

Security Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe: Croatia's View and Perspectives

Damir Grubiša*

Original paper
UDC 327:327.36(4-12:497.5)
Received in October 2002

The signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement substituted the full-scale war with a "mini cold-war", that is to say, a truce supervised by the USA and the European Union. Real preconditions for a normalization of the region came only after the defeat of nationalist-authoritarian political forces, both in Croatia, in January 2000 and in Yugoslavia (namely Serbia) in October 2000. In November 2000 the Zagreb Summit of the EU was held, opening the real process of normalization. Despite the fact that the Dayton Agreement established the precondition for a gradual return to normalcy and peace, it succeeded only partially. It is obvious that the concept of security implied in this process cannot be a narrowly reduced concept of security as the absence of threats and risks. A new approach should be elaborated, taking into account the most advanced approach of "human security". That concept should be worked out as a "cooperative security approach" by centering on human security issues, such as the circulation of men, ideas and values - and not only in the security sector, but in all fields of regional cooperation.

Key words: South-Eastern Europe, Croatia, Dayton Agreement, peace process, security, mini cold-war

1. Introduction

The last decade marked the region of South-East Europe as a "conflict-generator". The signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement substituted the full-scale war (albeit a low intensity conflict with a large number of civilian casualties) with a "mini cold-war", that is to say a truce supervised by the USA and the European Union. Real preconditions for a normalization of the region came only after the defeat of nationalist-authoritarian political forces, both in Croatia, in January 2000 and in Yugoslavia (namely Serbia) in October 2000. In November 2000 the Zagreb Summit of the EU was held, opening the real process of normalization.

Normalization meant also growing security in the region (better to say: the decrease of insecurity). This normalization, however, occurred exclusively under the pressure and guidance from abroad, i.e. from the international community (USA, EU, OSCE, UN and intertwined regional oriented initiatives). Even after the demise of the nationalist-authoritarian forces in Croatia and Serbia, mutual suspicion and insecurity remained. In both key-countries of the region of the former Yugoslavia, Croatia and Serbia, weak political coalitions came in power, burdened with a lack of political culture, a lack of energetic reform-minded political leaderships, and almost catastrophic economic situation as inherited from the previous regimes. Despite the victory of democratic forces, nationalism was not defeated, as it may have appeared. During the last decade nationalism spread

* Senior research fellow at the Institute for International Relations, Zagreb, Croatia, damir@irmo.hr

as a virus, owing to the escalation of the conflict and the cruelties of war, which far exceeded the worse predictions.

Despite the fact that the Dayton Agreement established the precondition for a gradual return to normalcy and peace, it succeeded only partially. The Dayton Agreement was envisaged as a long-term and continuous process with three phases: first, frameworks would be established for strengthening measures for building security and trust in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina; secondly, to determine the restrictions in the field of armament control for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Yugoslavia; and thirdly, to finally analyse armament control measures that should include all states in the territory of the former Yugoslavia and the neighbouring states. To a certain extent, this process gave some tangible results.

However, the confidence-building process after Dayton began slowly, due to the fact that two aspects of the peace process were sabotaged by the nationalist governments both in Croatia and Yugoslavia: the first is the return of refugees; the second is the prosecution of war criminals and perpetrators of heavy human rights violations. The "healing" of the societies could begin only after the elimination of the political elites that led the nations during the war. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia was a model of overlapping wars, thus rendering more difficult the analysis of the root and causes of the war, and, of course, to heal the wounds in the after-war period. The first cause of the war(s) in the former Yugoslavia was the fight for power within the Yugoslav federation, where Slobodan Milošević, as the exponent of the former communist bureaucracy resisting reforms used and manipulated the ideology of Serbian nationalism to invert the shaky balance upon which the Yugoslav federation was built, thus launching an aggressive political campaign that resulted in creating insecurity and the perception of threats among other nations that constituted the Yugoslav Federation. Serbian nationalism ignited and provoked other nationalisms and the spiral of violence began. The second aspect, or phase of the war was the push to independence by other nations: Milošević's aggression, using the Serb minorities in Croatia and the Serb people in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the purpose of the aggrandizement of Serbia provoked a similar reaction within the nationalist elites that emerged after the first free election in 1990: "hidden agendas" of a Greater Croatia and of a Muslim ethnic Bosnia complicated the situation. Atrocities committed against the civilian population by Milošević and the Yugoslav People's Army

(JNA) under his control triggered a violent reaction and over-stepping on the right of self-defence, leading to abuses and war crimes committed against Serb civilians as a revenge or retaliation, as well as against political adversaries who did not share nationalists views and policies. Thus the war, initially starting first with violence of an armed insurgence (the first casualties in April 1991, were a Serb civilian in Croatia and a Croatian policeman), then turned to a military conflict against Slovenia and then against Croatian civilians and settlements in Croatia, taking the form of an aggression after the declaration of independence both of Slovenia and Croatia (June 1991), eventually turned into a series of civil wars, in which the nationalist elites in all three countries cleansed its own nation-state from political adversaries. Democracy that was proclaimed after the fall of communism was in fact only a facade, and despite the fact that communists were defeated, communists' authoritarian political practice remained as a form of political culture, where the collective was labelled as the supreme value of the nation, whereas the individual is subjugated to the fate of the collective. During communism the collectivist mind had referred to the "society", now it referred to the "ethnic nation". The other aspects of the war were the religious conflict, materialized through the form of a "clash of civilizations" between the "Catholic civilization" and the "Orthodox (Christian) civilization" on one side, and on the other side between the "Christian civilization" and the "Islamic civilization". Samuel Huntington's book became the official Bible of the Croatian nationalist leaders.

