

Conference Report

Shaping a Common Security Agenda for Southeast Europe:
New Approaches and Shared Responsibilities

September 5-6, 2003

Boyana Conference Center, Sofia, Bulgaria

organized by

Center for the Study of Democracy

in cooperation with

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

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Introduction

The two-day conference, entitled “*Shaping A Common Security Agenda For Southeast Europe - New Approaches And Shared Responsibilities*”, took place on September 5 and 6 in Sofia, Bulgaria. The conference covered some of the key aspects of the future of Southeast European (SEE) security in the context of EU and NATO enlargement. More specifically, the objectives of the conference were to address three major issues.

The first objective was to highlight the **need for an adequate doctrine that would make crime a priority issue** in the framework of the newly defined regional and European security.

The second objective was to **look for innovative responses to soft security threats**, particularly organized crime and corruption.

The third objective was to **demonstrate the value of public-private partnership** in tackling soft-security issues by bringing together professionals from the security sector and private actors, such as non-governmental policy institutes.

This document summarizes the speeches that were delivered and the discussions that took place during the two days of the conference. Although, the format of the summary adheres to the conference agenda’s four sessions an attempt was made to extract the major points

Opening remarks

The opening remarks of the conference were delivered by Dr. Ognian Shentov, Chairman of the Center for the Study of Democracy, Dr. Solomon Passy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, and Dr. Harald Kinderman, German Ambassador to Bulgaria. Dr. Passy and Dr. Kinderman greeted the participants and emphasized the importance of the conference as a demonstration of regional cooperation. Dr. Passy paid particular attention to the role that Lord Robertson has played in consolidating the SEE security. He underlined the Secretary General’s role in strengthening the transatlantic relationship, adapting the Alliance to the new security threats, creating the strategic partnership with the EU in the Balkans and new type of relations with Russia.

The opening remarks of Dr. Shentov explored in depth the objectives and the suggested topics of the conference. His remarks served as a springboard to the plenary sessions. Dr. Shentov stated that after the events of September 11, 2001, **the border line between external and internal security has faded** and the balance between the two has changed. He outlined a number of new threats, defined as “soft security” threats. In his opinion, geographic remoteness and geopolitical advantages no longer provide a safe haven. The threats coming from failed states and non-state actors have multiplied. International crime syndicates have nurtured a fusion between criminalized political and economic elites. Cyber crime has become a common occurrence. Corruption has turned into strategic threat to established as well as new democracies.

These new threats, in Dr. Shentov’s opinion, required a revision of the traditional separation between the instruments of foreign policy and domestic security. The new dynamic has imposed a broader definition of the established roles of the military and the police, often pushing today’s armed forces into performing civilian tasks.

*“After the events of September 11, 2001, the border line between external and internal security has faded and the balance between the two has changed”
Dr. Shentov*

Dr. Shentov criticized the sporadic interest of the international community into issues of organized crime and, particularly, transnational economic crime. He also pointed to **corruption as a major risk to national and international security**. The involvement in organized crime of institutions and individuals from the security sector was, in his words, evidence that the society's ability to protect itself from the criminal world has been undermined. Particularly dangerous were the established smuggling channels that were aided by corrupt individuals in the customs, the law-enforcement agencies, or other state institutions.

Dr. Shentov explained that the "gray" and "black" economies are also governed by the demand and supply logic. On the supply side, he argued that **high unemployment rate and the enormous share of the "gray" economy have created a favorable environment for organized crime and corruption**. On the demand side, he claimed that the trafficking in women and children was driven by the demand for their "services" in the West. Similarly, drug trafficking was driven by the growing number of drug users in Western Europe. In some EU countries cigarette smuggling was eased by the lack of efficient measures to stop it and by increasing demand for cheap cigarettes as a result of high tobacco taxes. He added that the illegal labor market depended on the demand for cheap labor in the West. Thus, Dr. Shentov called for solutions not only in SEE but also in the EU and the US.

Dr. Shentov paid special attention to the importance of public-private partnerships in the process of looking for innovative approaches to analyzing the security risks and the conduct of an adequate security policy. He pointed to a Bulgarian example of this new role, *Coalition 2000*, an anticorruption initiative of a group of non-governmental organizations.

Dr. Shentov also stated that the immediate task of the countries of SEE is to **find mechanisms so that NATO's enlargement increases the security of both the members of the Alliance and of non-member countries in SEE**. In conclusion, Dr. Shentov's highlighted as an objective of the conference the need to **adapt the contemporary doctrines, institutions and mechanisms of cooperation so that they can counter the new threats to national and international security**.

*"...When considering the need for innovative approaches to analyzing the security risks and the conduct of an adequate security policy one should emphasize the **increasing role of non-state actors** in both domestic and international politics."
Dr. Shentov*

Session One: Enlargement, leadership and shared responsibilities in facing security challenges in Southeastern Europe

The goal of this session was to examine how three important components of SEE's security environment relate to the new soft security issues and to public-private partnerships. Strong leadership both institutional and personal was indispensable for containing, preventing from spillover, and ultimately stopping armed conflicts within the territory of the Former Yugoslavia. The process of enlargement is an important part of expansion of the role of NATO in SEE. NATO's presence has been and continues to be crucial to SEE security. At the same time, as the security situation evolves the nature of the risks and threats shifts from military to non-military.

Institution building, countering organized crime, trafficking corruption etc. become the high priorities that could be only solved through regional approaches.

The panelists in the first part of Session One included Lord George Robertson, Secretary General of NATO, Markus Meckel, a parliamentarian from the German Bundestag and Dr. Erhard Busek Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for SEE. The discussion was moderated by Ambassador Boyko Noev, Former Minister of Defense of Bulgaria and currently Director of the European Program at the Center for the Study of Democracy. The panelists in the second part of the session included Dr. Klaus Schumann, Director General for Political Affairs at the Council of Europe, Dr. Ioan Mircea Pa°cu, Minister of Defense of Romania and Dr. Matthias Dembinski from the Frankfurt Peace Research Institute. Dr. Fraser Cameron, Director of Studies at Belgium-based European Policy Centre. Between the two parts of the first plenary session the Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Simeon Saxe-Coburg Gotha and Lord George Robertson addressed the participants and answered some questions.

