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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND NATO

NATO is alliance based on partnership. Stability provided by NATO enabled Western Europe to rebuild and ensure prosperity after the years of war. For the states preparing to become members, the alliance has special significance. While working with the alliance, as member states or active partners, they once again gain the right to be in the very heart of European affairs relating to development. Bosnia and Herzegovina with its geostrategic position and its overall characteristics has great significance for the stability of the region of Southeast Europe region. Considering the NATO transformation as a system of collective defense to a system of collective and cooperative security, it will be required from future members states to enable their armed forces to participate in missions of operating crisis, expedition warring and projections of power. This is the reason why Bosnia and Herzegovina has implemented significant reform of the defense system which provides for unitary defense structures and mechanisms for efficient command and control of the armed forces.

Keywords: NATO, Partnership for Peace, Bosnia and Herzegovina, regional co-operation, defense reform.

I

By the agreement on North Atlantic Treaty, signed in Washington on the date of April 4, 1949, an alliance was established with the aim, on the base of it, of ensuring mutual defense in order to preserve peace and guarantee future security. In fulfilling its tasks, it is based on the high degree of co-ordination and planning on the political level, as well as on the military and defensive field.

After geopolitical changes which took place after breaking up the USSR and the Eastern Block in Europe, further existence of NATO as an organization which main task is organization of collective defense has become questioned. After the threat from the East had ceased to exist, it seemed that the existence of the NATO, as a military alliance, lost its purpose.¹ However, as NATO is also a military – political treaty, it evolved quite quickly and got its political task. In 1991, a process

¹ See: Waltz, Kenneth (1993), «The Emerging Structure of International Politics», International Security, 18(2); pp 44-79

of transformation was opened because of instability in the area of Middle and East Europe.

The NATO transformation took place through the following mechanisms:

- a) *The Program Partnership for Peace* – which represents a frame for establishing co-operation between the NATO and partner countries which are outside the Treaty in different fields (military drills, joint planning and performing missions under the guidance of NATO, but also the co-operation in the field of the reforms of the security sector in the partner countries:
- b) *Euro-Atlantic Council*, established in 1997.,
- c) *Development of the CJFT* concept as a means of organizing multinational military formations:
- d) Strengthening co-operation between the NATO and EU in the performing - *Petersburg missions*, and
- e) *Development of partnership between the NATO and Russian Federation*.

From the aspect of collective defense, the NATO has begun to operate crises in the area of Europe (especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia), and the terrorists attacks in the USA led to further transformation of the NATO and its engagement in fight against the international terrorism.² The Decisions of the Paris Summit³ are particularly important for further development of the Treaty. They refer to:

- a) spreading and operation of the NATO in the area of Caucasus and Central Asia with a possibility of operations in the area of Near East and North Africa;
- b) operating in secure surroundings in which the main security challenges will be terrorism and mass destruction weapons and conventional weapons proliferation;
- c) development of the Treaty military efficiencies for expedition warring by development
- d) forces for interventions outside the area of Europe (forming of NRF forces), as well as development military efficiencies for realizing that aim;
- e) strengthening of the civil defense ability;
- f) deepening relationships with Russia, particularly in the field of fight against terrorism and against of mass destruction weapons spreading.

² See: Lugar, Richard (2002) «Redefining NATO's Mission: Preventing WMD Terrorism», The Washington Quarterly 25(3); pp 7-13

³ See: «Prague Summit Declaration», NATO Press Release (2002) 127, Nov 21, 2002 (<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>)

At the Istanbul Summit all those aims were confirmed and intention was emphasized for their further development.⁴

Partnership includes different forms. In the case of the countries which participate in “Partnership for Peace”, it is based on the previously agreed Frame Document and on individual partnership programs. Partnership co-operation of the countries participating in the Council of the Euro-Atlantic partnership is being developed on the base of an all-comprising Action Plan. Co-operation with six Mediterranean countries which take part in the NATO Mediterranean dialogue is based on previously agreed work program.

NATO has very important tasks. It guarantees security to all its members, represents a forum for active co-operation between member states and countries-partners in planning actions in emergency civil circumstances, help in the case of disasters, and scientific and ecology programs.

The most obvious advantages of the Treaty membership are reinforced security and stability. The membership represents guarantee that the members will come to the rescue of each other, individually or collectively, in the case of armed attack on any of them. In reality, the Treaty enables member states to realize key aims if national security by their common efforts.

Member NATO states also have advantage from the coordinated effort on other international forums as well. Regular usual mutual contacts contribute to influence and role of each individual member state in overall international relationships. Those contacts are of special benefit to member states in the times of hardships or disagreements, because they enable them to operate on the bases of mutual understanding and respect, which in turn helps to find solutions acceptable for all through common decisions.