Until nationalists stayed in power i.e. until the year 2000, both the preconditions of healing the wounds created by the war were not possible: first, the Croatian government simulated a return of the Serb refugees, as well as it did not observe its commitment to punish the perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations during the war from its own "ethnic" ranks. The cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague was tepid, and only after foreign pressures the Government (i.e. the President himself) yielded and eventually extradited the indicted, from time to time. Yet all of those accused of war crimes and transferred to The Hague were treated almost as national heroes. The new government promised a full cooperation and, as a result, the international community rewarded the declaratory commitments of the new government involving Croatia in almost all international fora, such as the NATO Partnership of Peace, the EU (lately with the Association and Stabilization process), the WTO, the CEFTA (upon suggestion from the EU), etc.

Normalization with neighbouring countries went very slow, despite the expectance after the victory of the democratic coalition in 2000. As of today, Croatia has not solved the border problem with two of its former-Yugoslav neighbours: Slovenia, with which a conflict over the Piran bay outburst in summer 2002 taking the form of border incidents and provocations from both sides; and Yugoslavia, resulting in strong feelings about the Prevlaka isthmus and border incidents on the Danube river. The third former Yugoslav state, Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed in 2001 a border agreement with Croatia, ratified in both the parliaments, but lately Croatia despite the fact that ratification was done, wants to renegotiate the terms about the joint administration of the port of Ploče.

The normalization with Bosnia and Herzegovina marked a positive turning point when Croatia decided, one year after the democratic change, to cancel financing the Croatian component of the Bosnian Army and giving money for the local public administration in Herzegovina to local Croats, who have maintained strong nationalist attitudes and want to establish the third federal unit in Bosnia and Herzegovina (besides the "Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" and the "Republic Srpska") based on the ethnic principle, thus destabilizing the already shaken situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Lately the High Representative banned nationalists from the elections, stormed the Herzegovina bank through which illegal funding was provided, but their strongholds still remain intact.

Normalization is the first precondition for security and cooperation: normal diplomatic relations were established after the democratic changes in 2000, but the process of normalization is very slow. The Croatian government still is very slow in allowing the repatriation of Serb refugees, creating a lot of formal obstacles to the returnees. For this reason, many refugees rather wish to stay in Yugoslavia, than to go back and to face an uncertain future. Single cases were reported that returnees have been beaten, killed or ostracized by the communities they returned in. Besides, most of them do not find jobs and are left to live by their own devices. The integration of returnees still suffers from ethnic prejudices, harassments and in many cases returnees were brought to courts for alleged wrongdoings during the war despite the general amnesty applied to all those who participated in the war. One of the existing problems is still the insisting of the EU and OSCE that Croatia recognizes the tenants rights to the returnees, either to reinstate them in these rights or to find a form of just compensation (Croatian authorities claims that "tenants' rights" were abolished in 1992 and there-

fore refugees cannot get back what was cancelled).

One of the main obstacles for the normalization between Croatia and Yugoslavia is still the visa regime. The Yugoslav authorities even proposed that visas be abolished between the two countries, but Croatian authorities still apply a rigid visa system, thus not allowing Yugoslav citizens to enter the country for other purposes other than strictly business. Paradoxical cases are reported of Yugoslav businessmen who ask for transit visas to go to Slovenia by train, and Croatian authorities giving them only one transit visa, whereas they are not allowed to return through the Croatian territory.

Therefore to speak about extending security cooperation in the European "Bermuda triangle" (Yugoslavia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Croatia) means, in the first place, to transcend the traditional approach of security and security guarantees. Here, in the first place, we must look at what "security" means for the Croatian policy-makers and how they conceive it.

2. The security environment and challenges

The Croatian Parliament adopted on March 19 a document entitled "The Strategy of National Security of the Republic of Croatia". These documents pretend to formulate the "unified basis for the creation and execution of institutional solutions, as well as action measures in reacting to general security threats and concrete forms of threat challenges and concrete forms of threats posed to the Republic of Croatia". The conceptual solutions formulated in this document are the reflection of four factors: first, the geopolitical position of the Republic of Croatia, marked by a "decisive aspiration" to come closer and to enter Euro-Atlantic and European security organizations; second, the situation in the field of security threats and risks for the Republic of Croatia; third, the situation of the system and success in the implementation of the function of national security; and fourth, the resources available.

