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Development of Civil- -Military Relations in Croatia

Introduction

Differing from many other post-communist European countries that have started the process of political, economic and military transition immediately after gaining independence, the Republic of Croatia, after declaring its independence and achieving international recognition, was forced to face the internal armed rebellion by the part of radical Serb population and the external aggression led by the forces advocating the idea

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of Great Serbia. Spreading the crisis to other parts of the former joint state (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia) has added to the fact that the particular forms, methods and management, as well as dynamics of development of both Croatian security and defence system and the military were the function of the defence of the country, its territories and newly founded state institutions.

Based on the great moral and material support by Croatian people and new Croatian government – strongly centralised in the person of president Franjo Tudjman – the Croatian military became a national institution that enjoyed a strongly privileged position within the society. After military operations “Lightning” and “Storm”, through which a large part of territory was liberated, and after a peaceful re-integration of the Podunavlje region in 1998, Croatian leadership declares Croatia to be a “regional power”.

Avoiding fulfilment of signed commitments (Dayton), rejecting regional cooperation (regional approach by EU, SECI, Royamount, Stability Pact), and reluctance of Croatian government to accept and apply standards of democratic behaviour (freedom of media, cooperation with the ICTY, return of refugees), have gradually distanced the international community, especially the US, from Croatia.

Transitional failures (devastated economy, unemployment, rise of crime) magnified by war destruction; participation in military operations within Bosnia and Herzegovina aimed at its division; war crimes committed; along with economic, social and moral colaps of the society and the death of president Tudjman all led to the replacement of the HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union) from power.

During all this time Croatia’s security and defence system was not included in any of the new European security mechanisms, nor in European security architecture.

On January 3rd a six-party opposition coalition wins the elections, and following that Croatia exits the international isolation. Soon it becomes a member of Partnership for Peace, and is undergoing negotiations for joining the WTO and defining the cooperation with EU.

Democratic Croatia, headed by the newly elected president Stjepan Mešić, started its attempt to compensate for “ten lost years”. Reform of the security and defence system, the military, their transformation to peace-time organization and tasks, reduction and profesionalisation of the personnel, de-polarization and de-partisation of the military and strengthening of all military-civil connections, form a significant segment of overall democratisation of Croatian society. But achieving these goals, due to objective and

some still very strong subjective reasons will not be easy. Same as whole Croatia today, its security and defence system can be seen as facing the crossroad: glorification of the Patriotic War, turning the blind eye to some of its negative consequences and individuals, firm insistence on maintenance of the status-quo and existing privileges, on one side, and objective need to accept democratic tendencies and regional cooperation, and through that inclusion into development of the new European security architecture and new trans-Atlantic ties, on another.

Objective circumstances and subjective weaknesses in development of Croatian military forces

Croatian state did not inherit any of its armed forces from previous regime, but rather created and developed them within very detrimental conditions created by transition and war. Croatian Democratic Union (CDU) came to the power after the first elections in May 1990, and on October 8, 1991, Croatia declared its secession from the SFRY. It also gained international recognition. But through the internal armed rebellion by the part of Serb population, as well as by external Serbian aggression a para-state called the Republic of Serbian Krajina was formed on almost 1/3 of centrally located Croatian territory. With the support from the international community Croatia manages to liberate the largest part of the country by military operations in spring ("Lightning") and summer ("Storm") of 1995. Occupied Danube region (Podunavlje) Croatia peacefully reintegrates, also with international assistance, in January 1998.

Under the pretext of assistance and support to Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia was in various ways participating in war fought in that neighbouring country. It helped forming para-state political institutions of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia), as well as in forming Croat's military forces (Croatian Defence Council – HVO). Also, Croatian forces were assisting Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Croatian-Bosniak "war within the war" during 1993-1994.

Transition

The war in Croatia and its neighbourhood has reflected itself on transitional processes in Croatia as well. The transition of Croatian political system begun after the first multi-party elections (parliamentarian, presidential and local). During the period from August 1991 to August 1992 a joint government of Democratic Unity was formed, with participation of opposition

parties as well. Throughout the remaining time of war the CDU was continuously in power, and due to a very favourable electoral law and notorious “diaspora list”, was winning all subsequent elections. The characteristic of Croatian political system of that time was a quite unclear limit between the authorities of the legislative, executive and judicial powers, where the majority of power was concentrated in the hands of president Franjo Tudjman.

Media were formally free and independent, but the HDZ managed to obtain a firm control over main daily newspaper and TV – which was defined as “state television”. During the war days it was the television that was the principal source of information for majority of citizen.

The war has further strengthened the crisis in economy caused by the transition, typical of all transitional countries. But, one of the fundamental problems of Croatian economic transition lays within the fact that the representatives of the ruling party – which fact enabled them to obtain favourable loans, low prices of shares and/or equity of privatised companies, and other ill-founded privileges – came into possession of all the best and most valuable companies, most influential media, telecommunications, and similar. Through such schemes the HDZ had practically gained control over everything that survived and that was of any worth in Croatian economy.

