). What is more Macedonia is a term in several of the 'simultaneous equations' of South-East European security and stability (notably all those concerning Kosovo). The ICB's analysis and prescriptions suit the country as well. Macedonia craves a 'positive signal' on its NATO membership prospects, not to mention a follow-on invitation to accession. All things considered, we think it should get both.

#### **4. Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)**

The powers-that-be in Sarajevo – from the High Representative to the state-level Defence Minister – would be delighted to receive a positive signal concerning BiH's prospects for entering PfP and overjoyed to gain admission.

Failure to meet the threshold conditionality of 'full cooperation' with the ICTY, specifically the failure to catch and despatch former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, meant that NATO's leaders felt unable to offer an invitation at their mid-2004 Istanbul Summit (and they have shown no inclination to do so since, sticking to their 'war criminals first, PfP later' line).

Rejection in Istanbul was poor reward for the single-minded effort put in by BiH over 2002-2004 to meet all NATO's other expectations and

requirements, including the creation of a functioning state-level command and control structure for the Armed Forces of BiH prior to eventual integration of all (indigenous) Armed Forces in BiH. By the time of the Summit all necessary state-level legislation and regulations had been adopted and the Entities had passed all relevant legislative and constitutional amendments. Key personnel benchmarks had been met, including the appointment of a state-level defence minister and deputies. Posts were being filled in the defence ministry, Joint Staff and Operational Command. At the state-level legislature a Security Commission of elected representatives was already in business.

Though it was a case of Turkish disappointment rather than Turkish delight in 2004, this centralising process has continued, however, consolidating BiH's partnership credentials and, indeed, the union-state's preparedness for Alliance membership in due course. The country has had help in this from NATO which tempered its denial of PfP status in Istanbul by authorising BiH's participation in many *partenariat* activities, devising a Tailored Cooperation Programme, and making assistance to defence reform the primary task of the NATO presence in the country that remains now that the SFOR mission is assigned to a European Union Force (EUFOR).

If it were not for the ICTY compliance hurdle, BiH might indeed be well on its way towards – if not actually enjoying – MAP status. On the aspects of preparedness for membership stressed in this study it is worth recording the following.

- Under the *civil-military relations* heading: arrangements exist for the higher (civilian) direction of the Armed Forces of BiH ; and provision for legislative oversight has been made.
- *Public attitudes* to NATO are positive. According to High Representative Ashdown this goes for 'everybody in every ethnicity, every political party and every corner of the country'.
- Regarding *defence organisation* at the state level, the institutional framework has been established and there is work in hand to develop coherent planning processes.

The missing item from this list is *military education* because at present BiH lacks state-level training institutions.

In view of the foregoing it is apparent that 'war criminals first, PfP later' has become a paralysing conditionality, despite NATO's efforts to prevent or circumvent this by according BiH *de facto* partnership status (or almost that). In fact the hard-line insistence on defining 'full cooperation' with the ICTY as delivering Karadzic to The Hague has a perverse effect. Most attempts to arrest the indictee have been SFOR/EUFOR-led. The reason for failed missions, therefore, is almost certainly not wilful non-cooperation on the part of BiH's common institutions. Yet it is the latter's praiseworthy state-building efforts that are frustrated by denial of *de jure* PfP status. This emphasis on 'full cooperation' as construed in Brussels is doing more harm than good in a more

fundamental way as well. A core rationale of the ICTY is to establish that war crimes are an expression of individual, not collective, guilt. Yet it is whole societies – in BiH, and SCG too – that are bearing the burdens of an interpretation of the Tribunal’s mandate which keeps them out of Euro-Atlantic organisations.

The only way to resolve these contradictions is to abandon the present definition of the threshold conditionality. The ICB says that it should ‘move away from its focus on specific individuals...[and] compliance should now be understood more broadly’. This makes sense. It would permit an entirely defensible determination that BiH’s state-level authorities are doing all that they can reasonably be expected to do by way of cooperation with the ICTY. The country could then be properly admitted to PfP.

### **3. Serbia and Montenegro (SCG)**

Admission to PfP was refused to SCG also at the mid-2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul. The ICTY threshold conditionality applied, in this case on account of failure to deliver former Bosnian Serb commander General Ratko Mladic to The Hague. In other respects, though, the country had respectable partnership credentials. A start on ‘military transformation’ had been made twelve months before the Summit: necessary preparation for a major reform effort had been made in the weeks immediately preceding it. To their great credit, Alliance leaders decided that such work should not go wholly unrecognised. Although denied partnership status, the state-union was offered (like BiH) the opportunity to take part in ‘selected PfP activities’ plus a Tailored Cooperation Programme.

