

Conflict Studies Research Centre



**The Croatian Armed
Forces and NATO**

Slavko Baric

November 2006

The Croatian Armed Forces And NATO

Slavko Baric

Abstract:

Building armed forces capable of meeting new security challenges poses a real challenge for the majority of European countries and even for the USA. Croatia aspires to access the NATO alliance, and this places the imperative of true transformation before the Croatian armed forces and Croatian society as a whole. Transformation of the Croatian armed forces (CAF) has to be an ongoing process of building new capabilities that will enable the CAF to respond to new security challenges. The question of building a professional army is of primary importance. This is also a primary political question in Croatia, given that the armed forces were formed during the Homeland War. This is why the support of all national institutions is important for transforming the CAF and for integration of Croatia into NATO. Croatia should modernize and professionalize its armed forces with the objectives of serving Croatian national interests and contributing to an overall NATO capability as an integral part of the alliance. Progress so far has been slow but steady on the detail of transformation.

The Croatian Armed Forces and NATO

Slavko Baric

Introduction

Since it became independent and internationally recognized, Croatia has determined its strategic objectives: liberation of Croatia and accession to Euro-Atlantic institutions, first and foremost into the European Union and NATO. The Croatian defence system was formed in wartime conditions in the early 1990s and was structured in line with requirements of the war situation at that time. Upon liberation of Croatia, conditions were created for Croatia to apply for admittance into Partnership for Peace (PfP) and through this partnership to activate necessary transformations with the objective of contributing to building peace and stability in the world, especially in Southeast Europe. Croatia has established membership in NATO and EU as its main foreign policy objectives and considers them as one of the most important guarantees for its national security.

Insufficient understanding of the concept of security in the entire meaning of the word is a constant in the process of transformation of the defence system; security has been identified as synonymous with defence. The consequence of such an approach was non-comprehension of the need to secure the capability of the Croatian state to respond to dynamic and persistent threats through the Croatian security system and to enable an optimal and comprehensive development of Croatian society. Precious time and the limited resources that were made available to Croatia left devastated by the war were therefore wasted. It also confirmed the thesis that the transformation of the armed forces was primarily an intellectual issue. The result was galloping foreign debt and a consequential weakening of the Croatian security system. It also slowed down the accession of Croatia to NATO. The slow implementation of the accepted Partnership Goals lost Croatia precious credibility related to its readiness to carry out defence reforms. Upon liberation, the CAF were recognized as a system of providing social care and solving major socio-economic problems of the victims and participants of the Homeland War. The beginning of a planned reform was therefore delayed.

By accessing NATO and EU, Croatia will enter the exclusive circle of developed democratic states that have a functioning legal system and market economy and these will make it a credible and reliable partner. Membership in NATO will secure Croatia a transition from the status of an associate member to the status of active participant in international relations. By placing emphasis on the construction of stable foundations for permanent democracy based on security, justice and wealth of all Croatian citizens, the capability of strongly protecting national interests and securing the well-being of future generations will be demonstrated. The outlook of membership in NATO gives Croatia a strong stimulus and support in reforming the entire defence and state system. The Republic of Croatia has accordingly put great effort into fulfilling preconditions for membership, primarily through its Membership Action Plan (MAP) – by developing the Annual National Plan (ANP) and through the Planning and Review Process (PARP) as the most important mechanisms.

In its firm attempt and wish to become a fully-fledged NATO member, Croatia needs to carry out extensive reforms and adjustments in policy, economy, and legislation as well as in defence where transformation of the CAF has a key role. Successful implementation of an entire raft of social reforms is decisive for membership, since not only the armed forces of any state but the entire society enters the Alliance. A democratic, stable and legally ordered Croatia is first of all in the interest of its citizens. By achieving and building such a society, conditions for full integration into NATO will be fulfilled.

Croatia has been recognized as a serious candidate for NATO by the Istanbul Summit and it has been invited to take part in the Summit to be held in December this year (2008), with full membership by end of 2009 or early 2010.