The unemployment was of partially amortized through inclusion of a part of active population into police and military forces needed for the defence of the country¹ and by employment in other ministries and newly founded institutions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office of the President). Some important parts of national economy, like tourism, transit traffic, shipbuilding, and others, came to a stand still due to the war. On top of that, consequences of various new types of crime, drugs and ever rising moral and material crisis were felt all over the devastated country.

International community was mostly very critical of Croatian transition processes. Main objections were aimed at lack of media freedom, electoral law, Croatian policy regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina and the problem of Serb refugees. Based on this, the doors to main European economic and security integrations were closed for Croatia, although Croatia has declared its interest to join the EU and NATO. During the CDU and president Tudjman Croatia was accepted into the UN, OSCE, the World Bank, IMF, the Council of Europe and a regional organization of Central European Initiative. But exclusion from major organizations like the NATO, EU, WEU, Partnership for Peace, and their activities, have disabled Croatia to strengthen its concrete political, economic and military forms of cooperation with the developed Western European countries. On top of that, Croatia was firmly rejecting all

attempts by international community to include it in regional forms of cooperation, stating that these are all attempts to return Croatia into some “new Yugoslavia”, “Balkanoslavia”, and to again firmly link Croatia with “backward Balkans”.

The War

Economically, the war has additionally exhausted Croatia. Direct war damages are being estimated to 27 bill. USD. The price of war was huge. During the war, military expenditures were as high as 15 % of the GDP.

The war has intensified nationalistic feelings, and the ethnic and religious communities that were living in Croatia before (especially Croatian and Serbian) found themselves separated by a deep ditch. Both in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina numerous war crimes over civilians of other nationality were committed. People were murdered, loathed and expelled. This has caused significant demographic changes, as well as changes in the structure of the population. Croatian atrocities were often justified by the aggression on Croatia, which culminated by the extreme statement given by the President of the Supreme Court – that no crime can be committed in a defence war fought on our territory.² War has also caused strong national homogenisation on all three sides (Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian). Croatian government was accenting the “statehood” as a paramount value that was expected to engage all existing resources, energies and emotions of the population and direct them to creation and defence of the national state. In those days a very influential president’s adviser marked the police, army and the Church as “institutions that are forming an axis of Croatian state and society”. President Tudjman was also often accenting significance of development of Croatian armed forces for Croatia. On several occasions president Tudjman described Croatian armed forces as something “on which Croatian state politics and Croatian people may found their overall policy”. After the military successes in 1995, in which vast majority of the occupied Croatian territories were liberated, as well as large parts of territory in Bosnia and Herzegovina (in cooperation with Croatian Defence Council and Croatian Army in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as with B&H Army), the leadership declares Croatia as a “regional power”.³ The proclaimed “strategic US-Croatian alliance” was ment to accent Croatian military contribution to overall policies of the international community in the territories of former Yugoslavia. But notwithstanding the military contribution, relations with military-political and other Western institutions that Croatia was desiring for – NATO, WEU, EU – are based on acceptance of a system of values promoted by

those very institutions. Croatian authorities made a wrong assessment believing that it will be only based on the strength of Croatian military and on readiness to use it that Croatia will be accepted as an equal partner of the new international community. Ever since the “Zagreb crisis” 1995-1996, when the President of the Republic refused to recognize and accept the results of the local elections in Zagreb – won by the opposition – the systematic criticism by the international community was rising. Even more so since within the overall post-Cold-War security system the, so called, “hard-security” was being gradually changed with “soft-security”, through introduction of democratic standards, respect of human rights, extended civil control over the armed forces, application of non-military dispute resolution mechanisms and similar. Advocates of this new direction (especially among former army commanders) were libelled by the Croatian leadership as national traitors, dilantants, devils, “sheep”, “goose”, and similar.

It may be concluded that Croatian system of national security and Croatian armed forces were being created and developed in an extremely unfavourable initial conditions characterized by transition and war, with no existing tradition of democratic institutions in that segment of society. The situation on the battlefields and unclear authorities between the various institutions of political system has resulted in a firm interlink age of military and political decision-making. The solutions were primarily in the function of direct defence of the country or leading of armed battles. Both the security-defence system and Croatian armed forces of that time were certainly not meeting the criteria and imperatives expected in a democratic society.

Organizational and legal structure of the system of national security and armed forces

The system of national security and defence in Croatia consists of several institutions and organizations differing in functions, authorities and relations among them.

Structure

According to the Constitution, the President of the Republic is a chief-in-command of the armed forces, and according to the Law on Service in the Armed Forces his title is “Vrhovnik” (“Supreme Commander”). The Law on the Defence regulates his authorities and responsibilities regarding the armed forces, except by the mentioed provisions, as well. The President of the Republic issues directions, orders, decisions, rulings and other acts gover-

ning the foundations of the structure and preparation of the armed forces, as well as their training, armament and equipage. Following the proposal made by the Minister of Defence, the President of the Republic issues acts determining the overall volume, number and mobilization development of the armed forces, as well as the organization of units, services, headquarters and commands. The Military Cabinet is at President's disposal, as counselling and preparatory body, as well as the Military Adviser.

