Assessment of the Transformation of Civil-Military Relations in Serbia and Croatia since 2000[*]

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Summary

Since 2000, the republics of Serbia and Croatia have had very different levels of achievement and success in transforming their national security orientations and doctrine, military structures, and patterns of civil-military relations to conform to the expectations of the Atlantic and European communities. Both nations' armed services and their respective ministries have abandoned old national security and defence strategies based upon nation state threats and both have substantially downsized their military force structures. Croatia, however, has been much more successful than Serbia in building a professional, modern force that contributes to collective security in the region and it has made considerably more progress in articulating a vision of the future and in transforming civil-military relations to conform to the needs and expectations of a democratic society. A comparison of the process of reform and transformation between these states indicates that the consensus among Croatia's political leaders to stand by the transformation process and the lack of agreement among Serbia's political leaders is the critical factor determining the relative success of the transformation process in civil-military relations in Serbia and Croatia.

Key words: civil-military relations, Serbia, Croatia, NATO, ESDP

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Introduction

The dissolution of Socialist Yugoslavia created unusually challenging complex and variable standards for civil military relations in the new successor states and for the roles of their armed forces. The two largest of these states, Croatia and Serbia, provide the most interesting contrasts for scholars and policy makers. Both states have approached the task of redefining their national security strategy from very different political perspectives and both have achieved very different results.

Although Croatia and Serbia have responded markedly differently to the need to transform their national security framework to conform to the new European continental realities, both militaries were faced with similar pressures to undertake fundamental reforms. Both the Croatian and Serbian armed services had to implement dramatic reductions of the size of their military forces, as well as fundamental realignments of their national threat assessments and security strategies to conform to the norms advocated by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the evolving European Union's European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The armed services and civilian heads in both nations clearly understood that they could not avoid fundamental reforms directed towards modernization of the armed services, interoperability with potential NATO or EU partners, and the rapid phase-out of conscription. Equally challenging, both nations' armed forces discovered that they had to partner with new, inexperienced, and underfunded state institutions to achieve the survival of the state security sector, allay domestic public concern about national security, and lay the foundations for integrating the state within the security architecture of the European and the Atlantic communities. To compound the challenges, both the Croatian and Serbian states were expected to undertake these efforts with exceptional speed and under exceptionally tight budgetary environments.

To meet the challenges listed above, both the Croatian and Serbian governments had to commit to a transformation of civil military relations that went well beyond assuring simple civilian control of the military. In this new environment, civil military relations involved a qualitative shift in thinking and in behaviour for both the military and civilian government officials. The need was to create a pattern of relationships that can be characterized as truly democratic, and that was acceptable to their European and NATO partners (Cottey et al., 2002).

This paper examines the impact of domestic political consensus in Serbia and Croatia in addressing the issue of the transformation of civil military relations. It assesses the success of each state in implementing the specified NATO – ESDP performance measures applicable to the democratic transformation of the armed services and the security sector. It also examines the

role that political consensus, or its absence, has had on progress in transforming civil military relations.

The performance measures used to track and assess the readiness of an aspirant nation to affiliate with the Atlantic Alliance and ESDP include the following four criteria (Edmunds, 2006):

1. Substitution of a national security and defence strategy based upon territorial-based threats, with a collective security defence strategy;

2. Modernization, professionalization, and specialization of the armed forces, and abandonment of large, land-based conscript military forces;

3. Full acceptance of, and democratic participation in, the collective security decision-making process of the Alliance and ESDP; and

4. Establishment of democratic civil-military relations to include a clear division of authority between the head of state and the head of government; peacetime governmental or executive direction of the general staffs and commanders through the ministry of defence; legislative oversight of the defence and security organizations to include the budget; and popular perception that there is civilian and democratic control of the armed forces (Greenwood, 2005).

These four principles are the essential components of the North Atlantic and ESDP security frameworks; and they form the bases with which to assess the success of democratic transformation in the role, purpose, mission and behaviour of the armed forces in Serbia and Croatia[1].

