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F I N A L R E P O R T

***THE NEW NATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT
AND ITS IMPACT ON
THE CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN BULGARIA***

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I INTRODUCTION

Bulgaria is subjected to deep systemic social changes as a former totalitarian socialist society and state. At the same time the post-Cold War global, regional and sub-regional security situation strongly, and in some cases even decisively, motivates the national security and the more general social transformations and adaptations. Bulgarian society and its military component cannot be isolated from the revolutionary technological and especially information technological changes – another major factor of understanding the complexity of the present situation in this country and in its armed forces.

A basic concept of the present Report is that **the most direct influences of the new national security environment on the present and future state of the civil-military relations in Bulgaria may be defined most generally through the four sources of change in the field of this specific relationship on a global scale: 1) the new mission of the democratic military in the post-Cold War era; 2) the technological and especially the information technological revolution in the military profession; 3) the social systemic changes in the developing world, and 4) the social systemic changes in the post-totalitarian socialist world.**

No country – free and democratic or those making steps in that direction, is spared of these influences. But the different influences are of a varied priority and with different contents for the national security and for the system of civil-military relations in the different types of countries: while societies and states with developed market economies and solid democratic traditions are concentrated mainly on the adaptation to the first and the second sources of change, others, like Bulgaria, are fixed on the fourth and less – on the first, and least, though so important – on the second. A natural task for the NATO countries is limiting defence spending while attempting to provide effective armed forces. For seven consecutive years a major task of Bulgaria is the survival of her armed forces – a poor starting position for the efforts of adapting to the three mentioned sources of change in the field of civil-military relations.

The fixation on the existential issues of society and its armed forces does not provide the country with an adequate capacity of adapting its national security system to the dramatic

changes of the external security environment and the dramatic technological breakthroughs. This leads to turning the natural process of changing the entire system of values of the people, its civilians and military, into a frustrated one, doubting even the rationale of all the changes in the recent years. This can be traced during the last seven years both in the decision-making process on national security and foreign-political issues, and on the everyday behavior and acts of individual representatives of the armed forces of the country. Hence, it is no wonder, both the civilians and the military are still not well placed in the complex and with a manifold meaning civil-military relationship.

Some people in the West and in the East are tempted to remind that the issues of civil-military relations are nowhere ultimately solved. For example, still "the intelligence community – a \$30 billion black hole of no public accountability"¹ is a fact of life in the USA. "Providing the public at national and European level with appropriate information on the issues involved in developing an autonomous and credible European defence policy"² is an actual task of the Western European Union. Despite the different magnitude of the problems in the Bulgarian civil-military relations, it is good to remember that "a country which has no problems of civil-military relations and democratic control is a country which has no democracy"³.

A second basic concept of the Report, stemming from these considerations is that **the good, taking place in the Bulgarian civil-military relations is no enemy of the perfect in the field.** The "perfect" itself is not an ideal achievement that does not create new problems during the strife for improvement and no one can close the competition between civilians and the military, taking place in democratic limits.

The present problems in the Bulgarian civil-military relations are doomed to be transformed most probably into new ones, of a more benign character. Any expectations that the problems of the civil-military interrelationship are of just a temporary character are futile and demobilizing. There is really more worth in the effort to prevent dilettantism of civilian and military experts as participants in the relationship in question rather than trusting the issues will be either easily solved or be eternal as arguments of inactivity.

Plainly speaking, **the essence of this second concept is the need to work for solving the multitude of problems in that field.** Any neglect of this approach will inevitably fire back both at society and its army.

A third basic concept of the Report is that **the contradictory pressures of the external and the internal national security environment, the inadequacies of the domestic conceptual and policy-making machinery prove by now to contribute to the general frustration of the civil-military interrelationship.** Though the principle of the civilian oversight of the military is officially not doubted and praetorianism is virtually eliminated, the results are often failures of the coordination and control mechanisms between civilian and military sectors as well as inability of civilians and society in general to provide even the minimum needed funding for implementing the mission and role of the military and for respecting their social status.

In the fluid, transforming and specific national security environment of Bulgaria sensible efforts are required to prevent civilian-military interaction turn into an obstacle of an adequate national security of the democratic country. For this reason three objectives need to be reached: first, achieving national consensus on foreign policy, security and defense; second, improving the national security decision-making process and, third, fostering a more harmonious relationship between civilian and military counterparts.

A fourth basic concept, closely connected with the previous one, is that **the dominating motivation of designing and implementing the principle of the democratic control over the military and the construction of meaningful civil-military relations is the country's integration in EU, NATO and WEU as well as the need to respect the rule of law.** This motivation has very much to do with the novelty of the security situation of Bulgaria after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the end of the Soviet Union.

The motivation that a normal, healthy democratic society with effectively functioning market economy requires good civil-military relations is still of a lower priority. It takes time for democracy to take roots. The situation is going to change and the "internal political

motivation" will get the upper hand over the benefit of integrating in the Western economic, political and defense institutions with the realization of the link between good civil-military relations and the attainment of effective armed forces in the infotech age.

Our understanding is that the "misplacement" of the two motives for building good civil-military relationship is not only understandable, but quite normal from the point of view of the process of knowledge: the need to anchor one's country's national security system in times of change and unpredictability to a stable security and defense system can be more easily sensed than the adaptation to the needed chain of economic, social, political, cultural, psychological and military transformations inside the country.

The tranquillity the integration into a working and effective security and defense organization can bring will make much easier the elaboration of a national strategy how to provide an answer to the own nation's problems, including the creation of effective armed forces. Of course, some East/Central European nations have developed through effort and reason better conditions than others. Bulgaria is unluckily not among the forerunners, though solidly rows for the second round.

A fifth basic concept of the Report is **the absence of a functional model of civil-military relations that can be implanted into a transitional society from totalitarian socialism to a democratic society** – the period when democratic institutions and a pluralistic political system are established, regular, honest and democratic elections take place, representative parliamentary institutions are formed and civil rights are respected. This is why **a leading concept of the Report is Samuel P. Huntington's understanding that "civil-military relations is one aspect of national security policy"**⁴.

A driving motive of the author of this Report is the need to find answers to the questions: *1) what design and practical construction of civil-military relations will best serve the national security of Bulgaria in the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries; 2) what are the internal social, economic*

and political imperatives of such a model and, 3) what foreign-political behavior will best correspond to it.

This requires to outline the problem of the civil-military relations in Bulgaria after the beginning of the systemic change in the end of the 80s.

II CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN BULGARIA: ISSUES AND HYPOTHESES

In theoretic terms the beginning of the democratic transformations in the post-totalitarian socialist countries in Central/Eastern Europe, including in Bulgaria, set the standards of the industrial democracies in the field of civil-military relations. They included: 1) achieving a high degree of professionalism by the military; 2) reaching an effective subordination by the military to the civilian leaders; 3) clear and competent recognition by the same civilian leaders of the role and the social mission of the military, and 4) minimizing the political role of the military. These standards entered the new market of ideas in that field even before the Warsaw Pact Treaty Organization (WPTO) was dismissed. That was a logical consequence after the departure from the philosophy of the one-party state in which the military was an instrument of the party.