The Accession Process

In early 1996, Croatia officially defined full membership of NATO and EU as the priority foreign policy objectives, as emphasized by the President of the Republic in his state of the nation speech. Croatia accordingly submitted a formal request to join PfP in the same year, but at that time NATO only welcomed Croatian aspirations and supported efforts to establish closer cooperation.

Accession of Croatia to PfP began with the visit of the President of the Croatian Government on 15 February 2000 to NATO. On that occasion Croatia was offered a special programme of PfP activities (Tailored Individual Partnership Plan (IPP)). On the basis of that offer, and after formal entry in the PfP process, in 2000 Croatia took part in 59 events, of which 47 were planned and 12 unplanned. (Croatia participated in about 300 IPP events in 2004.)

On 25th May 2000, the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs signed the Framework Partnership for Peace Document by which Croatia officially became a member of the NATO PfP programme and Euroatlantic Partnership Council. In October 2000 Croatia submitted a reply to NATO on the "Questionnaire on the Survey of Overall PfP Interoperability", which initiated its participation within PARP. On that occasion Croatia was offered Partnership Goals aimed at improving interoperability between the CAF and NATO. Out of 32 offered, Croatia accepted 26. Croatia is currently implementing 49 PGs that significantly direct transformation processes in the Croatian MOD and the CAF, and in the state administration. In other words, they cover an exceptionally wide spectrum of areas of cooperation that are necessary in Croatian preparations for accessing NATO. In January 2006, Croatia was offered Partnership Goals that will significantly direct the reform processes in the CAF by 2012, and also provide a projection of requested capabilities of the CAF after 2012.

The reform efforts initiated in early 2000 resulted in significant downsizing of the armed forces. However, the new structure has become only a minor version of the previous one, meaning that it has not adapted to the security challenges of the new age. Nor was it in line with available budget funds for defence, in spite of significant downsizing.

By obtaining the status of a formal aspirant for membership in NATO in 2002, a PARP/MAP mechanism initiated thorough reassessment of the capabilities of the Croatian defence system, and gradual adjustment to the NATO planning system. Analyses of the Croatian defence system in the American Defence Reform Study, and the British Study of MOD Management & Administration, were an attempt to

suggest reforms that would establish a balance between budget possibilities and real commitments.

Work on the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) was started in late October 2003, as the first attempt to consider all aspects affecting the defence system in an integral way; from threat analysis, to the influence of the alliance to available resources. This document would, for the first time, analyse all strengths and weaknesses of the defence system.

The absence of a direct military threat to Croatia and the development of good neighbourly relations in the immediate environment has enabled the beginning of reform in the CAF and their transformation into forces capable of responding to new security challenges (terrorism, proliferation of WMD, organized crime). The main factors that determine the framework of their transformation are undoubtedly the experiences and accomplishments of the Homeland War, a relatively stable security environment and the budget frameworks of the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces in the years to come. Efforts for full membership of NATO and EU are perhaps the most important factors that define that framework.

The following activities of implementing the Strategic Defence Review were carried out:

- a) **A survey of the situation** within the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces was made with detailed analysis of resources and existing capabilities.
- b) **Risks and threats** to the Republic of Croatia were analysed and the probability of possible future threats was assessed.
- c) All **obligations and missions** of the armed forces were analysed, including obligations towards the UN, NATO, and EU and according to regional organizations and initiatives.
- d) **Specific questions** that are important for defining future prospects of the defence system were considered.

Options and consequences of the decision to abolish compulsory conscription were considered. The solutions offered in the study on professionalisation will be additionally tested through public discussion. The findings will serve as a foundation for reaching a decision in the Croatian Parliament about establishing priorities in professionalising the CAF, about conscription in the future, ways of carrying out conscription and the manner of professionalising the CAF. The reserve and conscript components have been analysed. Results identified the existence of a too large, territorially organized reserve for which there are insufficient funds for regular training. A consensus of state officials about abolishing "B" type reserves was carried out by the Decision of the President of the Republic of Croatia on 11 May 2004. The corps organization of the army was partially abolished by the end of 2005, and will be completely carried out by mid 2007.