NATO is the alliance which is based on partnership. History has taught us that democratic societies are not threat to each other. They are stable and they ensure progress and faster economic development. Stability given by NATO enabled West Europe to rebuild and ensure its prosperity in the years after WW2.

The Treaty has a special important for the countries which are in the phase of preparing to become its members. Each of them has history full of problems, with restricted political choice in a great number of years. However, to be a member in the NATO alliance also bears particular responsibilities. Apart from the obligations which they took over with regard to each other by signing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, each member state also bears its own part of the NATO responsibilities referring to collective defense, as well as a task on preserving peace and security, in the best interest of the international community as a whole.

⁴ See: (2004) “The Istanbul Declaration, Our Security in a New Era”, NATO Press Release 2004 (097), June 28, 2004

Working with the Treaty, either as members or as active partners, they gain again the right to be in the very heart of European events connected to development. They accept both advantages and obligations that it brings with it.

In strengthening both political and military co-operation with other countries, the Treaty operates with the aim of creating a unique continent in which democratic and individual rights are stronger and stronger, as well as it seeks ways of solving disputes in a peaceful manner. As a result of such a broad co-operation with the NATO, within the Partnership for Peace, the very foundation of European continent security, as well as the whole Euro-Atlantic region is changing. The security today is less concerned with defense from aggression and ideological struggles and enmities; it is more concerned with common aspiration for stability, peace, economic development and efficient co-operation of the huge number of states which wish to achieve them.

II - SECURITY SURROUNDINGS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Global Challenges

Security challenges which Bosnia and Herzegovina faces must be considered in the context of the total relationships of its global surroundings. The challenges brought by modern global movements are greatly consequence of: growing differences in the level of economic and social development, differences between the rich and the poor parts of the world, constant endangering of life environment as a consequence of industrial and technology development, international terrorism with all the forms of its manifestations, uncontrolled production and sale of weapons, intensifying of forced migrations which are consequence of armed conflicts, as well as conflicts and discriminations on the racial base, ethnic intolerance, or are a product of political pressures in autocratic and non-democratic societies.

Furthermore, those challenges are connected with different forms of organized criminal, which incite lasting social and political instability in particular states in the region, which is followed by general poverty and different diseases spreading, which get into danger entire populations.

Regional Challenges

Special challenges which the region of Southeast Europe as a whole faces refer to instability, as a product of transitional processes of transferring their economies into market ones, which is additionally difficult by economic backwardness of this Region behind the developed world.

By its geostrategic position, this region is situated on the main roads between Europe and Asia, which are at the same time the roads for transport of oil and gas,

but also for transit of terrorist groups. In the last decade of the last century, this region was also a scene of all sorts of conflicts which left economic, social, psychological and other consequences. In this area endeavors for secession, autonomy or independence of different ethnic groups are still present, which, together with relatively high concentration of military capacities, additionally complicate the overall state.

Inner Challenges

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a complex state, burdened with its inner problems, mainly caused by different political factors, such as:

- remnants of political and social animosities, as a consequence of the war;
- slow implementation of the Dayton Accord;
- problems of political transition which as a result has slow development of efficient and effective executive, legislative and judicial bodies;
- the problem of transition to market economy which as a result has low level of domestic and foreign investments, and which are favorable for underground economy and black market functioning;
- unemployment problems;
- too large quantity of weapons;
- great number of landmines and unexploded mine and explosive means;
- different ecology challenges which represent a serious danger for social, political and each other form of stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

That's why the priorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina lie in the area of security stimulated by:

- a) protection of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- b) protection of constitutional system and human rights guaranteed with it;
- c) organization of self sustainable economy;
- d) attachment and accession to collective systems of security as a really most favorable
- e) manner of realization of security priorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into Collective Security Systems

Bosnia and Herzegovina, without any restrictions, accepts the concept of collective security as the most important pillar of a long-term military strategy. In accordance with this orientation she aspires to faster membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and into other alliances in the area of security, as a base for connection and choice of strategic bilateral partners.

As her priority, Bosnia and Herzegovina wishes to develop partnership relationships in the following areas:

- a) consultations, command and control, including communication and information systems, navigation and identification systems and technologies;
- b) defense planning and resources managing;
- c) democratic control of armed forces and defense structures, and
- d) conceptual, planned and operative aspects of operations supporting peace, which will finally contribute to greater operative ability for performing missions of armed forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and especially peace keeping mission and humanitarian operations.

