

HOW WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES CAN DEVELOP MULTINATIONAL
MILITARY TRAINING AND EDUCATION CAPABILITIES
WITH AN AFFORDABLE COST

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General Studies

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ABSTRACT

HOW WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES CAN DEVELOP MULTINATIONAL MILITARY TRAINING AND EDUCATION CAPABILITIES WITH AN AFFORDABLE COST, by LTC, ALBERT KUCI, 114 pages.

Finding an appropriate model to develop multinational military training and education capabilities with an affordable cost in Western Balkan Countries (WBC) is a significant challenge considering its specific recent history, geo-strategic position, and financial, as well as political limitations imposed on developing their armed forces. Principles of Smart Defense promoted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the development of cooperation in training and the educational domain of Baltic States, - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - could prove a useful model for development of the training domain in Balkan countries – Albania (AL), Bosna and Hercegovina (BH), Croatia (CRO), North Macedonia (NM), Montenegro (MN) and Kosovo (KV).

This research focuses on the development of a Multinational Military Training and Education domain for Western Balkan countries with limited resources, which could apply the principles of Smart Defense in order to develop multinational military training and education with less cost. Moreover, the Baltic example will provide a useful model to WBC in order to successfully improve their own training capabilities. The purpose of this research is to examine the principles of the NATO smart defense concept and the experience of Baltic States, the challenges Baltic States faced while developing their training capabilities, and how the Balkans can learn from their experience to utilize the best practices and disregard the shortcomings in order to successfully and efficiently develop capabilities of a small modern armed force. Considering the amount of assistance from NATO, Balkan Countries will have the best professional expertise and support offered on developing their training and educational capabilities. The current approach of cooperation between these countries is very slow. Nonetheless, there are bilateral initiatives for cooperation between these countries in order to increase their readiness to act in any situation. In the training domain there is already cooperation between their respective Armed Forces.

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ACRONYMS

A-5	Adriatic Charter - 5
ALB	Albania
B&H	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BALTDEFCOL	Baltic Defense College
CARL	Combined Arms Research Library
CRO	Croatia
DIME	Diplomatic Informational Military Economic
EST	Estonia
EU	European Union
EUSR	EU Special Representative
FAS	Feasible Acceptable Suitable
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KS	Kosovo
KSF	Kosovo Security Force
LIT	Lithuania
LTV	Latvia
MN	Montenegro
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NM	North of Macedonia
ODP	Office of Degree Programs
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PfP	Partnership for Peace
RS	Republic of Serbia
SGA	Small Group Advisor
UN	United Nations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protective Force
USEUCOM	US European Command
WBC	West Balkan Countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and North of Macedonia)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far, go together.
—African Proverb

In the 1990s, the Western Balkans went through a radical transformation, both in the government and in the socio-economic system, and executed a profound transformation in the field of military defense. Moreover, the geostrategic situation changed radically. During this time, the region endured several periods of armed conflict, which led to the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, Albania overthrew the communist system, and the entire region moved to a democratic political system. After the conflict in Yugoslavia in 1990-1999, Western Balkan Countries entered a new phase of mutual cooperation between each-other to fulfill their commitments and liabilities to the Euro-Atlantic institutions. The United States played a significant role in the transformation and defense reforms of these countries to promote peace and security in the Western Balkans region.¹ Similar geographic and security environments, the aspiration to join the Euro-Atlantic organizations, and the consequences of force reduction and budget constraints, led to further research to define a common approach of cooperation for developing defense capability. In 2003, the United States led Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia to established Adriatic Charter Partnership Initiative-3 (A-3).²

¹ Steven Woehrel, RL32136, *Future of the Balkans and U.S. Policy Concerns*, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, updated January 10, 2008).

² U.S Department of State, “Adriatic Charter,” accessed December 20, 20202, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/112766.htm>.

Finding an appropriate model for the training and education system of the Western Balkan Countries (WBC) is a significant challenge, considering the region's history, geostrategic position, and financial as well as political limitations imposed on developing their armed forces. In 2011, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen proposed "Smart Defense"³ as NATO's new approach to risk and burden-sharing that "ensures greater security, for less money, by working together with more flexibility."⁴ As part of this approach, he promoted pooling and sharing of defense capabilities based on the right priorities and better coordination of efforts. Following independence from the former Soviet Union, the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania started building the capabilities of their armed forces, virtually from scratch. They worked together and cooperated very closely to find the solutions for increasing their capabilities, especially the joint efforts in the training and education domain, they successfully managed to develop efficient military training and education system. Moreover, they established a multinational defense college (BALTDEFCOL)⁵ to train, develop, and educate their officer corps. The development of cooperation in the training and education domain of the Baltic States could prove a useful model for the development of the training domain in Balkan countries. Considering the similarities between the Baltic and Balkan States, their small territories, struggles for independence

³ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), "Smart Defense," February 20, 2017, accessed on December 15, 2019, www.nato.int/cps/cs/natohq/78125.htm.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Government of the Republic of Estonia, Government of the Republic of Latvia, and Government of the Republic of Lithuania, "Baltic States, BALTDEFCOL Agreement," June 1998, <https://www.baltdefcol.org/?id=30>.

and the need to create small credible defense forces, their security and threats, as well as political and financial limitations of developing their armed forces, there is common ground that WBC could learn from the Baltic experience.

In light of the NATO Smart Defense Strategic Concept and the experience of the Baltic States, the challenges they faced in developing their training capabilities, the Balkans can learn to utilize the best practices and disregard the shortcomings to successfully and efficiently develop their training capabilities. With assistance from NATO, the Balkan Countries will have the valuable professional expertise and support offered in developing their training and educational capabilities. The current pace of cooperation between these countries is very slow. Nonetheless, there are bilateral initiatives for cooperation between these countries to increase their abilities in the training domain. Development of the military training and education domain of WBC includes three components that need to be accomplished: cooperation between partners, specialization of capabilities, and prioritization of their efforts to create successful multinational military training and education capabilities.

The strategic documents, national security strategy (NSS)⁶, national military strategy (NMS), white papers on defense policy, and strategic defense review (SDR), Security Sector Reviews (SSR)⁷ of each country in the region (except Serbia), present the desired end state, objectives, threats, and challenges that the western Balkans face to meet

⁶ Lulezim Peci, Policy Paper 3/14, *Kosovo in the Security and Defense Context of the Western Balkans*. Kosovo: Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, November 2014), 1, accessed March 31, 2020, http://www.helsinki.org.rs/doc/Kosovo_in_the_Security_and_Defence_Context_of_the_Western_Balkans.pdf.

⁷ Ibid.

their strategic goal, Joining NATO and European Union (EU). The environment of the Western Balkans is characterized by political instability, disputes, and a lack of resources to invest in defense to reach the NATO goal of 2% of the National budget to be spent on the military capabilities. Another factor that has caused delays in the integration process, in particular joining NATO, is the failure of individual countries to establish their own full military training capacities. Sharing similar geographic and security environments, the aspiration to join the Euro-Atlantic organizations, and the consequences of force reduction and budget constraints led to further research to define a common approach of cooperation for developing defense capability.

The purpose of this thesis is to identify and analyze the possible areas of cooperation between Western Balkan Countries to design an operational approach, in order to develop their training and education capabilities to fulfil national and NATO objectives for Multinational Military Training and education of their own Armed Forces. The research addresses the potential capabilities that Western Balkan Countries have, and are willing to “pool and share” with partners. This study will be based on issues and information related to the topic, such as principles of the NATO Smart Defense Strategic Concept, and Baltic Defense College (BALDEFCOL) model, as a case study, and their experiences during the developing their Multinational Military Training and Education. This research will consider Baltic country constitutional legal and strategic documents, constitutions, laws, strategic documents of respective countries.

Framing the Problem

The Western Balkan Countries, have set their strategic goal to join NATO and EU.⁸ Meanwhile these countries are facing political, economic, and security challenges that significantly deter them in achieving these goals. Budget shortfalls and other constraints are delaying WBC development of military capabilities. Finding an appropriate model to develop multinational military training capabilities with an affordable cost in Western Balkan Countries is a significant challenge considering its specific history, geo-strategic position, and economic, as well as political limitations imposed on developing their armed forces. These issues have led respective governments to search for another way to address the military gaps and enhance regional cooperation as a smart solution to develop military capabilities for a mutual response.

Smart Defense, promoted by NATO, and the development of cooperation in the training and educational domain of the Baltic States, could prove a useful model for the development of the training domain in Balkan countries. Furthermore, considering the amount of assistance from NATO, Balkan Countries will have the best professional expertise and support offered on developing their training and educational capabilities. The current approach of cooperation between these countries is very slow. Nonetheless, there are bilateral initiatives in the training domain for cooperation between these countries in order to increase their readiness to act in any situation.

⁸ Woehrel, *Future of the Balkans and U.S. Policy Concerns*.

The Research Questions

How Western Balkan Countries can develop a Multinational Military Training and Education domain by using principles of NATO Smart Defense initiative?

Secondary Questions

1. What is the current state of the operational environment within the region?
2. What are the current capabilities that WBC should “pool and share” among each other to enable development of Multinational Military Training and Education Capabilities?
3. How Baltic states approach development of multinational military training and Education can prove a useful model for Balkan countries in developing multinational military training and education?
4. What is the status of cooperation within Western Balkan countries regarding development of military training and education?

Assumptions

The following assumptions related to the development of Multinational Military Training and Education are considered relevant for the research process.

1. Western Balkan Countries will create multinational military training and education capacities while cooperating with each other in multiple domains, specializing current capabilities and pooling and sharing training capabilities with regional partners.
2. NATO will continue to assist with the expertise and funding different projects to facilitate WBCs initiative to succeed.

3. WBC will continue to be committed to their strategic objectives for joining NATO.
4. Regional security environment will remain stable and secure, that enable cooperation among regional countries in military issues, especially in training domain.
5. The Western Balkan countries are willing to promote good community to
6. work together for better prosperity.

Limitations

This research can only examine open-source information. The researcher is limited to resources that can be accessed only at or from Fort Leavenworth. Therefore, the researcher has access only to online-published lessons learned by the case study countries selected for this research. Likewise, only online-published NATO doctrine and documents can be accessed during the time of this research. In addition, the researcher has limited access to resources and information from countries in the Balkan region.

Delimitations

This thesis does not attempt an in-depth analysis of military training capabilities of countries discussed or the willingness of those countries to pool and share these capabilities with partners and allies. This study will only focus on the possibilities of these countries and the military aspect of cooperation between countries with the strategic intent to join NATO. Furthermore, this study will not attempt an in-depth analysis of regional political relationships or any other issue between them. This analysis focuses on countries that consistently present their goal for joining NATO: Albania, Bosna and

Hercegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. In analyzing the operational environment, the author refers to political, economic, social, infrastructure, and military factors. In addition, the study cannot ensure implementation of a recommended solution for filling a capability gap.

Definition of Terms

Smart Defense: Smart Defense is a new concept that NATO launched at the Chicago Summit. In these times of austerity, each euro, dollar or pound sterling counts. Smart Defense is a cooperative way of thinking about generating the modern Defense capabilities that the Alliance needs for the future. In this renewed culture of cooperation, allies are encouraged to work together to develop, acquire, operate, and maintain military capabilities to undertake the Alliance's essential core tasks agreed to in NATO's Strategic Concept. That means harmonizing requirements, pooling and sharing capabilities, setting priorities, and coordinating efforts better.⁹ Smart Defense is a cooperative way of generating modern defense capabilities that the Alliance needs in a more cost-efficient, effective and coherent manner.¹⁰ Allies are encouraged to work together to develop, acquire, operate and maintain military capabilities to undertake the Alliance's core tasks.¹¹

Western Balkan Countries (WBC): The Western Balkans Countries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

⁹ NATO, "Smart Defense."

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Croatia became a member of European Union (EU) on 1 July 2013; Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, and Albania are suitable candidates. Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Kosovo are potential candidates.¹² Furthermore, except Serbia, all others have presented their strategic goal of multinational cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

State Partnership Program: The State Partnership Program (SPP) is a program managed by the National Guard Bureau guided by the Department of Defense foreign assistance policy and executed by the state adjutants general in support of combatant commanders and U.S. Chief of Mission security cooperation objectives and Department of Defense policy goals. SPP is a great tool for building partnership capacity overseas.¹³

Baltic Defense College (BALTDEFCOL): The Baltic Defense College (BALTDEFCOL)¹⁴ is a multinational military college, established by the three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) in 1999. It serves as a center of strategic and operational research and provides professional military education to intermediate- and senior-level officers and government officials from the founding states, other member states of the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

¹² Peci, *Kosovo in the Security and Defense Context of the Western Balkans*, 1.

¹³ National Guard, “State Partnership Program,” accessed March 26, 2020, <https://www.nationalguard.mil/Leadership/Joint-Staff/J-5/International-Affairs-Division/State-Partnership-Program/>.

¹⁴ Government of the Republic of Estonia, Government of the Republic of Latvia, and Government of the Republic of Lithuania, “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia, the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania concerning the Baltic Defense College,” Baltic Defense College, accessed March 15, 2020, <https://www.baltdefcol.org/?id=30>.

EU countries, as well as other European countries including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine.¹⁵

The foundation of BALTDEFCOL was an essential step in strengthening the defense capabilities of the Baltic states. BALTDEFCOL is the first combined institution for military education in the Baltic states, helping to create a common background for the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian officers corps. The college's main objective is to establish and continuously improve the training of senior staff officers of the defense forces of the Baltic states.¹⁶ BALTDEFCOL is the most effective way to educate NATO-interoperable staff-level officers in Baltic countries.¹⁷

The history of the Baltic Defense College reflects the ongoing challenges and opportunities facing the militaries of the Baltic States and their governments. The Baltic Defense College has continually sought to be at the forefront of professional military education to ensure its graduates are well prepared to meet the challenges they will face throughout their career in war and peace.¹⁸ Within a year of regaining their independence, the Defense Ministers of the three Baltic States agreed to cooperate in officer education. This cooperation was formalized in 1998 with the signing of an

¹⁵ Baltic Defence College (BALDEFCOL), “Facts about the Courses,” accessed March 31, 2020. <http://www.baltdefcol.org/?id=45>.

¹⁶ Republic of Estonia Republic of Estonia, Defence Forces, “International Co-operation: The Baltic Defense College,” accessed March 31, 2020, <http://www.mil.ee/en/defence-forces/international-co-operation/the-baltic-defence-college-baltdefcol>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ BALDEFCOL, “History of the Baltic Defense College,” accessed March 05 2020, <https://www.baltdefcol.org/?id=34>.

agreement establishing the Baltic Defense College in Tartu, Estonia – with English as its working language.¹⁹ This study is going to research the case study of BALDEFCOL, make comparisons with possibilities, and provide solutions for Balkan countries.