Besides this in 2004 viewpoints were formed and very important decisions reached, such as: no further modernization of MIG-21 aircraft, the project of equipping with new tanks was temporarily suspended and decisions made about discarding obsolete army equipment and armament. These decisions represent a step to defining the final structure and size of the Armed Forces.

The Strategic Defence Review proposed a concept of organizing the Coast Guard where the Croatian navy and parts of the air force will have a significant role. Drafting the normative-legal proposals for regulating this area is underway and the

Coast Guard will be accordingly organized within the Croatian navy. The command of the Coast Guard will be carried out from a NATO interoperable operations centre.

Development of the third ANP gave a new impetus to activities in defence policy, emphasizing preparations for membership of NATO and EU as the most important priorities in the mid-term. The document "Defence Policy 2004/05 – Into the Alliance" was published in February 2004 and initiated the activities in developing the Strategic Defence Review which were given the highest priorities.¹ The main novelty of the document was its announcement of the intention to change the basic defence concept. Croatia has accepted that the collective defence concept is desirable and necessary, and actively monitors transformations within NATO, with the aim of making its own adjustments to transformations within the Alliance itself.

It is now necessary to initiate thorough reorganization of the defence system during 2006, complying with the findings of the SDR, and also with the adopted Long-term Development Plan of the CAF from 2007 to 2016. This plan should be adopted in parliamentary procedure in June 2006, conforming with the law. Its realization will create necessary preconditions for completing the Croatian defence system reform initiated in 2002, and establishing a direction of its future development within a ten-year period. In this Plan, a vision of developing the CAF will be clearly set for the first time, based upon real and secured resources. Complete civilian control over the CAF will be realized through enacting the Plan by Parliament.

Towards the new structure of the CAF

The objective of the reform and reorganization is to establish a modern structure that will be able to respond to threats of the new age, relying on membership in NATO and security arrangements made under the auspices of the European Union. Commitments deriving from these should be recognized and built into future missions and tasks of the armed forces, but also in a security and defence system that will efficiently use all national force elements in real time, with special emphasis on capabilities for crisis management. To enable efficient decision-making, it is necessary to harmonize not only the elements and structure of forces but also to reorganize the legal framework and procedural mechanisms within the entire state administration, with emphasis on strategic level decision making. Expenses of developing defence capabilities have to be placed in the framework of the country's own budget capabilities. Aiming to have small but mobile, well-equipped, organized and trained armed forces that will have deployment capability outside national territory, it is necessary to take account of available budget resources and security in the region. In the mid-term, the CAF should be reduced to fewer than 18,000 military and civilian employees.

The future armed forces should be organized into ready, joint forces manned with professionals. They are likely to consist of two manoeuvre brigades and combat and logistic support units, reserve and training forces and support commands, and the Croatian Military Academy. The main characteristics of such a structure are: reduction of the organizational "depth" in relation to the existing structure; manning of permanently ready forces with professionals; joint and modular organization for each operation; reduction of the number of commands and deployment of more people in units; system of education integrated in one institution; training and reserve under service commands representing the top of the military profession. Logistics should be concurrently organized on principles of focused logistics with integrated distribution, and a maximum reliance on national

capacities. The future structure will be based on operational capabilities for the purpose of avoiding multiplication of competence and unnecessary paperwork.

With the NATO alliance already in the process of transformation, it is necessary to plan how to build forces from the officially recognized capabilities that will have their place in the NATO collective defence system, and form the main architecture of forces that will have to meet the requirements of carrying out any future missions led by the Alliance. The main answers to such questions are given by Partnership Goals offered to Croatia in January 2006. It will be necessary to continue the programme of downsizing military and civilian personnel, while simultaneously starting to hire new personnel so as to improve the age and educational structure.

Necessity of professionalisation in transformation of the CAF

Challenges of professionalisation are especially topical in the transformation of the armed forces of European countries. They are mostly faced with a similar security dilemma - and for small and transitional countries, such as the Republic of Croatia, the challenge also represents a first-class political question.