NATO Enlargement

The issue of NATO enlargement was most directly addressed in Lord Robertson's keynote speech. He affirmed the Alliance's commitment to SEE security and explained that the current reduction of troops reflects improved security situation in the region. He also praised the efforts of the SEE countries to become "exporters of security" by participating in peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Lord Robertson noted that the by becoming NATO members in 2004, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia would consolidate a common security space "from the Atlantic to the Black Sea, and from the Baltic to the Balkans." In addition, the new members would strengthen the Southeast European dimension of the Alliance by proposing and leading new NATO initiatives that would consolidate peace and stability in the region. Mr. Meckel built upon these remarks by stating that in addition to the new members, **the prospects of NATO and EU enlargement need to be left clearly opened to all countries in the region.**

"...[We] are still deploying a sizeable number of troops. And they are now able to focus their efforts in new areas where they can add real value - in tackling persistent regional problems such as border security, organized crime, and dealing with illegal weapons"

Lord Robertson

Lord Robertson added that it was the prospect for enlargement and its process that represent the biggest incentive for changes in the region. He stated that NATO facilitated change by providing expert help, building partnerships and "holding out the prospect of eventual membership of Euro-Atlantic structures." In addition, he explained that the NATO was working with Albania, Croatia, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the framework of the Membership Action Plan to help them make the necessary reforms required for a NATO membership. Lord Robertson also emphasized that the efforts of NATO's troops in SEE were now focused on tackling persistent regional problems such as border security, organized crime, and dealing with illegal weapons.

The issue of enlargement was also addressed in the speech of Bulgaria's Prime Minister, Simeon Saxe-Coburg Gotha. He expressed his support for further enlargement of NATO as a guarantee for the security in the region.

In the discussion session a Macedonian colleague asked Minister Pascu how should countries like Macedonia, neither a EU nor NATO member, prioritize defense

policy and budgets in the context of the simultaneous and competing for funds EU or NATO accessions processes. Mr. Pascu responded that it did not need to be one or the other but rather the focus should be on the regional challenges that at their essence were common to the two processes.

Leadership

On the issue of leadership, Lord Robertson's stated that although many people thought of Southeast Europe as a postwar reconstruction project, run by the international community, a stable domestic environment was vital to the success of these efforts. He stressed that despite the economic stagnation, the corruption and the outdated military structures it was up to the political leadership of each of the countries to create an environment, conducive to rebuilding the security and the economy of the region. He demanded that these **leaders convince their populations that short-term sacrifices were necessary to secure a better future**. Thus, the successful leaders would be the ones that "look to the future, not to the past."

Dr. Schumann also brought-up the issue of new leadership that should focus on the future. Here again **the role of public-private partnerships was underlined in the effort to create a common standard for political leadership**. He pointed to an example for such initiatives, the Council of Europe supported network of Schools of Politics in Southeast Europe that train young political leaders and civil servants. The establishment of each school, he clarified, was "a civil society initiative (NGO or individual.)"

Mr. Meckel addressed the issue of leadership in a broader context. He underlined the leadership initiative that the US has taken in the past in solving problems in SEE.

In the discussion session following the remarks of session Ms. Zapf of the German Bundestag asked how would the old leadership, some of whose members were involved in organized crime and corruption, give way to a new "clean" generation. Dr. Schumann again pointed to the public-private initiative of politics schools, by clarifying that the majority of the participants in these schools were young and represented various political parties, journalists, NGO representatives, and lawyers. He also explained that the school program was designed to stimulate discussions and convince the young generation in the importance of protecting the common not their personal or ethnic interests.

Shared Responsibilities

During the course of the conference particular attention was paid to the issues regional and international cooperation. While the participants, particularly the government representatives, pointed to numerous examples of existing initiatives and partnerships, they also insisted on multiplying cooperation efforts, particularly on a regional level. Minister Pascu pointed out that countries **should end the SEE mentality of isolationism and take advantage of the current climate of stability that SEE had not seen in the past 15 years**.

Lord Robertson's keynote speech touched on several aspects of international cooperation. He started by calling on modern SEE political leaders to adopt "a broad, international perspective rather than a limited, nationalistic view". He noted that there was a "growing realization that many problems in the region can only be tackled by working together".

SEE and the International Community

Lord Robertson first addressed the issue of cooperation between SEE and the international community, by praising the region's support for the international coalition against terrorism and the accomplishments in implementing counter-terrorism measures. He added that SEE countries have made valuable contributions to peacekeeping missions not only in the Western Balkans but also in Afghanistan and Iraq. All this was evidence that **the region was "helping share the responsibility and burden of upholding international security."** Mr. Schumann built upon Lord Robertson's speech by stating an important aspect of regional cooperation was the common effort to integrate in Euro-Atlantic community.

Along these line, Mr. Schumann's remarks focused on **the importance of the standards, set by the EU or the Council of Europe**. These standards represented a "security pillar", encompassing over 180 Council of Europe conventions on social, political, economic, and legal matters. He added that "standard-setting is accompanied by the promotion of coordinated measures at European level ...in fields of particular common concern." He gave as example the "Group of States against Corruption – GRECO", "a co-ordination and follow-up mechanism" monitoring the observance of the Council of Europe's Guiding Principles in the fight against corruption and the implementation of international anti-corruption legal instruments. Mr. Shumann also mentioned similar approaches in the fight against organized crime such as the OCTOPUS program that involves 18 countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the SEE specific PACO program. He also pointed to MONEYVAL a coordination structure set up for the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime.

Mr. Meckel spoke about the common security agenda of EU and US on reducing the threats from terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and regional conflicts. In that context, Mr. Meckel called for continuous political pressure on all countries, including SEE, because the above threats could be efficiently dealt with only through cooperation. He also stated that **the continuous focus on SEE was appropriate because there were still many problems that needed to be solved and Europe could not afford an island of instability within its borders**.

In the discussion session Dr. Cameron asked Minister Pascu whether he could see Austrians and Germans serving in Romania, along the EU's future external borders, if after the EU enlargement there was a proposal for joint guards along EU's external border. Minister Pascu agreed and stated that this would be a good way to increase the efficient guarding of the borders.