Significance of the Study

First, the study addresses the gaps in military training capability and potential capabilities that exist among the western Balkan countries. Second, the study addresses the security environment in the Western Balkans, national objectives, and strategic goals. Third, based on the shortfalls and potential capabilities, the author recommends the operational approach to close the capability gaps. Lastly, this study will identify and analyze issues, standards and requirements needed to be incorporated by partners in that process and recommendations for further action and research focused on subjects that could have a significant impact on the development of multinational military training and education in the Western Balkans. In addition, this process will help to achieve interoperability within regional partners and future NATO members.

Summary

After the conflict in Yugoslavia ended in the late 1990s, the Western Balkan countries entered a new phase, beginning to work together to fulfill their commitment to the Euro-Atlantic institutions. The western countries, the United States, and the EU began working on maintaining security in the Western Balkans, and promote peace and prosperity for the future. As a continuation of the success story of the Baltic military

¹⁹ BALDEFCOL, “History of the Baltic Defense College.”

cooperation (Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia), in 2003, the United States, with Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia established the Adriatic Charter Partnership.²⁰ Under the framework of the A-3 and A-5, the Western Balkans planned and conducted multinational exercises and improved cooperation and interoperability with each other. Furthermore, from 2005-2009, this cooperation proved successful, and because of that some of the Balkan countries have opened their way toward their strategic goals, joining NATO. These two cases of regional cooperation (Baltic states military cooperation and Adriatic 5 partnership program) encourages scholars, as well as the author of this research to research for more opportunities for cooperation among regional partners.

The integration to Euro-Atlantic organizations is the strategic objective of the Western Balkan countries. There are concerns that this process has been hindered by political, economic, and security issues. These issues have delayed the process of developing the region's armed forces to achieve standards and interoperability requirements with NATO allies. In order to meet these standards and requirements, these countries should establish credible military capabilities, interoperable and with high standards, compatible with NATO.

Considering the previous research work by scholars, and analysis, the author will investigate the military capability gaps and challenges that exist among the Balkan Countries, with a particular focus on military training capabilities. Then, based on identified gaps and issues, and after analyzing potential capabilities, the author will

²⁰ Ivan Grdešić, "US-Adriatic Charter of Partnership: Securing the NATO Open Door Policy," *Političkamisao* 41, no. 5 (2004): 104-122, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/21148>.

provide approaches and solutions that will contribute to improving these issues and gaps, in order to meet the requirements needed for their goals. Development of multinational military training and capabilities of WBC, will increase interoperability among regional partners and NATO allies, enhance military capabilities, and improve security, as well as the social and economic environment of region.



Figure 1. Western Balkan Map

Source: Newsroom, “Western Balkans’ Demographic Future: Poor, Depopulating, Aging,” *Independent Balkan News Agency*, August 13, 2017, 1, accessed March 31, 2020. <https://balkaneu.com/western-balkans-demographic-future-poor-depopulating-aging/>.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research is to examine the needs, requirements, and standards that WBC should consider during their development of a multinational military training and education domain. The study is based on an analysis of NATO doctrine, leadership and personnel development criteria, infrastructure and materiel, regarding training and education. This research will examine challenges that the WBC face while building multinational military training capabilities and meeting the NATO requirements.

Joining NATO and the EU is a strategic objective of Western Balkan countries. To do so, these countries are facing political, economic, and security challenges that have delayed that process to finally meet these goals. Budget shortcomings and the inability to meet military needs have caused delays in developing military capabilities for contribution to the collective defense. These circumstances, the shared security environment, and the nation's interest in membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions have led to a search to address the military gaps, and enhance regional cooperation as a smart solution to develop military training capabilities. In addition, this research will investigate the journey of the Western Balkans in developing their military training capabilities based on strategic documents, the level of ambition, and NATO requirements. Significantly, the study examines how regional cooperation under the formal partnership such as ADRIATIC 5, or any other regional partnership, will address the common areas of collaboration for filling the capability gaps through a regional approach.

The research for this thesis relies on non-classified sources and published work. The primary source material is derived from official NATO publications, NATO Conference and Summit reports, and studies focused on the NATO Smart Defense concept, as well as those with multinational training interest. Other sources of information include official government documents regarding security issues and multinational training issued by NATO. The second sources are analysts' opinions expressed in articles published in different periodicals providing valuable insights on NATO interoperability and challenges. The third sources are books and articles regarding political, economic, social, historical and military affairs of Balkan countries. Finally, the Internet will provide timely and updated information. The literature review is organized into three main topics: First of all, the NATO Smart Defense initiative and principles of cooperation among partners. Second, the Western Balkan Countries Operational Environment overview, threats, and national goals. Third, the Government documents of Baltic countries, bilateral agreements, implementation reviews, as well as the lessons learned and challenges that Baltic states faced during their multinational development of training and educational domain.

The NATO Smart Defense Initiative

To answer the research questions, first of all the primary question, How Western Balkan Countries can develop a Multinational Military Training and Education domain, the author analyzed the NATO Smart Defense concept and principles launched by NATO, in the Chicago summit, held in Chicago on March 2012. Moreover, "*The NATO*

conference report and expert papers,”²¹ presented by The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, with the coauthors Dr. Lisa Aronsson, and Dr. Molly O’Donnell, provides the basis of the Smart Defense Concept and principles, as well as a basis of this research in order to provide a model that WBC should apply to find a solution for their gaps in military training and education system. In addition, when it comes to explaining Smart Defense, there's probably nobody more qualified than Ludwig Decamps. He formerly as a lead for NATO's Smart Defense team.²² In an interview conducted by NATO review, he explained what the project of Smart Defense means, how it could work and why it's important.²³

Another resource that contributes to the thesis is an article in Academia.edu, “Smart Defense - A Smart Approach for the Balkan Region,”²⁴ written by coauthors Dr. Leonard Demi, and Col ThimiHudhra. It provided the “food for thoughts”²⁵ debate for the research community on defense and security in the Balkans. They promote open

²¹ Dr. Lisa Aronsson and Dr. Molly O’Donnell, *Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century?* (Conference Report and Expert Papers, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Chicago, IL, March 28-30, 2012), accessed July 13, 2020, https://espas.secure.europarl.europa.eu/orbis/sites/default/files/generated/document/en/Conference_Report.pdf.

²² Ludwig Decamps, “Smart Defense Initiative,” video, YouTube, June 6, 2012v accessed January 09, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGsKZiFAGdw>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Dr. Leonard Demi and COL Thimi Hudhra. “‘Smart Defense’: A Smart Approach for the Balkan Region,” Academic, accessed March 15, 2020, https://www.academia.edu/7603042/A_SMART_DEFENCE_APPROACH_FOR_THE_BALKANS

²⁵ Ibid., 1.

discussions on what could be ‘smart defense’ areas at the national, multinational and regional level.²⁶ Through the article the authors try to answer several questions: how to develop more capabilities with less resources?²⁷ How to refine the priorities? How to specialize in niche capabilities we can afford? How to promote multinational approaches and develop regional capabilities to face regional threats, and how to share and pool many of capabilities at regional level?²⁸

Among others International Relations Research Institute in Warsaw Department of Theory of Foreign and Security Policy, University of Lodz Warsaw, in Lodz 2013, conducts research on the topic, the Smart Defense Initiative - a chance to enhance NATO's defense capabilities, edited by authors Robert Czulda and Robert Łoś, offers insights on “Smart Defense,”²⁹ they stated, “is about building security for less money by working together and being more flexible. This requires identifying those areas in which NATO allies need to keep investing.”³⁰ Smart defense also means encouraging cooperation among multinational allies and partners. As the price of military equipment

²⁶ Demi and Hudhra, “‘Smart Defense’: A Smart Approach for the Balkan Region,” 1.

²⁷ Ibid., 3.

²⁸ Ibid., 3-6.

²⁹ Tadeusz Zielinski, “The Smart the Smart Defense Initiative - A chance to Enhance NATO’s Defense Capabilities,” in *NATO: Towards the Challenges of a Contemporary World*, ed. Robert Czulda and Robert Łoś (Warsaw, Poland: International Relations Research Institute in Warsaw, Department of Theory of Foreign and Security Policy, 2013), 212-226, accessed July 13, 2020, https://www.academia.edu/7470306/The_Smart_Defence_Initiative_a_Chance_to_Increase_NATO_s_Defence_Capabilities.

³⁰ Ibid., 213-224.

continues to rise, states acting alone may struggle to afford high-tech weapons systems.³¹ Nations should work in small clusters to combine their resources and build capabilities that can benefit the Alliance as a whole, and NATO can act as a matchmaker, bringing nations together to identify what they can do jointly at a lower cost, more efficiently, and with less risk.³²

The Western Balkan Countries Operational Environment Overview

To answer the secondary questions, what is the current state of the operational environment within the region, and what are the current capabilities that WBC should pool and share among each other, the author will analyze the operational environment involving political, military, economic, and social factors (PME-SIIT). To analyze the current situation of the WBC, the author reviewed the strategic documents of the respective countries, such as National Security Strategies (NSS), National Military Strategies (NMS), White Papers on defense policy, and Strategic Defense Review (SDR), Security Sector Reviews (SSR). These documents provide the overall threats identified, their interests and goals, and also their capabilities. Moreover, “Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment: The Balkans,” provides an executive summary, country overview, and analysis through the elements of national power and operational variables.³³ Jane’s

³¹ Zielinski, “The Smart the Smart Defense Initiative - A chance to Enhance NATO’s Defense Capabilities,” 213.

³² Ibid.

³³ IHS Markit, *Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment: The Balkans, Albania*, Jane’s Information Group, 1999, accessed March 26, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/1999-11-01/janes-sentinel-security-assessment-balkans>.

assessments, addresses the security issues of the regional countries, the current status of military capabilities development, mid and long-term defense plans and expenditures, security capacities, defense acquisition system of these countries, training areas, and capability assessment to conduct combat operations. Furthermore, Jane's provided a snapshot of the relationship of the Western Balkans with NATO, and regional initiatives.³⁴

Another source of analysis of the Western Balkans operational environment is an analysis done by Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development in 2014. While analyzing the security environment in Kosovo in the security and defense context of the Western Balkans, the analysis provides an overview in security context within the region and plenty of data regarding Western Balkan's operational environment.³⁵ Moreover, the research has evaluated the strategic documents of Western Balkan countries regarding regional threat perception and management.³⁶ In addition to these resources, the author has drawn on data based on official websites, such as the CIA Factbook website, which addresses the crucial data regarding variables the author analyzed pertaining to the operational environment, such as politics and diplomacy, economy, and security issues.³⁷

³⁴ IHS Markit, *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: The Balkans, Albania*.

³⁵ Peci, *Kosovo in the Security and Defence Context of the Western Balkans*.

³⁶ Ibid., 9-16.

³⁷ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "The World Factbook: Albania," accessed March 05, 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/al.html>.

Moreover, this website provides the latest information about each country within the region.

Baltic Defense College Case Study: Literature Review

To answer third research question, How Baltic states approach the development of multinational military training can prove a useful model for Balkan countries in developing multinational military training and education? The author analyzed the government documents of Baltic countries, bilateral agreements, implementation reviews, as well as the lessons learned and challenges that Baltic States faced during their multinational development of the training and educational domain. The analysis started with the main regulated documents such as the establishment agreement, “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia, the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania Concerning the Baltic Defence College,”³⁸ signed by the government's representatives in 1998 which established with the Baltic Defense College, in Tartu, Estonia.³⁹ The second document is the protocol regarding the status of the defense college, “Protocol between the Government of the Republic of Estonia, the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania concerning the status of the Baltic Defence College and its

³⁸ Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, “Agreement concerning the Baltic Defense College.”

³⁹ Ibid.

personnel.”⁴⁰ These two documents are the basis for the establishment and functioning of the Baltic Defense College.

Other resources regarding are articles and researches conducted from and for Baltic Defense College as well as college reviews. An article released on the twentieth anniversary of its establishment is the one entitled “20 Years of the Baltic Defense College: Vocational Military Education in the Baltic States”⁴¹ by Dr James Corum & Mr Art Johanson. In this article the authors have made a summary of BALTDEFCOL since its founding, the challenges this institution has gone through, and the lessons learned from twenty years of cooperation and coordination between its Baltic partners.

⁴⁰ Government of the Republic of Estonia, Government of the Republic of Latvia, and Government of the Republic of Lithuania, “Protocol between the Government of the Republic of Estonia, the Government of the Republic of Latvia, and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania concerning the Status of the Baltic Defense College and its Personnel,” accessed March 15, 2020, <https://www.baltdefcol.org/?id=30>.

⁴¹ Dr. James Corum and Mr. Art Johanson, “20 Years of the Baltic Defence College: Professional Military Education in the Baltic States,” accessed March 15, 2020, <https://www.baltdefcol.org/?id=34>.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces and describes the methodology used in this research to identify and analyze challenges that Western Balkan Countries may face during the development of the Military Training and Educational domain to meet their needs. This research uses a multi-dimensional approach using descriptive, comparative, and case study methods.

The researcher, through a descriptive method, will provide data and information regarding NATO standards and requirements for the training. Through this method, the researcher will describe what the training and education domain is in terms of meaning and definition in reference to the Smart defense initiative and concept definition. Furthermore, through the descriptive method, the researcher will provide information regarding the process that other states have undertaken to develop their military training and education domain within NATO standards.

The researcher then will compare the WBC situation with the goals of other regions, laws and regulations, organization, and military capabilities. In addition, the research will examine and compare the infrastructure of different regions with a focus on the Balkan and Baltic regions. Also, the focus of this research will be the requirements and standards for the development of military training.

The research will examine the topic through the case study method to gain information about the challenges of developing a multinational military training and education system. The research will draw lessons learned from the Baltic States and the challenges these countries faced while developing their military training and educational

capabilities. It will be valuable to examine how the Baltics managed to build their own capabilities, and challenges they are currently facing in conducting their training their education.

The research process will consist of three phases. The first phase will consist of the collection and selection of data and information regarding a military training and education concept. The second phase is an analysis of the NATO Smart Defense concept and the main directing pillars toward facilitating the training and education development in the region. The third phase will analyze the lessons learned from Baltic case studies to identify challenges that these countries faced during their process of development of the training domain and meeting their needs. In the final phase, collected data and information will be compared and analyzed in order to formulate a clear and concise conclusion regarding the development of a Western Balkan Military training and education domain.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The aim of the research is to address the military training gap among the Western Balkan countries, obstacles, and challenges that these countries are facing and to provide solutions to fulfill their strategic goals. The author will use the DOTMLPF analysis, in particular, organization and training to analyze this gap and to provide a solution for it. This research tries to identify the potential capabilities and common areas of cooperation to build multinational military training and education. Identifying these areas of cooperation will begin with developing an operational approach and establishing lines of effort for achieving the strategic goals of Western Balkan countries in the military training and educational domain. In this chapter, the author will analyze the security environment in the Balkan region, political, economic, and military challenges in the development of multinational military training and education capabilities. Examining the principles of Smart Defense will provide a cooperative approach to this issue. In addition, in this chapter, the researcher will furnish an analysis of the Baltic case on the development of their training and educational domain.