This document offers a working definition of national security. Thus, national security is defined as follows: it is, first, a determined (achieved or projected) situation of security; second, national security is a functional area of activity of different security institutions, altogether with the comprehensive social endeavours in the field of achievement of security goals; national security consists of those security institutions themselves, connected among themselves in an ordered system of relations.

Although "security" is an ambiguous and elastic concept in its meaning, and surely it cannot be reduced only to its most fundamental sense, i.e. se-

curity as the state of feeling free (awareness of absence) from threats, anxiety or danger, this "working definition" seems to be pretentious. It obfuscates the understanding of the perception of threats implicit in possible wars and near violent conflict situations that raise acute security questions for political leadership, as well as the formulation of suitable strategies of balancing, ally seeking and coalition-building, defence spending and armed forces development.

But let us see how, furthermore, the security environment and challenges for the Republic of Croatia is defined. First, Croatia is perceived as embodying the new reality of international relations, characterized by two controversial processes: one is globalisation as the process of integration of different "management systems and cultures in one entirety", which leads, apparently, to the unification of value systems, legal orders and technologies. The second is the process of strengthening individual identities of any kind - national (i.e. ethnic), regional, cultural, religious, etc.). Croatia wants, allegedly, to partake actively in shaping such a new reality, in conformity with its possibilities and interests. A positive note is introduced by the explicit statement, that in such circumstances the principle of undivided security appear more evident, and that this means that there is no strengthening of our own security at the expense of the security of others. At the same time, there is no "effective facing with the risks and threats without mutual cooperation and support - new challenges request new solutions".

However, the security environment is defined as conditioned by factors that influenced predominantly its present position. Croatia is defined as a state and society in transition towards a democratic social order and market economy that was in the first phase of its existence marked by an "armed aggression aiming at making impossible the achievement of Croatian independence". The biggest part of economic difficulties as well as security risks is caused by the above mentioned. Here the fact that a predatory privatisation took place during the last ten years, through which a new class of "nouveau riches", i.e. a new elite took hold on power and the national wealth is clearly omitted.

The instability of "part of its encirclement", being at the very beginning of a social-economic transition, represents a "security threat for the Republic of Croatia", albeit this instability does not represent any more a direct security threat, as formulated in the document.

Another paragraph of the National Security Strategy deals with the fact, that in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina the central state adminis-

tration is not yet functioning, and that the position of the Croatian people is sensitive because of the very fact of their scarcity. The evident imbalance between the "entities" is also mentioned.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, that was in the past ten years the main generator of regional instability, after the parliamentary and presidential elections in October 2000 does not represent a threat any more, but a potential partner. Bilateral relations have been normalized and are expected to develop through various forms of bilateral and regional cooperation. The evolution of the whole area of South-East Europe into a zone of partnership, stability and economic progress will request a more active participation of the Republic of Croatia. This is clear a progress - in perceiving Yugoslavia as a potential partner and gives hope that impulses for regional stability and security arrangements can generate from within the region, some day.

On the other hand, Croatian environment consists also of stable and consolidated democracies. Hungary e.g. has been a member of NATO since 1999, which represents a considerable contribution to regional stability. Others are in the mainstream of European integration processes, respectively Euro-Atlantic associations: Slovenia was invited to join NATO at the Prague Summit in November 2002, and the Copenhagen summit will issue an invitation to Hungary to join the EU. The enlargement of the European Union and NATO represents for Croatia the most important international process. One of the most important goals of Croatia is to approach both integrations, since it "fully shares and supports the values upon which EU and NATO are based". Since its inception, these structures were the guarantee of peace, stability, social development, human rights and economic growth. As far as Croatia is concerned, membership in the EU and NATO gives a "unique historical chance to keep and strengthen democracy and to preserve independence".

Despite the evident progress, there are still many challenges, such as the threat of spill-over of local and regional crises, the phenomenon of globalisation which generates new security challenges, proliferation of mass destruction weapons, bacteriological and biological, refugee crises, organized international crime, ethnic conflicts - are among the most important. Terrorism as a global threat underlines the principle of indivisible security. Croatia as such supports the efforts and goals of the International Antiterrorist Coalition, led by the USA.

The security position of Croatia is also determined by its multi-regional appurtenance. The integration within the EU is a unique chance to overcome all consequences of the war, and the signing of

the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU opens up a unique space for cooperation and security. This is also achieved by the entering of Croatia into the Partnership for Peace Program for the adaptation of the whole system to the highest western values. Last but not least is the fact that Croatia belongs to three European areas with a recognizable identity - to Central Europe, to South-East Europe and to the Mediterranean (here the geographic term "Balkans" is avoided on purpose, since the "Balkans" was interpreted by the nationalist as a place of lower civilization, to whom we do not want to belong).