Croatian Sabor (Parliament) is the highest legislative power in the country. It consists of the House of Representatives and the House of Counties. In the field of national security the House of Representatives issues legislation governing the obligations that the national defence imposes on the citizens, their property and determines the basic principles of the organization of defence. Deliberations on the draft Law on Military Budget, adopted every year, should enable all interested MPs to familiarize themselves with the defence situation and to state their minds regarding the further development of defence and military policy. Prior to the deliberation on certain issues in the house of Representatives, these issues are being discussed at the Sabor's Committee for internal policy and national security. The scope of responsibilities of this Committee is very wide, and issues like national security and defence represent only a narrow segment of these. The State Auditing Office is directly accountable to the House of Representatives. This is the only body through which Sabor may control the activities of the Ministry of Defence and Croatian Army, namely through the control of finances. Until the 1998 the State Auditing Office was not auditing the Ministry of Defence nor the Ministry of Interior, neither at least, was submitting those findings to the House of Representatives.

The Cabinet of Ministers, within the scope of its authorities, proposes the legislation to Sabor, among other the legislation governing the military, and if presided over by the President of the Republic, it may issue certain decisions regarding the defence policy.

National Security Office (UNS) is a state executive body entrusted with coordination and supervision of the work of other administrative bodies, especially of ministries dealing with matters relevant to national security. The Office is run by a Chairman appointed (and may be relieved) by the President of the Republic. The UNS is a mixed civilian-military body, encompassing also following services: Croatian Intelligence Service (HIS), Headquarters for National Security (SONS), Security Headquarters and Intelligence Academy. During the president Tudjman's mandate a military unit – I. Croatian Guard Regiment – assigned for president's security, was also a part of the Security Headquarters.

Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia (MORH) is one of the, so called, state ministries, and performs administrative and expert tasks in the area of defence, as regulated by the Law on Defence, Law on Service in the Armed Forces, Law on State Administration, as well as tasks ordered by the decisions of the President of the Republic.

Ministry of Defence has undergone several transformations since its creation in 1990. The present structure of the Ministry of Defence is regulated by an un-published Decision on Basic Structure of the MORH, from December 1997. The Decision should have been applied as of August 1998, but, allegedly, is being applied only partially as of October 1998. This structure was to replace the so-called wartime structure to the peacetime structure of the Ministry. Basic purposes of this transformation lay on creation of the organization adjusted to the peaceful development of the country and on approaching the Euro-Atlantic standards.

The chain of command runs from the President of the Republic, as the chief-in-command, over the Minister of Defence, down to the Chief of Staff and then to organizational units within their command.

Minister of Defence is heading the Ministry and has one deputy and eight assistant ministers. The State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence conducts legal, property-related and protocol tasks at the MORH. The Minister of Defence is a civilian, while the deputy, assistants and state secretary are commissioned officers.

General Staff, Defence Inspectorate, Institute for Defence Studies, Research and Development and Administrations and Offices of the Defence are all part of the Ministry of Defence. Military Council, as an advisory body, is also formed within the Ministry of Defence. Apart from the Minister and Chief of the General Staff, certain number of experts also participates in the activities of this body, appointed by the President of the Republic based on proposals by the Minister and Chief of the General Staff.

General Staff of the Republic of Croatia (GSOSRH) structured within the Ministry of Defence for performing professional tasks for the President of the Republic. According to the Law on Defence, the Chief of the General Staff is directly responsible to the President of the Republic in all questions connected to commanding and use of armed forces both in war and peace. The Chief of General Staff is, after the Supreme Commander, the highest ranking officer in Croatian military and is superior to all commands and units, except those directly subordinated to the President of the Republic through the UNS and its Security Department. The organization of the GSOSRH is regulated by the act signed by Joint Chief of Staff, who appoints the chiefs of certain

units within it as well. A new structure of the GSOSRH is regulated by a never published Decision on Basic Structure of the GSORSH signed by the President on December 5, 1997.

The Ministry of Defence and the GSORSH have somewhat similar structure, but while in the Ministry the accent is put on preparation of defence, the main task of the GSORSH is operational conducting of defence and military operations. In case of the war a war Cabinet is being formed, members of which are being appointed by the Supreme Commander.

The law as a form of organization and preparation of Croatian citizens for armed defence and a main pillar of armed resistance defines Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia. According to the Constitution and the Law on Defence, the Armed Forces are being prepared during the peace time as a principal defence force capable of timely resisting and blocking of a sudden enemy strike, or to remove other threats. In peacetime, the Armed Forces are preparing human and other resources for defending the country in the case of war.

Since Croatia did not inherit any armed forces from the previous state, the Armed Forces had different organizational forms since Croatian independence.

During the period that ended by adoption of Croatian Law on Defence (July 1991), they consisted of police forces (professional, reserve and drafted cadre). By the decision of the President of the Republic of April 20, 1991 the National Guard was formed (ZNG), as the first military formation of the new state. National Guard as the first professional, uniformed and armed formation of military organization was a part of the Ministry of Interior, but under the command of the Minister of Defence. During the 1991 members of former Territorial Defence joined the defence of the country within the newly formed brigades under the command of the Minister of Defence. By adoption of the Law for Defence the Armed Forces and the National Guard form the unique armed forces, subordinated to the Supreme Commander. Units of the former Territorial Defence became the reserve of the ZNG. By the presidential decision of December 24, 1991 Domobran forces are being formed as a territorial component of the reserve, filled in accordance to the territorial principle. Therefore, the armed forces are formed of Croatian Army, which consists of National Guard (ZNG) and Domobran units.