The research will focus on areas that answer the primary and secondary questions, as described in chapter 3 to define the military training gaps and approaches to mitigate these gaps. The primary research question is the driving mechanism for the secondary questions, which provide a framework to answer the questions of “what” and “how.” The author will analyze the current environment in the Western Balkans, involving political, military, economic, and social factors. After assessing the current situation, the author

will provide an assessment of military training and educational gaps, and challenges that the Western Balkans is facing in their effort to create a competitive training domain.

First, the author analyzes the current environment in the Western Balkans, focusing on operational variables (PME). Second, the research will focus on primary and secondary questions, which analyze the possibility to establish a multinational military training domain by using NATO Smart defense principles.⁴² This includes an investigation of the current military training capabilities of Balkan countries and the interests as well as level of cooperation of the Western Balkan countries to pool and share these capabilities with partners and allies. In addition, this research will examine the case of the Baltic States as a proven model for Western Balkan Countries. These questions define the end state of the research. The most important objective of the Western Balkan countries and specifically those countries considered in this research is integration in Euro-Atlantic institutions (NATO and EU), and for those who are already members of NATO (Albania, Croatia and Montenegro) to transform and develop “capability targets.”⁴³ During this research, the author will refer to the Western Balkan Countries, which include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia. This analysis will address two critical aspects. The first aspect is the common areas of cooperation; the second aspect is the potential capabilities of each country that would be appropriate to pool and share with partners. Finally, the researcher

⁴² NATO, “Smart Defense.”

⁴³ See primary question.

will analyze what determines regional cooperation as a comprehensive approach to close the military gap.

Western Balkan Countries Operational Environment and Security Assessment

After the fall of Yugoslavia and the creation of new states, the security environment changed, and the WBC were focused on adopting democracy, reformation of their own defense capabilities, and the ability to contribute to peace and stability in the international environment. Almost two decades later, the Western Balkan countries, once consumers of security, gradually transformed and reformed their security architectures and developed deployable forces capable of exporting security.⁴⁴ The Western Balkans consist of seven countries, Albania, Bosna and Hercegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Croatia is the only member of NATO and the EU, while Albania and Montenegro are members of the NATO. The Western Balkans retains a gap from a NATO security perspective. To have a better understanding of the environment, the author is going to analyze the political, military, economic, and social environment of the Western Balkans, through instruments of power lenses.

Albania

Politics and Diplomacy Overview

Albania is the only state that was not part of Yugoslavia, from the Western Balkans, but was ruled by a communist regime for more than half of century. After the

⁴⁴ Lidija Levkovska and Shane Thomas Franklin, "Constructivist Approach to Western Balkans' Contribution towards Peace and Stability," *Analytical Journal* 4, no.1 (June 2011): 1-16, accessed March 26, 2020. <http://analyticalmk.com/files/2011/01/1.pdf>.

overthrow of the communist regime in the 1990s, the Albanian Government began the transformation of the governmental system and conducting the necessary reforms to meet the EU standards. The transition process has been prolonged. The government of Albania has undertaken a series of reforms to fight corruption, illegal activities, and implement law enforcement measures in public services.⁴⁵ Albania became a NATO member in 2009, and has been a candidate member of the EU since July 2014. The national objective of Albania is to acquire a solid membership in Euro-Atlantic organizations, primarily NATO and the EU.⁴⁶ After the wars ended in the former Yugoslavia and communist regime overthrown, Albania improved the relationships with the region. The only issue regarding relationships with their neighbors is “A maritime border dispute with Greece, which does carry the potential of Greece using the veto to block Albania’s EU membership.”⁴⁷

Economical Overview

The Albanian economy has gone through a process of transition from centralized and planned to a free-market system economy. It is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), World Trade Organization (WTO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and Black Sea Economic Development

⁴⁵ Marie Chen, “Albania: Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption,” U4 Anti-Corruption Centre, Help Desk, 2009, accessed March 26, 2020, <https://www.u4.no/publications/albania-overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption>.

⁴⁶ IHS Markit, *Jane’s: Albania*, 2.

⁴⁷ CIA, “World Factbook: Albania.”

(BSEC).⁴⁸ Albania is considered a country with middle to low income. The World Bank lists Albania “as a lower-middle-income country,” and it will take time to reach comparable European standards.⁴⁹ Albania is a developing country and is projected to have economic growth of 3.5-4.0 percent annually until 2025..⁵⁰The country is rich in natural resources, and the economy relies mainly on agriculture, food processing, lumber, oil, cement, chemicals, mining, base metals, hydropower, tourism, textile industry and oil extraction. The strongest economic sectors are energy, mining, metallurgy, agriculture, and tourism..⁵¹

The national interest of Albania is to become a member of the EU. This goal forced and encouraged the country to undertake significant reforms in many fields such as judicial, political, and administrative, as well as economic reforms. However, close trade, remittance, and banking sector ties with Greece and Italy make Albania vulnerable to spillover effects of possible debt crises and weak growth in the eurozone..⁵² The government of Albania is in the process of improving and developing the network of roads and railways as a long-standing obstacle to sustainable economic development. The

⁴⁸ Wikipedia, “Albanian Economy,” accessed November 27, 2019, https://sq.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekonomia_e_Shqip.

⁴⁹ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, “Investing in the Western Balkans.” file:///C:/Users/User/AppData/Local/Temp/western-balkans-country-factsheets.pdf

⁵⁰ IHS Markit, *Jane's: Albania*, 5.

⁵¹ Wikipedia, “Albanian Economy.”

⁵² CIA, “The World Factbook: Albania: Economy,” accessed 28 November 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/al.html>.

country continues to face high public debt, exceeding its previous legal limit of 60% of GDP in 2013 and reaching 72% in 2016.⁵³

Armed Forces Overview

Albania became a part of NATO in 2014. The Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) consists of three components: Land Forces, Air and Navy. According to data available in open sources, AAF has 8500 active and 5000 reserve personnel. The mission of AAF is:

The development, management and coordination within its land, sea and air components of a joint military force able to fulfill the constitutional mission of safeguarding the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, supporting and protecting the civilians in time of peace, crisis and war, contributing for the peace and security in the region and beyond, and supporting or engaging in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration and cooperation and other regional initiatives in the field of security.⁵⁴

The structure of AAF is designed based on threats, capabilities, and according to NATO standards and requirements. In 2013 Albania fulfilled the integration process with NATO and accepted capability packages. NATO membership and the transformation process converted Albania from a security consumer to a security provider. According to the AAF Long-Term Development Plan (2016-2025), among others, the objective is to reach 2 percent of GDP in defense spending.⁵⁵ The current budget of their armed forces is 1.25% of GDP (2019 est.).⁵⁶

⁵³ CIA, “Factbook: Albania.”

⁵⁴ Republic of Albania, “Albanian Armed Forces,” accessed 28 November 2019, <https://aaf.mil.al/english/index.php/shtabipergjithshëm>.

⁵⁵ IHS Markit, *Jane's: Albania*.

⁵⁶ CIA, “Factbook: Albania.”

The training and education system is a significant factor that has a great impact in the development of defense capabilities. Training enables armed forces to increase readiness, and enhance capabilities and improve interoperability. Within its structure, the AAF has a Training and Doctrine Command⁵⁷, which is responsible for providing training and education for all AAF military and civilian personnel. The AAF Military Academy provides training and education for their personnel while ensuring Advanced Officer Course (Second and First lieutenant), Basic Officer Staff Course (Captain), Command and General Staff Course (Major), Senior Officer Course (Lieutenant colonel), and Senior Security and Defense Course (Colonel and high ranks of civilians).⁵⁸ The AAF Military Academy does not provide education for new cadets and officer candidates within its Military Academy.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Politics and Diplomacy Overview

The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was created after the bloody war that occurred during the years 1991-95, between the Serbian aggressor and Bosnians fighting for their liberty. Bosnia and Herzegovina declared sovereignty in October 1991 and independence from the former Yugoslavia on 3 March 1992 after a referendum boycotted

⁵⁷ Republic of Albania, “Albanian Armed Forces.”

⁵⁸ Republic of Albania, “Military Academy,” accessed 28 November 2019, <https://aaf.mil.al/english/index.php/shtabipergjithshëm>.

by ethnic Serbs.⁵⁹ The Bosnian Serbs, supported by neighboring Serbia and Montenegro, responded with armed resistance aimed at partitioning the republic along ethnic lines and joining Serb-held areas to form a "Greater Serbia."⁶⁰ In 1995, the peace conference in Dayton generated the Dayton Peace Accords, which were signed on December 14. The state of Bosnia and Herzegovina was created as a consensus between two entities, Serbs and Bosnians. "The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H) Serb Republic (Republika Srpska)."⁶¹ As a state founded by two main ethnic groups, constituted by a peace agreement, B&H has faced numerous obstacles during its development as a result of the ethnic divisions existing in B&H. Ethnic divisions and government coalitions impede significant organizational and legal reforms and dominate the political spectrum in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁶² In the book *The Breakup of Yugoslavia and the War in Bosnia*, Carole Rogel mentioned, "Unlike the other republics, it had neither a majority of the national group nor a majority religious community."⁶³ Regardless of the nationalities

⁵⁹ Moody's Analytics, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Economic Indicators: Economic Overview," accessed December 09, 2019, <https://www.economy.com/bosnia-and-herzegovina/indicators>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ IHS Markit, *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: The Balkans, Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Jane's Information Group, 1999, accessed March 26, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/1999-11-01/janes-sentinel-security-assessment-balkans>.

⁶² Ibid., 16.

⁶³ Carole Rogel, *The Breakup of Yugoslavia and the War in Bosnia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998), 30, accessed March 26, 2020, <https://www.amazon.com/Breakup-Yugoslavia-War-Bosnia/dp/0313299188>.

and religions, maintaining a foreign relationship is the primary responsibility of the federal government of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) like most other countries in the region, has a strategic goal to join NATO and the EU. The strategic goal to join NATO is essential to the B&H, and was rooted in the war during the 1990s. The failure of the UN mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina led to the need for protection from NATO.⁶⁴ It is an essential and wise choice for B&H to seek membership in the NATO alliance in order to enjoy the benefits of collective defense.”⁶⁵ In its drive to join NATO, B&H has made significant steps in that direction. A primary step was joining the PfP program in 2006, and in 2016 signed the request to join the EU.

B&H has created good relationships with NATO and the EU. In 2008, B&H received visa liberalization within the EU on its road to join these Euro-Atlantic organizations. Until 2004, the U.S. had significant influence within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since then, U.S. influence has declined, particularly when U.S. troops were replaced by the EU-led peacekeeping force.⁶⁶ However, military influence inside B&H remained high through some partnership initiatives such as A-5,⁶⁷ which B&H joined in 2008, as a way to proceed with other steps to join NATO, as well as promoting a good

⁶⁴ IHS Markit, *Jane's: Bosnia-Herzegovina*.

⁶⁵ Rogel, *The Breakup of Yugoslavia and the War in Bosnia*, 30.

⁶⁶ IHS Markit, *Jane's: Bosnia-Herzegovina*.

⁶⁷ Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, “A-5 Joint Statement of Bosnia and Herzegovina, following the U.S.-Adriatic Charter Defense Ministerial,” October 21, 2015, NATO Communications and Information Agency, accessed March 15, 2020, https://www.ncia.nato.int/Documents/CRM_SEE_2015_Joint_Statement_A-5.pdf.

community. B&H established correct diplomatic relationships with regional countries; however B&H has not recognized the independence of Kosovo.⁶⁸

Economic Overview

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a transitional economy, and the reforms of the market system are growing slowly. As with other regional countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina's economic development is moderate. Since 2013, Bosnia and Herzegovina posted positive economic growth though severe flooding slowed recovery in 2014. Bosnia and Herzegovina became a full member of the Central European Free Trade Agreement in September 2007.⁶⁹ The projected growth of Bosnia for the medium term is 4 percent, and in the long term 6 percent.⁷⁰ According to Moody's, assessments for the Bosnia and Herzegovina unemployment rate is 27 percent.⁷¹ The B&H is ranked as 79th globally for the doing business however, B&H has established trade partners within the region as well as with EU.⁷²

⁶⁸ Wikipedia, "Bosnia and Herzegovina's reaction to the Kosovo declaration of Independence," accessed March 15, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina's_reaction_to_the_2008_Kosovo_declaration_of_independence.

⁶⁹ Moody's Analytics, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Economic Indicators: Economic Overview."

⁷⁰ Moody's Analytics, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Economic Indicators: Economy Assessment," accessed December 09, 2019, <https://www.economy.com/bosnia-and-herzegovina/indicators>.

⁷¹ Bosnia and Herzegovina, "A-5 Joint Statement of Bosnia and Herzegovina, following the U.S.-Adriatic Charter Defense Ministerial."

⁷² Ibid.

Most potential contributors to the B&H economy are metal products, textiles, leather, forestry, food, drinks, and tourism.⁷³ The country trade market is oriented toward EU countries, in particular Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Germany, and Italy.⁷⁴ Bosnia and Herzegovina's top economic priorities are acceleration of integration into the EU, strengthening the financial system, public administration reform, World Trade Organization membership, and securing economic growth by fostering a dynamic, competitive private sector.⁷⁵ In 2016, B&H submitted the request for EU membership, but according to Jane's assessments, this membership depends on political and economic reforms.⁷⁶

Military Overview

The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were officially unified in a single entity in 2005 and created out of two armies: The Bosnian-Croat Army of the Federation of B&H, and The Bosnian Serb Army of Republika Srpska.⁷⁷ The size and structure of the Armed Forces is determined by decisions of the B&H Presidency. It has been established that the B&H Armed Forces should have 16,000 members.⁷⁸ Total strength

⁷³ Moody's Analytics, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Economic Indicators: Economic Overview."

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ IHS Markit, *Jane's: Bosnia-Herzegovina*.

⁷⁷ Wikipedia, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Military," accessed December 12, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina#Military.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina," accessed December 12, 2019,

consists of 10,000 professional military personnel (generals, officers, NCOs, and soldiers), 1,000 civilian personnel serving in the Armed Forces of B&H, and 6,000 members of the reserve.⁷⁹ The Bosnia and Herzegovina Armed Forces executed a defense reform system which resulted in the completion of the transfer of the competencies in the field of defense from former entities to the state level.⁸⁰ With the adoption and implementation of the Law on Defense, the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina became responsible for ensuring transparent, democratic and civilian control over the Armed Forces of B&H.⁸¹ The defense reform transformed the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina into a small force with limited capabilities. According to the CIA Factbook, the Army consists of Operations Command (includes Army, Air, and Air Defense units), and Support Command (2019).⁸² The military budget of B&H is 1.11 percent of its national GDP.⁸³

Bosnia and Herzegovina's strategic goal is to join NATO. The country has been striving toward NATO membership since 2001. The first step was signing the Partnership

http://os.mod.gov.ba/o-oruzanim-sagama-B&H/misija/Default.aspx?id=41&lang=Tag=en-US&template_id=181&pageIndex=1.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² CIA, "The World Factbook: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Military and Security Forces," accessed December 12, 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bk.html>.