In other words, the question under scrutiny in this Study entered the theoretic realm of Samuel P. Huntington's book "The Soldier and the State"⁵. It was a question of time,

educational or self-educational effort to outline the new parameters of the civil-military interrelationship and its basic features:

First, military institutions of any society are shaped by two forces – a functional imperative stemming from the threats to the society's security, and a social imperative arising from the social forces, ideologies, and institutions that are dominant within the society. According to Sam Huntington the interaction of these two forces is the "nub" of the problem of civil-military relations. The conflict of the civilians and the military is dependent on the intensity of the security needs and on the nature and the strength of the value pattern of society.

A very important consequence of these considerations with a special significance for Bulgaria is that adjustment and balance between the two forces are not inevitable. Some societies may prove to be incapable to provide effectively their own military security due to their lack of survival value in times of change and continuing threats. The functional imperatives in molding civil-military relations in times of technological and international-political change have grown in importance. The basic questions Bulgarian civil-military relations face today are how to make them more compatible with the values of democracy and political pluralism and how best they can serve for keeping Bulgarian national security.

Second, the major point of interest in civil-military relations is the relationship of the officer corps to the state. Here is the principal conflict between functional and societal pressures.

The officer corps is the driving and directing element of the military structure and is responsible for the military security of society. On the other side, the state is the powerful and directing element of society and is responsible for the allocation of resources among important value pillars, including to military security.

The social and economic relationship between the military and the other part of society is realized through the political relationship of the officer corps and the state. This is why **it is necessary to outline the theoretic and historical perspective of the officer corps' nature, of the specific character of the military profession and of**

the military mind to understand the problem of the Bulgarian civil-military relations in the period of transition.

A further theoretic structuring of the issue of civil-military relations in Bulgaria utilizes Chris Donnelly's approach of breaking the problem down⁶: when discussing civil-military relations the real and whole issue that is being dealt with is **the transformation of the security, especially the defence establishment in the post-totalitarian socialist state of Bulgaria**. This issue can be broken down into three distinct and interconnected areas: *democratic control, civil-military relations and defence reform*.

The debate, especially the internal one, often confuses or blurs these aspects of the issue. Usually only one element is taken and the others are being ignored. Claiming that the problem of civil-military relations is overcome means actually only a partial and inadequate solution has been achieved.

It is only through the dialectical reinforcement of the progress in all three areas that the problem of the transformation of the defense establishment in post-totalitarian socialist Bulgaria can be solved. For example, the subordination of the military to the democratically elected government, the increased transparency in defense policy, the greater parliamentary oversight, the progress in civilianizing the defense ministry, putting an end to the internal security role of the armed forces – legally fixed in 1996 and later verified during the popular discontent in the Winter of 1997 are real indications of the progress in that area.

But this is not enough to conclude the transformation of the defense establishment is completed and either the civil-military relations or the democratic control are in good shape. When the armed forces are in a mess and a major everyday duty is counting the amount of food reserves left to the end of the current week while technological modernization of the armed forces sounds like a science-fiction story there must be no doubt civil-military relations are still lagging behind if compared to the standard requirements of a NATO membership.

Breaking further down the three areas of the defense establishment transformation in Bulgaria leads to the following sub-structure of the elements:

First, the democratic control. It includes the government direction of the military activity and the parliamentary oversight of both the government and the military.

Second, civil-military relations cover army-government relations and army-society relations.

Third, defense reform – the most retarded element of the whole transformation process, includes the restructuring of the armed forces and the re-conceptualizing of military psychology. The restructuring is expected to reflect the clarity of vision how the Bulgarian nation and state are to be defended in the post-Cold War world, and the reorientation of military psychology requires a new understanding and coming to terms with operating both in a national and international democratic environment by the men and women of the armed forces.

What are the outlines of the successful part in the transformation of the defense establishment in Bulgaria and why? A tendency with a solid social support is the growing acceptance of the norms of both military professionalism and civilian control, though accepting does not yet mean effective operationalization of the new way of thinking. On the one side, the military realized there are no easy solutions to the issues of national security and that some form of involvement in politics can cost them too much. Civilians, on the other side, understood that it is too dangerous to play politics with the military. The involvement of three very high ranking generals into the political activity of three major opposing political organizations in Bulgaria (Lyutskanov in UDF, Petrov – in BSP and Andreev – in BBB) developed a poor reputation for both the persons and for their political mentors. The low political, social and financial cost of the reorganization of civil-military relations and the introduction of the democratic control of the activity of the military establishment is another reason for the reception of a broad popular and political support.

Major inadequacies of the transformation of the defense establishment with all its three elements, though with no consequence of a military intervention in politics, are: **the**

ambiguities in the present legal and institutional framework, a polarized domestic politics, influencing badly the general national security situation of the country, and the low level of civilian expertise in security and defense.

The causes are to be traced in the historical traditions and heritage of civil-military relations in Bulgaria, the slow adaptation to the dramatically changed national security environment of the country, the newly emerging roles of the armed forces and the inadequate balancing of the separated powers of the legislative, executive and judicial branches in the country.

While defense reform in Bulgaria has several historical precedents and the activity for its practical realization is very much connected with the financial and material resources society can afford to identify for its military, democratic control and civil-military relations do not have working models in the past that might be directly or with a certain level of modification utilized.

Since the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-78, when Bulgaria re-established its sovereignty, the armed forces and the military entertain a constant and comparatively high level of respect by the civilian population. This is very much due to the expectations that the Bulgarian army will provide the liberation of the territories and Bulgarian population, which remained under the occupation of all the neighbors of the country after the unjust Berlin Treaty of 1878. Examples of sacrifice not once or twice in the period after that by the Bulgarian soldiers and officers solidified this general positive inclination and attitude to the armed forces of the country.

This positive record, however, is paralleled by several cases of using the military as an instrument of political terror against its own people in 1923, 1925, especially the period 1941-44⁷. A long period before the Communists took power in Bulgaria the armed forces have "entertained" the experience of fascist totalitarian ideological attitudes – from the beginning of the 20s till 1944. After that an ideologically driven system of a totalitarian socialist type replaced the previous one. The requirement of almost permanent mobilization, deep and total secrecy characterized the atmosphere of the combined party-social control of

the armed forces, dominated by the Communist Party. The so called period of "perestroika" in the FSU (former Soviet Union) did not bring a single seed of the new type of civil-military relations Bulgarian society was to turn very soon to. On the contrary, the ruining of the image of the armed forces as a burden to the state was initiated during the years of the Soviet perestroika.

The process of undermining the military component of the civil-military relations continued after the changes of 1989-90. The result was a dramatic deprivation of the military of their guaranteed social status and stability. Meantime the civilian element did not evolve on the expert side and as an exponent of a society, becoming more potent and richer for managing the issues of its military. A difficult process of realization how civil-military interrelationship in a market and democratic society should look like started to assume very slowly some shape after the adoption of the Law of Defense and the Armed Forces. Probably, the total pauperization of the officer corps at the end of 1996 and the beginning of 1997 may turn to be a dividing line between the past and the future of civil-military relations, of the transformation of the defense establishment in general in Bulgaria. This period coincides with the clarification for and understanding by society of the need of deep and thorough economic and financial reforms in the country.