In the context of Lord Robertson's statement that today's threats to Europe come from the Middle East and Central Asia, Bulgarian MP and former Foreign Minister Geogri Pirinski, asked about **NATO's members dilemma of cutting defense spending while increasing economic support for failed states**, such as Afghanistan, or weak states, such as some Central Asian states. Dr. Cameron added to the question, asking Lord Robertson whether there could be a trade-offs between defense spending, improving border controls or increasing development assistance.

Lord Robertson responded that government need to have a comprehensive approach of how they deal with the general problem of security, not simply with "defense". NATO is no longer a defense alliance, it is a

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Lord Robertson

security alliance. NATO needs the hardcore military underpinning to deal with threats like the Taliban, but it also needs involve border controls that are open but secured. We also need properly organized and corruption-free police forces. European countries should have a better management of existing resources, by increasing their military capabilities and trying to work for a common defense.

He criticized most European armies for their narrow national approaches to defense budgets, where they still spent money on tanks and inefficiently allocated resources that did not provide the capabilities needed to counter the new threats. He criticized that SEE and European armies were largely un-deployable to the places where the real threats to NATO members originated. Lord Robertson explained that NATO, Canada, and Europe had 2 million men and women in the armed forces and 1 million in reserves. At the moment only 80 thousand soldiers were deployed outside Europe's boundaries, and governments had assured Lord Robertson, that this was the upper limit of what they could deploy. Thus, 3 million people were paid to defend NATO countries but only 80 thousand could actually do so. Lord Robertson called this "a scandalous, ludicrous waste of money" where tax payers were "being ripped off". He added that "the time has come to make really substantial and fundamental changes to the way we spend our defense money and domestic MPs would not need to ask these questions." He agreed that in some countries more needed to be spent on defense but if what currently was spent was properly allocated the taxpayers would get a better value and the countries would feel more secure.

In the discussion session **Dr. Busek** asked how can the countries of **SEE develop a closer cooperation not only with the EU, which was already happening, but also in global context.** He pointed to the successful way in which the US developed such global partnerships. Dr. Busek stated that as a head of the Stability Pact he was

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Lord Robertson

subject to the limits of the EU and Europol, thus, leaving beyond his reach Central Asia. He said that this conference should send the message, that organized crime needs to be fought on global level.

Lord Robertson agreed that **fighting organized crime needed a global approach, stating that "organized crime does not stop in the Balkans"**. He gave an example with the political, social, and economic devastation that heroin trade had done to the societies in Central Asia and its social damages on European societies. He pointed to a July 2003 a productive meeting of regional organizations at the United Nations, where NATO stood by the Shanghai Group, the Arab League, and Interpol. He argued that at this meeting one could feel that there was a consciousness about the global approach, for which Dr. Busek called, and about the need to stop the rivalries and the duplications between regional and functional organizations. Such duplications often mean that no one takes full responsibility.

Regional Initiatives

Lord Robertson also talked about the issue of regional cooperation in tackling cross-border and regional problems. Here underlined the role of NATO in encouraging initiatives like the South-East Europe Initiative (SECI) or the Ohrid Common Platform on Border Security. He praised the South-East European Brigade, SEEBRIG as "one of the practical and concrete co-operation initiatives". The same point was also addressed by Klaus Schumann who gave as an example the "Vilnius

Declaration on Regional Co-operation and the Consolidation of Democratic Stability in Greater Europe” that was adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in May 2002. Mr. Schumann also pointed the Council of Europe’s involvement in the Central European Initiative and the South East European Co-operation Process both of which can become key in consolidating regional stability and security.

During the discussion session Dr. Cameron asked Dr. Dembinski whether the example Franco-German people-to-people initiatives in the post-WWII period were instrumental in creating the current Franco-German alliance and whether similar initiatives would work in SEE. Dr. Dembinski suggested that such approaches were good examples for reconciliation and should be used in SEE. Dr. Schumann pointed to two other examples: the Strasbourg – Frankfurt partnership and the “local democracy” initiative that connects local councils and involves NGOs.

International Cooperation in SEE

Lastly, Lord Robertson as well as Mr. Schumann stated that NATO, EU, and OSCE have themselves taken a shared responsibility approach towards SEE. As examples they both pointed to the Common Platform on Border Security and the Stability Pact. In that context, Dr. Busek expanded on the role of the Stability Pact in countering the threat of organized crime. He spoke about the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe Initiative against Organized Crime (SPOC), explaining that “SPOC facilitates dialogue with international and regional representatives of the legal, scientific and law enforcement communities covering preventive and repressive aspects of the combat against organized crime issues.” He also expressed his expectation that the Austrian-Swiss-Norwegian funded OCTN (Organized Crime Training Network) would “play an important role in future education and networking of middle management SEE police officers in charge of combating organized crime.” Dr. Busek also explained that SPOC was cooperating with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), by supporting the implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime in SEE. The first step in this process has been dissemination of a Practitioner’s Handbook on the TOC, which is meant to teach investigators about group criminalization, mutual judicial assistance indictments, and the so-called Falcone checklist. SPOC also promotes CARDS projects relevant for the combat against organized crime.

Prime Minister Saxe-Coburg Gotha agreed with the need for increased regional cooperation and stated that only such cooperation could speed up democratic reforms and eliminate threats from organized trans-border crime, traffic in people, arms and drugs. He added that steps in this directions have been already undertaken with initiatives such as the Stability Pact, the Process of Cooperation in South East Europe, the Initiative for Cooperation in South East Europe, the Initiative for Development of the Southern Balkans, the meetings of the defense ministers of the countries in South East Europe and the Multinational Peacekeeping Force.

In their remarks the panelists discussed some additional factors of SEE security. These included institution building, the future of Kosovo, economic development, and the effects of organized crime.

Strong State Institutions

Two panelists emphasized the importance of strong state institutions as a priority for improving the security in SEE. In this area Minister Pascu stated that protecting

state institutions from corruption and criminality would retain within the government the source of authority, that criminality displaces is in a country ruled by lawlessness. Dr. Dembinski added that this could be achieved by strengthening the state administrative system. He pointed to the example of East Germany where the strengthening of the administrative system after the unification was a major factor in making the state system efficient.