⁸³ Ibid.

for Peace (PfP) program.⁸⁴ On 2 December 2004, the EU launched EUFOR Operation ALTHEA in B&H, taking over from NATO-led SFOR (Stabilization Force).⁸⁵ Since 2004, the EUFOR mandate has evolved. Based on a decision of the EU Foreign Ministers in 2010, EUFOR provided “Capacity Building and Training” (CB&T) to the AFB&H in order to support them with military expertise and train them according to international standards for participation in Peace Support Operations and to enhance B&H’s resilience (e.g., disaster relief).⁸⁶ The CB&T program concluded in November 2018; In December 2018, EUFOR signed a Collective Training Plan with AFB&H in order to continue supporting their training efforts.⁸⁷ Moreover, the United States Department of State, through the security cooperation program, assisted the development of the mine action program and IED capabilities.⁸⁸ The Armed Forces of B&H actively participate in peacekeeping operations. Their contribution to the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan is proof that Bosnia can provide significant capabilities to NATO. Bosnian soldiers

⁸⁴ Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Brochure of the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Sarajevo: Public Affairs Office, Bosnia and Herzegovina, April 2011), accessed December 15, 2019, <http://os.mod.gov.ba/vojno-vojna-saradnja/saradnja-sa-nato/default.aspx?id=946&langTag=en-US>.

⁸⁵ Headquarters, European Union Force, *Operation Althea: European Union Force in B&H* (Information Booklet, Camp Butmir Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Headquarters, European Union Force, Public Affairs Office, March 2019), accessed December 15, 2019, http://www.euforB&H.org/eufor/images/pdfs/201903_infoBooklet.pdf.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

currently are part of three ongoing peacekeeping operations, such as “Resolute Support” in Afghanistan, MONUSCO, Congo and MINUSMA, Mali.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina strategic goal is oriented towards NATO memberships. Based on the white paper, “the establishment effort is oriented to enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve overall progress and stability. Furthermore, to confirm it rightfully belongs in Euro-Atlantic family of liberal democratic states, the implementation process of radical and comprehensive reforms and transformations in more areas of our society.”⁸⁹ The process of transformation and reform of the Armed Forces was oriented towards NATO requirements and standards and national objectives to respond to current and future threats.⁹⁰ The contribution of B&H to peace keeping operations shows that Bosnia and Herzegovina goal is to join NATO as a participant in NATO security and stability operations.

The AFB&H Training and Military Education Policy, and the AFB&H Training Doctrine as the umbrella documents of the training management system, define the purpose of training and military education in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁹¹ According to these documents, the task of the AFB&H is to develop

⁸⁹ The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, “Message by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” in *Defence White Paper of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Ministry of Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina, June 2005, 5, <http://www.mod.gov.ba/files/file/dokumenti/defense/engwhitebook.pdf>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, “Armed Forces Military Training and Education System of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” accessed December 15, 2019, <http://os.mod.gov.ba/obuka-i-vojna-edukacija-u-os-B&H/centri-za-obuku-i-voynu-edukaciju-os-B&H/default.aspx?id=104&langTag=bs-BA>.

trained, prepared individuals and units for the successful accomplishment of assigned missions in support of B&H Defense.⁹² The Training and Doctrine Command supports the planning and implementation of AFB&H training by conducting basic, joint and institutional training and education of individuals, assessing the training of the AFB&H individuals, commands, and units.⁹³ Training and education is carried out at training centers and training grounds, developing doctrine, standardizing training, establishing a system of lessons learned and providing modernization of the AF of B&H to achieve and maintain operational capability, interoperability and compatibility of commands, units and AF of B&H as a whole.⁹⁴

Croatia

Political and Diplomacy Overview

The Republic of Croatia located in the northwest of the Balkan peninsula. Croatia declared its independence in 1991. It took four years of sporadic but often bitter fighting before occupying Serb armies were mostly cleared from Croatian lands along with a majority of Croatia's ethnic Serb population.⁹⁵ The Republic of Croatia is situated in the

⁹² MOD and Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, “Armed Forces Military Training and Education System of Bosnia and Herzegovina.”

⁹³ MOD and Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, “Training and Doctrine Command,” accessed December 15, 2019, <http://os.mod.gov.ba/obuka-i-vojna-edukacija-u-os-B&H/centri-za-obuku-i-voynu-edukaciju-os-B&H/default.aspx?id=104&langTag=bs-BA> Ibid, Training and Doctrine Command.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ CIA, “The World Factbook: Republic of Croatia,” accessed December 16, 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hr.html>.

northwest of the Balkan peninsula, between Bosnia and Herzegovina and it has 1.777 kilometers coastline along the Adriatic Sea.⁹⁶ Croatia joined NATO in 2009 and the EU in 2013.⁹⁷

Since its independence, the Republic of Croatia has made significant progress in political and economic fields. In addition, the process of reforms undertaken by Croatia helped the country in its quest toward joining Euro-Atlantic organizations. Croatia has been conducting membership negotiations with the European Union since October 2005. In its November 2007 progress report on Croatia's candidacy, the European Commission found that Croatia met the political criteria for EU membership,⁹⁸ the process that has facilitated the road to Euro-Atlantic membership. In addition, on April 1, 2009, in a ceremony at the United States Department of State, the Ambassadors of Albania and Croatia deposited the ratified documents with the United States and officially became the 27th and 28th members of the Alliance.⁹⁹ The country applied for joining the EU in 2003 and began negotiations in October 2005. The ratification process concluded on 21 June 2013, and accession of Croatia to the EU took place on 1 July 2013.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ CIA, "Factbook: Croatia."

⁹⁷ Vincent Morelli, Carl Ek, Paul Belkin, Steven Woehrel, and Jim Nichol, RL34701, *NATO Enlargement: Albania, Croatia, and Possible Future Candidates*, Congressional Research Service, April 14, 2009, accessed December 16, 2019, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34701.pdf>.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Eurasia Review, "EU Summit: Accession Treaty with Croatia to be signed in 2011," last updated June 30, 2011, accessed December 16, 2019,

Croatia adopted a democratic form of government. The government is divided into three branches. The Executive Branch led by a president who is head of government,¹⁰¹ the Legislative Branch exercised by a unicameral assembly or Hrvatski Sabor,¹⁰² and the Judicial Branch with the Supreme Court as the highest judiciary institution in the state.¹⁰³ Croatia has adopted national legislation in accordance with Euro-Atlantic standards.

The Republic of Croatia enjoys relatively good relationships with its neighboring countries. It has some issues with Bosnia and Herzegovina consisting mainly of maritime borders on the Adriatic Sea. Bosnia and Herzegovina argue that Croatia denies B&H access to the Adriatic Sea with the investments in the Peljesac Peninsula.¹⁰⁴ The Republic of Croatia has issues with its eastern neighbor Republic of Serbia, deriving from the 1990s conflicts in former Yugoslavia. Moreover, Croatia and Serbia have accused each other of genocide.¹⁰⁵ However, Croatia is the leading country in the region

<https://web.archive.org/web/20110630191705/http://www.eu2011.hu/news/eu-summit-accession-treaty-croatia-be-signed-2011>.

¹⁰¹ CIA, “Factbook: Croatia.”

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ IHS Markit, *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: The Balkans, Croatia*, Jane's Information Group, 1999, accessed December 16, 2019, <https://my.ihs.com/Janes?th=janes&callingurl=https%3a%2f%2fjanes.ihs.com#f=&q=Croatia>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

regarding economic development and has shown commitment to support other regional countries membership in the NATO as well as the EU.¹⁰⁶

Economical Overview

During the war of 1990s in the former Yugoslavia, the economy of Croatia collapsed. The GDP fell, and the country suffered severely economically. Croatia's economic fortunes began to improve with moderate but steady GDP growth between 4% and 6%, led by a rebound in tourism and credit-driven consumer spending.¹⁰⁷ Inflation over the same period remained tame and the currency, the Kuna, stable.¹⁰⁸ The economic reforms are undertaken by the country to shape the path toward Euro-Atlantic organizations and financial resources that Croatia possesses make the country one of the strongest economies in the region.¹⁰⁹ In 2000, Croatia joined the World Trade Organization, NATO, in 2009, and it's the only country in the region that since 2013 enjoys EU membership. A significant contribution is expected to come from investment activity in both the public and private sectors, partly reflecting a greater absorption of EU funds.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Crisis and Transition: The People's Perspective*, Transition Report 2011, accessed December 16, 2019, <https://www.ebrd.com/downloads/research/transition/tr11.pdf>.

¹⁰⁷ CIA, "Factbook: Croatia."

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Croatia.eu, "Economic Transition," Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography, accessed December 20, 2019, <https://www.hr-eu.net>. Retrieved 19 November 2019.

¹¹⁰ The World Bank, "The World Bank in Croatia," accessed December 20, 2019, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/croatia/overview#3>.

Besides services, the primary sectors contributing to the Croatian economy are industry, tourism, and agriculture. Industrial production is a measure of output of the industrial sector of the economy. The industrial sector includes manufacturing, mining, and utilities. The rich cultural and historical heritage, and also the scenic beauty that characterizes Croatia, makes it very popular for international and domestic tourism. The Adriatic Sea and the beaches that border it, give Croatia a great advantage in terms of tourism. According to the 2010 European Environment Agency's survey, Croatia had the second cleanest water in all of Europe.¹¹¹ The tourist offerings of Croatia are very diverse and consist of nautical, excursion, diving, congress, cultural, ecological, rural, religious, adventure, hunting or fishing, and health tourism.¹¹² The tourism sector in Croatia accounts for up to 20% of Croatian GDP.¹¹³ Other sectors are infrastructure and energy.

Military Overview

The Croatian Army consists of five major commands lead by the General Staff: Ground Forces, Naval Forces, Air Force, and Air Defense Command, Joint Education and Training Command, Logistics Command;¹¹⁴ The Military Police Force supports each

¹¹¹ CIA, "Factbook: Croatia."

¹¹² Wikipedia, "Croatia: Tourism in Croatia," accessed December 20, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_Croatia.

¹¹³ Trading Economics, "Croatia GDP," accessed December 20, 2019, <https://tradingeconomics.com/croatia/gdp>.

¹¹⁴ Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Defence, accessed December 20, 2019, <https://www.morh.hr/en/>.

of the three Croatian military forces (2017).¹¹⁵ The Croatian Army strengths are 16,000 active personnel and 21,000 reserve forces. The role of the Croatian Armed Forces is to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Croatia and its national interests.¹¹⁶ Croatia is the most significant contributor in security cooperation in the region, and has the largest military of the A-5 initiative.

Since its independence in 1991, led by guidance from NATO, SDR, and the Long-term Development Plan, Croatia has transformed and developed its armed forces and became a NATO member in 2009.¹¹⁷ Since then, as part of NATO, Croatia contributed to several NATO missions. During membership in NATO Croatian soldiers provided to NATO EFP Battlegroups (Lithuania & Poland) – 2017, Operation Resolute Support (Afghanistan), and NATO International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) (Afghanistan).¹¹⁸ The Croatian Armed forces contribute forces to UN Peace Operations in locations from the Western Sahara to Lebanon and Pakistan. Croatia in the past participated in Peace Keeping missions.¹¹⁹ Croatia's current contributions include 433 military personnel engaged in operations: 283 in NATO operations (this number will

¹¹⁵ Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Defence.

¹¹⁶ IHI Market, *Jane's: Croatia*.

¹¹⁷ Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Defense.

¹¹⁸ NATO, "Croatia," accessed December 20, 2019, <https://www.nato.int/issues/commitment/docs/090409-croatia.pdf>.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

increase soon to 315 - 295 in ISAF and 20 in KFOR) and 150 in non-NATO UN/EU operations.¹²⁰

To fulfill its objectives and NATO requirements, the Croatian Armed Forces need considerable funding. According to Jane's assessments the Balkans, CAF has shortfalls in allocating funds to achieve NATO standards of 2 percent GDP (1.36% 2018 est).¹²¹ Defense expenditure in 2024 based on current projections could reach 9.4 billion Kuna or around the 2% NATO requirement.¹²² According to Jane's assessments, the Balkans, "Croatian Armed Forces," the CAF intends to participate in future NATO, EU, and UN initiatives, requires cooperation with other countries to share capabilities to participate effectively in peacekeeping operations.

In its structure, the Croatian Armed Forces has Joint Education and Training Command, which is responsible for supporting the CAF with training and education of its personnel and leadership. The Dr. Franjo Tuđman Military Academy, acts as a school of higher learning responsible for training and educating future generations of military personnel. The Centre of Military Schools was formed, which integrates the War College, the Command and Staff School, and the NCO School that incorporates the Cadet Battalion.¹²³ The Centre of Military Schools and the Centre for Defense Strategic

¹²⁰ NATO, "Croatia."

¹²¹ IHS Markit, "Croatian Armed Forces," in *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: The Balkans, Croatia*, Jane's Information Group, 1999, accessed December 16, 2019, <https://my.ihs.com/Janes?th=janes&callingurl=https%3a%2f%2fjanes.ihs.com#f=&q=Croatia>.

¹²² Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Defence.

¹²³ Colonel Slobodan Čurčija and Lieutenant Colonel Goran Karlović, "Comparative study regarding the last 25 years of the Croatian Defense Academy: Dr.