In the 20th century, a century of classical wars, the most benevolent form of manning the armed forces, was conscription. Mass armed forces had the basic mission of defending a country's own national territory. The forces built according to these principles were static, reactive, mass, regional and markedly slow. In the second half of the century a combined model emerged that presupposes manning through universal service obligation and engagement of soldiers under contract (volunteers) for special missions only highly trained, professional soldiers can perform. However, not even the combined model could entirely respond to security challenges in crisis management. Projecting power on any part of the Earth is the imperative of the new age. The demand for transformation in all NATO and PfP member countries was dramatically accelerated by the tragic events of 11 September 2001.

Future armed forces must have the capability of cost effective engagement with minimal possible losses. Only highly-trained forces which perfectly understand that the information revolution has fundamentally changed the nature of war, can respond to this requirement.

As the Republic of Croatia was the object of international security for a long time, the question is raised of how to build armed forces that will be capable of keeping pace with the future and present allies and respond to security-defence challenges on Croatian territory. The complexity of this problem demands mobilisation of a wide spectrum of society, from the president, parliament and the government to the entire Croatian public. This also includes implicitly a systematic approach to security issues and requires constant education of senior state officials regarding security issues, ways of solving security challenges and possible consequences of undertaking adequate measures for the prevention of security threats. The mission of the Croatian MOD and the CAF is also to create an environment where security awareness and security culture will be desirable qualities in persons who are active in policy making. The CAF and the Croatian MOD alone cannot meet the numerous challenges and problems that will appear in the period of transformation.

For some authors, especially in Croatia, professionalism (in the sense of terminology) is mostly just a descriptive term which covers transformation from the half professional/half conscript composition of the armed forces to one consisting of

only contracted soldiers. Out of this arises the mistake that all non-conscripts are implicitly professional soldiers.

What actually is the professionalisation process of the Croatian Armed Forces all about? Is it just the process of making the forces non-conscript or is it at the same time a normative term for armed forces that accept their Constitution-described role in the New Croatian Democratic Society, cleansed from any daily-politics influence; in the sense of meeting the requirements of their country's civil authorities (consequently, they do not engage in politics or try to determine the overall defence policy)?

The unnecessary dilemma of professionalisation is strengthened by not knowing its real costs and obstacles in the process. Most countries in transition do not have fully professionalized armed forces so that costs are compared of individual segments of conscripts and contracted soldiers, who may or may not be professional soldiers. The calculation of the cost of professional armed forces must necessarily stress the existence of three mutual dependent components: a correctly balanced personnel and proportional infrastructure, equipment costs and sustainability. Budget imbalance means irrational fund usage and the impossibility of building an optimal force structure. It is necessary to eliminate dissonance between doctrine, education and training, weapons and military equipment and to develop possibilities for maintaining military capacities in long operations.² The cost of a resettlement system for professional soldiers after their contract is terminated must also be factored in. For a long time over 70% of the budget in Croatia was spent on personnel costs. Despite all transformational moves undertaken, the continuation of this trend will inevitably result in the downfall of built-up capacities and in the reduction of the armed forces' degree of professionalism. However, it is necessary to build adequate armed forces able to respond to challenges the CAF is expected to face when Croatia becomes a full NATO member, and these will certainly not be forces with units manned by conscripts.

Professional armed forces have to be determined multidimensionality. It is possible to categorize them, as Anthony Forster does, into four key features.

Role: Professional armed forces have a clearly defined and widely accepted role determined by the international environment and interior social system

- Strategic goals and tasks, roles as well as responsibilities of armed forces must be clearly defined and comprehensive;
- There must be clear legal and constitutional restrictions on the armed forces' role in politics;
- The armed forces are an organisation directed to achieving goals based on rational principles and with the mission to achieve efficiently goals related to personnel, equipment and acquisition;
- The armed forces are established and organised to sustain broader goals of defence policy.