The Law on Changes and Amendments to the Law for Defence from 1996, removes the term Croatian Army from legislative terminology, so thereupon only the term armed forces is being used. As of 1996 the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia have following components: Croatian Infantry (HkoV), Croatian Military Maritime Forces (HRM) and Croatian Military Air Force.

The armed forces have peacetime and wartime regime. During the peacetime regime armed forces are filled with professional cadre (officers and sentries) and recruits who are serving obligatory 10 months service.

Peacetime composition of the armed forces is organized in six military areas of the Infantry. Seven professional guardian brigades – infantry and motorized – form an axis of this composition.

The Ministry of Defence provides logistic support to the armed forces. Catholic military ordinaria headed by a bishop is also active in Croatian armed forces. The ordinaria has 16 chapels. There are no military priests of other religions in Croatian armed forces.

After the war both military courts and military prosecutions have been terminated, leaving the regular courts to deal with all cases. The armed forces have kept only the internal disciplinary proceedings.

Legislation

Apart from constitutional and legislative provisions regulating the general issues in structuring of national system of security and armed forces, their primary tasks and responsibilities, the Croatian public has no knowledge of any other documents that would regulate the policy of national security and defence, and organization and use of armed forces.

National interests and goals of the security policy, coherent strategy, methods and resources for its implementation are all noted in a very general and abstract ways in scarce programmatic documents. There are no legally accepted documents on concepts and strategies of national security and defence, nor on military strategy.

This lack of adequate documentation and discussion is especially notable when speaking of armed forces, their volume, methods of fulfilment, procurement, civil supervision, management, military budget etc. Parliamentary discussions on budget present a rare opportunity to open these questions. But due to lack of information these discussions usually lack expertise and quality.⁴

Except the Constitution, management and basic relations within the armed forces are regulated by the provisions of the Law for Defence, changed several times since the beginning of the war, the Law on Service in Armed Forces (from March 1995), and a number of other regulation and internal acts.

A wider framework of regulation of security and defence system was repeatedly changed through laws such as the Law on Organization and Authorities of Ministries and Administrations, Law on Internal Affairs, Law on the National Security Office, Law on Procedures in the Croatian Sabor, and

a number of rulings, acts, decisions issued both by the President of the Republic and the Cabinet of Ministers.

Governance and control

Croatian security and defence system with armed forces after parliamentary and presidential elections⁵ of 3rd January 2000 is still too big. Competitions of different institutions and organizations are overlapping and partly they are not regulated by legislature. Legislature is not in a position to make even limited part of control, which is ensured by existing laws. Ministry of defence is not sending yearly reports which are so usual in democratic states (The White Paper). It is not known whether Office for National Security (UNS) was sending the report to the parliament, what is also asked by law. In the Parliament there is no specialized body for armed forces, their development, supply of arms and technique. The question of national security and defence is mixed with other very wide questions of international and foreign policy.

There is also not control of public in the needed level. Due to recent full closeness of Croatian security and defence forces, and the rather negative feeling among some civilians and scholars, Croatia is now having very few educated civilians who are able to discuss and plan policy together with soldiers.

Former Study of Defence, which was created at Zagreb's Department for Political Sciences in 1975, was abolished in 1994. It was one of the first measures of new Croatian Ministry for Education, which was also ideologically motivated as a continuation of elimination of the subject self-defence, which in the days of former Yugoslavia was taught in every school. Instead of this subject nothing new was offered.

Cooperation between civilians and military people, which is a basis for democratic control and compromise on political and military interests of the country in Croatia, does not exist yet.

From 1992 in the frames of Office for strategic research, created in the Ministry for defence, some research activities were started in different fields: anthropology, psychology, sociology. In the same year the work on some other projects was started: Experiences from the Patriotic War, Geostrategic elements of Croatia, Armed forces of Croatia, Global and regional strategies, Logistic of Croatian Army, Command and information system. In these projects cooperation of civilian experts and the military people was secured. One of the projects was elaborating the Strategic defence of Croatia. It was partly published but not as a whole project which got a label of a state secret. After the war work on the projects was abandoned, teams of experts were not meeting any more, and finished studies were not offered for public discussion.

Research activities connected with the Patriotic War were also politicised. In the days of President Tudjman no one dared to touch the issue of a "sacred war". But the new regime, under the influence of international community, has started now drawing the new light on the War crimes. The conditions for cooperation with the Hague Tribunal return of Serbs and recompensation for all refugees were created. But radical elements from former military and civilian structures are strongly criticizing this policy, stating that with such new policy the government is betraying the Patriotic War, sacrifices the people, and the position of all patriotic fighters. The new Minister of war veterans is sharply attacked as a person who started the process of revision of privileges, which were lavishly given to the veterans (pensions, invalidities, privileges in getting apartments, cars, schooling). The strongest attack of these forces represented a letter of 12 generals where they have been asking President to change the policy toward international community. The main point of critics is a new Croatian cooperation with the Hague Tribunal. But the next day after the letter was published by the Presidential act all 12 generals were sent to retirement.