Studies, the Foreign Language Centre and Deanery of the CDA have been established..¹²⁴

The academy consists of several schools, including the Officers Academy, and a school for noncommissioned officers..¹²⁵ In addition, the CAF Military Academy provides training for international military personnel (officers, NCOs, as well as civilian)..¹²⁶

Macedonia

Politics and Diplomacy Overview

North Macedonia is a country on the Balkan Peninsula located in Southeast Europe. It declared its independence from Yugoslavia, in 1991 under the name The Republic of Macedonia..¹²⁷ The country is neighbored by Kosovo in the north, Serbia the Northeast, Bulgaria to the East, Greece to the South, and Albania to the West..¹²⁸ The Republic of Macedonia, like other countries in the region, is a multiethnic and multi-religious country. After independence from Yugoslavia, Greece objected to the name of the new state, the Republic of Macedonia (the official name of the country),and this issue

Franjo Tudman,” in *Training and Education*, 101-117, accessed July 13, 2020, file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/COMPARATIVE%20STUDY.pdf.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Republic of Croatia, Military Academy, “Dr. Franjo Tudman,” accessed December 21, 2019, [https://www.morh.hr/kategorija/hrvatsko-vojno-uciliste-kategorija/hvu-novosti./](https://www.morh.hr/kategorija/hrvatsko-vojno-uciliste-kategorija/hvu-novosti/)

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Ministry of Foreign Affairs,”accessed December 23, 2019, <http://www.mfa.gov.mk/bucharest/index.php/en/about-macedonia>.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

blockaded the road of Macedonia to join Euro-Atlantic organizations.¹²⁹ The country was eventually admitted to the UN in 1993 as The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and at the same time, it agreed to UN-sponsored negotiations on the name dispute.¹³⁰ The country's government used its time in office since 2017 to sign a historic deal with Greece in June 2018 to end the name dispute and revive Skopje's NATO and EU membership prospects.¹³¹

Currently the political situation in North Macedonia is stable with its strategic goals to become a member of both the EU and NATO. In 2018, the government adopted a new law on language that elevated the Albanian language to an official language at the national level, with the Macedonian language remaining the sole official language in international relations.¹³² Even though North Macedonia has been an EU candidate since 2005, it has not been accepted into the EU yet. The country still faces challenges, including fully implementing reforms to overcome years of democratic backsliding and stimulating economic growth and development.¹³³ In June 2018, Macedonia and Greece signed the Prespa Accord, whereby the Republic of Macedonia agreed to change its name

¹²⁹ CIA, "The World Factbook: Macedonia, accessed December 23, 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mk.html>.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

to the Republic of North Macedonia.¹³⁴ Reforms undertaken in recent years by the government opened the country to new perspectives, moreover, North Macedonia signed an accession protocol to become a NATO member state in February 2019.¹³⁵ The country has established good relationships with all regional countries as well as its strategic partners such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Turkey, and Russia.¹³⁶

Economic Overview

North Macedonia has made significant economic reforms in developing the country. The World Bank ranked NM as the fourth “best reformatory state” out of 178 countries in 2009.¹³⁷ The country adopted an open market system and economy that has improved the economic situation in recent years. Since 1996, North Macedonia has witnessed steady, though slow, economic growth with GDP growing by 3.1% in 2005.¹³⁸ Even though the economy has shown progress, the unemployment rate is 22.4%

¹³⁴ Aljazeera, “Greece and Macedonia sign agreement on name change,” accessed December 23, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/greece-macedonia-sign-agreement-change-180617074429644.html>.

¹³⁵ CIA, “Factbook: Macedonia.

¹³⁶ IHS Markit, *Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment: The Balkans, North Macedonia*, Jane’s Information Group, 1999, accessed December 23, 2019, <https://janes.ihs.com/Balkans/searchCOUNTRYNorthMacedonia>.

¹³⁷ The World Bank, “FYR Macedonia Country Brief 2003,” April 24, 2009, accessed December 23, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20181119132529/http://lnweb.worldbank.org/eca/Macedonia/Country/20Brief.pdf>.

¹³⁸ Wikipedia, “North Macedonia: Economy,” accessed December 23, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Macedonia#Economy.

(2017 est.). Labor force skills are insufficient, and the economic sector has reduced loans to private enterprises.¹³⁹ In terms of GDP structure, as of 2013 the manufacturing sector, including mining and construction constituted the largest part of GDP at 21.4%, up from 21.1% in 2012. The trade, transportation and accommodation industry represent 18.2% of GDP in 2013, up from 16.7% in 2012, while agriculture represents 9.6%, up from 9.1% in the previous year.¹⁴⁰ In terms of foreign trade, the largest sector contributing to the country's exports in 2014 was "chemicals and related products" at 21.4%, followed by the "machinery and transport equipment" sector at 21.1%.¹⁴¹

Military Overview

The Armed Forces of North Macedonia consists of the Army, and Air Force, with the responsibilities for defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of North Macedonia.¹⁴² The AF is organized, prepared, and trained for armed combat and other actions pursuant to its Constitutional function for the defense of the country in accordance with Art. 23 of the Defense Law.¹⁴³ The military goals of North Macedonia

¹³⁹ U.S. Agency for International Development, "North Macedonia Economic Growth," accessed December 23, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/macedonia/economic-growth-and-trade>.

¹⁴⁰ Wikipedia, "North Macedonia: State Statistical Office Gross Domestic Product 2013," accessed December 23, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Macedonia.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Defence, "Defense Structure," accessed December 23, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100904165013/http://www.morm.gov.mk/morm/en/ARM/Defense-Structure.html>.

¹⁴³ Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Defense (MOD), *Long-term Defense Capability Development Plan 2019-2028* (Skopje: MOD, May 2018).

are Deterrence and defense against armed aggression and protection of the territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of North Macedonia; Participation in operations and missions within the framework of NATO collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security; and Engagement of military capacities and capabilities to support other components of the defense system in support of civilian authorities and citizens.¹⁴⁴ To fulfill these principles and strategic goals, the defense system is completed with the peacetime and warfare organization, the basic development goals, the preparations, and the use of the Armed Forces as well as full civilian control over the Armed Forces.¹⁴⁵ The main NM Armed Forces goal is to support the national interest to develop and maintain credible capabilities to be fully interoperable with the armed forces of NATO and the European Union member states and their capability to participate in the full range of NATO missions.¹⁴⁶

The Ministry of Defense develops the Republic's defense strategy and assesses possible threats and risks. It is also responsible for the defense system, including training, readiness, equipment, and development, and for drawing up and presenting the defense budget.¹⁴⁷ According to CIA Factbook, the budget of North Macedonia's defense is

¹⁴⁴ Macedonia, MOD, *Long-term Defense Capability Development Plan 2019-2028*, 12.

¹⁴⁵ Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Defense, "The Army Basis Goals," accessed December 23, 2019, <http://www.arm.mil.mk/defense-structure/?lang=en>.

¹⁴⁶ Wikipedia, "North Macedonia: Military," accessed December 23, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Macedonia#Military.

¹⁴⁷ Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Defense, "The Army of the Republic of North Macedonia," accessed December 23, 2019, <http://www.arm.mil.mk/defense-structure/?lang=en>.

1.19% of GDP (2018 est).¹⁴⁸ which is below the NATO requirements for budgeting of Armed Forces. The strength of NM Armed forces comprises of 8000 active and reserve component 5000 personnel.¹⁴⁹

The NM Armed forces since 2019 participated in peacekeeping operations under NATO and the UN. Current contributions by NM armed forces include Resolute Support, ISAF, Iraqi Freedom, ALTHEA, Support for KFOR and UNIFIL. According to the Jane's assessments, the Balkans, the NM Armed Forces, intends to participate in future NATO, EU and UN initiatives. NM requires cooperation with other countries to share capabilities to participate effectively in peacekeeping operations. Moreover, The Adriatic Charter framework and NATO open-door policy, along with Croatia and Albania, helped the transformation process of the North Macedonian Army to be more professional and compatible with allies.

The Military training and education system in North Macedonia is one of the most significant resources for developing its Armed Forces.¹⁵⁰ According to the “White Paper on Defense” of the Republic of North Macedonia, the guidance on education and training covers the overall education throughout the course of an employee's career starting with

¹⁴⁸ CIA, “The World Factbook: North Macedonia,” accessed December 23, 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mk.html>.

¹⁴⁹ Global Firepower, “North Macedonia Military Strength (2020),” accessed December 23, 2019, https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=macedonia.

¹⁵⁰ Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Defense (MOD), *White Paper on Defense*, accessed December 23, 2019, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/167326/Macedonia_ENG_2012.pdf, 51.

the entry-level in all personnel categories..¹⁵¹ The Military Academy of NM is accredited by Bologna University, and the European credit transfer system offers all levels of academic education and degrees..¹⁵² The Military Academy of NM provides advanced professional education for Military Occupation Specialties (MOS) such as Logistics, Leadership (company, and battalion level command)..¹⁵³

To promote security cooperation, the Military Academy is providing training and education for regional partners such as the Montenegrin Armed Forces, and since 2012, cadets from Kosovo Security Forces..¹⁵⁴ Another training capability of NM Armed Forces is the Medical Training Center, which provides significant support for A-5 countries and contributes on development of Role 2 Medical Light Maneuver capabilities as a NATO requirement. This capability supports and enhances cooperation in the region..¹⁵⁵ In addition, the Regional Training Communication Center provides public affairs training supporting other countries in the region..¹⁵⁶ The Republic of North Macedonia has volunteered to develop into the PfP/NATO Center of Excellence..¹⁵⁷ The NM has

¹⁵¹ Macedonia MOD, *White Paper on Defense*, 51.

¹⁵² Ibid., 54.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 53.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

developed training infrastructure for collective and specialized training to enhance interoperability with regional and strategic partners and allies.

Montenegro

Political Overview

The Republic of Montenegro is one of the Balkan countries which became independent after the wars in Yugoslavia during the 1990s. Albania borders it in the southwest, Kosovo, to the southeast, Serbia to the northeast, and Bosnia and Herzegovina to the northwest. In the west and to the west, it is bordered by the coastline of the Adriatic Sea.¹⁵⁸ From the 16th to 19th centuries, Montenegro was a theocracy ruled by a series of bishop princes; in 1852, it transformed into a secular principality.¹⁵⁹ In 1878 was recognized as an independent principality at the Congress of Berlin. After World War I, Montenegro became part of Yugoslavia. After WWII it became a constituent republic of Yugoslavia.¹⁶⁰

Following the breakup of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro together created a federation of Yugoslavia, which was renamed the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2003.¹⁶¹ In 2006, Montenegro held a referendum on independence from the union. The vote was affirmative in favor of independence and allowed Montenegro to

¹⁵⁸ CIA, “The World Factbook: Montenegro,” accessed December 25, 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mj.html>.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Wikipedia, “Montenegro: Geography,” accessed December 25, 2019, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenegro#Geography>.

restore independence.¹⁶² In 2017 Montenegro joined NATO.¹⁶³ and is currently completing its EU accession process has officially applied to join the EU in December 2008.¹⁶⁴ After of the Declaration of Independence in June 2006 and the independence referendum held on 21 May, the government of Montenegro took over duties of defining and conducting the foreign policy of the country as a sovereign state.

After independence the government of Montenegro defined and proclaimed two main strategic goals, joining NATO and the EU. The first objective was achieved in May 2017 when NATO accepted Montenegro as a NATO member starting 5 June 2017,¹⁶⁵ which guaranteed stability and security for pursuing another strategic goal, integration into the EU. Montenegro enjoys a healthy relationship with its neighbors and Euro-Atlantic institutions. Moreover, Montenegro is working closely with other regional partners in different areas, including economy, military, and diplomacy.

Economic Overview

To enable its path toward integration in euro-Atlantic institutions, the government has undertaken a reformatory initiative in several fields, including politics, economics, as

¹⁶² BBC, “Montenegro vote result confirmed,” last updated May 23, 2006, accessed December 25, 2019, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5007364.stm>.

¹⁶³ CIA, “Factbook: Montenegro.”

¹⁶⁴ Michael Peel and Neil Buckley, “EU to map out membership for 6 western Balkan states,” *Financial Times*, February 2018, 1, accessed December 25, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/e0774a28-0695-11e8-9650-9c0ad2d7c5b5>.

¹⁶⁵ NATO, “Montenegro joins NATO, as a 29th ally,” 5 June 2017, last updated 9 June 2017, accessed December 25, 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_144647.htm.

well as legislation to establish a competitive environment and open the economy to foreign investors. Montenegro's economy is mainly service-based and in the transition to an open market economy. According to the International Monetary Fund, the nominal GDP of Montenegro was \$5.424 billion in 2019.¹⁶⁶ The GDP PPP for 2019 was \$12.516 billion, or \$20,083 per capita.¹⁶⁷ Montenegro is using the Euro as the national currency. According to Jane's using Euro helped the country to manage inflation, but has challenged it in facing European competitiveness in international trade.¹⁶⁸ Montenegro has signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement with EU, and became EU candidate since 2010.

The main pillars of Montenegro's economy are tourism, service, agriculture and industry.¹⁶⁹ In 2007, the service sector made up 72.4% of GDP, with manufacturing and agriculture making up the rest at 17.6% and 10%, respectively.¹⁷⁰ There are 50,000 farming households in Montenegro that rely on agriculture for income.¹⁷¹ The country

¹⁶⁶ International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook Report*, October 2019, accessed December 25, 2019, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2019/02/weodata/weorept.aspx,country>.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ IHS Markit, *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: The Balkans, Montenegro*, Jane's Information Group, 1999, accessed December 25, 2019, <https://janes.ihs.com/Balkans/>.

¹⁶⁹ CIA, "Factbook: Montenegro."

¹⁷⁰ The World Bank, "Montenegro at a glance," Internet Archive, accessed December 25, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20110511082355/http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/mne_aag.pdf.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

has moved forward with privatization. According to the Jane's assessments, even though the country has privatized around 90 percent of state-owned companies, including 100% of banking, telecommunications, and oil distribution, the country still faces an informal economy with an unemployment rate at 16%, corruption and inadequate diversification, and inept managerial capacity.¹⁷² The Montenegrin economy is dependent on foreign direct investments. The most prominent foreign investors in Montenegro in 2017 were Norway, Russia, Italy, Azerbaijan and Hungary.¹⁷³

Military Overview

Armed Forces of the Republic of Montenegro is composed of Army of Montenegro (includes Ground Troops (Kopnena Vojska), Montenegrin Navy (Mornarica Crne Gore, MCG)), Air Force (2019).¹⁷⁴ The country retains manpower strength up to 2400 active-duty personnel.¹⁷⁵ Montenegro established its armed forces after restoring independence in 2006. According to the Strategic Defense Review (SDR) of Montenegro, its Army's mission is Defense of Montenegro through active cooperation with allies and partners; Contribution in achieving and maintaining peace in the region

¹⁷² IHS Markit, *Jane's: Montenegro*.

¹⁷³ CIA, "Factbook: "Montenegro."

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Global Firepower, "Montenegro Military Strength (2020)," accessed December 25, 2019, https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=montenegro.

and in the world; and Support to civilian institutions in crises..¹⁷⁶ The Armed Forces are a professional standing army and capable of defending the country..¹⁷⁷

The strategic goal of Montenegro is to become part of NATO, while developing a small but a strong cohort of armed forces for protecting national security and Montenegro's integration into the system of collective security and defense..¹⁷⁸ Also, Montenegro desires to adopt NATO Smart Defense principles, develop a collective defense, and pool resources as a comprehensive solution for the future..¹⁷⁹ The long term goal is the development of units of the AFMNE so that they are deployable, efficient, equipped and staffed by trained and motivated personnel..¹⁸⁰

Recent years saw Montenegro is contributing to peacekeeping and security missions while participating in peacekeeping operations under NATO and UN auspices..¹⁸¹ Montenegro sent 45 troops and medical personnel to the ISAF mission in

¹⁷⁶ Government of Montenegro, Ministry of Defense (MOD), *Strategic Defence Review of Montenegro*, July 2013, accessed March 28, 2020, file:///C:/Users/User/AppData/Local/Temp/Strategic%20defense%20review%20of%20Montenegro.pdf.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ IHS Markit, "Montenegro Armed Forces," in *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: The Balkans, Montenegro*, Jane's Information Group, 1999, accessed December 25, 2019, <https://janes.ihs.com/Balkans/1>.

¹⁸⁰ Montenegro MOD, *Strategic Defence Review of Montenegro*, 34.

¹⁸¹ Wikipedia, "Armed Forces of Montenegro," accessed December 25, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Forces_of_Montenegro#cite_note-4.