The vital role in strengthening the country's ability to establish sustainable, stable, secure defense environment surely belongs to the OSCE mission. This mission concretely works on giving aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina in overcoming the military division of the country, building state structures in the area of defense and in complete implementation of obligations with regard to OSCE and other international military and political obligations.

The Mission, in co-operation with other international institution, gives support to Bosnia and Herzegovina activities on developing and sustainability of military capacity and readiness of Military forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina to preserve her sovereignty, territorial integrity and international subjectivity, without relying on international community in performing these obligations. This transformation will enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to contribute to regional stability and integrations into the Euro Atlantic security structures – at the beginning through the attachment to the NATO program – “Partnership for Peace”, and to realize her aim of entering both the NATO and European Union as a full member.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has determined for fulfilling the program of Partnership for Peace, and especially, through increasing transparency of defense planning and passing the budget, for ensuring the full control of the military forces and co-operation with NATO, with the aim of strengthening the capabilities of the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina to operate together with the forces of the NATO members. That was the reason why the crucial aim of the defense system reform was establishing and strengthening of state institutions which would operate as a supreme authority in all the matters connected with the defense. Because of this, the activities were focused on increasing powers of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, as a commander-in-chief of the Bosnia and Herzegovina armed forces, as well as Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, so that it could perform the function of efficient democratic control of armed forces, and on establishment of state institutions in the area of defense, capable of performing and supporting the function of command and control over the armed forces.

The changes in the entity constitutions and passing new laws in the field of defense in the years 2003 and 2004 ensured development of single defense structure, with corresponding division of responsibilities between the state and entities, establishment of mechanisms for efficient command and control of Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as improvement of democratic supervision and transparency. Establishment of Ministry of Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Common Staff Headquarters and Operative Command are the most visible results of defense reforms, because these institutions will directly contribute operative capability and functioning of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and they will enable participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in programs similar to Partnership for Peace.⁵

Thanks to the present co-operation with the NATO, as well as bilateral co-operation with numerous Treaty members, Bosnia and Herzegovina already has rather strong relationships and visible results in numerous defense areas. Furthermore, Bosnia and Herzegovina is oriented to establishment and improvement of bilateral and multilateral relationships in the defense area with all interested countries, on the principles of mutual appreciation and co-operation.

The Role of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Regional Co-operation

By her geostrategic position and overall characteristics, Bosnia and Herzegovina has great importance for the stability of the Southeast European region. That is the reason why Bosnia and Herzegovina has to give its maximal contribution to improvement of overall relationships and co-operation among the states and peoples of this region.

With respect to her national structure, Bosnia and Herzegovina has very favorable presuppositions to be a factor in convergence of people and nations in the region. By active participation in seeking solutions, as well as in creation of programs on the regional level, Bosnia and Herzegovina will advance her role and importance in regional co-operation in the following bases:

- by development of intensive and versatile bilateral relationships with all the countries in the region, and especially with her neighboring countries;
- by putting in motion initiatives in the process of the full implementation of the Agreement on Regional Control of Armament;
- by improving the measures for building trust on the regional plane;
- by consistent implementation of the Agreement on Sub Regional Armament Control.

5 The Bosnia and Herzegovina White Book on Defense, Sarajevo, 2005

Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to participate in activities of NATO's Initiative for Southeast Europe, aimed to harmonization and giving support to regional co-operation in the area of security and defense, as well as in other concrete projects. She is also oriented to accepting and developing other forms of co-operation in the field of defense, on different regional levels.

Sažetak

Bosna i Hercegovina i NATO

NATO je savez utemeljen na partnerstvu. Stabilnost koju pruža NATO omogućila je zapadnoj Europi da ponovno izgradi i osigura blagostanje nakon ratnih godina. Za države koje se pripremaju za članstvo, Savez ima posebno značenje. Radeći sa Savezom, bilo kao aktivne države članice bilo kao aktivni partneri, one ponovno dobivaju pravo da budu u samome središtu europskih poslova vezanih uz razvoj. Bosna i Hercegovina sa svojim geostrateškim položajem i općim obilježjima ima veliko značenje za stabilnost jugoistočno-europske regije. S obzirom na preobražaj NATO-a iz sustava kolektivne obrane u sustav kolektivne sigurnosti, buduće će države članice morati omogućiti da njihove oružane snage sudjeluju u misijama kojima je svrha upravljanje krizama, ekspedicijskih intervencija i demonstracija moći. Iz toga je razloga Bosna i Hercegovina provela značajnu reformu sustava obrane koji omogućuje jedinstvene obrambene ustroje i mehanizme za učinkovito zapovijedanje i nadzor oružanih snaga.

Ključne riječi: NATO, Partnerstvo za mir, Bosna i Hercegovina, regionalna suradnja, reforma obrane