In the same time the Croatian Parliament after a bitter discussion promulgated a Declaration on patriotic War, which is stating that Croatia was leading only a defensive war. It was a political attempt to cool the pressure. But it is quite sure that many issues connected with the war will be on agenda in the future: veterans privileges, war crimes, Croatian military participation in the war in Bosnia. They will represent a cause for potential political troubles.

Recently accepted changes in the Croatian Constitution,⁶ connected with the position of the President, could clear the relations within the military security services and they could improve civil military control and relations.

The main precondition for this is a change in the existing military forces.

Cadre policy

Having no clear programmatic documents, national goals, conceptions, strategies and doctrine, and the pointed responsibility for the practical making it was hard to talk on concrete structuring of military forces. All political actors in Croatia are in agreement that this is needed and that this restructuring has to be on the level with NATO standards.

Peaceful structure of the armed forces is mentioning 62.450 members of armed forces. In this number there are 38.450 professional soldiers and officers and 24.000 conscripts. To these figures 9.500 civilians on the duty in the Ministry should be included.

Critics are saying that even such peace projection number is too high, considering the territory of Croatia and the number of inhabitants. Also it is

not in the frames of new European security architecture and particularly it is not in accordance with the size of security challenges. Members of NATO and transitional countries which are invited to NATO, are having less forces compared to their number of inhabitants (Poland 0.62 per cent, the Czech Republic 0.57 per cent, Hungary 0.43 per cent) With number of 1.34 per cent Croatia would be the second in Europe, immediately after Greece (1.59 per cent).⁷

What is the real number of military in Croatia it is hard to say. The former Minister of Defence claimed in January 29, 1999, that armed forces have in service only 66 per cent of the number, which is projected with a new structure. Ministry of Defence in December of 1998, according to the obligations coming from OSCE, was informing the Organization that in the services of Croatian armed forces there are 61.506 men and women.

Today a number of 45.000 professional soldiers and officers is used. In the period of three years there is tendency to cut this amount by 16.000 and another cut should be made in the next ten years taking away another 6.000. Here of course there are not counted people who would from different reasons leave the ranks voluntarily.⁸

On other side such reduction of its armed forces Croatia could not make easily, due to the huresh economic situation (more than 360.000 unemployed, which makes 22 per cent of population). The problem is that a whole Croatian economy is in the crisis, there are no foreign investments and domestic resources are not adequate to start the production. All cuts in the military sphere should be made by maximal sensitivity trying not to deepen economic and political crises. The set of measures should be created like: loans for employment and stimulations for employers beside these unfavourable economic social conditions the big problem is in a lack of formal training of military people.

Training

The creation of Croatian military forces in the conditions of war and transitions from one regime to another had a strong impact on very heterogeneous composition of the Croatian military.

In the beginning of the Patriotic War a smaller group of the officers of the former Yugoslav Peoples Army (YPA), mostly Croats, had joined the ranks of Croatian fighters. In the ranks of fighters there were people coming as a volunteers and they were having strong animosity toward the YPA. Former officers were confronted with these sentiments but also they were needed as professionals. Still majority of people who were in commanding cadres were without professional training and they were getting their formal ranks due to

their courage, or party affiliation (mostly members of Croatian Democratic Union) and familiar and tribal connection. This system for long time was the main source of recruiting new officers.⁹

During the Patriotic War fighters were unable to get a formal civilian education. For the reason of military education special school was organized which is offering courses for officers on the different level of commanding. Special short courses for officers were organised and for the highest-ranking officers the War School was created. The future military attaches are educated in the Military diplomatic Academy. All these programs are for the people who already are in the military services and they are not open for civilians.

Unity and compatibility of military and civilian education systems were not created during the war and there is no sign that it could happen now.¹⁰

As a professional training is more and more coming as a result of peaceful development and also as a result of a new Croatian ties with NATO many officers are applying for, the Graduate Programme in International Relations at Zagreb's University.

Military expenses

The real numbers from military budget are not very precise. Official statistics are just one part of the picture. During the Patriotic War part of military expenditures was registered nowhere. President Tudjman was claiming that during the war years military forces were getting around 15 per cent of GDP. On the other side official statistics were not giving more than 10 per cent.

The claims that military budget during 1997, 1998, and 1999 was reduced should be also taken with reserve. Part of the budget was rescheduled to other institutions. So called transfers to Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was taken away from the military budget and was chanaled to Croatian part of Federation via Ministry of Finances.¹¹ The sum of money which Croatia was sending to Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina (pensions for veterans, support for invalids, medical care, rehabilitation) was representing in 1999 680 mln Kuna or 109 million dollars. After the change of regime this costs were transferred to newly created Ministry of Croatian Defenders.

All these changes of transparency in military budget were made under the strong pressure of international community which was clearly saying that only democracy opens the door for Croatian membership in Partnership for Peace.