Serbia: An Insufficient Commitment

More than any other potential candidate for inclusion in the European security structures, Serbia's continuing chaotic domestic politics have complicated the process of transformation of the national security architecture. In contrast to many of the former communist nations who lobbied for NATO membership as early as 1992, Yugoslavia/Serbia, remained aloof, if not viscerally opposed, to such ambitions. Under Slobodan Milošević's regime Yugoslavia became the pariah of Europe. Yugoslavia/Serbia endured stringent economic sanctions for nearly a decade; it pursued a nationalist military and national security strategy; it maintained large conscript army units that warred with its neighbours; its armed services were repeatedly used as a domestic political weapon by the regime; and most significantly, it became the first European government in 1999 to challenge NATO and become em-

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[1] See the *NATO Handbook* (2001) to see how each of these themes inter-connects with each other and form the foundation for procedures and doctrine of the Alliance.

broiled in war with the Alliance. By the end of the century, civil control of the armed services had broken down and the military had become a state within the state under no effective civilian control (Vankovska & Wiberg, 2003: 250-259).

The overthrow of Milošević in October 2000, while welcomed, did not resolve the fundamental issues dividing Serbia's political system, particularly with respect to national security and the role of the armed services. A substantial proportion of the citizenry still supported Milošević's grand strategy of a "Greater Serbia". Few in Serbia were ready to accept publicly Serbia's borders without Kosovo, and there was considerable doubt over the ability of the newly elected democratic government to control the military, democratize the state, and seek permanent peace with Europe. Since October 2000, every government in Serbia has felt constrained from making a complete break with the past and from reconciling itself to a future in Europe and the North Atlantic community[2].

Since the assassination in 2003 of Serbia's prime minister, Zoran Đinđić, the Serb government has recognized the necessity to forestall a complete breakdown of society by wresting control over the security sector, including the armed services (Edmunds, 2005); and in recent years, many fundamental reforms have been undertaken. These reform steps include the adoption of defence legislation, adoption of a new constitution, acceptance in the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in 2006, and a significant increase in bilateral military contacts and exercises between the Serbian military and US and other NATO member nations. By 2008, the Serbian armed services had been significantly downsized, basic national security documents had been adopted by the parliament, and the Serbian military no longer had the capability to directly and imminently threaten its neighbours.

Despite all these activities, there are significant unresolved policy questions, and the government lacks the political capacity to articulate a decisive security policy. The political system is still sharply divided over what should be done in the security and defence sectors, and there is no consensus over the future direction of the nation.

Expectation 1 – Principles of Threat Assessment and Strategy in Serbia

In 2005-2006, the Ministry of Defence, Office of the President, and the General Staff prepared and adopted a set of documents, culminating in the

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[2] Past and current Serbian governments have cooperated with the ICTY and have undertaken fundamental changes in the personnel structure of the Serbian general officer corps. These actions, however, have been incremental, limited in scope, and accompanied by substantial political criticism and opposition.

Strategic Defence Review (SDR) adopted by the Skupština in October 2006[3]. The SDR outlined the form and direction of military reform for the period through 2015 and it articulated a vision that recognized the need for Serbia to engage in international cooperation and to foster interdependencies with NATO (SDR, 2006: 1.1.1). The document projected minimal danger to Serbia from traditional state threats and it, in accordance with NATO, defined the national security threats to be terrorism, organized crime, weapons proliferation, ethnic and religious extremism, and illegal immigration (SDR 2006, 1.1.1). Within the region, the SDR made an unqualified commitment to cooperate with neighbouring states to combat the threats listed above (SDR, 2006: 1.1.2). The SDR, in short, fully committed Serbia's armed forces to a national strategic plan and threat assessment fully compliant with NATO expectations.

While the 2006 SDR is an impressive document on paper and outlines a sharp break with past practice, the political elites, political parties, government, and public have not internalized, given their full approval to, or even agreed with all the policies represented in the Plan (Helsinki, 2008: 163-187). It is likely that much of the SDR was drafted primarily by the Ministry of Defence and General Staff to reflect a desire by the Serbian armed forces to reduce their international isolation, and there does not seem to be a commensurate commitment by the political leadership to advance collective security through NATO (Gazdag et al., 2007: 53).