The problem of civil-military relations, conceived as an important part of the whole transformation of the defense establishment in Bulgaria, has largely evolved as a meaningful social issue also thanks to the cooperation and discussions with NATO, WEU, OSCE and EU partners in the last 5-6 years. The contacts along the Partnership for Peace Program, the cooperation of Bulgaria as an associate partner of the WEU and an associate state to the EU facilitated projecting also the problem of civil-military relations on the background of the new humanitarian, peace-keeping and peace-enforcing missions of the armed forces in the post-Cold War years.

The partnership and cooperation of Bulgaria in the NATO's PfP context helps the country to adopt a more mature approach to two existent risks in the field of civil-military relations in the specific and hard social and economic situation. First, preventing the risk of looking to

the military by the civilians in the difficult situation as the rescuer of society and, second, preventing the exclusion of the military from society. In the context of the second mistaken approach the Bulgarian military experienced a middle degree of isolation from society.

Concluding this part of the Report I wish to underline that until now Bulgaria lacks a normal civil society, a normal state of the democratic control and a normal civil-military relationship. The issue of the transformation of the defense establishment in post-totalitarian socialist Bulgaria is, obviously, of the category of the complex and long-term ones. Its solution will not be easy at all!

But it will be also fair to acknowledge the last seven years were not useless for the effort to adapt to the needs of the transformation in question. Both society and its military are much closer to the realization of the so called "liberal bargain", speaking in the terms of Prof. Joseph Nye, the former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs of the United States⁸.

This "bargain" is supposed to define in a stable way the specific rights and responsibilities for the military and for the civilian leadership. The contents of the evolving bargain is the recognition by the military that they are accountable to the rule of law, the agreement to remain nonpartisan and respect civilian authority. On the part of the civilians – they must respect the special role of the military in society as long as the military profession is needed by society, must provide an adequate funding for the respective and mutually agreed appropriate military roles and missions. A common obligation is expected to be the education of both military and civilians in such a way that they can interact positively with each other for the benefit of the society and the state.

No doubt, the present state of the transformation of the defense establishment in Bulgaria, the civil-military relations including, is also a reflection of the ability of both the civilian political elite and of the officer corps to conceive and assess the dramatic changes in the internal and external national security environment of the country. Much has changed in the recent years but few solid conceptual strongholds are actively motivating on a national

consensus basis the behavior of the civilians and the military, responsible for the national security of the country. **The new policy of the new President in cooperation with the leading political parties in Bulgaria and the social agreement of joining NATO that has settled friendly relationship with Russia have the potential to turn the tide.**

Understanding the way in which the progressing liberal bargain is going to be shaped between the civilians and the military requires a deeper knowledge of the particularities of the internal and external national security environmental changes, how they are perceived and reflected in the national security decision-making process in Bulgaria.

III THE SYSTEMIC CHANGES OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT OF BULGARIA: PERCEPTIONS AND IMPACT ON CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

1. Internal Changes

The most general perception and assessment of the post-totalitarian socialist transition of Bulgaria's economy and society is of **the conceptual and management inadequacy, insufficiency and incapability to cope with the systemic and individual changes.**

The initial concerns from the incoming changes were linked to the expected *high velocity of the very transformations*. Indeed, Bulgaria had to build-up very shortly what took the Western partners much longer time. But actually the real danger came from the inadequacy of the human factor and mainly – its conceptual and managerial impotency of coping with the issues of the internal social, economic and political changes, with the geopolitical re-ordering of the post-Cold War world and with the challenges of the society of the "third wave" (or infotech or cyber society).

This perception is **the major source of the psychological atmosphere of frustration and an occasional loss of orientation**, accompanying the adaptation of the civil-military relations and the transformation of the Bulgarian defense establishment in general. In the dialectic linkage of Bulgarian society, civilians – on the one side, and the military people of the country, on the other, the civilian part remains much indebted to the reasonable behavior of the military in a new, completely different from the traditional situation for the armed forces. While the men and women in uniform largely succeeded to undertake a new course in the civil-military interrelationship, implemented the Law of Depoliticization of the Armed Forces, Police and the Diplomatic Service, non-involvement in political decision-making has become a solid norm of behavior, a law, providing greater civilian control over the military has been adopted, society was unable to provide both the funds necessary to carry out the modernization needed by the armed forces and for insuring a respectful social status of the officer corps. Why and how were these unfavorable conditions developed, that influenced the perceptions and civil-military relations?

While Bulgarian society had sensed the need for economic and technological change in the middle of the 80s of the present century, the negotiated⁹, quick, easy and luckily – nonviolent transition in Bulgaria, the absence of a decent, organized and motivated

opposition to the official totalitarian system (as for example in Czechoslovakia or Poland) and the lack of an effective reform- concept and program by the Socialist party led to a prolonged and yet unfinished process of self-identification of the alternative political force and reformation of the old one. The post-totalitarian political forces dealt too long with their own internal organizational problems. The social need was to face the problems of the mid-80s, the newly formed ones in the beginning of the 90s – the adaptation to the market economy and pluralistic democracy, the post-Cold War security situation, the ruined foreign-economic links and the need to build new and reshape the old ones.

In broader sociological terms since the middle of the 60s Bulgaria undergoes a deepening crisis of its modernization. There are many reasons for Bulgaria's belated modernization. Whatever the antecedents, Bulgaria lacks historical time of repeating the model of well established Western democracies of developing and coordinating their institutions. In reality at the turn of the 80s Bulgaria was facing the problem of either entering a chronic crisis of modernization or mobilizing society on a national consensus basis for getting out of the civilization periphery and using the potential of the free, democratic and market oriented society for joining the center of the present human civilization as fast as possible.

The real social needs of Bulgaria were not to watch the realization of petty and narrow political ambitions of individuals, groups and even bigger organizations – left, right or centrist, but rather of a different dimension:

First, instead of striving – at the expense of society, of bringing to life an inefficient political elite with too short-sighted vision and small volume of potency, the very political elite could be self-shaped if this process aimed at the formation of an elite for modernizing the country. Being on the basis of democracy and after abandoning any authoritarian form of ruling the country, the only way of achieving overlapping or at least harmonization and synchronization between the elite for modernization and the political one was within the context of a national consensus, bipartisan approach and strategy of economic and social reform.

Second, an adequate choice of modernization strategy. It should have included on a national consensus basis short-, mid- and long-term aspects in the political, economic, legal and foreign support fields.

Third, elaborating and effective functioning of the organization structure of Bulgarian modernization according to the specific national social, political and economic conditions.

Fourth, timely correction and adaptation of both the strategy and the organization, especially the regulation aspects of the economy.

Fifth, intelligent development and utilization of the human resources – not only as a problem of the education and scientific social subsystems, but also as an appropriate political and social psychological atmosphere, in which the free and democratic attitudes of people, political and social organizations and political leaders motivate maximum intellectual and practical output and results.

Sixth, mobilizing constructive, European-like nationalism by accentuating on the national cultural and historical traditions that have improved culture internationally and serve the purposes of cooperation and respect to the neighboring people.

Seventh, trying to use best the beneficial aspects of the external environment and to bypass the existing impediments for the realization of the national objectives.