Competence: Every profession has two competence levels: the first giving a broad liberal cultural background and the other specialised knowledge of the profession. The second level of professional education is enabled and conducted in specialised institutions managed by or connected to the profession. The armed forces build specialised competence necessary for conducting efficiently and effectively their international and interior functions and tasks. The following are necessary:

- The existence of firm standards and formal qualifications for enlisting in the armed forces related to education, training, experience, health and age;
- The existence of efficient training and military education, including military academies, NCO and officer schools;
- Since assignments in the armed forces are highly specialised, they require both high and varied technical competences as well as specialised skills. Hence, it is necessary to have a modern education and training system;
- In order to maintain competence it is necessary to have the capability of retaining competent personnel and of ongoing professional training.

Responsibilities: Professionals are practical experts working in a social context and performing duties essential for functioning of society. Responsibility towards society is often among military professionals a set of written and unwritten norms and canons of professional ethics and morality, unmistakably stressing both the rules of responsibility of the armed forces as an institution and of every individual within the armed forces. The following regularities are stressed through regulations and doctrinal solutions:

- Operations are marked by clear rules and norms explicitly describing duties, responsibilities, procedures and the relations of employees in various situations, so that by using these, unwanted consequences are avoided;
- There is a free information flow and a quick movement of command in depth with a flexible chain of command especially in crises;
- The legislation and service regulations are clearly defined in the armed forces, emphatically applying principles of single command and subordination so that a necessary degree of military discipline is achieved through legislation;
- Mechanisms and standards preventing corruption within the armed forces and preventing professional soldiers from participating in various activities for benefits or other forms of salary;
- The efficient and optimal use of resources.

Promotions: Professional armed forces are characterised by a developed promotion system stimulating achievement-based excellence so that the:

- Promotion procedures are transparent, precise and based on the idea of expertise or achievements through defined modalities of showing capability;
- Appointments take place through clear procedures defined by law and are based on specialist qualifications and not on nepotism, friendship, political or other criteria. This means it is vital to build a new human resource management system with mechanisms for evaluating, rewarding, promoting or posting to key positions those qualified to manage the armed forces' reorganisation, but in congruency with the new role and plans for the armed forces' use.

From these determinations it is unquestionable that countries building their own political system on democratic principles do not have the dilemma whether professionalisation is necessary or not. They do not prefer any model of organising forces, nor does it exclude conscripts (e.g. Germany, Austria and others).

Professionalisation involves defining the military role, revising force structures and their organisation in congruency with the redefined role and acceptance of

professional standards (in particular in the area of expertise, responsibility and promotions). Summing up defence and national security requirements Chris Donnelly stresses:³

- That armed forces must possess the capability of mobilisation to respond successfully to unpredictable threats and to secure reserves but with a long warning time;
- That armed forces must possess the capability of quick out-of-area deployment and be sustainable – which will require a defence budget ratio increase in favour of logistic and support functions;
- Interoperability with NATO on the highest political and military levels of decision-making;
- High education and training standards for soldiers, NCOs and officers;
- Building capabilities for a large range of administrative skills (e.g. managing transportation systems, hospitals etc.);
- Being able to act as police forces;
- Building and maintaining new motivation and moral foundations to support the formation of these capabilities (building morale in new conditions is not based on the same principles as the ones for defending the homeland).

Experience from CAF professionalisation

The CAF were formed during the war and they had the features of inter-World-War-armies. This particularity results from the fact that Croatia was invaded and therefore it was necessary to establish combined armed forces with a large number of mobilised soldiers (during certain war periods 5% of the total population was mobilised), causing the CAF to have the features of a mass army, and representing a huge effort for Croatian society. The primary mission was the country's defence, and therefore the public reaction was very positive. The dominant characteristic of the military professional was his war-leader role. Experience confirmed the thesis of Philip Gold, the Head of Defence Studies at the Institute for Research in Seattle, that recruitment has always been very efficient whenever a large half-trained mass was needed for the defence of the homeland from a direct and mass threat. The Homeland War pointed out the invaluable importance of the citizen-soldier, through which the CAF were reflected as an image of their own nation. Since it was established in war conditions, the Croatian defence system was not structured in congruency with the transformations brought by the revolution in military affairs during the 1990s. Since the CAF were formed successfully in a very brief time and they managed to successfully complete their task during that period, they could be categorized as post-neutral armed forces giving priority to national territorial defence, but also willing to participate in peace support and relief tasks.