The Second Chapter of the National Security Strategy lists the values and interests of the Republic of Croatia. They are, namely: national interests deriving from the highest values determined by the Constitution, such as freedom, equality, national (ethnic) equality, equality of sexes, peacefulness, social justice, justice, inviolability of private property, the protection of nature and the environment, the rule of law and democracy. Vital interest, on the other hand, is defined as the survival of sovereign, independent and territorially integrated state with its national (ethnic) identity and basic values. Other interests are listed as: the survival and development of democracy and democratic institutions, economic prosperity and social justice (redundant!). Democratic values such as freedom, human and minority rights and equality are integral part of these interests.

The Third Chapter lists the challenges, risks and threats to the Republic of Croatia. The danger of a military threat in the region has been diminished, but not eliminated completely. The eventuality of an inter-state military conflict has been reduced, but still low-intensity conflict can be possible in the region. One risk comes out from the general instability in other world regions, and from situations that may arise connected with countries that dispose of natural resources. Transitional problems are also possible in neighbouring countries, i.e. instability and internal crises, as well as transitional problems arising from the internal development of Croatia itself. Furthermore, there are problems in the functioning justice, corruption, negative demographic processes, unemployment, protection of minorities, border problems, transnational challenges, etc. All these risk factors are matched by the threat of natural and technological catastrophes, environmental catastrophes, pollution, diseases, as well as negative outcomes of the globalisation process, the gap between North and South, threats to the information science technology - all these are listed in the Document.

The possibility of military threats within the region are significantly reduced, but not eliminated

completely. As already mentioned, the chance of an inter-state military conflict is reduced to minimum, but chances of low-intensity conflicts in determined areas in the region are not yet excluded. These areas might be, as we interpret them, mostly border areas, as well as areas in which national minorities live. This is not said explicitly, but is deduced by the context. The geo-political position of Croatia is particularly sensitive. Crises in its immediate neighbourhood can have a negative influence on the security situation in Croatia, but crises in its wider surrounding may have a negative impact, too. This "wider area" is identified as the South Mediterranean/North Africa, the Middle East as well as the Caucasus. These areas are destabilized by crises, conflicts, high demographic growth and the diminishing of accessible resources such as water and energy, and are marked by growing trans-national threats and the spill over of the crises towards the European continent. The Republic of Croatia is situated in an area that connects Europe with the energetic sources on the territory of Asia (namely the Caucasus and Central Asia), on the communications that link the developed countries of Western Europe with industrially underdeveloped territory of Eastern Europe, albeit rich in resources, and it lies on the crossroads of traffic lines by which Central Europe is connected with the Mediterranean area and with South-Eastern Europe. Possible conflicts of interests in controlling the transit-lines of access to new resources or the ambition to gain influence over the areas of these resources can generate wider regional crises, that could threaten also the security and stability of the Republic of Croatia, as it is stated in the Document. However, this approach is clearly formulated under the influence of the balance-of-power theories and dominance of geo-political theories that claim the importance of the area in which Croatia is situated, putting in the background the interdependence of the European continent within the new architecture of an overall economic, political, and social cooperation within the framework either of the EU or the NATO, as well as other overarching initiatives such as CEFTA, the Stability Pact, the CEI (Central-European Initiative), SEEI, etc.

Another potential destabilization threat derives from the very nature of many societies in the closer neighbourhood: they might be summarized as "transition problems" of Southeast European societies. The economic, political and social transition towards parliamentary democracy and a market economy is a complex process with many roadblocks and setbacks. Malfunction of the state apparatus, worsening of the social circumstances, fall of the standard of living, conflicts both of political and social na-

ture, growing unemployment, rampant corruption and organized criminal - all these might lead to internal destabilization of these transition countries and changes in politics, which might assume, as the Strategy states, "different forms of inter-state revanchism", and thus lead to inter-state conflicts. The problems and difficulties of these transition countries represent security risks for the whole region. The wording is vague, but the real meaning of these is that internal contradictions in the transition process might generate, or regenerate, destructive powers such as nationalism, populism and authoritarianism. The consequences of the above mentioned logic are not drawn in their final implications, since Croatian policy-makers, even after the fall of the nationalist-authoritarian regime that emerged from the conflict and the war, try to avoid mentioning all these "evils" in order to avoid internal disputes and confrontations (which is a mistake, in my opinion, because the same threat, or danger of a relapse can be applicable to Croatia, too).

However, internal evolutions and involutions are not excluded in assessing the security risks and threats: they are listed as consequences of negative manifestations of the transition process in Croatia. Malfunctioning of the economic system, corruption, negative demographic development (yet this is a factor that should not be mixed with others, since it belongs to another set of phenomena), decreasing of the number of working-active population, high unemployment rate, etc. These "objectively derived factors" are matched by problems in functioning of the judiciary and slow administration of justice, that undermine the confidence of citizens in the functioning of the state and the rule of law.