Kosovo

Dr. Dembinski mentioned the issue of Kosovo, which came back several times in the discussion sessions. In **Dr. Dembinski's** opinion **the foremost security concern of SEE was the territorial and constitutional future of Kosovo**. Although, he did not propose any solutions, he underlined that the current strategy is not sustainable. The issue of Kosovo was brought up by one more time during the discussion session when a participant in the audience asked whether the panelists would agree that a solution for Kosovo would help all SEE to mover forward. **Minister Pascu** responded that **there seemed to be a desire to buy more time either because more time was in fact needed to come up with a solution or because the delay was a way to avoid a solution**.

Economic Issues

The second issue had to do with the underlying problem of poverty, i.e. the need for self-sustained growth and the creation of a middle class. **Prime Minister Saxe-Coburg Gotha also pointed to sustainable economic growth as a stabilizing factor**. He singled out the importance of accelerated implementation of regional and bilateral infrastructure projects. For Bulgaria such projects included the completion of the pan-European transport corridors 4 and 8, new border check points, the Vidin - Kalafat bridge across the Danube river and the Bourgas – Alexandroupolis pipe line.

Organized crime

The issue of the impact of organized crime on the security of SEE was the focus of the remarks of Dr. Busek. In his opinion the threat on organized crime became even more salient when one explored its roots. He examined the political connections that existed between organized crime and security services in the 1970s and 1980s, and later one during the Yugoslav wars. Dr. Busek stated that “[I]t took a decade to understand that organized criminal groups are acting behind the scenes”, under the cover of nationalistic rhetoric. In his opinion **“dirty money gained from women trafficking or weapons and drug trafficking does...not know national, religious or ethnic affiliation, nor boundaries”**.

Dr. Busek also talked about the impact that organized crime had on SEE security. He noted that criminal groups heavily corrupted and distorted the privatization process, and created a negative image that had pushed away foreign investors. He concluded that the impact of regional criminal groups went beyond the boundaries of SEE, reaching not only Western Europe, but as far Central Asia and the East Coast of the US.

Session Two: The transatlantic relationship and its impact on regional security

The Iraq debate had serious implications for the transatlantic relationship in general and in particular the future of NATO and the ESDP. As NATO and the EU are expected to continue having key roles for the security in SEE, anxiety grows as to whether the security framework they provide would be adequate to the new risks and threats. **A US pullout from the region would generate uncertainties and may ultimately lead to resumption of some local hostilities.** Meanwhile the EU has taken over security functions in Macedonia and its role in Bosnia and Kosovo is expected to grow. **As the future of European defense remains increasingly uncertain the question remains whether the EU has the political will and the capabilities to stabilize the region.**

Second session of the conference brought together three policy analysts and four ministers of defense to discuss the transatlantic relationship and its implication on SEE. Mr. Wemhoerner of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation moderated the first part of the discussion that included Dr. Fraser Cameron of the European Policy Centre in Belgium, Dr. John Hulsman, of the US-based Heritage Foundation, Otfried Nassauer of the Berlin Information Center for Transatlantic Security, and Zeljka Antunovic, Minister of Defense of Croatia. The second part of the discussion was moderated by Lubomir Ivanov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria. Participants included Macedonia's Minister of Defense Vlado Buchkovski, Bulgaria's Minister of Defense Nikolay Svinarov, and Albania's Minister of Defense Pandeli Majko.

The first part of the discussion focused on the broader issues of transatlantic relationship. The debate focused on the causes and the consequences of the rift in the transatlantic relationship following the war with Iraq. The participants also suggested various approaches to move away from the current impasse. The second part of the session paid particular attention to the effects of the transatlantic relationship on SEE.

The Transatlantic Rift

Dr. Cameron explained that **one could trace the roots of the rift between Europe and the US back in the 1990s.** Although the Clinton administration was in many respects pro-European, it faced a Republican Congress, largely uninterested in foreign policy matters. Dr. Cameron stated that **today's transatlantic relations were in crisis mostly over the war in Iraq but also a number of other issues, such as the Israel-Palestine conflict, the approach to rogue states, terrorism, global warming and arms control.** He emphasized the differences over the role of the UN, multilateral institutions and the respectability of international law. Dr. Hulsman responded that international law had always been power-based and has been used as a diplomatic tool. **Until Europe became powerful militarily it could not expect to successfully tie down the US through legal instruments.**

Also mentioned were the rising anti-Americanism and opposition to the Bush administration policies among European publics as well as the growing resentment at Europe, especially France and Germany, in the US. Dr. Hulsman pointed out that this is partly due to the inadequate understanding of US politics in EU, where people tend to see the US administration and its policies as a monolith and to miss on raging ideological debates within. He added that Europe and has failed to recognize that the neo-conservatives, prevalent in the Bush administration, have been part of US politics since the 1940s but have never been welcomed to Europe and, thus, remained unfamiliar.

Dr. Cameron stated that the EU had no concept of how to approach the US, which in turn often preferred bilateral as opposed to EU channels. He added that Robert Zoellick was the only person in the current Bush administration that really understood European politics. Dr. Hulsman agreed that there was a structural impasse and lack of communication in the EU-US relationship.

These disagreements, in Dr. Cameron's opinion, had a major impact on European foreign and security policy, and even on the process of European integration. There were doubts whether the US was still committed to a strong, united Europe speaking with one voice. This was particularly demonstrated over the issue of Iraq when US positively reacted to the division among European countries on that issue. **Dr. Hulsman** disagreed by pointing that it was not US that divides Europe. **The debate over the Iraq war put not the US vs. Europe but Europe vs. Europe.** It was "middle size" European countries, not only "New Europe", that joined the coalition against Iraq. **Italy, Spain or Poland sided with the US, because national interests continue to be the determining force in foreign policy and because these countries were looking for a way to counterbalance German and French influence in Europe.** Mr. Nassauer added that after the Iraq crisis NATO is no longer decision making body but rather a meeting venue.

Dr. Cameron quoted Dominique Moisi's observation that "a growing divergence between America's perception of its moral leadership and European perceptions of a military-minded America obsessed with rogue states and weapons of mass destruction."

Dr. Cameron made a number of recommendations on healing the relationship between Europe and the US. He recommended more moderate rhetoric, more balanced relationship, further efforts to narrow divergences, continued cooperation in the Balkans and elsewhere, joint pressure on the Middle East Process, stronger US support for united Europe, and wider relations between Congress and the European Parliament.