The initial reform measures in SCG were taken on the initiative of then Defence Minister (now President) Boris Tadic. In quick time Tadic formally subordinated the General Staff (GS) to his ministry and fired some uncooperative Milosevic-era generals. He went on to develop an ambitious medium-term plan for defence reform. This required early articulation of a defence strategy for the state-union, followed by programmes for force reduction, rationalisation and restructuring. The plan also foresaw reorganisation of both the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the GS.

Tadic’s timetable slipped in the run-up to SCG’s end-2003 election and immediately after. However, his prospectus was not discarded. It was taken up by the coalition government which then took office, and specifically by Defence Minister Prvoslav Davinic. Aided by an Assistant Minister from the reformist G17+ party – the junior member of the new coalition – Davinic initiated a high-tempo programme of activity to realise more or less exactly what his predecessor had envisaged.

Thus by the eve of the mid-2004 Summit the SCG’s Supreme Defence Council had approved *The Defence Strategy of the State Union of Serbia and*

*Montenegro*. In addition work was well advanced on a *White Paper on Defence* outlining 'force reduction, rationalisation and restructuring' intentions plus the MoD reorganisation scheme (covering incorporation of a number of GS departments in the ministry).

At Istanbul, therefore, SCG's partnership credentials looked fairly good. They have got better since. The reform process has continued and the key *White Paper on Defence* has appeared (April 2005), affirming the state-union's strengthened claim to PfP status. It describes institutional arrangements for 'managing' the national defence effort – under democratic and civil control – and reviews the agenda for transforming SCG's defences, covering both what has been done and what remains to be done. Under the former heading it records structural streamlining, reduction of armaments and military equipment (plus release of real estate) and a manpower rundown. Under the latter it heralds, in the short run, organisational changes and further restructuring ; and, in the longer term, completion of the armed forces' structural reform plus arms and equipment modernisation. Initially the future Army force structure will have 'response forces', main defence forces, territorial forces, plus logistic support. However, the *White Paper* foresees gradual disbandment of the main defence forces. A slimmed-down air arm and a small-ship navy complete the national order of battle.

Despite all of the above, though, on present policies SCG will remain excluded from NATO's non-members' club until such time as General Mladic appears in The Hague. The Serbian government says that, if and when it gets reliable information on his whereabouts in Serbia, appropriate forces will seize him. In the context of SCG's partnership quest, however, this is not 'full cooperation' as Brussels understands the term. Still, Belgrade cannot be accused of outright non-cooperation: several other prominent indictees were arrested, or persuaded to surrender, in the first half of 2005.

The consequences of 'war criminals first, PfP later' are thus as unsatisfactory here as in BiH. Regarding SCG also, therefore, it is our view that the present definition of the ICTY-related threshold conditionality should be abandoned. We realise that NATO member-states will find it difficult to do this; and we recognise that there may be some collateral damage to the Tribunal's standing. At the same time we find the arguments of the ICB persuasive and the Commission's conclusion constructive (see the BiH section of this Chapter). Accordingly, like that distinguished body, on balance we favour a change. That would pave the way for SCG's early admission to PfP. This course commends itself not only for reasons related to regional circumstances – the ICB's central argument – but also because the state-union has built up solid partnership credentials.



## XI CONCLUSION

There is a recurring theme in this Report's review of the Western Balkan candidates for NATO membership and partnership. It is that 'circumstances alter cases'.

When required, a decade ago, to consider what ground-rules should be laid down for post-Cold War enlargement, the Alliance produced a checklist of expectations and requirements. This incorporated stiff politico-economic preconditions for entry. Statesmen had the former Warsaw Pact countries of Central and Eastern Europe uppermost in their minds. So they took the view that no offer of accession should be extended to a would-be member unless and until there was clear evidence that the aspirant had for all practical purposes successfully completed its fundamental *transition* from authoritarian one-party politics and a centrally-directed command economy to plural democracy and a free market economy. Further, they took the view that membership candidates should be able to show that, following transition's turbulence and upheaval, essential *stabilisation* had been achieved both domestically and in the country's external relations. Put another way, the message was that chronically problem-ridden states need not apply. For governments able to pass these tests, though, the door to NATO would be open, presenting the prospect of *integration* into the Euro-Atlantic security community and what in earlier times had been called the Free World.