An important role is assigned to ethnic minorities in the region: the right and protection of minorities, if they are solved one-sidedly, might provoke conflicts among states, that could directly affect the security of the Republic of Croatia. Obviously, the question of ethnic minorities will be an important factor of stabilization or destabilization of the region. "One-sidedness" is mentioned as a negative approach: but this is just the approach that Croatia applied to the solution of minority problems in Croatia, when in spring 2002 the government dismissed the working group that formulated the Constitutional Law on human rights and rights of national minorities, consisting of the most competent Croatian experts in the field and representatives of minorities themselves, substituting it by a working group that formulated a restrictive draft, whom the representatives of the national minorities expressed their discontent with. No need to say that advices from the OSCE and other international fora were neglected, thus in fact achieving the "one-sidedness" that is deprecated, *expressis verbis*, in the National Security Strategy of Croatia.

Border questions that emerged as the conse-

quence of the collapse of Yugoslavia are viewed as a potential source of instability, but besides considering them as a risk, the Republic of Croatia at the same time considers them as a challenge. If Croatia solves that problem it can contribute in a substantial way to regional stability. As a matter of fact, Croatia signed the agreement on the borders only with Bosnia-Herzegovina. Establishing the borders has been a problem both with Slovenia and Yugoslavia. The problem with Slovenia arose from Slovenia's aspiration to control the Bay of Piran and to gain access to the open sea through a corridor. An accord was negotiated last year and even initialised, by which Slovenia recognized territories disputed on the land to Croatia, and from its side Croatia recognized the border on the sea dividing the Bay of Piran according to a ratio 2:1 for Slovenia (two-thirds versus one-third) as well as acknowledged a corridor on its part of the national sea as a Slovenian sea territory. However, Croatian Government revoked its signing, thus bringing back instability on the two borders, refusing to negotiate the border agreement unless Slovenia changes its claims and invoking an international arbitration.

On the other side, the border with Serbia is undefined due to the pockets of territories that appeared on the left sides of the river Danube, due to the change of the course of the river, that Croatia claim; the same is for the Prevlaka isthmus, which is to be also negotiated with a future Montenegro Government, after the EU mediated solution of the drive to independence of Montenegro.

Other security challenges are identified as the intensification of "transnational threats" such as global terrorism, organized crime, refugee crises - that will influence directly and indirectly the national security of Croatia. Global terrorism represents a threat to international peace and security, which is automatically a threat to Croatia and a threat to Croatian interests. Organized crime and its consequences, such as destabilization of state institutions, violation of the legal order, economic crime and corruption are also great risks for Croatia. Illegal traffic of weapons, drugs, illegal migration and human trade, especially women and children, are also to be listed as major security risks given the geographical position of Croatia on the routes that come from Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe heading towards Western Europe. Such phenomena might trigger a negative impact on the state organs and institutions in Croatia and on economic subjects, causing the growth of criminal activities, the intensification of organized crime and terrorism (killings and violent crimes), and that might bring about, eventually, the threatening to the political, legal and economic system of Croatia, and act as a catalyst, as it is said in the Document, "for the appearance and spreading of racism, xenophobia and other negative social processes".

Other threats to security belong to the area of natural catastrophes. A special threat is represented by wood-fires, taking into consideration the climate and draught on the seacoast during summer. Technological catastrophes that can affect not only the territory of Croatia, but also neighbouring countries, may be caused by out-dated industries in the country as well as in its surrounding (neighbouring countries), by environmental pollution caused by old industrial units. Infectious diseases and epidemics are also among the natural risks and threats that are not to be excluded. However, Croatia also lists as a risk one of the consequences of the last war, such as land mines and explosive devices that have not yet been neutralized.

New threats and risks, especially in the field of technological innovations such as computer crime and strikes to the information systems, can come not only from abroad, but also in the form of abuse of private data of Croatian users either by the state bodies and institutions of the Republic of Croatia or by private organizations.

The Document quotes the negative consequences of globalization: the rising "global gap" between rich and poor countries, alongside with the political consequences of such inequalities, could exert a negative impact on the economic interests and the development of Croatia. The Strategy quotes that it is possible "to expect pressure on the Republic of Croatia in order to impose solutions that would not be in the interest of Croatian economy or would threaten other Croatian interests and goals". It is not, however, specified what kind of this "imposition" could be, while it can be assumed that any foreign investment venture might harm the economic interests of Croatia, let us say, hypothetically, by the very fact of the re-export of profits abroad. This wording is not clear enough and can be misleading, leading to ambiguities that depend on the interpretation.

3. The "Security Concept"

The "Security Concept", worked out in Chapter IV, defines the basic goal of the function of national security, as the realization, protection and advancement of national interests in the circumstances of existing and expected security challenges, risks and threats. Methodologically, the Security Concept is presented by defining the security goals of the Republic of Croatia, and principles that encompass measures and instruments of the so called "security policy".

The "security goals" are the elaboration of the "general security goal", defined as the building of preconditions and prerequisites for a free, just and stable political, economic and social development of the Croatian society, in cooperation and combined with other democratic states.

