NATO Initiatives in Support of Defence Management Reform and Integrity Building

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Todor Tagarev, *NATO Initiatives in Support of Defence Management Reform and Integrity Building*

Abstract: In a presentation to the 86th Rose-Roth seminar, organized by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 16-18 June 2014 in Baku, Azerbaijan, Dr. Tagarev elaborates on the need to merge efforts to strengthen defence institution, and in particular to introduce advanced approaches to defence management, and initiatives to build integrity and reduce corruption in defence.

Keywords: defence institution building, transparency, accountability, integrity

Тодор Тагарев, *Инициативи на НАТО в подкрепа на реформирането на отбранителния мениджмънт и укрепването на интегритета*

Резюме: В доклада си пред 86-я Роуз-Рот семинар, организиран от Парламентарната асамблея на НАТО, 16-18 юни 2014 г. в гр. Баку, Азербайджан, д-р Тагарев обосновава необходимостта да се обединят усилията да укрепване на отбранителните институции, и в частност въвеждането на съвременни подходи към мениджмънта на отбраната, и инициативи за утвърждаване на интегритета и противодействие на корупцията в отбраната.

Ключови думи: укрепване на отбранителни институции, прозрачност, отчетност, интегритет

Editors: Todor Tagarev, Velizar Shalamanov, Venelin Georgiev, Valeri Ratchev

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, officers,

Some of you have probably seen this in the news. Yesterday, General Boris Kolesnikov jumped from the 6th floor and killed himself. He was Deputy Head of the Anticorruption unit of the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation. General Kolesnikov was arrested at the end of February this year and held in custody since then on accusations of bribery, abuse of power, and an attempt to influence an officer from Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) to take a bribe.

Another sobering example relates to ongoing conflicts in two countries not very far from Baku, actually both are just two borders apart. The two countries enjoyed NATO and allied support and advice in building modern, effective and efficient defence institutions, but in both cases the military performed rather poorly against a lightly armed asymmetric threat; at least judging from what we have seen so far.

What lessons can we draw from these two examples? Let's start with the latter. When there is a lack of integrity, efforts to improve capacity for policy and strategy making, defence planning, procurement and financial management lead to superficial, cosmetic changes. Defence ministries continue to function in a non-transparent manner, avoiding necessary reform and adaptation to new security and fiscal realities.

Required reforms may be painful, and on occasion damaging to the political party, or parties, in power, but avoiding reforms is equivalent to wasting scarce resources at best or, in a worse case, to maintaining armed forces that are ill-prepared for current and upcoming tasks and cannot protect the territorial integrity, the citizens, and the nation.

And this brings me to the concept of "Integrity." Integrity is more than the lack of corruption. Integrity means that when we share certain values, this is not just a declaration, but our actual practice. Integrity of the defence organization means that it is protected from undue influence of private interests, e.g. the interests of a commercial company to "massage" procurement requirements, the interests of a local community in maintaining or reviving a redundant military base, etc.

And the final key aspect of the concept is "process integrity." At your level of strategic decision making that means that declared goals, policies, and priorities are translated into programmes, capabilities, units, unit location, training, and procurement decisions, and all that within allocated resources, including budget, and clearly articulated risks. Integrity also means that implementation reports and audits, in turn, provide objective assessment of respective results.

Defence Committee of Parliament, in my view, provides the ideal venue to assure defence integrity in all its aspects.

But let me now turn back to the first example. Way too often, faced with the problem of corruption, young immature democracies tend to do two things:

1. Consider tougher sanctions and increase corruption-related penalties in law, and

2. Create all sorts of anti-corruption committees, bureaus, and agencies at most senior levels.

Both may have some utility, but only to the extent that they act transparently and are accountable to society. Often, however, this is not the case, and General Kolesnikov is just one of the casualties among "the guardians of integrity." Without effective and transparent mechanisms of control and accountability, such anti-corruption bodies easily turn into a locus of 'behind the scenes' protection of members of the ruling elite and harassment of opposition leaders and 'uncooperative' businesses.

These two examples were selected to demonstrate that the implementation of integrity building measures without proper defence management reform and efforts to strengthen defence institutions without attention to integrity may be equally counterproductive. We need to find ways to "marry" integrity enhancements to defence management reform and institution building.

Let's start with a brief overview of the main NATO initiatives in these two fields - the Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building (PAP-DIB) and the Building Integrity Initiative.