These were the Bulgarian needs. The practical realization of the reform projects of the nine governments after November 1989 were not centered around them and the results were definitely unsatisfactory in all spheres of social life and state institutions. Bulgarian society and state suffer now a total crisis. Economically the country is almost paralyzed.

Thousands of people were demotivated of active social participation because of the political irrationality. Social degradation has no equivalent in the Bulgarian history of the present century. Hunger and poverty have never been existent in such harsh forms as in the last few years. Unemployment is depriving from labor almost one third of the active working population. Hundreds of thousands of Bulgarian families are fighting every day with the

need of bread, heat and dresses. The social irrationality of the situation has concrete outlines: the coexistence of a bunch of "new rich" with desperate and poor people, with free but unemployed citizens who are also intimidated by corrupt and criminal groups and organizations, including in the administration; the absence of a serious modern education and a guaranteed normal health-care and emergency system and, a state machinery of drastically diminishing competence and popular respect. The demographic crisis of the Bulgarian nation is unparalleled in this century: diminishing in numbers and getting older in age population, left by approximately 400,000 of its younger part who fled abroad.

The national and historic self-conscience of the Bulgarians is in crisis. The national intelligentsia led the waves of emigration. Furthermore it failed to mobilize itself as a nationally and historically responsible factor of the country's conceptual revival and physical salvation.

The Bulgarian national capital remained undeveloped, frustrated and too small in the context of the globalizing economy. It proved incapable by now of introducing and following responsibly the rules of the market and the democratic game. The 90 per cent share of the industrial property is state controlled, mostly badly managed or just left prey to criminal privatizers.

Moral degradation, rise in criminality, terrorism, drug-trafficking, prostitution and violence are logical follow-ups of the social and institutional distress. The occupation of the separated powers by confronted politically forces who wage institutional wars compromised the principle of the mutually balancing separated powers of the democratic state.

A nascent civil society, though unexpectedly vibrant, did not find its most hospitable environment in the last years in Bulgaria.

It is only thanks to the dominating positive record of ethnic relations in Bulgaria on the popular level, the traditional Bulgarian ethnic tolerance and the stemming from this limitations of eventual internal and external wrong-doers for exploiting the issue for political purposes that tensions have not erupted on ethnic grounds.

A general neglect by investors of capital and Western governments in transforming Bulgarian economy additionally de-motivated the internal changes. While more than \$15 billion in foreign investment has been poured into Hungary since 1990, only \$830 million has come in Bulgaria. Of course, more importantly, the internal Bulgarian drive of developing an adequate interest was ill shaped for economic, political and psychological reasons and the expected Bulgarian bid for cooperation was either badly or unattractively formulated.

The predictable Bulgarian crisis of the end of 1996 – January-February of 1997 was a logical result of a chain of managerial blunders that started in 1990. Though there was political activism it was inadequate of coping with the grand-issues of transforming Bulgarian economy on an effective market basis while paying regularly back the \$12 billion debt. The success stories in that period were not the rule, but rather – the exceptions.

The Bulgarian transition to democracy and market economy required more government, and less ideology and political confrontation. This prevented the formulation of consistent and realistic, well-timed national objectives, and the political elite deprived itself of the chance to deal with substantial, nationally significant issues. The sad result is that Bulgaria missed historical time and many open windows of opportunity have been irreversibly closed.

Some, luckily, remain open and the chance to catch up with modernization is real. The only chance to succeed in solving the crisis in Bulgaria and jump on the road of modernization is to carry out the reforms in as a resolute way as possible. This would importantly influence the present and the future of the transformation of the defense establishment in Bulgaria. The hope has not left the knowledgeable people in the civil-military-relationship field and they still believe that democratic control and military reform are mostly an internal national need.

2. National Security and Foreign-Political Re-orientation

The perceptions of the transforming external environment of the Bulgarian national security system bear the contradictory influences of various old and new foreign-political dependencies and interests. The latter stem from the deep changes of the bipolar structure of the system of international relations of the Cold War period and the inception and the gradual stabilization of a new one.

Second, **the perceptions** of the new national security external environment reflect also the divergent opinions, concepts and practices of the internal economic, social, political and cultural transformations in Bulgaria.

Lastly, **the perceptions** in question are part and at the same time a result of a heuristic process – uneasy, not always clear and potent with many completely different but realistic tendencies of international development.

The Bulgarian system of national security and national defense has always experienced the influences of both the internal and the external environment. But both emotionally and by tradition the changes of the external environment have dramatically influenced it to the extent of its radical re-orientation.

In this context the divergent perceptions of the external national security environment have a respective impact on the civil-military relations and on the transformation of the defense establishment of the country in general in five major areas:

First, shaping of a new national security value system, formation and formulation of a new national security concept and a new national security and foreign-political decision-making mechanism. (This issue will be dealt with in more details in the next paragraph.)

Second, re-ordering the foreign-political priorities and railroading the new alignment of the Bulgarian national security interests. The questions of the country's affiliation with the European and Euroatlantic intergovernmental institutions while fostering a new friendly relationship with Russia are certainly of major importance.

Third, considering and re-conceptualizing the contents and the models of realization of the military profession in the post-Cold War world.

Fourth total shrinking of the likelihood of military intervention in political life, including rendering inefficient the efforts of those military who wish to remain influential through force in political life after their withdrawal from active military service. (The first part of the Report showed the mechanism of these changes. A developing value system world-wide after the end of the Cold War importantly adds to the internal prerequisites in various countries on all continents¹⁰.)

Fifth, changing the role of the civilian expertise in the field of national defense and national security in general.

On what grounds and how are these differing and often – frustrating perceptions of the international system influencing the major areas of the transformation of the defense establishment of Bulgaria, including civil-military relations?

The very nature of the deep systemic and structural changes of the international relations lays the foundation of the perceptions and the manner of their impact on the particular main areas of defense establishment transformation.

A certain level of stability of the international system and its structural levels has been preserved in the period of transformation of the bipolar world, but also many imbalances occurred and keep influencing the present state of the international relations: geopolitical, economic, strategic, religious and ideological, ecological and regulative. The transition of the old structure of the international system to a new one is not yet completed, the roles of the great states and the super-power – not finally cast yet. Some clearer **tendencies** have gathered momentum:

TENDENCY ONE: In Europe – the eastward extension of the European and the Euroatlantic Civic and Security Space, including through their major institutions as NATO, EU, WEU and the Council of Europe (CE);

TENDENCY TWO: The formation of strong integration nuclei worldwide – North America, Western Europe, Japan, China while Russia preserves such a potential for the future relative to some former Soviet republics;

TENDENCY THREE: Certain peoples and countries are getting poorer, and others – richer. The meaning and contents of this tendency is that some nations – unlike others, are technologically and informationally marginalized and world economic and cyber (or infotech) center and periphery have assumed shape.

TENDENCY FOUR: Global nuclear deterrence, the Russian-American strategic nuclear and military-space interrelationship and the respective treaties in that field continue to fundamentally shape the military aspect of international security. The tendency to block the usage of nuclear arms for national security (out of the circle of the official five nuclear states) or terrorist purposes has not yet found a final and solid international regulation.