Those goals, in turn, are the following:

Firstly, the establishment and implementation of policies and measures, activities and institutions in the field of security, appropriate in content to the demands for successful overcoming of actual and future security risks and threats to the Republic of Croatia;

Secondly, the building of a positive international security environment on the regional and global level through participation in international security integration processes and forms and cooperation with other democratic countries;

Thirdly, the development of a stable and economically progressive society which will be able on a long term to build and maintain efficient security mechanisms and resources, and react successfully to security challenges, risks and threats.

The principles of the implementation of national security, on the other hand, are posed as basic conceptual frameworks of the organization and action of appropriate institutions of the national security, and they are meant to represent the general criteria for the evaluation of results in the sphere of national security. They are named as follows:

1. The principle of complexity and multi-componentiality;
2. The principle of conceptual and legal ordering of the field of national security;
3. The principle of integral management and oversight of the functions of national security (i.e. democratic control exerted by the Parliament, the President of the Republic and the Government of the Republic of Croatia, etc.);
4. The principle of active involvement and efficient participation in international efforts to build a suitable security environment;
5. The principle of "healthy and equal-rights partnership" as the basis for Croatia's approach to other countries
6. The principle of regional orientation of security activities.

For the sake of extending security cooperation to other countries in the region, two principles are here important and stimulating. The National Security Strategy, as we have seen, mentions the "principle of active involvement and efficient participation to build a suitable security environment". This principle is the result, as elaborated further on, of Croatia's conception of national security as variable that presents the result of internal power and stability of the state and stability and progress of the international community. In actual conditions, security is conceived as being indivisible - states and peoples are mutually dependent in security and oriented towards each other. This fact is a precondition for the common, cooperative approach of states, their mutual respect, reaching agreement and mutual strengthening of different

organizational mechanisms and participants, the orientation towards preventive action in the field of security, and common determination of long-term action-strategies. A stable and secure international environment, as an interest of the Republic of Croatia, does not create itself, neither the Republic of Croatia wants to be only a passive recipient of the advantages of such environment that might be created by the activity of other states. The policy makers, authors of this document express their "sense of responsibility and duty to contribute actively to the construction of such conditions, in conformity with the objective possibilities and resources at disposal, and in those organizational forms in which a qualitative contribution can be given".

The principle of the regional orientation of security activities also needs to be treated as a positive innovation: it comes out of the fact that the Republic of Croatia perceives itself as a small country, and that the security problems of the contemporary world are numerous and complex. Therefore, while it supports in principle the global approach and involvement in international security activities, it stresses the importance of Croatia's involvement within the framework of the region in which it is situated. Security challenges and threats in that region, irrespectively of their dimensions are of a greater importance for the national security of the republic of Croatia than regional challenges and threats in other parts of the world.

The areas and instruments of the security policy of the Republic of Croatia, another step in implementing the Security Strategy, are listed as follows:

1. Integration with NATO as one of the main goals of Croatian foreign and security policies. The strategic concept of NATO, as adopted at the Washington Summit in 1999, represents for Croatia a security platform that it fully accepts. NATO's value lies not only in security guarantees in case of an armed aggression, but in the systems of values Croatia belongs to and wants to develop itself in conformity with. Therefore joining NATO is Croatia's mid-term goal, to which all available resources will be subjugated. The common values that Croatia recognizes as its own are democracy, human freedoms and the rule of law. An intensive process of harmonization with NATO standard is in course, both political and technical, to which Croatia wants to abide in order to join the Alliance. Croatia was accepted in the Partnership of Peace, in Spring 2000, and lately, in Spring 2002, in the Membership for Action Plan

2. The integration of Croatia within the European Union is the most important and most complex endeavour Croatia is facing. A special aspect of this integration is the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), as an integral part of the EU Common Security and Foreign Policy. (CSFP). Croatia will harmonize its foreign and security policy with

the EU in all major global, European and regional character.

3. Good relations with neighbours and regional cooperation are the fundamental premises and political precondition of a complete Croatian integration within the European mainstream. Without peace and security in Croatia's closest environment an optimal level of national security of Croatia cannot be achieved. States in the closest environment are, in principle, classified in three categories: First, well developed liberal democracies, members of the EU (Italy and Austria, although Austria does not have a border with Croatia); Secondly, states in the higher stage of transition, just before joining the EU, i.e. NATO (Slovenia and Hungary); Thirdly, states facing the beginning of the transition process, with inherited security and economic-social problems and under the intensive monitoring of the international community (Yugoslavia, i.e. Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to the Strategy neither of these states that represent the "closest Croatian environment" represents a security threat for the Republic of Croatia,. However, some processes and situations in some countries represent a "determinate security risk for Croatia". Namely, relations with Bosnia-Herzegovina in the last decade exerted a direct influence on national security in Croatia, because of its geographical location and because of the fact that Croats are one of the three constituent nations in that country, and therefore Croatia's interest is that Bosnia-Herzegovina should be a stable and democratic country, capable of a self-sustainable development and integrated, as soon as possible, in the "European mainstream" (not mentioning the wrongdoing towards Bosnia from Croatian side, during the last decade, i.e. from the ambition to partition Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Croato-Bosniac war). Having this in mind, Croatia declares that it will continue with the policy of active support of Bosnia-Herzegovina's central authorities, by maintaining a constant dialogue with the representatives of the executive and legislative power in the neighbouring country. Special attention will be paid to the Inter-state Council for cooperation set up by Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The care for the members of the Croatian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be achieved transparently, on a programmatic base. The return of refugees is the basic assumption of a full-scale normalization of inter-state relations. Despite the progress made, this process is still slow and misbalanced, with an imbalance between the entities. The Republic Srpska has, especially, a restrictive practice in this respect, i.e. the return of Croats and Bosniacs. Croatia will, "fully aware of its responsibility for the regional stability and security, continue with its policy of non-discrimination on whatsoever basis, regarding the return and the return of proper-