By liberating occupied Croatian territory, and after the peaceful re-integration of the Croatian Danube region, the conditions were created for Croatia to contribute to building peace and stability in the world, especially in the South-East part of Europe. Croatia considers NATO and EU membership one of its most important guarantees for its own national safety, although these goals have required an extraordinary effort from the entire Croatian society in deep transformation from a war army to post-modern armed forces. This requirement multiplies the complexity and stresses the particularities of Croatia in relation to other countries applying for membership in those organisations and which have not recently experienced war on their own territory. These challenges not only require a real, revolutionary transformation of the armed forces, but also concurrently a revolution of civil-

military relations. This revolution changes deeply the CAF's role, structure and composition, and requires tremendous efforts.

The CAF transformation is possible since changes have appeared in Croatian society. Firstly, the perception of citizens has changed in understanding what Croatia is and why the focus of activity should be set on building human rights, freedom, and true liberal democratic values – that is, the perception that the focus should no longer be on the defence system as the only segment of the security system. Secondly, changes have occurred in public opinion on the situation in the immediate vicinity. It is no longer considered that eternal adversaries surround Croatia and the possibility of developing its own prosperity is sought in the development of good neighbourly relations.

Croatia's post-war defence policy has been largely influenced by American military thought, which was manifested through the activities of the contracted American MPRI company. Therefore, the professional army was looked at as an army made up of volunteers and experience gained in the war, which dictated that a professional soldier was a person who proved himself through battles in the Homeland War, usually as a tactical commander.⁴ With the further development of Croatian military thought this attitude has been significantly extended. The road to a professional army has been based on education and building an officer-scientist, and an officer with a high degree of understanding of overall social trends. These tendencies have been stressed through the entire spectrum of soldiers and NCOs.

Three key reform areas were identified as part of professionalisation: firstly, military education; secondly, reform and conversion of the military budget to reach a balanced interior structure focusing on education and acquisition of modern military equipment, and thirdly, building clearly shaped structures and an efficient command and control system. The reforms in each of these areas create the possibility for a true transformation of the armed forces. However, concurrently huge barriers have been created primarily by particularly unfavorable economic conditions, and as Alex J. Bellamy says, given that the Croatian Army has limited capabilities and material resources for any other missions but for the defence of its own territory.

Therefore, it is necessary to have a systematic approach to the creation of postmodern, professional armed forces. The process starts with a firm organisation of forces which not only includes the organisation and structure of armed forces, but also the number of soldiers, NCOs, officers who carry out manning. The organisation has to be based on strategic documents: Strategy of National Defence, Defence Strategy and Military Strategy. That is a critical point but its efficiency depends on the speed of further progress. The next step is quality enhancement of the personnel structure. That means it is not enough to secure a sufficient number of members for manning, but it is also necessary to recruit and retain qualified personnel possessing the required education and physical capabilities to meet the requirements of every particular organisational post. Hence, it is necessary to set clear professional development standards, emphasizing the necessity of higher education as a prerequisite for most vacancies. During the recruitment of the new NCO and officer generation, the armed forces have to focus on high standards of self-confidence. In order to achieve that, it is necessary to create a top-quality media programme in order to reach out to the excellent young men and women the armed forces needs. This approach is vital as well in times of high employment since it is difficult to attract excellent personnel and it is even harder to keep them

within the system. Therefore, it is necessary to build a compensation system reflecting incomes at the very least equal to those in civilian professions.

In addition the army has to ensure a quality of life to people dedicating their lives to defence. That means the armed forces must pay full attention to living conditions, health care, housing and education. It is not simply enough to solve qualities of life and funding issues. It is also vital to built self-confidence, the spirit of unity and morale resulting out of the existence of a well-trained and led military organisation with high standards and the feeling of merit for their own engagement.