Governmental, parliamentary, and public resistance to cooperation with NATO is still intense. In December 2007, for example, the Skupština adopted a *Resolution on the Military Neutrality of Serbia* which, among other points, required a national referendum prior to any talks or negotiations with NATO, and which reiterated its condemnation of NATO for its "aggression" in the occupation of Kosovo[4]. Among the public, nearly a fifth of Serbs polled (19%) in April 2007 agreed that the Serbian Army's poor reputation should be attributed to its involvement with NATO integration, and half of the respondents in the same poll opposed any Serbian application for entry into NATO[5].

In brief, the Republic of Serbia has taken the formal moves to accommodate itself to the NATO-ESDP expectations of a national security strategy

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[3] The three most significant documents are the Defence White Paper – Bela knjiga odbrane (2005), Defence Strategy (2005), and the Strategic Defence Review – Strategijski pregled od-brane (2006)

[4] The Resolution was part of the reaction of the Skupstina to the impending independence declaration of Kosovo and President Tadić argued that it should not be viewed as a formal rejection of army reforms and the SDR.

[5] Vojska je oslabljena, *Glas Javnosti*, April 16, 2007.

whose foundations are regional cooperation and multilateral collective security under the NATO-ESDP umbrellas. This is not an insignificant achievement, considering that Serbia and NATO were at war less than a decade ago. The challenge, however, will be to forge the national will in Serbia to go beyond the printed formal documents and to embrace the European collective security vision. The impediments are political, not legal or military; and the solution can only be found in the Serbian political arena.

Expectation 2 – Modernization and Organization of the Serbian Armed Forces

Over the last few years, the Serbian Ministry of Defence has significantly downsized and restructured the armed forces. The total size of Serbian/Yugoslav army had declined from a peak of 180,000 in 1990 to 45,000 in 2006[6]; and it is expected to decline to 26,500 in 2010 when conscription is scheduled to end (SDR, 2006: 6.1.1).

The nearly two decades of downsizing of the Serbian armed forces, however, has created a large pool of retired officers, many relatively young and with few skills transferable to the civilian economy. For example, in 2007 Serbia had 15 active duty general officers and 756 retired general officers (Helsinki, 2008: 176). In addition, the veteran's organization and retired officers associations are large and political powerful and have been less supportive of the Ministry and General Staff's plans to transform the armed services (Helsinki, 2008: 181-183).

There are other anomalies in the force reduction program as well. In 2007, over 44% of the Serbian armed forces were officers and 39% of the officers held the rank of Lt. Colonel or above (Helsinki, 2008, p. 176). Thus, the armed services, while substantially reduced in size, have not altered the composition of the force structure to conform to its much smaller base.

In contrast to the downsizing and restructuring of the Serbian armed forces, there has been less visible progress in modernizing the forces and in assuring the public that the armed forces can be both smaller in total size and be more effective. Large segments of the public are concerned that the armed forces do not have the skills and resources to carry out its primary mission to defend the state. In 2007, 55% of Serb citizens polled believed that the Serbian army was incapable of defending the integrity of Serbia[7]. In 2008, less than 14% of the public characterized the Serbian army as profes-

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[6] Source Pietz (2005), p. 14.

[7] Vojska je oslabljena, *Glas Javnosti*, April 16, 2007.

sional[8]. Since 2003 there have been sharp declines registered in the confidence of the public in the army, as well as drops in public confidence of the civilian and military commanders (Hadžić, 2005). The same series of studies underscores public concern about living conditions for all ranks in the armed services and a growing uneasiness about the impact that downsizing and restructuring are having upon military readiness.

The transformation of a military force from a structure oriented towards large land-based armies to a smaller, more capable, professional, and modern equipped force is difficult and requires understanding from the political leadership and long-term financial support from the state. In Serbia, neither of these factors is available. The political leaders are divided on how to engage with Europe and NATO. Major political parties, including the Serbian Radical Party and the Democratic Party of Serbia, oppose engagement and are uncomfortable with the direction of military reform. In addition, the remaining state industries associated with armaments (e.g. Zastava) are concerned about their continued survival in a highly technical and modern military environment. Finally, and perhaps most fundamentally, Serbia, without significant external support, cannot commit the financial resources to carry out a comprehensive military modernization program.