ties" (however, it does not acknowledge the administrative impediments its authorities create to returnees, as stated in OSCE report for the year 2001). The document states that an important element of the security policy of the Republic of Croatia, regarding Bosnia-Herzegovina, is the cooperation in the field of border-control, and, even more generally, full cooperation in home affairs. Croatia acknowledges the obligation to stimulate cooperation of the competent bodies of the two states, with the aim to prevent and eliminate asymmetric challenges and threats - such as terrorism, organized crime and illegal migrations. Such cooperation should be, in the following years, the biggest joint contribution to regional and European security and stability.

The Strategy acknowledges that a turning point in the relations between Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia occurred after the parliamentary elections in Yugoslavia in October 2000. This event led to the full normalization of relations, and, as it is said - "consequently to the establishment of good-neighbourhood relations". By opening the process of extradition of most responsible perpetrators of war crimes committed during the aggression on Croatia to the Hague Tribunal, an important step was done. The processing of other indictees before the courts will remove one of the biggest obstacles for the establishment of "really good neighbourhood relations and full confidence between the two states". The establishment of the fate of disappeared and detained persons during the war aggression is an "issue of utmost importance and has an absolute priority". Among other questions important for the establishment of good neighbourhood relations the return of refugees and definitive demarcation of the border, such as the resolving of the security question of "Croatian Prevlaka" are mentioned explicitly. This last question, as an important security question, will be sought to be resolved in "good faith" and in mutual long-time advantage. The document concludes the formulation of the paragraph on relations between the FRY and Croatia with the following wording: "Only by solving the remaining open questions in good faith preconditions will be created for a long-term good neighbourhood cooperation and full involvement of all the national resources on both sides - in the first place economic, and then security, cultural and other. Having in mind this goal, it is of extreme importance to regulate with bilateral state agreements all fields of cooperation, for which a mutual interest exists".

Here we have to make a remark: although this formulation in principle holds, and we all could not but agree with it, in practice it is the Croatian side that is slowing down both the normalization, as well as the expansion of the cooperation. The Yugoslav government proposed to ease the visa regime, but

Croatia refused. The return of the refugees to Croatia is slow and many impediments and obstacles are created, if not by the central authorities, then by the local authorities that sabotages the plan of return. A special case is the reinstatement of "tenants rights" that Croatia in principle refuses to acknowledge. Moreover, the bringing before courts of perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations is also a problem in Croatia: due to partisan behaviour of so called "independent judges", witnesses from Serbia that could testify are formally invited, but practically discouraged to come and testify, while judges refuse to go to Serbia and organize a hearing there (the exception is the case of the process against the "Gospić group" that deliberately killed Serbian civilians in Gospić during the war). Croatian authorities are also reluctant to act energetically in handing over the indicted officers of the Croatian Army to The Hague (e.g. the case of the fugitive Gen. Gotovina, and the case of Gen. Bobetko, that caused even a series of serious admonishments to Croatian authorities and seriously affected Croatian international prestige and standing in the EU).

As other areas and instruments of the Security Policy of the Republic of Croatia, the document lists the following: cooperation with international organizations, Control of Weapons and Confidence and Security Building Measures, Contribution to International Peace and Humanitarian Operations, Development of Defence Capabilities, and Internal Security of the Republic of Croatia.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that Croatia in principle accepted the approach to "cooperative security", but in practice it does not carry out the principles enumerated and listed in the National Security Strategy. For these reasons, Security Cooperation is needed, that would involve a multi-lateral evaluation of security challenges, risks and threats in the region. This process has to start simultaneously on various levels of the society: first, it should be promoted by the international community: the first segment to be involved can be academics and researchers in independent and semi-independent (government controlled) research centres, universities, institutes, think-tanks, as well as journalists and writers. They can discuss openly and freely, without any bias, all the aspects of the security cooperation and generate ideas and initiatives.

However, this process should take place also on other levels: parliamentarians, mostly members of the National Security Committees of the Parliament, should be dragged into the debate. Military personnel should also partake in brainstorming sessions that would elaborate new initiatives and discuss existing

strategies or strategic documents.

The third level should involve officials from the executive, in order to create common platforms for security cooperation. In the meantime, joint publications should be published and a wider debate should be encouraged by the media.