Conclusion

Building a professional army with force-projection capacities, resulting in stability-projection, represents an armed forces transformation trend in almost all NATO and partner countries. Assuming that the regional surroundings are particularly vital to Croatia's interests, it is more than necessary to pay attention to promoting stability, reducing tensions and insecurity in these regional surroundings. To reach that goal, Croatia should continue to act both bilaterally and multilaterally within the framework of international organizations and regional initiatives. There are no alternatives.

Building a professional army is a long, complicated and complex process and the current abolition of conscription can have negative implications for the capabilities of the armed forces in carrying out existing missions. However, that process is necessary in the next two to three years if Croatia aims to build armed forces the NATO Alliance can count on as a reliable support for responding to challenges the unpredictable future brings. Croatia has not yet precisely defined standards relating to future CAF professional soldiers and the professionalisation study unfortunately did not give the necessary answers. Most professional soldiers currently do not fit the NATO professional soldier model as regards age, health, education and capabilities for missions, housing conditions and readiness for new challenges (mostly these are family people, tied to their homes).

A balanced development of all armed forces branches is a necessity, but likewise the national military capabilities must be in balance with the needs of the institutions Croatia wants to join. Therefore, it is vital to ensure support of all Croatian institutions for a necessary CAF transformation and Croatia's NATO integration. In that transformation process, it is necessary to modernize and professionalize CAF in a way that will primary serve Croatian national interests and then the CAF will be able to contribute to the overall NATO capabilities.

To ensure adequate answers to existing current and future security challenges, it is vital to have available a broader defence capability spectrum, which cannot be secured independently due to limited resources. Thus, Croatia can surely achieve its optimal security only through full NATO membership. While meeting the many challenges this brings, it is important to constantly bear in mind that the reform processes will enable the creation of a defence and security system contributing primarily to its own and then to collective security, and a stable and safe international environment, thereby protecting the national interests and welfare of Croatian citizens and our future generations.

Endnotes

¹ At the time this article was written and prepared for publishing (May/July 2006) the Strategic Defence Review was in its adoption phase. The same author is preparing a new paper in this Balkans Series which will give more details of the Strategic Defence Review and its benefits to the Croatian Armed Forces in achieving full NATO membership (A.W.)

² The NATO Alliance expects all nations to build their own armed forces capabilities, whose 40% of land components will be deployable and to have continuing support capabilities of 8% of land components in different types of operations.

³ Chris Donnelly visited Croatia in 2002. This summary has been taken from his presentation to students and lecturers of the Croatian War College on their study trip to Eastern Slavonia.

⁴ Alex J. Bellamy: *A Revolution in Civil-Military Affairs: the Professionalisation of Croatia's Armed Forces* page 165.-181. in the book *The Challenge of Military Reform in Postcommunist Europe*, Palgrave Macmilan New York.

LtGeneral Slavko Barić, M.Sc., is Deputy Chief of the General staff of the Croatian Armed Forces. Views in this paper are the expression of the author's personal opinion and do not represent standpoints of the institution the author works in.

Want to Know More ...?

See:

Alex J. Bellamy: *A Revolution in Civil-Military Affairs: The Professionalisation of Croatia's Armed Forces - The Challenge of Military Reform in Postcommunist Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan New York 2002

Anthony Forster, Andrew Cottey and Tim Edmunds: *The Challenge of Military Reform in Postcommunist Europe, Building Professional Armed Forces*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002

Amadeo Watkins, *PfP Integration: Croatia, Serbia & Montenegro*, CSRC Balkan Series, April 2004

COPYRIGHT: SLAVKO BARIC

Disclaimer

The views expressed are those of the
Author and not necessarily those of the
UK Ministry of Defence

ISBN 1-905058-65-9

Published By:

**Defence Academy of the
United Kingdom**

Conflict Studies Research Centre

Defence Academy of the UK
Watchfield
Swindon
SN6 8TS
England

Telephone: (44) 1793 788856
Fax: (44) 1793 788841
Email: csrc@da.mod.uk
<http://www.da.mod.uk/csrc>

ISBN 1-905058-65-9