Afghanistan and continues contributing to the recent Resolute Support Mission.¹⁸²

Montenegro also participates in UN peacekeeping missions in Liberia, UNMIL, Cyprus, UNFICYP as military observers, and Somalia, EU-NAVFOR.¹⁸³

After independence in 2006, the country established its Armed Forces, and has faced challenges in establishing its training and education system. According to the SDR, constant changes in the security environment and future obligations within the system of collective defense call for continuous staff training.¹⁸⁴ One of the Military leadership priorities is defined as the system of education and training of officers and the NCO corps. The education of officers is conducted through basic academic education and professional training. Basic academic education is carried out through training of cadets in foreign military academies and scholarships to civilian universities in Montenegro.¹⁸⁵ Command-staff and general staff training, as well as higher levels of military education are exclusively conducted abroad at prestigious military educational institutions.¹⁸⁶ NCO career development begins after completion of the Basic NCO Course, where the most advanced soldiers acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to function as a commander

¹⁸² Government of Montenegro, Ministry of Defense, “Vojska Crne Gore u međunarodnim misijama i operacijama,” accessed December 25, 2019, http://www.mod.gov.me/rubrike/Mirovne_misije/vojska_crne_gore_u_misijama_i_operacijama

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Montenegro MOD, *Strategic Defence Review of Montenegro*, 43.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

of a department and are promoted to an initial non-commissioned rank.¹⁸⁷ This continues through the advanced leadership course for future commissioning. Advanced and Senior NCO courses are held in military educational institutions of NATO and partner countries.¹⁸⁸

As a training means, besides its training center, Montenegro is utilizing its regional partners and NATO to fulfill the requirement of the armed forces.¹⁸⁹ The military training and education system in Montenegro is one of the primary gaps in its armed forces. The Montenegro Armed Forces can conduct small scale combat operations but need a system that sustains long-term development of the armed forces with necessary infrastructure and equipment.¹⁹⁰

Kosovo

Political Overview

The Republic of Kosovo is situated in the center of the Balkan Peninsula, and bordered by the Serbia to the north and east, North Macedonia to the southeast, Albania to the southwest and Montenegro to the west. Throughout history, the central Balkans were part of the Roman and Byzantine Empire. The territory of Kosovo as well as the entire western Balkans were inhabited by the Illyrian tribe, Dardanians.¹⁹¹ The Serbs

¹⁸⁷ Montenegro MOD, *Strategic Defence Review of Montenegro*, 44.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ IHS Markit, “Montenegro Armed Forces.”

¹⁹¹ Fanula Papazoglu, *The Central Balkan Tribes in Pre-Roman Times: Triballi, Autariatae, Dardanians, Scordisci and Moesians* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1978).

migrated to the territories of modern Kosovo, beginning in the 7th century.¹⁹² During the medieval period, Kosovo became the center of a Serbian Empire and saw the construction of many important Serb religious sites, including many architecturally significant Serbian Orthodox monasteries.¹⁹³ In the middle ages for five centuries, Kosovo was ruled by the Ottoman empire. By the end of the 19th century, Serbia won independence from the Ottoman Empire, and at the beginning of the 20th century, Albania won independence. The territory of Kosovo was divided into two countries, the Kingdom of Montenegro and Serbia.¹⁹⁴ After World War II, Kosovo was part of Yugoslavia until Yugoslavia was dissolved in the 1990s. Kosovo's present-day boundaries were established when Kosovo became an autonomous province of Serbia in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.¹⁹⁵ Inter-ethnic tensions continued to worsen in Kosovo throughout the 1980s. In 1989, Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, employing a mix of intimidation and political maneuvering, drastically reduced Kosovo's special autonomous status within Serbia and started cultural oppression of the ethnic Albanian population.¹⁹⁶ Kosovar Albanians responded with a non-violent separatist movement, employing widespread

¹⁹² CIA, "The World Factbook: Kosovo," accessed January 06, 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kv.html>.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Bulgaria, Ottoman Empire, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro, Italy, Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary, *The Treaty of London, 1913*. Web Archive, accessed January 07, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/19970501052336/http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/boshtml/bos145.htm>.

¹⁹⁵ CIA, "Factbook: Kosovo."

¹⁹⁶ Carole Rogel, "Kosovo: Where It All Began," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 17, no. 1 (September 2003): 167-182.

civil disobedience and creation of parallel structures in education, medical care, and taxation, with the ultimate goal of achieving the independence of Kosovo.¹⁹⁷

The Serbs, many of whom viewed Kosovo as their cultural heartland, instituted a new constitution in 1989 revoking Kosovo's autonomous status. Kosovo's Albanian leaders responded in 1991 by organizing a referendum declaring Kosovo independence.¹⁹⁸ Serbia undertook repressive measures against the Kosovar Albanians in the 1990s, provoking a Kosovar Albanian insurgency.¹⁹⁹ Beginning in 1998, Serbia conducted a brutal counterinsurgency campaign that resulted in massacres and massive expulsions of ethnic Albanians (some 800,000 ethnic Albanians were forced from their homes in Kosovo).²⁰⁰ After international attempts to mediate the conflict failed, a three-month NATO military operation against Serbia beginning in March 1999 forced the Serbs to agree to withdraw their military and police forces from Kosovo.²⁰¹ During the conflict, roughly a million ethnic Albanians fled or were forcefully driven from Kosovo. In 1999 more than 11,000 deaths were reported to the office of the International Criminal Tribunal prosecutor in the matter of the former Yugoslavia, Carla Del Ponte.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ Rogel, "Kosovo: Where It All Began."

¹⁹⁸ CIA, "Factbook: Kosovo."

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² BBC, "World: Europe UN gives figure for Kosovo dead," November 10, 1999, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/514828.stm>.

UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) placed Kosovo under a transitional administration, the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), pending a determination of Kosovo's future status.²⁰³ The UN-led process began in late 2005 to determine Kosovo's final status. The 2006-07 negotiations ended without agreement between Belgrade and Pristina, though the UN issued a comprehensive report on Kosovo's final status that endorsed independence.²⁰⁴ On 17 February 2008, the Kosovo Assembly declared Kosovo independent.²⁰⁵ Since then, over 100 countries have recognized Kosovo, and it has joined numerous international organizations. In October 2008, Serbia sought an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legality under international law of Kosovo's declaration of independence. The ICJ released the advisory opinion in July 2010, affirming that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate general principles of international law, UN Security Council Resolution 1244, or the Constitutive Framework. The opinion was closely tailored to Kosovo's unique history and circumstances.

The Republic of Kosovo's development of a sovereign, multi-ethnic, democratic country, and the international community ended the period of supervised independence in 2012.²⁰⁶ Serbia continues to reject Kosovo's independence but the two countries agreed in April 2013 to normalize their relations through EU-facilitated talks. These talks

²⁰³ CIA, "Factbook: Kosovo."

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ BBC, "Kosovo MPs proclaim independence," last updated February 17, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7249034.stm>.

²⁰⁶ CIA, "Factbook: Kosovo."

produced several subsequent agreements the parties are implementing though they have not yet reached a comprehensive normalization of relations.²⁰⁷ Kosovo seeks full integration into the international community and has pursued bilateral recognitions and memberships in international organizations.²⁰⁸ Kosovo signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU in 2015 and was named by a 2018 EU report as one of six Western Balkan countries that will be able to join the organization once it meets the criteria to accede.²⁰⁹ Kosovo also seeks memberships in the UN and in NATO.²¹⁰

Economic Overview

Kosovo's economy is a transitional economy that has shown progress in transitioning to a free market-based system and maintaining macroeconomic stability.²¹¹ But it is still highly dependent on foreign investments and remittances from its diaspora. Moreover, the remittances from the diaspora are estimated to account for about 17% of GDP.²¹² With international assistance, Kosovo has been able to privatize a

²⁰⁷ BBC, “Serbia and Kosovo reach EU-brokered landmark accord,” April 19, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22222624>.

²⁰⁸ CIA, “Factbook: Kosovo.”

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² International Monetary Fund (IMF), IMF Country Report No. 12/100, “Republic of Kosovo: Request for Stand-By Arrangement—Staff Report; Press Release on the Executive Board Discussion,” April 2012, accessed July 13, 2020, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2012/cr12100.pdf>

majority of its state-owned enterprises.²¹³ The official currency of Kosovo is the Euro, but the Serbian Dinar is also used illegally in Serb majority communities.²¹⁴ Kosovo's tie to the Euro has helped keep core inflation low.²¹⁵ Minerals and metals production - including lignite, lead, zinc, nickel, chrome, aluminum, magnesium, and a wide variety of construction materials - once the backbone of industry, has declined because of aging equipment and insufficient investment. These issues exacerbated by competing and unresolved ownership claims of Kosovo's largest mines.²¹⁶ Limited and unreliable electricity supply is a significant impediment to economic development. The US Government is cooperating with the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) and the World Bank to conclude a commercial tender for the construction of Kosovo C, a new lignite-fired power plant that would leverage Kosovo's large lignite reserves.²¹⁷

In June 2009, Kosovo joined the World Bank and International Monetary Fund,²¹⁸ the Central Europe Free Trade Area (CEFTA) in 2006, the European Bank for

²¹³ CIA, "The World Factbook: Kosovo: Economy," accessed January 06, 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kv.html>.

²¹⁴ IMF, IMF Country Report No. 12/100.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Kosovo Report, "Survey puts Kosovo's mineral resources at 13.5bn euros," *News and Analysis: Countdown to Independence* (blog), January 28, 2005, accessed July 13, 2020, <http://kosovareport.blogspot.com/2005/01/world-bank-survey-puts-kosovos-mineral.html>.

²¹⁷ CIA, "Factbook: Kosovo: Economy."

²¹⁸ US Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Office of the Spokesman, "Kosovo Joins the IMF and World Bank," Media Note, June 29, 2009, accessed December 09, 2020, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2009/06a/125489.htm>.

Reconstruction and Development in 2012, and the Council of Europe Development Bank in 2013.²¹⁹ In 2016, Kosovo implemented the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) negotiations with the EU, focused on trade liberalization.²²⁰ In August 2015, as part of its EU-facilitated normalization process with Serbia, Kosovo signed agreements on telecommunications and energy distribution, but disagreements over who owns economic assets, such as the Trepça mining conglomerate, within Kosovo continue.²²¹

Military Overview

In December 2018, Kosovo adopted a legislative package to initiate a ten-year transition of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) into a professional multi-ethnic force with a limited territorial defense mandate (2019).²²² After the Kosovo War in 1999, the Kosovo Liberation Army was demilitarized and demobilized pursuant to Rambouillet accord articles and Security Council Resolution 1244, under the control of the military component of the international administration in Kosovo – Kosovo Forces (NATO).²²³ The establishment of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) followed this

²¹⁹ CIA, “Factbook: Kosovo: Economy.”

²²⁰ European Commission, European Union, “Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) between the European Union and Kosovo, enters into force,” Press Release, April 1, 2016, accessed December 09, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_16_1184.

²²¹ CIA, “Factbook: Kosovo: Economy.”

²²² CIA, “The World Factbook: Kosovo: Security and Military,” accessed December 09, 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kv.html> Ibid, Security and Military.

²²³ Dr.Sc. Bejtush Gashi and Dr.Sc. Dario Molnar, “Demilitarization of Kosovo Liberation Army and in Establishment of Kosovo Protection Corps and Kosovo Security Force,” *ILIRIA International Review* 2, no. 47 (2012): 47-65, accessed January 09, 2020,

process, with the civil emergency organizational mission, which operated until the adoption of the constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, promulgated on June 15, 2008.²²⁴ The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) led the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) in 2008, started preparations for the formation of the Kosovo Security Force.²²⁵ In 2014, the former Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi declared, that the National Government decided to establish a Defense Ministry by 2019, officially transform the Kosovo Security Forces into the Kosovan Armed Forces, an Army which meets all the standards of NATO members with the aim of joining the alliance in the future.²²⁶ Citizens over the age of 18 are eligible to serve in the Kosovo Security Force. Members of the force are protected from discrimination on the basis of gender or ethnicity.²²⁷

The Kosovo Security Force will have a €98 million annual budget and will be 5,000 strong with another 3,000 reservists, composed of land forces, a national guard,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306526493_The_role_of_NATO_in_the_demilitarization_of_Kosovo_Liberation_Army_and_in_establishment_of_Kosovo_Protection_Corps_and_Kosovo_Security_Force.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Wikipedia, “Kosovo: Foreign Relations and Military,” accessed January 09, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo#Foreign_relations_and_military.

²²⁶ Reuters, “Kosovo to create national army of 5,000 soldiers,” accessed January 09, 2020, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-kosovo-army/kosovo-to-create-national-army-of-5000-soldiers-idUKBREA231E620140304>.

²²⁷ Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Defense (MOD), Law No. 03/L-082, *Law on Service in the Kosovo Security Force*, June 13, 2008, accessed July 7, 2016, <https://mod.rks-gov.net/repository/docs/Law%20on%20Service%20in%20the%20KSF.pdf>.

logistics, and training commands..²²⁸ The mission the KSF is to conduct crisis response operations in Kosovo and abroad; civil protection operations within Kosovo; and to assist the civil authorities in responding to natural disasters and other emergencies..²²⁹ The United States fully supports the process of transformation of Kosovo Security Force with the new mission. In a statement, the US Embassy in Kosovo stated that Kosovo is a sovereign nation, and as such, it is allowed to have a force to defend its territory..²³⁰ They confirmed that the United States will continue to support the development of KAF, and that they expect the cooperation of the KAF and NATO to continue..²³¹

The NATO Smart Defense Initiative

On March 28-30, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, in partnership with eight institutions from NATO member countries, hosted a conference on “Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century?”²³² Smart Defense is a new concept that NATO launched at the Chicago Summit, “In these times of austerity, each euro, dollar, or pound sterling counts. Smart Defense is a cooperative way of thinking about generating the modern defense

²²⁸ Kosovo MOD, Law No. 03/L-082.

²²⁹ State Portal of the Republic of Kosovo, “Security, Kosovo Security Force,” accessed January 09, 2020, <https://www.rks-gov.net/EN/f254/security/kosovo-security-force>.

²³⁰ US Embassy in Kosovo, “Statement from U.S. Embassy Pristina,” December 14, 2018, <https://xk.usembassy.gov/statement-from-u-s-embassy-pristina/>.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Aronsson and O’Donnell, *Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century?*

capabilities that the Alliance needs for the future. The concept—as General Abrial outlined—envisages NATO’s role as evolving into a facilitator, or “clearing house,” tailoring funding mechanisms for multinational projects, bringing industry into discussions from the earliest stages, and enhancing bilateral cooperation and “islands of cooperation.”²³³

In this renewed culture of cooperation, Allies are encouraged to work together to develop, acquire, operate and maintain military capabilities to undertake the Alliance’s essential core tasks agreed in NATO’s Strategic Concept.²³⁴ That means harmonizing requirements, pooling and sharing capabilities, setting priorities and coordinating efforts better.²³⁵ Smart Defense is a cooperative way of generating modern Defense capabilities that the Alliance needs in a more cost-efficient, effective and coherent manner. Allies are encouraged to work together to develop, acquire, operate and maintain military capabilities to undertake the Alliance’s core tasks.²³⁶

The smart defense in the Balkan region is critical, especially within the community of A5 Adriatic Charter countries.²³⁷ The Balkans is a region of small

²³³ Aronsson and O’Donnell, *Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century?*, 8.