There were demanding military 'expectations and requirements' in the enlargement checklist as well. Once an ally, a would-be member would have to contribute to the Alliance's forces – to be a producer and not just a consumer of security – and certain things followed from that. In the first place, a candidate ought prior to joining to be able to assure the existing member-states of its capacity to make, and continue to make, military provision *appropriate* to its strategic circumstances, *affordable* in light of its economic possibilities, and *acceptable* to its population. In addition, it ought to have taken steps to ensure its forces' ability to operate alongside those of other countries: in combat, in support, and in staff duties. Finally, as a state aspiring to join a community of democracies, a candidate ought to be firmly committed to practising democratic-style civil-military relations in running its defence effort.

These entry conditions were applied, but applied loosely, when NATO undertook the 'first wave' of post-Cold War enlargement in which Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary joined (in 1999). None of this trio was fully ready for entry and the Membership Action Plan (MAP) process was devised so that later entrants would be better prepared. By and large the 'second wave' countries – the seven invited to accede in 2002 – were better prepared. The MAP discipline had worked, and NATO's more rigorous approach to appraising candidates' credentials was vindicated.

Central to evaluation of the Western Balkan candidacies for NATO membership is consideration of how the ground-rules summarised here might, or should, be applied to Albania, Croatia and Macedonia. Should the countries' credentials be appraised with rigour or with a certain understanding and some sensitivity? Should the rules be enforced as originally formulated, with application to Central and East European states in mind, or recast (or reinterpreted) to take account of the markedly different security circumstances of the countries themselves and their region?

Circumstances alter cases. In analysing the Western Balkan membership candidates for the purposes of this Report, it became apparent that appraising their preparedness for NATO entry exclusively in terms of 'credentials' would be ill advised. South-East European 'circumstances' – the political, economic and security dynamics of the region – could not be left out of the reckoning. First and foremost, and fundamentally, they explain why the three MAP-states seek membership and the benefits that they expect to accrue if they gain accession. Basic security guarantees are sought, certainly. In this part of Europe, however, they are desired not so much because states fear military invasion, or even intimidation and coercion. They are wanted, rather, because of the sense of security that they confer – which, indeed Alliance membership *per se* should confer – and because of what integration can thereby contribute to domestic and regional stabilisation and to the completion and consolidation of each country's own democratic transition. Indeed, for Albania and Macedonia, these collateral benefits or by-products of membership may be what matters most.

This has implications for how readiness for NATO entry is gauged. To require of the Western Balkan MAP-states successful completion of transition and the achievement of stabilisation before integration is to demand the impossible. The sequential approach may have worked (more or less) in Central and Eastern Europe but it will not work here. In this neighbourhood integration is a condition of stability and not the other way around. It follows that NATO member-states should not insist on total fulfilment of entry qualifications when they assess the Adriatic Charter countries' candidacies. Understanding and sensitivity are called for. This means understanding that NATO can be a 'fast integration track' for Albania, Croatia and Macedonia and that 'mutually reinforcing effects' in the transition-stabilisation-integration dynamic would be generated by their accession. It means sensitivity to the real difficulties that the three have in fashioning appropriate, affordable and acceptable defence efforts and practising democratic-style civil-military relations in running them.

At the same time to advise a retreat from 'standards before accession' is not to say that standards do not matter. Quite the contrary: the MAP-states should be urged and expected – and helped – to address their many difficulties. That includes problems of the countries' own making, of which there are far too

many in the Western Balkans. They range from a 'democratic deficit' bordering on bankruptcy in one state (Albania) to public indifference, even outright hostility, to NATO in another (Croatia), from an unwillingness to get rid of obstructionist generals (Croatia) to a need for correction of ethnic imbalance throughout the armed forces (Macedonia), and from inadequate administrative capacity (Macedonia) to excessive corruption (Albania).

This is important. It explains why the conclusion to our evaluation of the Western Balkan MAP-states' candidacies is two-edged. In our judgement, Albania, Croatia and Macedonia should be sent a 'positive signal' concerning their NATO membership prospects at an early opportunity, and formal invitations to accession at the Alliance's next Summit (as recommended by the independent International Commission on the Balkans, or ICB). In each case, though, we think that the encouraging message should be accompanied by a sharp reminder that NATO is not in the business of helping those who do not always help themselves.