TENDENCY FIVE: Regional conflicts witnessed a boom after the end of the fundamental Cold War East-West confrontation. Unluckily for Bulgaria the Balkan peninsula, in whose East-Central part the country is situated, emerged as a new knot of regional conflicts, dangerously interacting with the broader European and world security conditions. The post-Yugoslav conflicts and wars, the latent Serbo-Croatian, Bosnian, Albanian, Greek-Turkish and outer-Turks issues in the region are not yet tackled only in a cooperative way.

TENDENCY SIX: The power politics continues to dominate the political thinking, international law is suffering a dramatic crisis after the end of the Cold War. Hence – the negotiation approaches in the field of security are hardly jumping over the limitations of the "bargaining" pattern and do not undertake a "problem-solving" direction.

All six tendencies have influenced the various Bulgarian perceptions of the transformations of the international security system and the visions of Bulgaria's future in light of these changes. The unfinished character of the latter, especially in the Balkan area, the various internal inclinations and positions, the poor leadership in solving basic economic issues, and the very difficulty and often dubiousness of the heuristic process determine the prolonged

and contradictory on certain items Bulgarian adaptation to the post-Cold War security situation. Civil-military relations, the whole transformation of the defense establishment in Bulgaria were also influenced by these processes:

*** The Issue of the Country's new Alignment**

The extension of the European and the Euroatlantic Civic and Security space eastwards was perceived in a mixed way:

a) As a favorable development that would serve the promotion of internal consolidation of the democratizing society and state, as a stabilizer of the Bulgarian market economy reforms. Hence the integration of Bulgaria in NATO, the European Union and the Western European Union is considered the best option for the future of the country. Bulgaria's good relations with Russia should be kept and developed and the eventual Bulgarian membership is no obstacle.

b) As an important tendency that does not reflect adequately the influence of the Russian factor in the OSCE context. Membership in the EU, continuing Bulgaria's Partnership for Peace (PFP), continuous effort of improving the relations with Russia and cooperation and strengthening the role of the OSCE in the security area is the way to the future of Bulgaria.

c) As an important tendency that may be effectively supported by obtaining a neutral international status. This might calm down the negative Russian reactions to NATO's enlargement, keep the positive reform- tendencies in Bulgaria and preserve the momentum of cooperation with NATO in the PFP context, the integration in the EU, the chance of continuing a traditional positive relationship of Bulgaria with Russia and solidifying the role of a regional stabilizer of security.

The first complex of perceptions is supported by the influence of the next two tendencies: the magnetic influence of the integration community of the countries of the EU and the obvious chance to cope with the historic task of modernizing Bulgarian society and drifting

away from the economic and technological periphery by keeping by and cooperating with the countries of the civilization center with developing information societies.

The sovereign Bulgarian choice of joining the expanding civil and security space eastwards is partly confused by the unfavorable elements in the functioning of the fourth, fifth and sixth tendencies. These three tendencies certainly provide logical arguments to the supporters of the second and third option for the foreign and security policy orientation of Bulgaria:

– the realities of the nuclear world we still live in require attention, responsibility and flexibility by all participants in the international system – for the sake of the international and their own national security;

– the harsh closest Balkan conflict environment, in which every involved significant international actor, including Russia, matter decisively for the actual state of the regional stability and the national security of Bulgaria – a situation that needs to be considered most pragmatically;

– the construction of a favorable, not speaking of a winning, "bargaining" negotiating position of the country in the context of the dominating "power politics" in the world for the various sets of negotiations for adapting to the activity of the six tendencies under consideration is not a realistic undertaking at the present Bulgarian circumstances as described in the previous chapter. Probably, like many other states in the world today, Bulgaria is in no position to elaborate alone a thorough capability of dealing in a satisfactory way with all the aspects of a "worst case scenario" for her national security.

After trying to balance for some years among the divergent international factors and preserve the regional stabilizing behavior Bulgaria made on the official level the choice to start working more clearly for the utilization of the effects of the first tendency by declaring the wish to be integrated both in the EU (December 1995) and in NATO (February 1997). This marks a radical shift in the country's foreign political and national security position, motivated by the systemic changes of the end of the 80s, the adoption of a new Constitution of a democratic capitalist society in 1991 and after passing a period, in which the country

succeeded to demonstrate its fundamental ambition – to preserve the peace of the nation internally and in the direct neighborhood.

The late declaration for the wish to join NATO reflects a frustrated reform process of the economy and society, an almost balanced positivism and negativism of NATO membership in the period 1991-96 in Bulgaria and a stable tendency of Russian influence on Bulgarian society, political forces and state. The reversal of the official attitude displays a popular expectation that the institutional engagements of the country in various spheres with the West, including with NATO in the political and defense one, will improve the catastrophic economic situation. This argument was openly or tacitly suggested to the public opinion by the democratic political forces, confronting the position of the socialists for a "wait and see" attitude in the NATO-Russia dispute about the enlargement of the Alliance.

The analysis of the various tendencies and the combination of their influences on the Bulgarians for adopting a clear pro-membership in NATO position shows how and why the balance shifted in favor of this attitude: 1) the country has one way or another taken the road towards NATO membership after the demise of the totalitarian socialist system and the adoption of the Constitution of 1991 and, 2) in the post-Cold War period Russia did not develop an equally attractive and influential design of the institutional membership in solving the question of the institutional guarantees of the national security as NATO and the USA did and which is viewed as extremely important for small countries like Bulgaria.

It will be fair to add that the new alignment of Bulgaria that is getting shape possesses three significant features – important for understanding the development of the social attitudes in the country and the civil-military relations:

First, the change of the country's position towards the full membership bears a deep philosophic motive but also a direct financial sign, connected with the disastrous economic situation in January-February 1997 when the caretaker government's decision was taken. The expectations of society's coping with the economic crisis are directly linked with the decision to apply for NATO membership. Success or failure in overcoming the economic

crisis will be sociologically and psychologically linked with the choice of becoming Alliance members.

Second, for the short- and most probably – the mid-term, Bulgaria, for historical and emotional reasons, should not be expected to be a reliable ally in a fanciful, highly hypothetical anti-Russian NATO contingency, and,

Third, the forecast NATO and Russia will soon reach an agreement as it happened on 14 May 1997 in Moscow additionally motivated the shift in the Bulgarian position.

Other important attitudes exist presently and in the foreseeable future, mainly the "Cyprus syndrome" – still very alive in the Bulgarian national conscience due to the continuous tensions in the island republic of Cyprus. The eventual way out of a potential similar situation of annexation – in this case of Bulgarian territory where Moslem people are settled, is considered – realistically or unrealistically, with or without real grounds of projecting such a worst-case national security scenario to be dependent on Russia's protective reactions. The continuing Greek-Turkish tensions are considered a very dangerous military threat. They add to the differentiated assessment of NATO as an alliance Bulgaria may soon join and of Turkey and Greece as neighboring countries, members of the same Alliance due to a perceived inadequate weight to change the tides of this long lasting issue.