This structure of military budget is still not favourable on many issues. For the salaries,¹² logistic and supply more than 90 per cent of the whole budget is spent. For technical equipment and modernization there is less than 10 per cent of budget provided.

For all that reasons it could be said that predicted three per cent military spending from budget would not be reached soon nor easy.

Politization of the military and civil military relations

Law for Defence from 1991 in the paragraph 42 is forbidding any political activities, creation of parties, organizing political meetings and manifestations in the military forces. But already in the Rules of military forces from 1992 membership of military in the political parties is allowed, what is also confirmed in the changes of Law for Defence from 1993. During the Patriotic War, and the years in which Croatian Democratic Union (CDU) was in power, majority of highly ranking officers were members of CDU. This was also confirmed by former minister of defence Miljavac who was claiming that majority of officers are active in the CDU.

In the days of war political affiliation to the CDU was very often a substitute for the lack of formal training or military experience. Beside the President Tudjman, who was a charismatic leader of the Party and the Supreme commander of the military, minister of defence Gojko Šušak was practically second ranking person in the Central Board of CDU. Generals and high-ranking officers were regularly on the party election lists. In the Representative house of Croatian Parliament (1991-1995) there were three representatives of CDU who were also on the highest military positions (chief of staff, commander of the Osijek military area and the leader of the Office) for political activities. In the 1995 political activities of military in legislature and the courts were eliminated.

Croatian political opposition started to fight for depolitization of the police and the army in 1993. But the CDU was strongly rejecting that proposals claiming that it would diminish human rights of military people. The next attempt of political opposition had also failed in 1995, but was having only one concrete impact on the abolishing the Political Office in the Ministry. Soon it was seen that it was only a cosmetic change and that its tasks were transferred to the Office for Public Relations from which slow reactions, apologetic writing, mitologization of military and politically inspired writing were coming as a normal way of communication.¹³

Polarization of military forces, political, social and financial power of the Ministry was extremely strong during the Ministry of Gojko Šušak. Lot of special links were created with the Croats in the Bosnia and Herzegovina, lucrative contracts were given from the Ministry to the members of CDU, and on other side 120.000 lawsuits were started against the Ministry which was not paying the bills.

After death of Šušak dr. Andrija Hebrang, a former minister of health was appointed as a new minister. Immediately after coming to the office he announced radical changes to the Ministry and its financial activities, creation of new peaceful structure, control of the civilian sector and the new model of training the military. Confronted with very strong internal opposition in the military, minister Hebrang after two months of crises gave a resignation. New minister Pavao Miljavac was appointed as a new minister and as he was an actual chief of staff during the same day he was put in retirement and immediately he got ministerial position.

The first minister who is coming as a proper civilian is Jozo Radoš who is a representative of the ruling coalition of six parties. Many transitional problems in the Ministry are not solved and there are also not easy relations between the Ministry and the Chief of General Staff. Some functions which in democratic states belong to the Chief of General Staff are not given back and also many scandals connected with the past (sale of arms, drugs, war crimes) are influencing the work of the Ministry.

Integration in the international security organizations and international cooperation

New Croatian regime and some retired military people are stating that Croatia is a Mediterranean, Panonian and Danube country and for that reasons her place in European must be unquestionable.¹⁴

Into the PfP Croatia was invited only after change of political regime in the 2000. But even before many areas of cooperation have existed where international links were cultivated.

Croatian army with its engineering staff was accepted in the OESC mission in Nagorny Karabah. The cooperation was developed with missions of EU, observers of OESC, UN forces in Croatia and with NATO forces in Croatia and with the forces which are stationed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatia was supporting activities of NATO and WEU in peace operation in the area. During all this time air corridors were open and flight controls in Zagreb and Split were also cooperating with NATO.

The biggest results of military cooperation were in the training.

USA was a first NATO country which has organised in the 1995 Joint Croatian-American civil military programmes for professional training of Croatian military, development of democratic institutions and civil control over military. Soon after an American offer other European countries were starting with cooperation.¹⁵

From 1999 Croatian military are trained in the Marshall Center in Garmisch. There are also training programmes organized for medical staff and special seminars in a German language. The value of the German support to Croatian military is around two million dollars.

Croatian and British forces are intensifying their cooperation after 1997. Britain is organizing special language seminars for Croatian officers and also few seminars are organized on the civil military relations.

The similar cooperation does exist with France, Turkey, Italy, Norway, Spain, Hungary and Poland. For the training of military people in abroad in the year 2000 Croatian Ministry for Defence is planning to spend two million dollars.¹⁶

It is hoped that all these Croatian candidates will help to foster transformation of Croatian armed forces on the line with democratic development of Croatia.

It was obvious that Croatia during Tudjman's time was not included in European security structures not because of military but primary because of political reasons.

Acceptance of Croatia in PfP during a first half of 2000 was a concrete award for democratic changes which were promoted after January 3. The whole process of democratisation of society includes also civilian control of the military and stronger civil military cooperation. Unfortunately, these transformations which were announced by a coalition government now in power, are going very slowly and it has an impact on the organization, conception and direction of the Croatian security defence system.

Conclusion

Security defence system of Croatia should be based on the basic national interests and has to be compactible with general democratic values, principles and norms of new European order.