So far as the two Western Balkan PfP aspirants are concerned, it is necessary to say at the outset that their basic eligibility for admission is not in question. If BiH and SCG had been in a position to submit applications in 1994, they would almost certainly have been admitted: in company with (among others) Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Moldova – countries which make up almost one-half of the current partnership roster.

In the event, however, they were not in such a position; and they would like to get into NATO's non-members' club now – as states (or quasi-states) born of the bitter Wars of the Yugoslav Succession – in a much-changed environment. Basic eligibility is today no longer enough for admission. For BiH and SCG, a specific threshold conditionality has been laid down, viz. 'full cooperation' with the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. Furthermore, 'full cooperation' here has been taken to mean delivery to the court of the wartime Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his top military commander General Ratko Mladic, two individuals indicted on account of their responsibility – or, strictly, alleged responsibility – for, among other episodes, brutal genocide at Srebrenica.

In the Wars, across the former Yugoslavia, thousands of men, women and children were killed, millions more displaced. The international community failed to prevent appalling crimes and was irresolute in trying to stop them. The conduct, command and control of the UN's own so-called Protection Force (UNPROFOR) were a disgrace. 'Bringing to justice' the persons responsible for the worst war crimes was, however, taken seriously. The ICTY was the designated instrument. The Tribunal was (and is) mandated to try individuals on their personal responsibility for misdeeds. By thus personalising guilt it seeks *inter alia* to shield communities from being labelled as collectively

responsible for others' suffering. This is considered to be one of the most important of its roles.

Another key role is simply to establish the facts, which the ICTY has done through its investigations and in its proceedings, e.g. from the evidence, from admissions of guilt and from information elicited in plea bargains. This is important too, for the historical record and in human terms. Perpetrators involved in plea agreements, for instance, have sometimes been the only people to disclose the whereabouts of mass graves, enabling victims' families to locate, identify and properly bury their dead. On top of that, determining beyond reasonable doubt the full facts relating to crimes is seen as crucial to combating denial and preventing attempts at revisionism. The material accompanying judgements makes it impossible, an ICTY official says, 'to dispute the reality of the horrors that took place in and around Bratunac, Brčko, Čelebici, Dubrovnik, Foča, Prijedor, Sarajevo, Srebrenica and Zvornik, to name but a few'.<sup>18</sup>

The pertinent question for this Report, however, is not the undisputed value of the ICTY. It is one related to defining 'full cooperation' with the Tribunal wholly in terms of the detention and transfer to The Hague of two men and making this pivotal for admission to PfP. Is this a threshold conditionality whose time has gone?

Circumstances alter cases. Examination of the claims to PfP admission of the Western Balkan aspirants leads to a clear conclusion. Both BiH and SCG have sound partnership credentials. This was acknowledged at NATO's mid-2004 Summit in Istanbul. Indeed the Alliance's leaders thought sufficiently highly of what the two states had accomplished to offer both the opportunity to take part in selected PfP activities and comprehensive assistance programmes. In fact the extent to which Heads of State and Government embraced the pair amounted to treating them as *de facto* Partners. Yet formal PfP status was withheld because – and, it would seem, only because – neither country had delivered to the ICTY its top war crimes indictee.

Since Istanbul, both BiH and SCG have strengthened their credentials by sustaining defence reform. They have participated in many PfP activities and benefited from much allied assistance delivered under 'tailored cooperation' arrangements. Partnership has continued to elude them, however, because Karadzic and Mladic have continued to evade arrest. (Neither has ever been expected to surrender, though other indictees have, including some very senior ex-Serbian military.)