It is obvious that the concept of security implied in this process cannot be a narrowly reduced concept of security as the absence of threats and risks. A new approach should be elaborated, taking into account the most advanced approach of "human security" (Canadian school on international relations). That concept should be worked out as a "cooperative security approach", i.e. a multi-faceted security that does not comprise only the classical repertoire of security goals, instruments and technologies, but encom-

passes the "positive building of security" by centering on human security issues, such as the circulation of men, ideas and values - and not only in the security sector, but in all fields of regional cooperation.

Obviously, this might be only an arduous endeavour - and therefore it has to be prepared carefully, step-by-step, and should not be discouraged by initial failure. The biases, stereotypes, and mutual non-confidence and suspicion are very much alive. The most visible protagonists of nationalism disappeared from the scene, but the virus of nationalism has not yet been defeated. This requires a long-lasting effort and a very slow, but steady strategy: it can be achieved only with the mediation of the international community. ■

References:

- C. Bellinzona, "Security and Europe's Periphery: the Case of South East Europe", in: M. Sopta (ed.), *European Security into the 21st Century: Challenges of South East Europe*, Croatian Center of Strategic Studies, Zagreb, 1999.
- V. Cvrtila, "Croatia - the Gateway to Southeast Europe", *Politička misao - Croatian Political Science Review*, 37, 5/2000.
- M. Grbin, C. Hodge (eds.), *Sigurnost i stabilnost u jugoistočnoj Europi* (Security and Stability in South-East Europe), Durieux, Zagreb, 2000
- D. Greenwood, "Shared Perspectives on Economics and Security", in: M. Drent, D. Greenwood, P. Volten (eds.), *Toward Shared Security: 7-Nation Perspectives*, Center for European Security Studies, Groningen, 2001
- A. Grizold, "The Concept of National Security in the Contemporary World", *International Journal on World Peace*, 3/1994
- A. Grizold, "Contemporary National Security in the Light of Militarization and Militarism", *Politička misao - Croatian Political Science Review*, 37, 5/2000
- I. Gyarmati, T. Winkler (eds.), *Looking Ahead: Security Challenges in the Balkans through 2010*, EastWest Institute and Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Belgrade, 2002
- M. Hadžić, "The Main Issues of Regional Security in South Eastern Europe", in: I. Gyarmati, T. Winkler (eds.), *Looking Ahead: Security Challenges in the Balkans through 2010*, EastWest Institute and Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Belgrade, 2002
- F. Heisbourg, "The Security Situation in the Balkans through 2010", in: I. Gyarmati, T. Winkler (eds.), *Looking Ahead: Security Challenges in the Balkans through 2010*, EastWest Institute and Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Belgrade, 2002
- I. Krastev (ed.), *Human Security in South-East Europe*, UNDP Special Report, Sofia, 2002, www.cls-sofia.org/publications
- D. Lozančić, "A New Military Dimension of a Cooperative and Preventive Approach to Security in Southeast Europe", *Politička misao - Croatian Political Science Review*, 36, 5/1999.
- Z. Mahečić, "Nacionalna sigurnost" (National Security), *Hrvatski vojnik*, 7, 30/1997; 8, 31/1998
- Z. Mahečić, "Security in South-Eastern Europe in the Coming Decade", in: I. Gyarmati, T. Winkler (eds.), *Looking Ahead: Security Challenges in the Balkans through 2010*, EastWest Institute and Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Belgrade, 2002
- Z. Milanović, "Multilateral and Regional Co-operation: A View from Croatia", in: *Security at the Fault Line: Security in Central and Southeastern Europe* (editors: S. Grier, M. Malešić, D. Ose), NATO Defense College, Rome, 2001
- C. Schwarz-Schilling, "Dimensions of Security in Southeastern Europe: A Blueprint for the Future", in: *Security at the Fault Line: Security in Central and Southeastern Europe* (editors: S. Grier, M. Malešić, D. Ose), NATO Defense College, Rome, 2001
- M. Sopta (ed.), *European Security into the 21st Century: Challenges of South East Europe*, Croatian Center of Strategic Studies, Zagreb, 1999
- G. Stoudmann, "Key Regional Security Issues in South Eastern Europe", in: I. Gyarmati, T. Winkler (eds.), *Looking Ahead: Security Challenges in the Balkans through 2010*, EastWest Institute and Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Belgrade, 2002
- Strategija nacionalne sigurnosti Republike Hrvatske* (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Croatia), 19th March 2002, www.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeno/2002/0692.htm
- S. Tatalović, "Ethnic Aspects of the Security in Southeast Europe", *Politička misao - Croatian Political Science Review*, 35, 2/1998.
- R. Vukadinović, "Challenges to Security in South-East Europe", *Politička misao - Croatian Political Science Review*, 36, 5/1999.
- R. Vukadinović, *Security in South-Eastern Europe*, Politička kultura, Zagreb, 2002.
- R. Vukadinović, *Sigurnost na Jugoistoku Europe* (Security in the European South-East), Interland, Varaždin, 1999.