Expectation 3 – Full Acceptance by Serbia of Alliance Decision-Making Process

Within Serbia, the legitimacy of NATO, the desirability of joining NATO, and public confidence in NATO are all extremely low. Public opinion polls consistently underscore sharp disagreements among Serbs over the desirability of Serbia becoming a NATO member. In a poll conducted in September 2007, 55% of the Serb public opposed joining NATO, while only 28% supported such a move. During the period from July 2005 to September 2007, support for Serbia joining NATO among the public never exceeded 32%, while it recorded a low of 22% support[9]

Opposition in Serbia to NATO or EU-led collective security is also high. In February 2008, 59% of the Serbian public polled registered disagreement with Serbia participating in peace missions[10]. In addition, public opposition to cooperating with the ICTY remains strong, and both major segments of

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[8] TNS Medium Gallup, *Serbian Public About Security Sector*, February 2008 http://www.atlanticcouncil.org.yu/TNS_Medium_Gallup_AS_-_engleski.ppt#31

[9] Source: Branković, Srbobran, *Serbian Public on Euro-Atlantic Integrations*, TNS Medium Gallup http://www.atlanticcouncil.org.yu/TNS_Medium_Gallup-engleski_13.12.2007..ppt#1

[10] TNS Medium Gallup, *Serbian Public About Security Sector*, February 2008 http://www.atlanticcouncil.org.yu/TNS_Medium_Gallup_AS_-_engleski.ppt#31

the population and political leadership disagree with NATO and EU efforts to apprehend and try those Serbs indicted for war crimes[11].

On the issue of NATO and eventual membership, everything is overshadowed by the inability of the Serbian political leadership to accept the loss of Serbian sovereignty over Kosovo (Batt, 2005). For the largest political party in Serbia, the Serbian Radical Party, non-compliance with NATO on this issue is non-negotiable. For other political parties, NATO is not a desirable strategic partner, and open discussions on the merits of membership are politically toxic. For the government, it would be political suicide to accept NATO's past and current decisions and policies in Kosovo and in the Western Balkans. Without a change in the political climate this expectation will not be met in the foreseeable future.

Expectation 4 – Democratic Civil-Military Relations in Serbia

Assessing the quality of democratic civil-military relations is a subjective exercise, and the standards of excellence or measures of full compliance with NATO-ESDP expectations are difficult to measure precisely. For Serbia, it appears that the military is now under civilian control, but it is not so clear that the control is exercised or managed in a clearly democratic way.

For Serbia, the effort for the civilian government to exercise civilian control was not an easy task. By October 2000, when Milošević was finally removed from power, nearly all of the military command hierarchy had been linked to the old regime and had been accustomed to intervening in domestic political affairs (Edmunds, 2003a). In the immediate period following Milošević's ouster, the army was considered to be an important player in political affairs; its support was important for political stability; and its constitutional status under the federal presidency of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro immunized it from serious civilian control (Edmunds, 2003b: 28-35).

Since 2003, much of the necessary legal groundwork for democratic civil-military relations has been formally adopted, but much of that groundwork is very recent and has not been tested. A new constitution for Serbia was adopted in 2006, but it was not until December 2007 that the Skupština adopted a new law on defence and a new law on the army to regulate national security affairs and democratic civil-military relations (Popović, 2008a).

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[11] *Public Opinion in Serbia: Views on Domestic War Crimes, the ICTY and Hague Tribunal.* Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, December 2006.

Until recently, peacetime direction of the general staff and commanders through the Ministry of Defence was largely conducted by military officers, and the Ministry lacked professional civilian competencies and expertise to manage and direct national defence activities (Popović, 2008b: 3). For example, in 2005, the Minister of Defence, Zoran Stanković, had been appointed to the position when he was still serving as a major general in the armed services, and his highest ranking deputy in the ministry at that time had no prior experience in military affairs[12].

Legislative oversight of the defence and security organizations to include the budget is exceptionally weak (Edmunds, 2005:123), and the Skupština lacks the staff to engage in serious and detailed oversight of military affairs or security affairs (Janković, 2006). In addition, the Skupština is highly fractionalized and individual members have little autonomy, resources, or opportunities to engage in serious debate on national security issues (Edmunds, 2008), or to conduct meaningful legislative oversight (Helsinki, 2008: 235-259).