²³⁴ Decamps, “Smart Defense Initiative.”

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Defense (MOD), Comprehensive Regional Ministerial, “US-Adriatic Charter Initiative,” 2015, accessed December 20, 2016, <https://www.morh.hr/en/agendacrm/a5/240-crm2015/agenda/12143-crm-2015-za-webhrvatski.html>.

countries with a total of about 550,000 km² and a population of over 50 million people. The Smart Defense may have a specific positive impact in our region. In that view the WBC has initiated the Adriatic 3 Initiative with the US in May 2003 with 3 countries (Albania, Croatia and Macedonia).²³⁸ From October 2008 Montenegro and Bosnia Herzegovina joined the agreement.²³⁹ Later more states are expected to join, such as Kosovo. In this new regional framework, we should not act in isolation; we should be smart to build our multinational and regional approaches in the interest of our peoples.²⁴⁰ Smart Defense can be applied in support of Education and Training. Pooling and sharing some of the national training and education institutions, where necessary, is a very efficient tool to get closer armed forces and reduce spending.²⁴¹

Baltic Defense College: Case Study

The story of the Baltic Defense College begins in 1991 when the three Baltic Republics openly broke with the Soviet Union and renounced the fifty-year occupation of their territory by proclaiming their full national independence.²⁴² However, although the three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) became independent again,

²³⁸ Croatia MOD Comprehensive Regional Ministerial, “US-Adriatic Charter Initiative.”

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Demi and Hudhra, “Smart Defence - A Smart Approach for the Balkan Region.”

²⁴¹ Ibid., 5.

²⁴² Corum and Johanson, “20 Years of the Baltic Defence College: Professional Military Education in the Baltic States.”

economically, militarily and politically they have started basically to re-create themselves. Receiving decisive and robust support from western countries, the new states were quickly able to establish their own capacities such as creating democratic governments, transition to free market economies and move towards full integration with the West. Overall, it was both an unusual and rapid process of transformation.

The critical consideration was these nations quickly understood the need to work together and cooperate in many fields to succeed and catch up with the western countries and partners. Also, they need to work together in the field of defense and security to create preconditions for deterring aggressors. Regarding contemporary security, this mutual responsibility started with the formation of the Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT).²⁴³ However, the best and most enduring example of the cooperation between the Baltic states has undoubtedly been the founding of the Baltic Defense College.²⁴⁴ The Baltic Defense College (BALTDEFCOL) is one of the best examples of mutual effort. It is a truly unique organization as it is owned by three different sovereign nations, open to allies and partners, thus signifying and embodying the will to cooperate and forming the basis of a common understanding.²⁴⁵

The Baltic Defense College has continually sought to be at the forefront of professional military education to ensure its graduates are well prepared to meet the

²⁴³ Estonian Ministry of Defense, “Baltic Defense Co-operation,” January 2002, Republic of Estonia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed January 11, 2020, <https://vm.ee/et/node/2088>.

²⁴⁴ Corum and Johanson, “20 Years of the Baltic Defense College: Professional Military Education in the Baltic States,” 5.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 6.

challenges they will face throughout their career in war and peace. Within a year of regaining their independence, the Defense Ministers of the three Baltic States agreed to cooperate in officer education.²⁴⁶ This cooperation was formalized in 1998 with the signing of an agreement establishing the Baltic Defense College in Tartu, Estonia – with English as its working language.²⁴⁷

In the initial stages of the College project, the resources of the three Baltic states were minimal, so the College was dependent on several financial and non-financial contributions from the international community for it to begin its operations.²⁴⁸ The college received the bulk of support from twenty countries that provided instructors, staff, education equipment, motor vehicles, textbooks, contributions to the college library, information technology, other support equipment and other physical requirements of a proper staff college.²⁴⁹ In the beginning, the three Baltic States provided initial funds, but without international support, the BALTDEFCOL was impossible to establish. Only later, the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians took over full responsibility for funding the College.

The initial class of the new BALTDEFCOL started with the first class of thirty-two students from eight countries.²⁵⁰ After this success, the Baltic States continued with

²⁴⁶ Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. “Baltic States, BALTDEFCOL Agreement.”

²⁴⁷ BALTDEFCOL, “History of the Baltic Defence College,”

²⁴⁸ Corum and Johanson, “20 Years of the Baltic Defense College: Professional Military Education in the Baltic States.”

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 16.

²⁵⁰ BALTDEFCOL, “History of the Baltic Defense College.”

further steps. The Baltic States continued further professional development and education of officers. They tasked the Baltic Defense College with developing courses for colonels (Colonels Course) and mid- and high-level civil servants (Civil Servants Course), both of which commenced in 2001.²⁵¹ The BALTDEFCOL has changed over the years. The teaching staff of the College was initially organized into three departments: The Department of Operations, Tactics, and Logistics; The Department of Strategy and Political Studies; The Department of Defense Administration, Management and Leadership.²⁵² At present, the College is comprised of: The Department of Military Studies; The Department of Political and Strategic Studies; The Department of Leadership and Management Studies.²⁵³ Currently the BALTDEFCOL evolved into a center of professional military education studies for both military and civilians of more than 20 countries.²⁵⁴ The Baltic Defense College currently runs four different academic programs: Senior Leaders Course, Higher Command Studies Course; Joint Command and General Staff Course; Civil Servants Course; Command Senior Enlisted Leaders' Course; NATO Course Certification; Master's Degree; In addition to the regular course offerings, the college, organizes yearly conferences and roundtable seminars.²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ BALTDEFCOL, "History of the Baltic Defense College."

²⁵² Corum and Johanson, "20 Years of the Baltic Defense College: Professional Military Education in the Baltic States."

²⁵³ Ibid., 17.

²⁵⁴ BALTDEFCOL, "History of the Baltic Defense College."

²⁵⁵ BALTDEFCOL, "Facts about the Courses."

The Baltic Defense College continues to receive substantial international support. This support, based on the “Memorandum of Understanding concerning co-operation in the establishment, operation, administration and initial funding and secondment of staff to a Baltic Defense College in the Republic of Estonia,”²⁵⁶ was signed in Brussels on 12 June 1998. In August 2016, the commandant, Major General AndisDilāns assumed command. He made one of the core missions of the institution to implement the new Development Plan 2017–2025 for the College. This plan was approved by the Defense Ministers of Estonia and Latvia, and the Minister of National Defense of Lithuania in October 2016.²⁵⁷ The new Development Plan placed particular emphasis on coping with collective defense frameworks as well as fighting violent extremism, terrorism, hybrid and cyber threats.²⁵⁸ Therefore BALTDEFCOL educates students to deal with permanently changing security situations making graduates agile, knowledgeable and capable leaders to act when required.²⁵⁹ The Development Plan also introduced several new initiatives. Since 2017, the College has offered continuing education at the most

²⁵⁶ Corum and Johanson, “20 Years of the Baltic Defense College: Professional Military Education in the Baltic States,” 85.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ BALTDEFCOL, “BALTDEFCOL Development Plan 2017-2025 signed by Baltic States Ministers of Defense,” accessed January 11, 2020, accessed January 11, 2020, <https://www.baltdefcol.org/?id=1136>.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

senior level. It established clear goals in the fields of Education, Research, Management and Support.²⁶⁰

Finally, the BALTDEFCOL has become one of the leading institutions dealing with regional security.²⁶¹ It also seeks to strengthen and further develop cooperation with various research partners. This example is fully consistent with NATO's 2012 Smart Defense Principles proclaimed in Chicago. It is a hugely successful example of cooperation, coordination in the field of military education. Partners, from countries coming from particularly developing regions, where countries have limited capacities to build their own security capabilities, in particular military education and training system, should follow the Baltic example in order to establish a system of genuine education and training, of high standards and at an acceptable cost.

How WBC can establish its own training and education system

Finding an appropriate model for the training and education domain of the Western Balkan Countries (WBC) is a significant challenge, considering the region's history, geostrategic position, and financial as well as political limitations imposed on developing their armed forces. In 2011, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen proposed "Smart Defense"²⁶² as NATO's new approach to risk- and burden-sharing that "ensures greater security, for less money, by working together with more

²⁶⁰ Corum and Johanson, "20 Years of the Baltic Defense College: Professional Military Education in the Baltic States," 88.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Aronsson and O'Donnell, *Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century?*

flexibility.”²⁶³ As part of this approach, he promoted the pooling and sharing of defense capabilities based on the right priorities and better coordination of efforts.

The Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, after regaining their independence from the former Soviet Union, started building the capabilities of their armed forces, virtually from scratch. They worked together and cooperated very closely to find solutions for increasing their capabilities, especially the joint efforts in the training and education domain; moreover, they successfully managed to develop efficient training and education.²⁶⁴ The development of cooperation in the training and education domain of the Baltic States could prove a useful model for the development of the training domain in Balkan countries. Considering the similarities between the Baltic and Balkan States, their small territories, struggles for independence and the need to create small credible defense forces, their security and threats, as well as political and financial limitations of developing their armed forces, there is common ground that WBC could learn from the Baltic experience. The Baltic example and the principles of Smart Defense Initiative are the right lessons that WBC need to pursue to develop their training skills.

In light of the NATO Smart Defense Strategic Concept and the experience of the Baltic States, the challenges they faced in developing their training capabilities, the Balkans can learn to utilize the best practices and disregard the shortcomings to successfully and efficiently build their training capabilities. With assistance from NATO, the Balkan Countries will have the best professional expertise and support available in

²⁶³ Aronsson and O'Donnell, *Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century?*

²⁶⁴ Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. “Baltic States, BALTDEFCOL Agreement.”

developing their training and educational capabilities..²⁶⁵ The current pace of cooperation between these countries is very slow. Nonetheless, there are bilateral initiatives for cooperation between these countries to increase their abilities in the training domain. Development of the military training and education domain of WBC includes three components that need to be accomplished: cooperation between partners, specialization of capabilities, and prioritization of their efforts to create successful joint military training and education capabilities.

Cooperation of Regional Partners

The first component is cooperation between partners to find and establish a better model of military training at an affordable cost; Western Balkan Countries must cooperate in two main fields. First of all, cooperation should begin with politics. “Smart defense concept promotes new ideas and management, facilitates better coordination between allies, and provides strategic responses to capability shortfalls. It requires significant political will and cooperation among allied countries” (NATO conference report and expert papers, March 2012)..²⁶⁶ The Baltic States, having gone through a difficult political, economic and military situation, have emerged to create an excellent environment of cooperation between them; furthermore, they have created several successful initiatives of cooperation in multiple ways, including cooperation among presidents, parliament speakers, heads of government, diplomats, as well as security

²⁶⁵ Anders Fogh Rasmussen, quoted in Aronsson and O'Donnell, *Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century?*, 49.

²⁶⁶ Decamps, “Smart Defense Initiative.”

sector representatives.²⁶⁷ The Smart Defense strategy encourages nations to cooperate closely to get all support needed to come up with the new initiatives that can contribute to the security environment.²⁶⁸ Political cooperation means trust between partners and needs to remove all national obstacles. Considering the Baltics approach, and according to the Smart Defense principles, Balkan countries must overcome all political obstacles to facilitate better military cooperation.

The Smart Defense Initiative promotes and supports cooperation in various military areas, as well as in the field of military training and education.²⁶⁹ The Baltic States have advanced with regional military cooperation between them, while they have undertaken several initiatives such as the creation of the Baltic Battalion; furthermore, the creation of the Baltic Defense College (BALTDEFCOL) is one of the most advanced examples of military co-operation in the field of training and education at a regional level. (The Baltic States, BALTDEFCOL Agreement, Brussels, June 1998),²⁷⁰ “BALTDEFCOL provides professional military education at the operational and strategic levels for military and civilian leaders of their countries.”²⁷¹ The example from the Baltics utilizes Smart Defense principles that promote cooperation between partners can enable establishment of a training and education system for Balkan military forces.

²⁶⁷ Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. “Baltic States, BALTDEFCOL Agreement.”

²⁶⁸ Rasmussen, 49.

²⁶⁹ Decamps, “Smart Defense Initiative.”

²⁷⁰ Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. “Baltic States, BALTDEFCOL Agreement.”

²⁷¹ BALTDEFCOL, “History of the Baltic Defense College,”

Specialization of Capabilities

The second component is the specialization of the existing capabilities of the states including current training courses, but also the modernization of infrastructure and equipment. The first factor is the specialization of the existing capabilities of the states in the field of military training. The head of the NATO Smart Defense team (Decamps 2012, 1) said, “every country already has its tradition, culture, its defense capabilities and strengths, some of them are oriented in the domain of maritime, some of them more in armed forces, and some of them in any other branch. Several nations do have their capabilities on an individual basis, but by combining them, you have a more interesting patch of capabilities, more important and more flexibility in using those capabilities.”²⁷² Some countries have already established their training and courses, and are declared willing to share with other regional partners. For instance, the Albanian Armed Forces Academy has created a critical course on Security Studies, which is a NATO listed course and tailored to meet the demands of the countries of the region. Nine generations of senior officials have graduated from this course. This example shows that existing national skills need to improve quality, upgrading, and modernization in line with NATO standards, creating the preconditions for sharing these capacities with partners.

Improving and modernizing the existing training infrastructure and equipment by particular partner countries is the second factor of this component that partners should deal with. “Because of the budget cuts and the economic decline situation, NATO Smart Defense encourages specialization by design, so that members focus on their existing

²⁷² Decamps, “Smart Defense Initiative.”

national infrastructure and equipment; moreover, they can pool and share their training capacities,” The head of the NATO Smart Defense team (Decamps 2012, 1).²⁷³ A useful example comes from Estonia,²⁷⁴ which provided the existing infrastructure of the Defense College to be put in the service of partners and allies. Some countries in the region like Croatia, Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo have built training infrastructure that needs to be modernized, then pooled and shared with partners.

The third component is prioritizing efforts with partners.²⁷⁵ According to this strategy, partners should give priority to their efforts in two directions. Firstly, setting priorities on their government agendas, but particularly in the field of defense, to find the best alternative to train and educate their military personnel. For example, the Baltic States set a standard for prioritization in the military field when in 1992, the Defense Ministers agreed in principle to co-operate in the field of training of officers and training of specialists.²⁷⁶ Moreover, at their meeting in June 1997, ministers decided to establish a joint educational institution for the training of senior staff officials, and in June 1998 they signed the BALTDEFCOL establishment agreement. The WBC governments should give priority to their agendas in terms of co-operation between partners, identifying priority areas and agreeing to join their efforts wherever possible, and find the best solutions to establish training and education capabilities for their military personnel.