Dr. Hulsman's recommendations focused on prescribing the policy of "cherry-picking", as the best way to move forward. In his opinion, the Bush Administration would continue to go through international institutions in addressing foreign-policy issues. Power, though, would remain the determining characteristic of this approach. Next on the policy options list would be the opportunities for useful multilateral and bilateral coalitions (cherry-picking). The "go it alone" approach would come last but it would be always an option for a superpower. He disagreed with the neo-conservative point of view that perceived the current state of the international order as a unipolar world and underestimated the interdependence in international relations.

Mr. Nassauer argued that the current policy of cherry-picking was dividing and inconsistent with the US interest in a united Europe. For instance, while the US demanded a European defense industry reform it readily offered its off-shelf products.

Transatlantic Cooperation in SEE

Dr. Cameron underlined that there were examples of successful transatlantic cooperation in the areas of world trade, development aid and Balkans security. Dr. Hulsman specifically mentioned the US role in Balkans, pointing to the fact that the Yugoslav conflicts were tackled only after the US intervened. In the discussion session he expressed his hopes that just like EU-US cooperation on the Middle East, on trade or on fighting Al Qaeda, joint action in SEE would continue to be possible. He cautioned, though, that except Iraq, Afghanistan and Al-Caida, no other issues got

the attention of the policy makers in Washington. Thus, the EU should take the lead in SEE and the US could be expected to provide a secondary and supportive role. Dr. Hulsman spoke in favorable terms about the proposed move of the US military bases from the northern to the southeastern parts of Europe. In his opinion the real contribution of such operation would be to increase the deployability of the US forces in the Middle East.

Dr. Nassauer added that EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and US foreign policy could support each other in the Balkans. He stated that since SEE countries want to join NATO and EU they could bring complimentary military and non-military capabilities and assets and the West should take advantage of them.

Dr. Nassauer also brought up the issue of the ability of NATO or EU to deal with the new threats. In his opinion **it is clear that the new threats could be tackled with non-military means.** Javier Solana's security strategy paper [A *Secure Europe in a Better World* delivered at the June 2003 European Council in Thessaloniki] clearly gave **preference to preventive political and economic measures to counter the threats from failed states, organized crime, terrorism** and weapons of mass destruction. Dr. Nassauer also quoted Solana's appeal to integrate all instruments of foreign policy (including embargoes, sanctions, etc.) in tackling soft-security issues. Dr. Nassauer concluded that the EU could provide some of the capabilities that NATO does not have. On the issue of EU's military capabilities, Dr. Nassauer's stated that it is in US interest to have a solid NATO partner by strengthening the EU. Otherwise, he noted, there would be only competition.

The issue of the impact of the transatlantic relationship on SEE was addressed more extensively in the speeches of the four ministers of defense. Deputy Foreign Minister Ivanov pointed out that SEE security was closely connected to Euro-Atlantic security. He noted that, although initially the focus was on former Yugoslavia where NATO intervened, today there was broader regional approach to most problems. Mr. Ivanov added that gradually a number of different policy instruments had been developed and today there was a faster reaction-mechanism that could solve problems. He explained that **along with the expansion of NATO and the EU, in SEE one could observe a process of increased division of responsibilities between EU-NATO.** In the discussion session, **Mr. Ivanov**, spoke about the longstanding understanding in SEE about the threats to soft-security threats. He recalled that **NATO members were very unconvinced in 1996 that these new threats should be a priority to NATO.** He explained that SEE often lead the cooperation efforts with NATO, and pointed out in recent dealings with Europol the slowdown was coming from NATO.

Minister Antunovic of Croatia explained that only after the Euro-Atlantic family of nations recognized itself as the "International Community" and realized the dangers to its common interests, that its actions started to provide substantial results. She observed that in Southeast Europe, the European Security and Defense Policy and European-American cooperation "happily and profitably" coexisted. Minister Antunovic approved the shift towards a greater role of the Europeans in SEE. She called for continued presence of the United States in the region, despite greater EU responsibilities. Weakening of the transatlantic link could "only serve the forces of instability."

Minister Buchkovski of Macedonia, along with his Bulgarian and Albanian colleagues, concurred with the need for continued presence of NATO and the EU in SEE. Minister Majko described the role of the international community in the ending the wars in former Yugoslavia. **Minister Buchkovski** reminded the participants that

SEE countries share the responsibility SEE security, adding that **“New Europe will not be complete without our active contribution.”** In that context he and Minister Majko called for the continuation of the enlargement processes and the support of the new members from SEE. He noted that the EU mission *Concordia* has already demonstrated that Macedonia is capable of securing its domestic stability.

Minister Buchkovski and Minister Svinarov both agreed that the partnership between NATO and the EU in the Republic of Macedonia proved to be valuable to SEE security. Both ministers agreed that **terrorism today was present in SEE and that the only way to provide an adequate response and introduce efficient preventive measures was through joint and coordinated action.** Minister Svinarov added that other destabilizing factors included organized crime, the endeavors of “extreme religiously and ethnically motivated organizations to establish their network on the Balkans”, and the proximity to unstable regions like the Middle East and the Caucasus. He also explained that **Bulgaria is already “exporting” security by contributing to the building of the European Rapid Reaction Forces, participating in SFOR, KFOR and ISAF.** He added that Bulgaria is an active participant in the Multinational Peace Force Southeastern Europe, which, he hopes, we make a real difference in consolidating security in the Balkans.

During the discussion session following the second part of Session Two, a range of questions were asked. Although some of them closely followed the session’s topic, many of the participants took advantage of the opportunity to ask the ministers a variety of questions. Mr. Ivanov posed the question of when would the time come when the international organizations’ presence will not be needed to guarantee SEE security. He also asked about the influence that the Iraq and Afghanistan crises have on the SEE countries and the respond of the regional armed forces to these new challenges. Ambassador Noev underlined the importance of regional initiatives and asked about the current situation of SEEBRIG (South East European Brigade) and the SEE Defense Ministers (SEDM) Process. He was particularly interested whether the SEDM format of periodic meetings of US and regional ministers of defense to discuss security issues is still active. Minister Buchkovski responded the SEDM meetings take place within SEEBRIG context. He added the SEEBRIG will be deployable within a year’s time and that its help will be likely employed in Bosnia or Kosovo.