The vital and unchangeable national interests of Croatia are: defence of the country, her integrity, independence, and national identity with permanent economic and cultural development.¹⁷

The threats to Croatian security are nowadays much more connected with domestic situation than with international realities. Despite unsolved problems in the relations with Croatian neighbours (Piran's bay, savings in the Ljubljanska banka, Prevlaka, return of refugees, compensation for the war damages, succession of the property from former Yugoslavia)¹⁸ Croatian relations in the region are gradually stabilized.

The international forces disposed in the Balkans are very important instrument of stability which is eliminating any idea of military threat. This presence is helping the stability in the area and also giving an impetus for democratic development and stabilization in the whole area of "Western Balkan".

Political, economic and social problems of Croatian society and consequences which are stemming from that could hamper reforms, further democratisation of armed forces and democratic development of civil military relations.

Respect for universal human rights, democratisation of society, transparency of military spending, strengthening of civil military relations are crucial not only for all integration links Croatia wants to create (EU, NATO) but they also represent important parts of a new European security architecture. As a small country Croatia has to do all in its power not to miss this opportunity and to build Euro Atlantic democratic links.



Notes:

1. Estimates state that during the whole time of the war some 350.000 people, or 7,3 % of the overall population, were connected with the army. *Croatian Army 2000 – National security, armed forces, democracy, Zagreb, 1999, page 50.*
2. *Ibid, page 50.*
3. Official domestic and foreign sources were, as a rule, using the term "regional power" only for Croatian military, not for the whole Croatia as a state.
4. The Cabinet has proposed approximately 1 bill USD for the 1999 military budget, without specifying any development programs that could justify such proposed amount. The opposition parties were challenging such a budget from equally abstract positions, calling it a "militaristic" budget, while the advocates of the proposed budget were protesting against "insufficient means for defence". Current statements that Croatian military budget should be reduced to NATO standards – meaning 25 – 35 % of current expenditures – are also being offered without any concrete argumentation in favour of such reduction.
5. It should be noted that Croatian military had recognized results of the elections and they continued normal work with new High Commander President Stjepan Mesić (who came from the Croatian National Party) and with new the Prime Minister Ivica Račan (Socialdemocratic Party).
6. Accepting constitutional changes on 9th November 2000 Croatia has changed semi presidential system with the system of parliamentary democracy.
7. *Vecernji list, 2 January, 2000.*
8. Normal fluctuation from the military is between three to five per cent yearly.
9. Minister Susak was stating that "war experience is much more important than some diplomas", *Hrvatska vojska... pp. 179.*
10. All efforts to create a Center for Strategic Studies have no impact and the Center was not organized.
11. Croatian Prime Minister Ivica Račan stated that Croatia "will fulfil all its obligations toward Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina: military pensions, invalidities but on trans-

- parent way thru legal institutions". I. Racan: "Making up for lost time", *NATO Review: Building Stability in the Balkan, summer-autumn 2000*, pp. 8-10.
12. There are important differences in the salaries. Members of guard's brigades (professionals) are having much higher salaries in relations to professionals employed in other services.
13. When some Croatian journals were publishing materials connected with bad behaviour of security services who were protecting President Tudjman on the islands Brijuni, Ministry of Defence issued statement in witch all journalists and citizens, witnessing such behaviour of the military, were called "citizens with no Croatian origin, Serbs, and children of officers and generals of former YPA who are still having strong hate for everything what is Croatian", *Hrvatska vojska...* pp. 175.
14. Antun Tus: "Obrambeni i sigurnosni aspekti integracije u Europske i transatlanske strukture", in *Hrvatska i Europa, Zagreb, 1997*. pp. 125-139.
15. Direct US military training assistance to Croatia grew from 65.000 in 1995 to 500.000 US dollars in 2000. This money was provided to Croatia through the congressionally authorized International Military Education and Training (IMET) fund. During this period USA trained nearly 200 Croatian military and civilian personnel in the USA and several hundred more at one or two-week seminars held in Croatia. Kristian J. Wheaton: "Cultivating Croatia's Military", *NATO Review: Building Stability in the Balkans, summer-autumn 2000*, pp. 10-12.
16. More than 90 per cent of the candidates are going for training in the NATO countries.
17. Antun Tus: "Sigurnost i obrana", *Hrvatska Agenda 2000, Zagreb*, pp. 35.
18. See: R. Vukadinovic: "La Croatie de L'apre's Dayton", in *Relations Internationales & Strategiques, Paris, No 28, Hiver, 1997*. pp. 63-71., and R. Vukadinovic: "Hrvatska vanjska politika – novo vrijeme i nove zadace", *Medunarodne studije, Vol I, 2000, Zagreb*, pp. 11-20.

Resumé:

Lidija Cehulic: Rozvoj civilno-vojenských vztahov v Chorvátsku

Na rozdiel od mnohých iných postkomunistických európskych krajín, ktoré začali proces politických, ekonomických a vojenských zmien hneď po získaní nezávislosti, Chorvátsko po dosiahnutí svojej nezávislosti a medzinárodného uznania muselo čeliť vnútornej ozbrojenej rebélii časti radikálneho srbského obyvateľstva a vonkajšiemu ozbrojenému konfliktu vedenému silami obhajujúcimi myšlienku Veľkého Srbska. Chorvátska armáda sa tak stala národnou inštitúciou, ktorá sa tešila vysoko privilegovanému postaveniu v spoločnosti.