A fourth indicator of democratic civil-military relations is the extent to which there is a popular perception that democratic civil-military relations exist. In a nationwide poll, conducted in February 2008, only 15% of the public affirmed that there was democratic civil control over the security sector[13]. More worrisome may be the findings from other surveys that consistently indicate relatively weak support for democratic control and procedures in Serbia and an uncomfortably low level of support for democracy (40% support), particularly among the Serbian Radical Party members (14% support)[14].

In summary, Serbia has formally adopted a strategy based on collective security in accordance with NATO principles, but the government has not internalized this approach. Formally, Serbia has put together a program of modernization and professionalism, but it lacks the resources and consistent political support to carry it out. Formally, Serbia has accepted NATO's collective security decision-making process, but politically, many Serbs feel alienated from, if not opposed to, NATO affiliation. Formally, Serbia has laid the groundwork for democratic civil-military relations, but in practice,

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[12] Both served in their capacity until May 2007 and the formation of a new government. The current Minister, Dragan Šutanovac, had served prior to his appointment as the Chairman of the Legislative Committee on Defence

[13] TNS Medium Gallup, *Serbian Public About Security Sector*, February 2008 http://www.atlanticcouncil.org.yu/TNS_Medium_Gallup_AS_-_engleski.ppt#31

[14] See Centre for Free Elections and Democracy: Belgrade (Summer 2006). The question was "Do you agree that democracy is the best form of government?"

democratic civil military relations have not been tested and significant political groupings do not share these values.

In brief, Serbia has a great deal of distance to go before it fulfils the criteria for inclusion in the European collective security network. The impediments are the same; namely, the political process is consumed with Kosovo and the political leaders are too lacking in trust and may be too willing to suspend democratic values for immediate political gain.

Croatia: A Full and Permanent Commitment

In April 2008, Croatia received an invitation to join NATO and it became a full member of the North Atlantic community in April 2009. During the period beginning in 2000, Croatia successfully implemented deep reforms in its conception of national security, force structure, relationship to NATO and its neighbours, and development of democratic civil military relations. These changes were not easy, and they occurred at a time when Croatia had to learn to work democratically in its domestic politics, reorganize its economy from a wartime footing, stabilize its relations with its neighbours, comply with the ICTY, and control its borders and insulate itself from the instability in neighbouring Bosnia and Yugoslavia/Serbia.

In contrast to Serbia, however, there has been broad agreement among all the major political parties in Croatia since 2000 on the fundamental strategic perspectives and values. While Croatia's party and parliamentary politics were vibrant and full of conflict, the major political parties, the political leadership, and overwhelming majority of the populace supported the concept of European integration and affiliation with the North Atlantic community. Unlike the situation in Serbia, the decision to reorient Croatia's security in conformity with NATO-ESDP guidelines was collective, and it was shared by all significant elements of the political system.

Also unlike Serbia, Croatia had adopted all its basic documents on national security and military organization by 2003 (Kranjčec, 2004). By 2002, the Sabor had adopted its first National Security Strategy, its first Defence Strategy, its Law on Defence, and the Security Services Act (Volten, 2005). Thus, the assessment on Croatia can focus on results and implementation, not just intent and law.

Expectation 1 – Principles of Threat Assessment and Strategy in Croatia

In 2002, the Croatian parliament adopted a series of policies that explicitly defined the national security and military strategy of the Republic. The fundamental document was the National Security Strategy of Croatia (2002

NSSC) which defined the principle threats, goals, objectives and strategy for the Republic's national security (Hrvatski Sabor, 2002). Among other points, the 2002 NSSC stressed Croatia's overriding interest in joining the EU and NATO, and it expressed Croatia's full acceptance and support for the values of collective security (Hrvatski Sabor, 2002: par. 9). The document mirrors the threats and concerns of other NATO nations, but also stresses the positive potential contribution of Croatia's membership and participation in collective security to security in Southeastern Europe.

Consistently since 2002, official Croatian documents reiterated and strengthened the state's commitment to collective security articulated in the 2002 NSSC. For example, the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) of 2005 reinforced the values and goals of the National Security Strategy discussed above, but it also underscored how the lowered probability of a direct military threat to Croatia opened up opportunities for reform and restructuring of the Croatian defence structure. Even Croatia's annual reports on defence planning to the OSCE repeatedly reinforced the commitment and importance of collective security. These and related documents underscore that accession to the NATO alliance is the primary national security goal for Croatia (OSCE, 2008: 3).