The NATO-Russia Founding Act will surely lessen these probable Bulgarian attitudes and concerns. Bulgaria assumes also an important position in further re-shaping the psychological attitudes in the field of security in the post-Cold War era as a prospective NATO member and a close historical, cultural and geopolitical friend of Russia. The approaching Bulgarian membership in NATO on a "no Russian threat perception basis" soon after 1999 and the active parallel relationship with Russia will inevitably add to the positive attitudes towards security in Europe and Russia's adequate assessment of NATO's role. The significant practical relations of NATO with the new allies and the already closer Russian partner are just beginning and Bulgaria has the potential to build bridges in the complex area of confidence-building and developing mutual trust. Being late in the club of candidates for

NATO membership should not be viewed as a setback but rather as a new possibility for Bulgaria and her friends to the East and the West.

The start that the NAC Madrid Summit in July, 1997 is expected to give should care of all the complexities of the individual cases and deal with care of the practical effects of Bulgaria's security behavior that added positively to stabilizing the Balkans from the beginning of the 1990s as well as the undisputed democratic change of the country in the recent years. Both local and outside observers know that the country's direct neighborhood remained under-invested and under-cared by the West in the difficult first years of change for reasons which are not one hundred per cent of Bulgarian guilt. The membership rounds must not develop negative national self-images. They will be counterproductive for the future Alliance relationships. This is also an important way to compensate for the contradictory effects of the country's new foreign political re-orientation on the civil-military relations.

*** The New Contents and Model of Realization of the Military Profession**

The end of the Cold War marked a major shift from the traditional security thinking. This led to re-thinking of the functions of military power, strategies, necessary hardware and operational concepts¹¹. The military profession as well as the respective missions and roles also changed contents and forms of implementation. Civil-military relations are also influenced and need to be re-considered and re-conceptualized.

The basic traditional mission of the armed forces is to get ready to engage in combat either for the sake of deterring or for defeating the country's enemies.

Other historically proved engagements of the military profession and role are to participate in various aspects of economic re-construction or development; to carry out or support scientific research; to participate or initiate disaster relief. In many cases the military have been involved in suppressing riots or strikes.

Today the external threat continues to be the major motive of the military role and profession. In certain cases continues the need to support civil police in augmenting the internal order. Participation in disaster relief operations becomes a significant component of the present military roles. Various international programs help the training and the international cooperation in carrying out these missions.

Humanitarian relief is also a regular engagement of the military in an international system with lots of local and regional conflicts in which the civilian population is becoming victim of the armed clashes and wars. The international aspects of this new feature of the military profession are importantly adding to its effective implementation.

Peacekeeping is also a new present engagement of the military profession. The international peacekeeping operations have become, probably, the most important adoption of a new role, comparable only to the traditional territorial defense. This new role of the military profession is actually bringing together national interest from many parts of the world into a joint, international effort whose potential is to further change the contents of the military profession in the future.

All the enlisted roles of the military already engage the everyday activity of the Bulgarian officers and soldiers. In light of the enormous difficulties of the transitional period the military profession has "opened" itself in an effort to relieve society's hardships.

Occasionally military police patrols have supported national police in fighting criminality, especially street one. One should not exclude their eventual involvement in the fight for curtailing illegal industries, including narcotics and smuggling. Similarly the protection of the environment may lead to the involvement of the military in various roles. By tradition and especially in the existing crisis of the health system the military health service provides help to civilians too.

It is hard to judge if the roles of the transitional period necessarily distract the military from their core missions or lead to a rise of the authority in society of the military profession – also suffering from the general social and economic crisis. Certainly one of the aspects of

the civilian monitoring of the activity of the armed forces should deal and cope with this specific issue too.

*** Changing Role of the Civilian Expertise on National Security and Defense**

The end of the totalitarian socialist system in Bulgaria and of the Cold War brought to life the need of civilian expertise on defense issues as a central element of the new type of civil-military relationship. After these historical changes the formation of an independent security and strategic community has begun – slowly, in an unorganized way and with limited results for seven years. The issue has been studied by many authors and experts involved in the transformation processes in that field¹².

The development of sound civil-military relations requires a high standard of integration between the civil society and the armed forces. What role should the civilians play in that interrelationship?

First, they can bring their specific skills to the various issues of managing the national security establishment and the defense one in particular. The skills of economists, accountants, lawyers, managers, etc. may prove to be crucial in a situation with very limited resources.

Second, the civilians with foreign-political or diplomatic experience may gradually develop, if involved in the defense issues, adequate capacity in the formulation of security policy.

Third, not dependent on the strict rules of behavior of the officer corps the civilians may provide a high level of continuity in the defense establishment.

Fourth, the civilians can add to the professional military view a fresh opinion that may be particularly helpful in coping with complex defense issues which require broader expertise.

While talking and writing about civil-military relations we obviously mean the relations of the people of a civil society in development with their armed services' men and women, in the case of "civilian expertise" we include the following categories of civilians:

- 1) members of the Bulgarian Parliament, the Bulgarian politicians and their respective staffs;
- 2) journalists and other opinion-makers;
- 3) civil servants of the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Foreign Affairs and European Integration Committee and the National Security Committee of the Bulgarian Parliament, the Office of the Prime Minister of Bulgaria and the Cabinet of the Bulgarian President;
- 4) university professors, academic and NGO researchers.

It is notorious in each NATO, EU and WEU country there are as many models of structuring the civilian expertise as the number of the member-countries. Notwithstanding, there are certainly some *general expectations* in these countries from the civil-military relationship¹³ that influence the perceptions in Bulgaria after the national security and foreign-political re-orientation was initiated:

First, a constitutional and legislative structure which allows for defined responsibilities and appropriate checks and balances among the various institutions of state power dealing with national security and defense;

Second, clear civilian controls over the Ministry of Defense and the military establishment, with democratically elected government officials having a deep reach in the decision-making and operational processes of both;

Third, substantive, not just perfunctory, Parliamentary oversight of security policy and expenditure;

Fourth, sufficient transparency of the decision-making processes to allow for a thorough public scrutiny of defense matters, and

Fifth, an informed national debate on security, with special importance being attached to civilian expertise in the executive branch of government, in political parties, in the media, and in other aspects of public life; the role of independent sources of advice and critical

assessment, such as research institutes is essential to the shaping of this debate and to achieving progress in other areas of civil-military relations.

It is only after the acceptance of the need to have and to work for building up the elements of these five general requirements that practical aspects of the issue can be efficiently dealt with. Such practical areas are: the limits of the internal use of the armed forces; civil-military decision-making in emergency and crisis management situations; the implementation of the defense reform; defense-planning and budgeting; defense procurement; legislative oversight; laws regulating the various aspects of military activity; humanitarian law; government ethics; the role of the NGOs; defense policy formulation.

What is the current state of the issues under discussion in Bulgaria?

First, as Chris Donnelly has suggested about post-communist military society in general, in Bulgaria, too, it is "still a society closed to civilians and which resists civilian interference. While there may be good reasons for this, and the situation is certainly better than it was, it remains a serious problem. The military fears depredations by ignorant civilians. It has a strong sense of its own loyalty and, in defence matters, it is convinced that it knows best. Furthermore, the military is very distressed by the strains of transition.

The result is military resistance to efforts to develop democratic control, which itself generates hostility and prevents a mutually advantageous solution from being worked out. As a result, there is no Central and Eastern European country that has the effective army it needs and no government that can evaluate what kind of defence it requires, nor what size, nor evaluate the proposals of the generals"¹⁴.