There is more than a hint of absurdity about this. Insistence on 'war criminals first, PfP later' is taxing NATO's ingenuity in finding ways of ensuring that BiH and SCG are not unduly inconvenienced by its own demand. In addition, there are perverse effects. In BiH, helped by the intelligence

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted from a presentation to a meeting held under the auspices of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (Rose-Roth Seminar) in Dubrovnik, 12-14 March 2005, which is the source of some of the other material in these paragraphs and some later ones.

resources they have, EUFOR/NATO troops should be trying harder than they are to capture Karadzic: it is one of their missions. By contrast there is not a lot that the state-level institutions can do. Yet the latter are the focus of international criticism of the fugitive's continued freedom; and it is certainly the latter who are disadvantaged most, in their state-building efforts and generally, by continued exclusion from PfP. In SCG there is a suspicion that Mladic may be being shielded by rogue elements in the Serbian military and security services, but the government says he will be seized if discovered in Serbia, and has been as good as its word in arresting other prominent indictees or putting pressure on them to surrender. Apparently this counts for nothing (or very little). The perception in Belgrade, therefore, is that the country is being 'held to ransom' on this issue.

Equally perverse is the distortion of the ICTY's own objectives that results from use of this threshold conditionality to penalise BiH and SCG. Citizens suffer. By attribution of individual guilt communities are supposedly freed of the *psychological* burden of collective guilt. Maybe. However, in this instance the failure to 'bring to justice' a couple of arch-villains leads to a worse injustice: the closing-off to entire societies – and all the communities within them – of access to the benefits of international integration, including a greater sense of security and an enhanced prospect of prosperity. This is a *practical* burden, perhaps even a pecuniary one. By no stretch of the imagination, or the intellect, can it be argued that the punishment of everyone fits the crime of a few. It certainly should not be claimed that freedom from sleepless nights can somehow compensate for a dearth of remunerative working days.

Nor is this all. The ICTY says that trials reveal facts, and that facts are necessary to combat denial and prevent revisionism. In the case of BiH and SCG – and Karadzic and Mladic – this is irrelevant. There is an abundance of facts about the horrendous episodes in which the pair are implicated. Neither state is 'in denial' about these and other events, and neither has acquired a reputation for revisionism (unlike Croatia).

The foregoing arguments add up to strong case for abandoning the ICTY-related conditionality that keeps BiH and SCG out of PfP. Needless to say, there are some that run the other way. For example, we respect the view that the Tribunal has dismantled the tradition of impunity for war crimes and brought a sense of justice to victims across the region. In relation to Karadzic and Mladic, we recognise that allowing them to 'outrun' the court would send autocrats and ethnic cleansers everywhere the wrong message about the international community's resolve. Also, we realise that NATO's Secretary-General is unlikely to relish eating his own words.

These are not compelling arguments, however, because we challenge neither the existence, nor the roles, nor the value of the ICTY. Moreover we are not suggesting that the hunt for fugitives from its justice should end – although we do think, like the ICB, that the seizure of particular individuals has perhaps

received too much emphasis lately. Our quarrel is strictly with the threshold conditionality as applied by NATO in the PfP context. We think it should cease to be applied, and we think that the Secretary-General should say so soon, perhaps citing the points made earlier. (On this matter there are more important issues than his digestion.)

Therefore our conclusion on the Western Balkan aspirants for admission to PfP is that their claims to admission are strong, and becoming stronger. 'War criminals first, PfP later' expresses an overriding conditionality whose time has indeed gone. It should be set aside. There should be a declaration to that effect, and both BiH and SCG should be admitted to the Partnership at the earliest suitable opportunity.

To sum up: circumstances alter cases. In the first and second rounds of post-Cold War NATO enlargement it made sense to require former Warsaw Pact states to have completed their basic politico-economic transition and achieved essential stability before being offered integration. The entrance examination they underwent reflected that. Approaching a third enlargement round involving the Adriatic Charter states, it is apparent that the candidates lack – and will find it hard to acquire quickly – the sort of solid membership credentials that would allow them to pass a scrutiny similarly based on 'standards *before* accession'. In the Balkan security circumstances, though, their candidacies should be evaluated differently, because in this region integration is crucial to both desirable stabilisation and the consolidation of transition. Putting Albania, Croatia and Macedonia on a fast integration track should therefore commend itself and these states' qualifications for NATO entry should be assessed accordingly.

Help to enter the European mainstream is needed also by the two union-states of the Western Balkans, who initially want to join PfP. To date they have been kept out of this programme because of an ICTY-related conditionality. This now impinges most on the citizens of BiH and SCG: it is they who suffer from the resultant prolonging of their countries' isolation. In the circumstances it would be better if the obstacle were removed. That would strengthen the hand of reformers in both states and, by advancing Euro-Atlantic integration, in due course benefit their populations. It would not do irreparable damage to the standing of the Tribunal or that of NATO.

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