Ambassador Tihomir Ylievski of Macedonia’s Foreign Ministry commented that regional cooperation and regional ownership were the key topics on which future conferences need to focus. Ms. Zapf of the German Bundestag noted that military threats were not as important as the new threats. She inquired how did one integrate military and non-military means in countering the new threats. Minister Buchkovski gave an example that the common borders security initiative was one step in this direction.

Session Three: The risks to integration: threats from organized crime and corruption

The most significant pressure on the security of governance in SEE comes from the various forms of organized crime. Among the key aspects of SEE transition was the connection between the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and the growth of the transborder crime. The free reign of criminal networks in the war-ridden Western

Balkans, had an impact not only on SEE but on all of Europe. They also slowed down the integration of SEE in the EU.

The indigenous efforts to strengthen the region's capability to counter soft security threats should be better coordinated with EU's efforts to aid this process. There should be a clear and shared vision about the fundamentals of the security situation, backed by a common agenda of how to address them. **Thus, an adequate doctrine for making organized crime an European priority is urgently needed.** The integration of institutional responses to these new threats is vital and pressing. There is also a need for a systematic threat assessment.

This session consisted of one panel that was moderated by Bulgaria's Deputy Minister of Interior, Mr. Boyko Kotzev. The panelists included Mr. Vecdi Gönül, Minister of National Defense of Turkey, US Ambassador to Bulgaria James Pardew, Bulgaria's Minister of the Interior Georgi Petkanov, and Ms. Uta Zapf, an MP from the German Bundestag. It is especially important to note the makeup of the panel of this session. By bringing together a Minister of the Interior and Minister of Defense, the organizers of the conference aimed to seek common solutions that solicit the efforts of the entire security sector.

Defining the Problem and its Origins

The panelists explained that the forces of globalization, and particularly international commerce, mass communications, intercontinental travel, had transformed organized crime and corruption into serious threats to national and international security. **Minister Gönül added that the new threats were asymmetrical and non-conventional.** They included international terrorism, separatist movements, ethnic and religious conflicts, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crimes, environmental problems, drug trafficking and cyber terrorism. In respect to the terrorist threat, he argued that while the number of terrorist actions had decreased, the destructive power of terrorist acts had increased.

When addressing the issue of organized crime, Ambassador Pardew and Minister Petkanov emphasized the various origins of criminal groups. Mr. Pardew talked about the wars in former Yugoslavia and the origins of organized crime. Ms. Zapf expanded on the underlying social causes of organized crime. She noted that exclusion from economic interests had been a major cause for interethnic conflict in the Balkans. In the discussion, Ambassador Noev argued that one of the sources of organized crime was the ineffective sanctions regime during the Yugoslav wars. Dr. Fraser Cameron agreed that sanctions were ineffective but argued that at the time there was no real alternative for the EU, in terms of parliamentary and public opinion.

Ms. Zapf expanded on her understanding of the threat of organized crime. She disagreed with Lord Robertson's opinion (from Session One) that the Balkans were an exporter of security noting that they were still a very unstable place. She explained that **arms trafficking maintained high the possibility of renewed conflict.** She added that Chinese-made weapons were smuggled through Romania and Bulgaria and there were reports of arms race among crime syndicates.

Mr Petkanov explained that the members of organized criminal groups came from the circles of former sport figures and criminals. In the middle of 1990s these groups were involved in a setting of networks of corruption. In the late 1990s these groups became legal financial institutions, such as insurance companies, where through nominal directors and off-shore companies they become invisible to Ministry of the Interior. Internationally, in Mr. Petkanov's opinion, these groups had no significant impact. They were involved mainly in economic and financial crimes, trafficking in

drugs, people, goods and cars, as well as money forgery. **Despite the downward trend in crime rate, the crimes involving organized criminal groups were still widespread.**

Ambassador Pardew, noted that organized crime was more than a Balkan problem. **Every country has problems with organized crime, including the United States**, where the work in the area of counter-narcotics was particularly difficult. Mr. Pardew stated that the important issue was whether the problem was recognized and dealt with, as well as, what was the trend.

Deputy Minister Kotzev clearly outlined the connection between organized crime and corruption. He explained that during the transition period of the 1990s, organized criminal groups were able to corrupt officials in law-enforcement and other security institutions. Thus, fighting corruption, was becoming one of the most important objectives of the Ministry of the Interior.

Minister Petkanov expanded on Mr. Kotzev's point stating that joint venture of corrupt customs, law enforcement, Ministry of the Interior officers and organized criminal groups was dangerous. He added, that corruption was also widespread among local and state administration officials, tax-collection officers, the judiciary, education and health services. Tax evasion and tax fraud were also actively utilized by criminal groups.

Minister Gönül's focused on the threat from terrorism. He explained that Turkey is located at the intersection of problematic areas of Middle East, Balkans and Caucasus and thus constantly exposed to the terrorism threat.

Organized Crime and Integration

Ambassador Pardew identified the obstacles that organized crime and corruption pose to the processes of NATO and EU integration. He noted that membership in NATO required more than military capabilities. Being member of the Alliance was a reflection of the shared values, of the commitment to democracy and the rule of law. **Since organized crime and corruption were incompatible with the rule of law, they were threats that undermined the very essence of NATO.** Mr. Pardew added that organized groups, involved in arms-trafficking, were not concerned with the end-use of the weapons and were natural partners to terrorist groups. In this sense, **organized crime constituted a direct threat to the security of the citizens and the institutions of NATO members.**

In the discussion session following the panel's presentations, the participants debated whether EU integration itself could be the solution to instability in SEE. **Ambassador Noev** argued that the EU had put plenty of resources in helping SEE countries reach EU standards. He suggested that **if most sources of instability in SEE revolve around border issues, then, one solution could be to make borders unimportant, by making everyone EU member.** The latter approach might be more efficient, save money, but was difficult to sell to the voters and to opposing EU bureaucrats. **Ms. Zapf** disagreed arguing that integration should be fast but not imposed, especially when many people do not want it. **The EU integration was not a matter of government agreements but required the support of the public.** The process of integration needed to have the ownership of all citizens. Mr. Fraser

“Organized crime and corruption threaten democracy everywhere. It's not a question of who has a problem and who doesn't. Everyone does! The question is whether the issue is recognized as a national and international problem, what's being done about it and what is the trend”
Ambassador Pardew

Cameron agreed with Ms. Zapf and added that if one looked at Turkey, whose transformation had been remarkable, one could easily see how a hasty integration could be disastrous. As an alternative to quick integration Mr. Cameron suggested facilitated border and visa regimes, like the ones between Ukraine and Poland or Ukraine and the EU, respectively.