Second, there exists a problem, known to almost all the parliaments of the democratic states, though not in the proportions of the Bulgarian transitional society: the general lack of knowledge among parliamentarians about security and defense issues. The problem is that there is neither specific knowledge, nor background by most of the members of the National Security, and in many cases – of the Foreign Political Committees. Their social role of "watchdogs" in the policy development and analysis process is very seriously undermined

without the needed independent civilian expertise. The previous political system in Bulgaria bears responsibility for this situation, but seven years of democratic life were quite a long period to work out a more decisive effort of structuring the problem and gradually – solving it.

Third, very close to the assessment of the politicians and the parliamentarians is the one about the journalists, having a crucial role in materializing the effects of the civilian monitoring over the armed forces while keeping a high profile of the national security system. Though the Bulgarian press is undoubtedly free, not always it is responsible enough to self-educate itself on rather specific or new issues as what did civil-military relations and the details of the issue become for society in the last seven years.

Fourth, the issue of education on civil-military relations. It is certainly at a crossroads not only for the military but for the civilians as well¹⁵. Obviously there was an underestimation of the complexity of the issue, requiring both social and individual learning effort for developing and assimilating the civilian-military relations in democracy. The initial reactions were as if the education on this principle of the democratic society was one of the campaigns, i. e. it should be short-lived, for implanting overnight a new way of thinking. The educational aspect is rather a political one and the learning process should be started at school, continued in the high school – civilian and military, and remain a permanent topic of the public debate after that. The NGOs dealing with these issues may be particularly instrumental, together with educated journalists for the internalization by society of the issues of the civilian monitoring of the national security institutions. The support for such NGOs should continue from international sources and gradually be paralleled by national donors, especially when laws of tax deductible donations are adopted by Parliament. Bilateral and international projects in the PfP/NATO, Phare/EU and WEU contexts continue to be major stimuli of the learning process in that area.

The presently functioning Center for National Security Studies at the Ministry of Defense, the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria – an associate member of ATA, the High Military Academy "G. S. Rakovsky" of the MoD, the Institute for Security and International Studies – an

independent NGO, the Open Society Fund, the Center for the Study of Democracy are the few institutions of bringing together civilians and military, discussing and educating on the issues of the defense establishment transformation and the issues of civil-military relations in particular. They are important also for the gradual process of establishing the civilian defense community as an important element of the national security community of the country. The latter should comprise academic, defense, diplomatic, intelligence, humanitarian and ecological components. All of these components should create the intellectual background of a precise and competent monitoring or control process over the security institutions.

The risk of over politicizing the expertise of the civilians remains as long as the official institutions do not shape a consistent national security decision-making process. The developing Bulgarian civilian security community should be supported and integrated in the international security one. But the major effort should be the national one.

3. Shaping of a New National Security Concept and Decision-Making System

The evolving perceptions of the changing post-Cold War world during the last seven-eight years led to a gradual process of transformations in the national security system of values in Bulgaria. The contents and degree of evolution in that area are to be traced in the delaying birth of a new national security concept and in an inefficiently functioning national security decision-making system.

The realization of a minimum order in the civil-military relationship requires an adequate level of defining of the defense policy. That means that the armed forces need to be told clearly what the Bulgarian nation expects them to do and what capability they should develop. The formula of what the military are expected to do should be clearly written in terms of allocating resources (place, possible choices), which are known to be very limited. The formula should be written by the politicians who are expected to demonstrate capability of balancing the policy and the budget. When the resources are limited the military experts

would advise what are the available options. The political leadership, however, should take the responsibility of making the decisions and the defense of the chosen direction to the public.

All these needed activities and behavior require the background motivation of the national security "ideology", embodied in a concise and thorough national security concept accompanied by an effective decision-making mechanism. An effective civilian control over the armed forces is possible only in case there is a strong democratic political and institutional structure for balancing the organized, disciplined, powerful and with a high level of solidarity military as a profession and as an institution. The national security conceptual background of such a democratic political and institutional structure is indispensable, but there is another fundamental condition for its efficiency – a broadest possible partisan activity and interest of the political forces of Bulgaria, especially of those represented in the Parliament. Unluckily in the last seven-eight years the national security conceptual issues were generally debated with lots of ideological motives and party political interests. The too long lasting polarized political situation was named "the Bulgarian civil cold war" and of its negative effects for the national security the public has been forewarned in the course of 1990¹⁶.

The neglect of the practical and realistic issues of the country's national security concept formulation and decision-making mechanism construction did not lead to the involvement of the Bulgarian military into the political debate. But watching the inability of the leading politicians and statesmen to limit the negative effects of the political tensions on the process of drafting on a national consensus basis a new national security concept and decision-making mechanism made them nervous and highly frustrated as to their own capability to be simultaneously responsible actors in a democratic society and guardians of this same society against various dangerous contingencies in the post-Cold War Balkans and Europe. The realization of the fact that the political parties are too far away from a joint discussion and formation of a national consensus on the genuine national security issues has been no

comfort neither for the knowledgeable civilians, the public which has very correct instinctive evaluation of the situation, nor for the military – patriots by rule.

Along with this justified critical approach to the formulation of the new national security concept of Bulgaria and the respective decision-making mechanism there have been also positive signs for the civil-military relationship.

In the period 1990-97 thirteen documents, produced by political parties, academic institutions, and foundations, linked to political organizations, have been given the name "National Security Concept of Bulgaria". Two of them have been drafted upon the request of the President of the Republic in 1991, coordinated by his National Security Adviser, and of the Prime-Minister of Bulgaria in 1995, coordinated by the Minister of Defense. An effort by the former Prime-Minister Berov to launch a draft by an inter-ministerial commission failed after obstructions by the parliamentary parties that could not solve their contradictions. The rest are a reflection of the views on national security issues by different Bulgarian political parties.

The two official drafts are a specific indicator of the breakthrough in the field of communications between civilian experts and official members of the security institutions in Bulgaria, including the military.

The first one, initiated by President Zhelev in 1991 was worked out by 14 experts, headed by the President's National Security Adviser and with the support and within the activity of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The team comprised 14 experts – 4 army officers, including the future Head of the Military Cabinet of the President, 2 diplomats and 8 academic researchers, including the author of the present Report. The document was the first complete version of the methodological principles and new foreign-political orientations of the President's Office after the end of the Cold War and the systemic transformations in Bulgaria. However, though helpful for all other similar efforts, it could not bring together the diverging political attitudes in Parliament for joint action in formulating a broadly acceptable concept on national security

The second draft of a national security concept of Bulgaria that an official institution – in this case the Government, has been involved in, brought together the efforts of 16 experts of the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry for Environmental Protection, of few independent non-governmental research institutes and from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky". The author of the Report participated in his capacity of a Senior Researcher, founder and Director of the independent, not-linked to any party and ideological movement or denomination, non-governmental Institute for Security and International Studies.