The extent to which Croatia followed up on and internalized its written commitments to collective security is open to interpretation, but its formal adherence to the principle is clear. It could be argued that Croatia, as was the case in other formerly socialist states, suffers from poorly developed military and defence planning capabilities, and that the planning documents are essentially military staff exercises in which the civilian authorities have little direct involvement (Nelson, 2004). Others point out that the national strategic documents may reflect an artificial set of threat priorities predominantly determined by an external security agenda (i.e. placating NATO officials), and that they may not fully reflect indigenous national security concerns (Gazdag et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, despite reservations regarding initial motivations, there is common agreement that Croatia has consistently contributed to regional security structures and missions for both NATO and the ESDP (Pietz & Remillard, 2006). It is also clear that the consistently unqualified leadership support for the strategy has done much to quell potential domestic xenophobia and nationalism in Croatia (Staničić, 2007). Overall, Croatia has made a strong commitment to accepting NATO's collective security values, and it has made good on that commitment over time.

Expectation 2 – Modernization and Organization of the Croatian Armed Forces

The initiative to modernize and restructure the Croatian military in 2000 originated with the Račan government, not with the armed services or general staff. In 2000, many of the personnel in the Ministry of Defence lacked professional expertise and training to administer a peacetime ministry, and many of the personnel had strong ties to the ruling party of the Tuđman regime (i.e. HDZ). Much of the military command had also been politicized under the Tuđman regime, and the politically powerful veterans organizations were accustomed to playing major roles in defence and national security decision-making (Edmunds, 2007). From the newly elected government's perspective, the modernization, professionalization, and restructuring of the Croatian armed forces became the mechanisms through which the civilian leadership was able to reassert control over the military, carry out its cherished vision to pursue European and North Atlantic integration, and achieve control over the national defence budget.

From a national security perspective, Croatia's pursuit of integration and collective security through the modernization and restructuring program also made considerable sense. Croatia's territorial boundaries do not lend themselves to a doctrine of in-depth territorial defence based upon large, land-based and heavily armoured armies. Maintaining such a force structure in Croatia would be both strategically ineffective and fiscally overwhelming. In addition, following NATO's air war in Kosovo in 1999, the nature of the likely threat against Croatia had changed from a state-on-state conflict to threats requiring smaller, agile, modern, and professional military units.

To accomplish the modernization and restructuring program, the Government of Croatia adopted a long-term and detailed planning program to reduce the overall size of the armed forces; resettle redundant military personnel into the civilian economy; reconfigure the disposition of forces, their armaments, and their mission; reinvigorate professional military education in conformity with NATO and ESDP doctrine and practice; reallocate and reduce the military budget to focus on modernization; and integrate Croatian military units into NATO and PfP operations and exercises.

Under the modernization and restructuring program, personnel strength of the Croatian armed forces during 2000 to 2007 dropped nearly 70% from 60,000 to 18,000 persons under arms (OSCE, 2008: 13). To ease the transition, Croatia introduced a retraining and resettlement program for its redundant military personnel (SPECTRA), and it designated funds from base conversions and closures to help fund the program[15]. The percentage of the state

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[15] The SPECTRA program is not as fully funded as the need requires, and base conversions have occurred at a slower than anticipated rate (Pietz & Remillard, 2006).

budget and GDP designated for defence has also dropped. In 2000, five percent of the GDP and 19% of the state budget was designated for defence (Bellamy 2002:165). In 2007, only 1.7% of GDP and 4% of the state budget were allocated to defence needs (OSCE, 2008: 29)[16].

The extent to which Croatia has simultaneously downsized and reconfigured its armed forces should not be discounted. Unlike Serbia, the personnel downsizing have affected all ranks in the Croatian armed services, and the officer structure, although still somewhat top heavy, is not excessively weighted towards senior officers. Armaments and equipment have been linked to specified tasks and decisions have been made through 2015 for reductions, procurement and replacements of all weapons systems and facilities down to the unit level (Ministry of Defence RC, 2006). The government has also made considerable investments in the recruitment, retention, promotion, education and training of military personnel towards the goal of creating a highly professional military force (Bellamy & Edwards, 2005), and it abolished conscription in 2008 to reinforce the professionalization of the armed services.