Solutions to Combating Organized Crime and Corruption

Ambassador Pardew suggested that fighting organized crime and corruption required constant vigilance, **aggressive anti-organized crime programs, effective laws, accountability of government, transparency in the state's financial matters**, and a law enforcement and legal systems that worked. He added that the countries should engage and cooperate fully in international programs to attack organized crime and corruption.

Mr. Petkanov described the efforts of the Ministry of the Interior in fighting organized crime and corruption. He stated that one of the main goals was to interrupt the financing of organized criminal groups. He agreed with Mr. Pardew on the need to strengthen the civil control and transparency of security services. **Minister Petkanov** explained that Bulgarian police cooperated with other European police agencies and security services, as well as international institutions. He noted that **Bulgaria had undertaken a number of legal changes making illegal the participation in criminal groups, creating witness protection programs, banning money laundering, making corruption of foreign officials and businesses illegal.** Mr. Petkanov added that his ministry sought the active cooperation of other agencies and international organization, as well as civil society organizations.

Mr. Gönül's speech suggested several concrete steps to counter the threat of terrorism. In his opinion, a number of things were needed: (1) a unanimous definition of terrorism, (2) closing of the loopholes in the international law, (3) and a global approach to counter the terrorist threat within the framework of international organizations. He also insisted on the need for (4) an extensive intelligence sharing network, (5) more secure WMD storage, (6) stronger arms controls, (7) cutting terrorist finances, (8) and a comprehensive list of the terrorist organizations and the countries sponsoring terrorism. Lastly, he called for the (9) reduction of social, political and economic discrepancies between communities that cause terrorism. Mr. Gönül emphasized that NATO should more actively engage in countering threats along its periphery, including a greater NATO role in Iraq.

Ms. Zapf of the German Bundestag emphasized the need for more awareness among parliamentarians about the problems of organized crime. She could not recall a single discussion on the issue in the Bundestag. She noted that when speaking of SEE the focus was still on the military side of conflicts and not much on the civilian issues such as organized crime and corruption. In her opinion, raising awareness among the public and the political elite, in SEE as well as in Western Europe, is an important step towards fighting organized crime. Ms. Zapf suggested that the strategies for tackling organized crime in SEE that international organizations had already developed, had to be reexamined so that they could be realistically implemented and enforced. She also emphasized the need for adequate witness protection programs, for interrupting the financing of organized crime, and the increase of small arms controls.

In the discussion session, **Dr. Cameron** asked Ministers Petkanov and Gotzev to give more details on how Bulgaria is addressing **the issues of ethical standards and training in the public services sector**, as well as the penalties for corrupt public

servants. Mr. Petkanov responded that such initiatives had been part of the administrative reform. He explained that in the Ministry of the Interior and its agencies, an ethical code had been recently approved and that the judiciary already had one. The ministry had created two departments on corruption. The first one, formed part of the ministry itself, and was fighting internal corruption. So far 212 cases has been investigated and 58 cases had been sent to the courts and the rest had been given various forms of administrative penalties. The second department, was within the National Service for Fighting Against Organized Crime. This department, focused on fighting corruption in other ministries, has only recently expanded its functions and staff. Deputy Minister Kotzev elaborated further the response, stating that Bulgaria has developed a National Anti-Corruption Strategy, special training modules are taught at the at the Policy Academy at the Ministry of the Interior and the Institute of Public Administration and European Integration. On the question of Mr. Meckel about the cooperation between international institutions, in particular Europol, and the Bulgarian authorities, Minister Petkanov responded that Europol had been a partner for some time, and that Bulgaria had completed all the requirements needed for the signing an agreement between Bulgaria and Europol. Mr. Kotzev added the Bulgaria was an active participant in The Bucharest-based Regional Center for Combating Transborder Crime.

Session Four: Breaking with stereotypes: innovative responses to the new security risks.

Public institutions need the cooperation of the private sector to reduce the impact of criminal networks and other security risks. When crime and corruption hamper corruption and when governance fails to provide a remedy only a public-private cooperation could effective. Broad domestic or international public coalitions are needed to dislodge entrenched interests. Traditional bureaucracies alone cannot muster the type of public support needed for successful reforms.

This last session aimed to provide a forum for dialogue between public and private partners by bringing together government and NGO representatives. The session was moderated by Mr. Boyko Todorov, Program Director at the Center for the Study of Democracy. The panel included Mr. Assen Assenov, Director of Bulgaria's Customs Agency at the Ministry of Finance, Mr. Guner Ismail, President of the Skopje based FORUM and Dr. Emil Tsenkov, a Senior Researcher at the Center for the Study of Democracy

Government Measures and Cooperation

Mr. Ismail offered an extensive analysis of the connections between political elites and organized criminal groups in SEE. He noted that there had been no new security risks in South-east Europe in the past 15 years. In his opinion, **in the beginning of the 21st century the only novelty in the region was that the regimes projecting extremisms and crime had disappeared.** He stated that in the past decade criminal activities not only allowed certain individuals to become rich but financed political elites that were able to accomplish their political projects. In this form, crime constituted one of the fundamental risk factors for the region. Mr. Ismail

explained that ethnic extremism had become a disguise for criminals. Today, this couple of crime and politics was in a process of dissolution. Governments, in his opinion, were prepared to break their links with criminal groups.

Mr. Ismail suggested that all SEE countries should join, what he called, “the Small Balkan Entente.” He explained that this was an initiative that called for “unification of the anti-crime legislation, standardization of legal and administrative procedures and regulations.”

Mr. Assenov gave more details about the Bulgarian Customs Agency’s measures to counter organized crime. He noted that the Bulgarian customs were part of the International Customs Union and cooperated actively and followed the agreements reached by that body. Bulgaria had initiated a dialogue working group within a regional project for easing the SEE trade. In a meeting in Ohrid, he explained, the **Bulgarian Customs Agency suggested a real time exchange of information of trade**, which was already being done with some of the neighboring countries.