Nenaplnením podpísaných záväzkov v Daytone, odmietnutím regionálnej spolupráce a nechotou uplatniť štandardné pravidlá demokratického správania sa Chorvátsko samo vylúčilo z medzinárodného spoločenstva. Chorvátske obranné a bezpečnostné systémy neboli zaradené do žiadneho z nových európskych mechanizmov ani do žiadnej európskej bezpečnostnej

architektúry. Dnes sa chorvátsky bezpečnostný a obranný systém, tak ako celá krajina, nachádza na križovatke: glorifikovať vlasteneckú vojnu, prižm - riť oči nad niektorými jej negatívnymi následkami a jednotlivcami, trvať na súčasnom status quo a existujúcich privilégiách, alebo akceptovať demokratické tendencie a regionálnu spoluprácu a prostredníctvom nej rozvoj novej európskej bezpečnostnej architektúry a nových transatlantických väzieb.

Vojna v Chorvátsku, ale aj v okolitých krajinách sa podpísala na kvalite tranzitného obdobia. Predstavitelia vládnucej strany získali väčšinu najlepších a najhodnotnejších podnikov a vplyv na významné médiá v krajine. Na druhej strane nezamestnanosť bola vďaka konfliktu nižšia, odhaduje sa, že až 7,3 % obyvateľstva bolo spojených s armádou. Chorvátsko nezdedilo z bývalej federácie žiadnu armádu, preto si muselo vybudovať vlastnú „od piky“ za ekonomicky veľmi neprajných podmienok a bez existujúcej tradície demokratických inštitúcií v krajine. Vojenský a politický rozhodovací proces sa výrazne prepojili. Obranno-bezpečnostný systém Chorvátska a jeho armáda vtedy rozhodne nespĺňali nároky očakávané v demokratickej spoločnosti.

Po parlamentných a prezidentských voľbách 3. januára 2000 je chorvátsky bezpečnostný a obranný systém stále priveľký, viaceré inštitúcie sa vo svojej agende prekrývajú, a neriadia sa legislatívou. Nie je zabezpečená dostatočná civilná kontrola armády. V Chorvátsku je len málo vzdelaných civilných odborníkov schopných fundovane diskutovať a plánovať politiku ozbrojených síl. Zatiaľ neexistujú jasné pragmatické dokumenty, vytyčené národné ciele, koncepcie, stratégie a doktrína. Napriek tomu existujú plány na úpravu a redukciu ozbrojených síl Chorvátska. V súčasnosti má armáda 45 tisíc profesionálnych vojakov a dôstojníkov. V priebehu najbližších 10 rokov sa očakáva zníženie ich počtu o 22 tisíc. Nie je to krok, ktorý by Chorvátsko mohlo urobiť jednoducho. Podobným problémom je zníženie výdavkov na armádu. Počas vojny podľa prezidenta Tudžmana tvorili okolo 15 % HDP. Počas rokov 1997-1999 bolo toto percento údajne znížené, zmena v transparentnosti vojenského rozpočtu bola uskutočnená až na základe silného medzinárodného tlaku. Avšak očakávané 3 % HDP sa dosiahnuť tak skoro nepodarí.

Popri nepriaznivých ekonomických a sociálnych podmienkach armády je veľkým problémom aj nedostatok formálneho výcviku vojenských kádrov. Na začiatku vlasteneckej vojny vstupovali do armády dobrovoľníci. Veľká časť veliacich dôstojníkov tak nemala profesionálny výcvik a hodnotu získavali na základe odvahy alebo straneckej príslušnosti, či po známosti. Počas vojny bolo vybudované vyššie dôstojnícke vzdelávanie, ktoré však nebolo kompatibilné s civilným životom. Profesionálny výcvik je dnes pos-

kytovaný hlavne ako výsledok mierového rozvoja a nových vzťahov Chorvátska s NATO.

Chorvátsko a jeho armáda boli postupne integrované do európskych a transatlantických aktivít – v misii OBSE v Náhornom Karabachu, rozvinula sa spolupráca s misiami EÚ, ZEÚ a NATO v Chorvátsku, Chorvátsko umožnilo prelety vojenských lietadiel Aliancie nad svojím územím. Po politických zmenách v roku 2000 bolo Chorvátsko prijaté aj do PZM. USA boli prvou krajinou, ktorá uskutočnila prvé spoločné chorvátsko-americké civilno-vojenské programy pre profesionálny výcvik chorvátskej armády a budovanie demokratických inštitúcií (1995).

Dnešné hrozby pre Chorvátsko sú oveľa viac spojené s vnútropolitickou situáciou než s medzinárodnou realitou. Chorvátsko však buduje nové demokratické inštitúcie a má veľký záujem na svojej integrácii do EÚ a NATO, chce sa podieľať na novej európskej bezpečnostnej architektúre a rozvoji euroatlantických vzťahov.*