Significantly, Croatia has taken a leading role in participating in collective security operations. It is a founding member of the Adriatic Charter and it has been heavily involved in regional exercises with both the ESDP and NATO. Overall, it can be concluded that Croatia has made the commitment and implemented a fundamental transformation in the restructuring, professionalization, and modernization of its armed forces.

Expectation 3 – Full Acceptance by Croatia of Alliance Decision-Making Process

Since 2000, the governments of Croatia have been fully supportive of joining NATO's collective security system, and they have been markedly supportive and involved in integrating within the Alliance (Božinović, 2007). Croatia is a founding member of the Adriatic Charter, along with Albania and Macedonia (Grdešić, 2004). It has participated in numerous NATO exercises and it has radically reorganized and restructured its armed forces to integrate its logistics, communications, training, and procurement systems with NATO and the ESDP (Barić, 2006).

Overall, there has been little, if any, hesitation on the part of Croatia to accept the obligations, costs, and responsibilities of membership in NATO and the EU-ESDP. If anything, Croatia has been enthusiastic in its support,

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[16] The Long-Term Development plan estimates that 2% of GDP and 5.4% of the state budget will be allocated to defence in 2010 (Source: MOD, 2006: 69).

generous in its contributions, and willing to accommodate its military structure and doctrine to integrate fully in the NATO structure.

Expectation 4 – Democratic Civil-Military Relations in Croatia

Democratic civil-military relations in Croatia have evolved considerably since 2000 when "seven serving and five retired generals wrote an open letter to the government attacking its policies and accusing it of 'slandering of war heroes'," forcing President Mesić to demand the resignation of the serving generals and establish a precedent of civilian control over the military (Edmunds, 2007: 62). For Croatia, forging democratic civil-military relations has been a long and continuous process that has traversed several stages, including the establishment of civilian control, depoliticization of the armed forces, and democratization of civil-military relations. While progress in this area has not always been linear, it has been substantial (Bellamy & Edmunds, 2005).

In accordance with the Defence Law and the National Security Strategy of 2002, the government executed a concerted program to professionalize and depoliticize the armed forces and the Ministry of Defence towards the goal of integration of Croatia with NATO and the EU (Bellamy 2002). The program represented a virtual revolution in Croatian civil-military affairs; and by early 2004, the national security sector had substantially enhanced its professional capabilities, reduced its size, and sharply reduced the level of politicization in both the Ministry and in the armed forces (Bellamy & Edmunds, 2005). While nepotism or corruption may still exist, neither is endemic or widespread in the national security sector.

Weaknesses, however, still exist in Croatia's civil-military relations that impact on an assessment of full democratization. For example, the divisions of authority between the civilian and military leadership are not fully proscribed; and, on occasion, the initiators for action and implementation of policy are unclear (Bellamy & Edmunds, 2005: 75). Low salaries and high turnover have made it difficult to recruit and retain optimal civilian expertise in the Ministry of Defence (Nelson, 2004) and the painfully slow development of fiscal public accountability standards and transparency has hindered the ability of the Ministry and Government to provide consistent fiscal oversight (Greenwood, 2003). Finally, the parliament still lacks the staff and expertise to provide full independent oversight of the budget and processes in the defence sector (Staničić, 2005).

In summary, what is remarkable about the Croatian case is the extent to which there has been consistency for nearly a full decade in the support for directed change in the national security sector. While the changes have been sweeping and while there has been resistance to some of the changes, the

programs for reform have stayed on a reasonably constant path. Croatia has been a reliable partner for NATO and the EU-ESDP. Croatia's political leadership has minimized its political partisan involvement in national security affairs. Significantly, the Croatian campaign to adopt collective security has helped transform its strategy and doctrine, its force structure and administration, its values and politics, and its civil-military relations.

Conclusion

The divergent experiences of Serbia and Croatia in transforming their national security architectures to integrate within the European and Atlantic defence communities indicate that the success of the transformation process depends heavily upon achieving a broad-based, consensual, and long-term political commitment to the transformation process. In the case of Serbia, political commitment was lacking, and the transformation process has been severely handicapped. In the case of Croatia, that political commitment was full and genuine, and the chances for successful transformation markedly improved.

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