PAP-DIB was launched ten years ago, at NATO's Istanbul Summit in June 2004, and endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of 49 NATO and Partner countries.[1] The plan aimed to assist Partners in carrying out defence reforms, with a view that "effective and efficient state defence institutions under civilian and democratic control are fundamental to stability in the Euro-Atlantic area, and essential for international security cooperation."[2]

An integral part of the Partnership for Peace, PAP-DIB provided opportunities for exchange of experience and practical co-operation between Allies and Partners in pursuing a number of objectives of fundamental importance to the development of effective and democratically responsible defence institutions:[3]

- Effective democratic control of defence activities;

- Civilian participation in policy making, including participation of civilians in governmental defence institutions;

- Legislative and judicial oversight of the defence sector;

- Effective and transparent arrangements and procedures for assessing security risks and requirements;

- Optimizing the management of defence ministries;

- Ensuring compliance with international norms and practices in the defence sector, including export controls;

- Effective and transparent personnel structures and practices in personnel management;

- Transparent financial planning and resource allocation;

- Effective, transparent, and viable management of defence spending;

- Effective international cooperation and good neighbourly relations in defence and security matters.

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) has supported the implementation of PAP-DIB via training, advice, identification of best practice, information sharing

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[1]   Partnership Action Plan for Defence Institution Building. Effective civilian and democratic control over armed forces, *NATO A-Z*, 10 June 2014.

[2]   Ibid.

[3]   See Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building (PAP-DIB), NATO e-Library: Official texts, 7 June 2004, www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-478BCB16-E7EF398D/natolive/official_texts_ 21014.htm?selectedLocale=en; and Thomas-Durell Young and Todor Tagarev, "Planning and Development of Defense Institutions in a Time of Transformation," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 5, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2006): 1-3, http://connections-qj.org/article/planning-and-development-defense-institutions-time-transformation.

and knowledge dissemination in English, as well as the languages of partner countries, including Azerbaijani.[4]

In November 2007, EAPC Ambassadors approved a report on building integrity in defence establishments, thus launching the Building Integrity initiative. The 2008 Bucharest and the 2009 Kehl-Strasbourg summits called for practical implementation and further development of the initiative.[5]

At the end of 2012 the initiative was transformed into the "Building Integrity Programme" intended to provide practical tools to help participating countries strengthen integrity, transparency and accountability and reduce the risk of corruption in the defence and security sectors.

It promotes good practice, processes and methodologies, and provides countries with tailored support to make defence and security institutions more effective.[6] Sixteen countries--both NATO member states and partners--have been involved in the programme so far. Defence establishments, often with the involvement of parliaments and civil society, conduct corruption risks and integrity self-assessments, invite peers to review findings and identify suitable integrity measures, create action plans, participate in or even launch their own capacity building programmes.

Both NATO/ EAPC initiatives were very timely and useful. Partners, as well as members, which a couple of years ago were not willing to discuss corruption-related problems in defence, are now on board. Many PfP nations, as well as Mediterranean Dialogue partners and countries as far away as Columbia benefit from the NATO BI programme.

All this indicates significant progress. A few would claim, however, that we are close to solving the problem. In many cases BI activities take place in parallel to, or on top of, everyday defence activities. There are examples, when measures intended to strengthen integrity and eliminate corruption overburden and sometimes block organizational processes. Experience demonstrates that effective implementation of integrity measures requires that they are smoothly incorporated in defence management processes.

Achieving this in defence establishments with limited management capacity and still weak institutions is far from trivial. Therefore, with these introductory remarks, I invite all of you to share your views on how best to merge institution building and management enhancement measures with efforts to strengthen integrity and improve transparency and accountability of defence establishments.

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[4]   For a list of selected publications see the bibliography at the end of this essay. DCAF PAP-DIB, as well as defence integrity publications were translated into Azerbaijani by Mr. Elkhan Mehdiyev, Director of the Peace and Conflict Resolution Centre, Baku.

[5]   Adrian Kendry and Susan Pond, "NATO and the Evolution of the Building Integrity Initiative," in Todor Tagarev, ed., *Building Integrity and Reducing Corruption in Defence: A Compendium of Best Practices* (Geneva: DCAF, 2010), 22-30, reference on p. 24.

[6] Building Integrity (BI) Programme, *NATO A-Z*, 24 June 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_ 68368.htm?selectedLocale=en.

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