The national security concepts and military doctrines of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Russia and other post-totalitarian states in Central and Eastern Europe were carefully studied. The specific features of the Balkan environment were also importantly considered in search of a complex and invariant approach to emancipating the stability of the region and of its individual actors. The National Security Strategy of the USA for 1994, the White Books on the defense of France, Italy and Germany were also thoroughly studied. This document, adopted by a Decision of the Government was published in the press¹⁷.

The knowledge of the own national interests, including in the security field, is a really tough issue. The evolution of the documents, conceptualizing the national security of Bulgaria in the last 7-8 years are a reflection of the improving quality of the security perceptions. The 1995 governmental document was a step forward, compared to previous efforts by political parties or other organizations. It is very much influenced by the post-Cold War security studies concepts about the complex character of both national and international security, leading to more realistic assessments of the problem of the "enemy" in the country's relations with her foreign environment. An important breakthrough for the Balkan political arena, provided by the concept is Bulgaria's practical denial of the artificial creation of the enemy images, following the NATO July, 1990 ideas and the Charter of Paris of the OSCE, November 1991.

The National security concept of the Bulgarian Government is not politically biased and is the most successful effort till then for founding its premise on the national interests and

ideals of the Bulgarians as conceived by the Spring of 1995. The participation of independent politically non-governmental experts was certainly a guarantee against the political parties' prejudices. For example the long disputed issue of Bulgaria's relations with NATO led to the following formula in the text of the concept: **"... continuing the efforts of utilizing the potential of cooperation, suggested by NATO and the WEU with the objective for Bulgaria to join them in their future enlargement while fully considering and respecting the country's national interests"**¹⁸.

Some of the participating experts have previously clearly stated their own positions, requiring as a necessary step the formal declaration by the official authorities for the readiness of Bulgaria to join NATO while appealing for a constructive regulation of the Alliance-Russian strategic relationship¹⁹.

Later this view has been adapted to the reality of the Bulgaria's obvious placement in the second row of NATO candidates and the need to have a clear vision of what the country should do in the meantime²⁰. According to this view in the late Summer of 1996 the developing Bulgarian position and interests to NATO could be characterised in this way: "1. Bulgaria is still on the level of Partnership for Peace participation. PFP is conceived as a serious Euroatlantic *institution* with which the country is interested to develop an intensified form of relationship. It is through the PFP that an adequate level of compatibility and interoperability is to be achieved with NATO. The technical transitional period will most probably coincide in time with the evolution of the political and strategic interrelationships in the OSCE area that are still unresolved and with the country's adaptation to the EU. By continuing to produce security Bulgaria will contribute to finding an agreeable solution of these issues. At the first appropriate opportunity the PFP structure is to be crossed in the direction of full NATO membership in a situation which will not be characterized by drawing new dividing lines in Europe because of membership in the Alliance. The engagement with NATO for the time being will be real for Bulgaria even without the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty obligation of the Alliance and the actual membership in the integrated

military structure. For Bulgaria – a signatory of the NPT, the nuclear option for achieving defence is not acceptable even theoretically.

2. While this is acceptable for the national security in peace-time in case of an escalating war threat it is in the country's interest to choose among four possibilities or a combination of them: full membership in NATO; bilateral military agreement with the USA; bilateral military agreement with Russia; military neutrality.

The governmental concept of 1995 was not moved in the Parliament because of disapproval from both left and right, and a year later the text obviously needed to be actualized. This was not done. The responsibility is of those who were in charge of the respective parliamentary commissions for foreign policy and national security. The Government, on its side, did not accept the experts' recommendations of making public an accompanying declaration to be adopted by Parliament, considering the country's position to NATO membership.

The work of the experts on the national security concept was very positively influenced by an international seminar, organized by the Center for National Security Studies at the Ministry of Defense and the Center for the Studies of Democracy with the support of NATO Press and Information Service and the Open Society Fund: "*Methodology of formulating a national security concept*", held in Sofia, 3-4 May, 1995 as an element of the process of drafting the concept. This seminar's ideas and suggestions promoted further the principles of civil-military relations of the democratic society in the process of shaping a new national security concept. A special tribute deserves the effort of Dr. Hans-Georg Wieck of Germany to bring to the attention of the Bulgarian participants the specific requirements of building the intelligence service in the democratic society.

The inadequacies of the management of the transformation processes were reflected also on the foreign-policy and national security decision-making structures in Bulgaria. The inconsistencies and deficiencies of the unfinished process of drafting the national security concept on a national consensus political basis, the cold war of official state institutions on

strategic and tactical issues of Bulgaria's transition to democracy – a specific local contribution to the "separation of powers" theory, deprived the country and its people from an effective national security decision-making mechanism. The author of this Report has been asked by the President's Office through the former Institute for International Relations and Foreign Policy at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in December, 1991 to draft an expert concept of a Presidential National Security Council (NSC) as a consultative body. The suggested concept provided for a thorough consultative process that was supposed to lead to an acceptable decision-making follow-up by the constitutionally empowered authorities. The only requirement was a minimum level of agreement on a non-party, nationally motivated basis.

During the first term of President Zhelev the NSC functioned in an informal way as a consultative body with almost missing decision-making follow-ups in the constitutional procedure. The Law, determining the status of the Consultative National Security Council (CNSC) of 28 January, 1994 did not change qualitatively the decision-making situation in the field of national security. The stubborn political confrontation compromised a lot of open opportunities for the country's national security and foreign policy. Occasionally the CNSC proved a very useful, though only consultative, institution, especially in cases of internal political deadlock situations²¹. The smooth national security decision-making process and the formulation of a national security concept are still open issues that need to be solved. The newly elected Parliament and Government have set the task of finally drafting the National Security Concept that will include the clear position to join the Atlantic Alliance in the near future.

IV CONCLUSIONS

1. Civil-military relations in Bulgaria have marked a qualitative improvement but still their state reflects the low level of the civil society evolution.

2. The evolution of the Bulgarian civil-military relations depends on the transformation of the defense establishment in general.
3. The social transformation process to market economy and democracy suffered from management inadequacy that was reflected on the military reform sector and on the civil-military interrelationship.
4. The new national security and foreign-political orientation of Bulgaria to integration in the European Union, NATO and the WEU is delicately balanced with the tough direct Balkan environment of the peaceful and stable country and with the Russian factor – a traditional insider in Balkan affairs and Bulgaria's partner. A positive external environmental influence on civil-military interrelationship in Bulgaria is only possible if the background is a benignly extending Civic Space eastwards. The NATO-Russia Founding Act of 14 May 1997 is a sound and promising argument to extend further the Civic and the Security Space with a more active Bulgarian participation as a future member of NATO and as a traditional friend of Russia.
5. A stable civil-military relationship in Bulgaria is possible if the national security decision-making process is structured well and goes on smoothly. A basic condition is the adoption on a national consensus basis of a national security concept and strategy of its implementation.
6. The major conclusion of the present Report is the realization of the need of further strengthening of independent think-tanks as the Institute for Security and International Studies. The process of developing the information and analytic base of the Bulgarian civil society will not be a short one and the efforts initiated some years ago need to be continued and supported. Our belief is that at some point the legislators, the politicians in general will require at least for their own parties' analytic purposes the opinion of other, independent sources to balance the call for spending for defense and the limited resources of the taxpayer in Bulgaria.

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