Mr. Assenov elaborated on the anticorruption legal measures in the Bulgarian Customs, taken within the framework of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. An ethics code of conduct was introduced, and non-compliance with it was subject to penalties. An inspection control department had also been created.

Border control was no longer the only point of activity of the Customs. An follow up process was designed to track the goods to their final destination. As part of this effort the Mobile Customs Groups has been set up. For the first seven months of this year 7300 customs violations have been registered, out of which 1886 violations have been serious violations with high-level of public risk. The custom actively cooperate with other national institutions, including the National Investigation Service, the Ministry of the Interior, Financial Intelligence Agency, the Agency for Internal Financial Control. Promoting cooperation with NGOs and business has been also an important part of the customs work. Free and open trade is an important objective but it needs to be balanced with the society’s interest for security. Memoranda of understanding have been signed with airlines, couriers. Regular consultations have been conducted with transport companies and a number of trade associations. It is through their cooperation that many of the seizures have been accomplished. The Bulgarian Customs also cooperate with the NGO sector. An example is the cooperation in the area of intellectual property rights with Bulgarian Association of Music Producers.

Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

The approaches of the PPP were discussed in more detail in the remarks of Dr. Tsenkov and, in the discussion session, by Deputy Minister of the Interior Mr. Boyko Kotzev.

Dr. Tsenkov explained that PPP in the area of corruption and organized crime is new and difficult venture. He presented an overview of a CSD-supported PPP anti-corruption initiative, called *Coalition 2000*. This initiative brought together NGOs, politicians, journalists, policy makers, and public figures. ***Coalition 2000*, he explained, has successfully advocated for the introduction of local corruption observers, who have helped to increase the transparency of the local administration.** Dr. Tsenkov also elaborated on the obstacles that the *Coalition* had run upon when trying to solicit the cooperation of the local state authorities in fighting corruption. His analysis distinguished three types of reactions by the local authorities:

- He explained that in one sometimes the local administrations were transparent and cooperated in examining corruption practices.
- In other occasions, that were the most widespread, local administrators were passively resistant, and then, the local leadership became the focus of anticorruption efforts.
- Finally, there were some straightforward denials for any sort of cooperation. Often though, the initial hostile reactions of the local administration were gradually transformed into cooperation.

Dr. Tsenkov further explained that PPP has had **more success working with central government institutions**. This was due mostly to the fact that such type of cooperation was becoming part of the governing culture of the political elites, as well as due to the contacts of these elites with Western ones. The value added of PPP was the opportunity of academics / experts and practitioners to work together. It also allowed the participants to work outside institutional limitations, such as the format of the analysis, the institutional hierarchies, etc.¹

Further remarks on the advantages of PPP were offered by Deputy Minister of the Interior, Mr. Kotzev. He talked about PPP in diagnosing and monitoring the threats to security as well as preventing and countering organized crime and systemic corruption. Mr. Kotzev explained that **the stereotypical understanding that public institutions have an absolute monopoly in the fight against organized has been changed** due to a number of factors. First, was the appearance of non-traditional threats. Second, was the increased expertise potential within the NGO sector. Lastly, was the need for an better efficiency by seeking objective criticisms and different viewpoints. Mr. Kotzev also mentioned his ministry's cooperation with *Coalition 2000* in producing expert analyses, monitoring of the gray economy and transborder crimes. He emphasized the *Coalition's* contribution to the development of a National Strategy for Combating Crime, the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, and the draft-legislation of improving the law-enforcement agencies' efficiency.

Conclusion

Dr. John Hulsman of The Heritage Foundation opened his concluding remarks with a call for cooperation by quoting Benjamin Franklin's thought that "We should hang together otherwise we'll have to hang separately."

Dr. Hulsman's first concluding point was about the status of the Euro-Atlantic partnership. He pointed out that the transatlantic relationship was at its worst since WWII. In his opinion, all European countries should, first, accept that there was problem in the relationship. A second step for closing the rift between the EU and the US was to remove the rancor from the debates and to agree to disagree. He called on **the Europeans to accept a certain degree of American pragmatism and bottom-up approaches, not that much on the structural problems. The Americans, on the other hand, should inform their debate with "certain subtlety about the human spirit."** He reminded the support that the Europeans offered after September 11th and called for continuation of the long-standing friendship between Europe and the US.

¹ Dr. Tsenkov gave two examples about PPP in Bulgaria. Both examples are illustrated in a PowerPoint presentation available on www.csd.bg

Dr. Hulsman emphasized that one should be careful not to discard the bases of this friendship over current disagreements.

The second concluding point of Dr. Hulsman was about the Balkans as a region of a successful EU - US partnership. He emphasized, though, that only SEE countries could change things. **The US and the EU could and should help but initiatives should originate domestically.** SEE countries should take advantage of the fact that there were only democratic countries in the region and that “the dog is not barking”, i.e. the region is stable. **The US will remain engaged but Europeanization is healthy and should be encouraged.** Europe will have to lead and the US will have to follow. The division of labor was returning and this was helpful.

The third point in the Dr. Hulsman was called on the participants to focus on specific policy initiatives and not on generalized calls of better leadership that often deprived of content. When one calls for leadership, what is meant is the need for political will, creativity, political incorrectness that gives way to workable solutions. **As the Balkans were not anymore a primary security interest for the US and the US had gone from overemphasis on the Balkans to under-emphasis. There was a need for a more balanced US approach to the Balkans, where the US recognizes again the importance of the region for Europe’s security as well as the importance regional security for its allies in the region.** There should be an effort to focus on North Korea, Al-Qaeda and Iraq.

The discussion about corruption, in Dr. Hulsman’s opinion, was very important. Foreign direct investment (FDI) often depended on managers, investing retirement funds, and these people always asked the question about the level of corruption and transparency in the region. **FDI and trade were much more significant than development aid.** The great advantages of globalization were simultaneously dangerous. Those **who conduct successful judicial reforms, and have open and transparent society will be able to attract more FDI.** Otherwise the this money would go those that underwent the reforms and the inequality between those that had conducted the reforms and those that had not would continue to grow.