²⁷³ Decamps, “Smart Defense Initiative.”

²⁷⁴ BALTDEFCOL, “History of the Baltic Defense College.”

²⁷⁵ Decamps, “Smart Defense Initiative.”

²⁷⁶ Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. “Baltic States, BALTDEFCOL Agreement.”

Coordination of Funds and Investments among Partners

The next step is coordinating funds and investments among partners, as well as finding pragmatic and practical projects. WBC are facing a similar challenge as other NATO countries, to generate savings with the financial difficulties of maintaining a modern and capable force. NATO and the EU, particularly the European Defense Agency, are coordinating their efforts to avoid unnecessary duplication of work and to seek synergies.²⁷⁷ NATO also includes partner countries in specific pragmatic and practical projects as a unifying effort when the participating countries agree.²⁷⁸ BALTDEFCOL is an institution of training and education founded, developed, and maintained by effective coordination, giving priority to its creation from the three Baltic States. WBC with insufficient resources can learn from the Baltics to successfully develop their training skills. Through examining the experiences of the Baltic States and the challenges they faced in developing their training skills, the Balkans can learn from their experience. WBC can benefit by exploiting the best practices from the Baltic experience and overcome shortcomings to successfully and efficiently develop advanced training skills.

The Balkan region needs a Smart Defense concept in support of the Training and Education; moreover, Western Balkan Countries should cooperate closely in all possible areas, specialize and modernize current training capabilities and capacities, prioritize and undertake actions to create conditions for training and education of their military

²⁷⁷ Aronsson and O'Donnell, *Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century?*

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

personnel. Smart Defense is the opportunity for a transparent, cooperative and cost-effective approach to meet essential capability requirements.²⁷⁹ A critical area of research is how to effectively use our precious available resources at the local or regional level. Pooling and sharing some of the national training and education institutions, where necessary, is a very efficient tool to build closer cooperative relationships between Balkan armed forces and considerably reduce spending. The efforts made so far in this area are to be appreciated, but a promotion of a regional cooperation framework on training and education capabilities under the “Smart Defense” concept is a project to be supported by all countries.²⁸⁰ Using infrastructure, maintenance, and logistics capabilities for the training of countries at the regional level, or multinational level is an area of smart cooperation to be further explored. For example, in a small region such as the Balkans, instead of having separate training capabilities in all regional countries, we can establish joint capabilities and provide regional training sites. Political and military cooperation, specialization of current capabilities and infrastructure, and also prioritization of Government agendas and investments will provide a chance for finding a model of joint training in the region. The best security is security together, so the Balkan countries should step out of their national interests and obstacles to create a better security environment.

²⁷⁹ Decamps, “Smart Defense Initiative.”

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research had as an objective to identify and highlight the potential of cooperation among western Balkan Countries to establish a Multinational Training and Education capability within the region at an affordable cost. Creating a common system of training and education in the Western Balkan region would assist these countries in many ways, in particular the professional development of their armed forces, upgrading of interoperability between each other and NATO countries. This eventually would facilitate progress toward accomplishing their strategic objectives, acceptance into NATO, and in the long term, will shape the path toward the EU.

The findings of this research show that the strategic objectives for joining NATO and the EU prompted the Western Balkan countries to undertake a series of reforms in the areas of governance, economy, and security. But to meet the standards required in particular by NATO, these countries need to work diligently on military reform. Also, the research suggests that U.S involvement in the Western Balkans is required to help those countries on their integration toward Euro-Atlantic organizations. All findings of the study will be summarized in three categories. First was the presentation of the current state based on assessments of the operational environment of the countries included in this thesis, their strategic objectives and desired end state. Second, the author addresses the WBC gaps and shortfalls, particularly in military training and education system. Third, based on the assessment of the operational environment, gaps in capabilities are identified and options to mitigate these gaps proposed. In particular recommendations of

how the Western Balkan countries can establish their training and education capacities with an affordable budget.

The WBC Operational Environment Assessment and Their Strategic Goals

Recent decades brought changes across Europe, as well as in the Balkan region. But in the Western Balkans, these changes accompanied by costly wars. The most intolerable cost was in human life. In this war, more than a hundred thousand people perished, and millions were displaced.²⁸¹ It is the only place in post-communist Europe that experienced massive ethnic cleansing.²⁸² And this is the single region which is still knocking on the doors of Europe and which is not sure whether or when they will open.²⁸³ After the war ceased and relative peace came to the region, the operational environment changed and brought about a new era. We are witnessing many positive developments. Western Balkan countries are now governed by freely and fairly elected democratic Governments. Given its recent history of wars, nationalism and unresolved ethnic issues, co-operation between countries in the region is difficult and at levels far below what is needed to continue regional development.

²⁸¹ István Gyarmati and Darko Stančić, eds., *Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans* (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2007), accessed March 19, 2020, <https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/gyarmati-stancic-study-western-balkans-2007.pdf>.

²⁸² Ibid., 1.

²⁸³ Ibid.

To improve this requires the international community, NATO, and in particular, the United States to facilitate Western Balkan progress path toward Euro-Atlantic integration. Successful cooperation between the Baltic states led the United States to apply a similar approach in the Balkan region. This approach led to establishing the Adriatic Charter Partnership initially among three countries; Croatia, Macedonia and Albania in 2003, known as A-3. This was extended to two more countries in 2005, Montenegro and Bosnia & Herzegovina and renamed Adriatic Charter 5. In 2008 this organization accepted Serbia as an observer state, and in 2012 Kosovo became an observer state and applied for membership.²⁸⁴ This process occurred under the auspices of the United States, and the purpose of the partnership was “Securing the NATO Open Door Policy and promotion of good neighborliness.”²⁸⁵ To better understand the operational environment and in particular security environment, the author has analyzed operational variables and especially politics, economics, and security, as well as the rule of law in the region. Further analysis included reforms taken by governments to transform their countries from centralized economies, communist oriented politics, to democracy based on a free market economy.

Overall assessments of the region disregard the possibility of a direct attack by a neighboring country, the threat of a new conflict, or the renewal of old internal wars and

²⁸⁴ Gyarmati and Stančić, *Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans*, 1.

²⁸⁵ Grdešić, “US-Adriatic Charter of Partnership: Securing the NATO Open Door Policy,” 104-122.

armed conflicts..²⁸⁶ All analysis of Western Balkan security pays much more attention to new threats than to traditional ones. Current security threats in the Western Balkans referred to in the constitutions, or national security/defense strategies show a remarkable similarity..²⁸⁷ Despite some small differences they include: Organized crime; Economic instability; Corruption; State failures; and Natural disasters,Proliferation, Spreading of extremism and radicalism, and cyber security..²⁸⁸ It is an assumption that corruption is the most critical threat not only to security, but also to the democratic transition processes and economic progress in the region..²⁸⁹

While reviewing the strategic security documents of WBC, such as National Security Strategies, Military Strategies, White Papers on Defense; and their Strategic Defense Reviews, and to what extent these documents reflect and shape realities on the ground, one can conclude that WBC strategic goal is to join NATO and EU. Currently, Croatia, Albania and Montenegro are part of the NATO,²⁹⁰ and North Macedonia is finishing the ratification process to become a NATO member soon..²⁹¹ Croatia has been a

²⁸⁶ Gyarmati and Stančić, *Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans*, 2.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Peci, *Kosovo in the Security and Defense Context of the Western Balkans*, 9-11.

²⁸⁹ Gyarmati and Stančić, *Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans*.

²⁹⁰ NATO, “Member Countries,” accessed March 24, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm?

²⁹¹ CIA, “Factbook: North Macedonia.”

member of the EU since 2013.²⁹² This integration into Western European institutions and NATO is moving too slowly. Political instability, difficult relationships between ethnic groups has caused tension and delays in the integration process into NATO and the EU.²⁹³ Also, the Western Balkan countries are suffering from a lack of focus from the international community in the region, especially by the United States. This has paved the way for Russia's involvement in the region, using traditional allies like Serbia to expand its influence in the region.²⁹⁴

Shortfalls in Military Capacities, Trainings and Education System

Another finding of this research is the limited defense budgets of Western Balkan countries and a gap in the field of officer training and education system. For instance, Croatian Armed Forces established its Croatian Defense Academy, which is responsible for the training of military and civilian personnel of armed forces.²⁹⁵ Its fundamental tasks are as follows: Implementation of the interservice education and training of officers and NCOs; Proposal and elaboration of the joint doctrine of the Armed Forces; Taking

²⁹² CIA, "Factbook: Croatia," accessed March 24, 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hr.html>.

²⁹³ Janusz Bugajski, *Return to Balkan, Challenges to European Integration, and U.S. Disengagement* (Lulu.com, July 10, 2013), accessed July 25, 2020, <https://www.amazon.com/Return-Balkans-Challenges-Integration-Disengagement/dp/1304217787>.

²⁹⁴ The Economist, "NATO and Russia: In the Balkans, NATO has Outmuscled Russia," December 11, 2015, accessed March 21, 2020, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2015/12/11/in-the-balkans-nato-has-outmuscled-russia>

²⁹⁵ ČurČija and Karlović, "Comparative study regarding the last 25 years of the Croatian Defense Academy: Dr. Franjo Tudman."

part in setting unified standards and criteria for education and training in the Armed Forces; and Making instructions for education and training. However, the Croatian military budget for the recent years was kept below 2% of GDP. For example, the defense expenditures of Croatian Armed Forces for fiscal year 2017 was 1.21 percent of country GDP,²⁹⁶ in 2019 was 1.31 percent.²⁹⁷ Also other countries in region are in the same situation or worse. For instance, the Albanian defense budget for 2017 was 1.22 percent of GDP,²⁹⁸ and Montenegro's budget was 1.6 of the country's GDP.²⁹⁹

Another finding is that some of the Balkan Countries lack the capacity to provide training and education for their officers, such as Kosovo Security Force, which requires professional military education courses for its officers.³⁰⁰ Through the University Study Center, TRADOC trains and educates new officers. Through USC, young cadets complete their junior officer studies and graduate as Second Lieutenants. However, the USC cannot provide training to any other level of officer.³⁰¹ KSF officers are getting professional development based on training provided by our allied partners through

²⁹⁶ Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Defense.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ International Information Centre for Balkan Studies, "Military expenditure of Balkan countries members of NATO," accessed March 22, 2020, <https://www.cibal.eu/contacts/43-statistics/2859-military-expenditure-of-balkan-countries-members-of-nato>.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Kosovo Security Force, Training and Doctrine Command, *Courses and Trainings*, Establishing Regulation (Ferizaj: Kosovo Security Force, 2019).

³⁰¹ Ibid.

bilateral agreements.³⁰² The Albanian Armed Forces, through training and doctrine command, provides training and education for all AAF military and civilian personnel.³⁰³ However, the AAF Military Academy lacks capacity for the education of new officers.³⁰⁴

Recommendations on establishing Training and Education System with an Affordable Cost

Based on the findings of this research, the security assessments of the operational environment, and gaps identified, in military training and education capability, the following recommendations are offered for WBC to reduce these gaps. Particularly recommendations on how Western Balkan countries can establish training and education capacities with an affordable budget. Overall, Western Balkan countries lack capabilities to provide courses and training for officers at a standard acceptable to NATO and interoperable with NATO.³⁰⁵ The Balkan countries do not meet NATO standards for budgeting, 2 percent.³⁰⁶ The concept of Smart Defense, launched by NATO in 2012,³⁰⁷ and the example of BALTDEFCOL³⁰⁸ can provide a model on how small countries with

³⁰² US Department of State, Bureau of Military-Political Affairs, “International Military Education and Training (IMET) Programs,” accessed July 13, 2020, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/pm/65533.htm>.

³⁰³ Republic of Albania, “Albanian Armed Forces.”

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ International Information Centre for Balkan Studies, Military expenditure of Balkan countries members of NATO.”

³⁰⁷ NATO, “Smart Defense.”

³⁰⁸ Estonia Defense Forces, “International Co-operation: The Baltic Defense College.”

limited resources and small budgets can establish a successful joint multinational training and education system.

First of all, the Smart Defense concept promotes harmonizing of partner requirements, pooling, and sharing of capabilities with partners, specializing current capacities, setting priorities, and coordination of the effort more effectively.³⁰⁹ Smart Defense principles provide a cooperative way of generating modern defense capabilities that the Alliance requires in a more cost-efficient, effective, and coherent manner.³¹⁰ The Smart Defense Initiative is a NATO initiative that provides assistance from the Alliance to these states undertaking joint co-operation initiatives to build shared security capacities.³¹¹ This facilitates the path of countries seeking membership in this alliance.

Another example is from the Baltic region, where partner states established the Baltic Defense College. The BALTDEFCOL is a college,³¹² established by Baltic countries in 1999, that provides courses and training for military officers of those countries.³¹³ BALTDEFCOL can provide a proven model for WBC on developing a defense college with a limited budget. BALTDEFCOL is an example of small countries with limited resources cooperating among each other, pooling and sharing their own

³⁰⁹ NATO, “Smart Defense.”

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Decamps, “Smart Defense Initiative.”

³¹² Estonia Defense Forces, “International Co-operation: The Baltic Defense College.”

³¹³ Ibid.

capabilities with regional partners and allies, to establish a joint multinational training and education system, and to meet their strategic objectives joining NATO.

First of all, the “Smart Defense” principles can be applied in the military training and education domain. This would facilitate establishing a joint, multinational training and education system, where officers of all regional countries can be trained and educated together, with the same standards, same tactics, techniques, and procedures. This approach will promote cooperation between the armed forces of partners and allies. It will enhance interoperability between them, and will facilitate integration to NATO, and would be beneficial to all partners involved.

There are some key issues. First is the consideration of Smart Defense at a national level. Currently, nations in a region often create parallel capabilities.³¹⁴ Small countries cannot develop a bit of everything with comparable expertise in everything. Small countries need to prioritize resources.³¹⁵ It is inefficient for small countries of the region to maintain or build national capabilities with the same mission in different national security institutions.³¹⁶ Second, prioritization of the use of resources should also be used at the regional level. This would help build the capacity needed to train and educate officers, avoid duplication of training institutions, and reduce the financial burden of countries. This would be appropriately applied in support of the education and training domain. Pooling and sharing some of the national training and education institutions,

³¹⁴ Demi and Hudhra, “‘Smart Defense’ - A Smart Approach for the Balkan Region.”

³¹⁵ Ibid., 3.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

where necessary, is a very efficient tool to build closer cooperative relationships between the armed forces in the region and significantly reduce spending.³¹⁷

In conclusion, we can note that the Western Balkan countries, as small countries with limited resources, cannot develop all the required capabilities on their own. Their approach to developing a smart defense should be flexible and pragmatic rather than conformist and traditional. This new approach requires a new vision of broad and practical cooperation in the region. Capabilities that WBC cannot afford at the national level should develop together. An excellent example to be followed is the successful approach of the Baltic countries. The Smart Defense concept may require short, mid, and long-term solutions. It has to do with the use of existing capabilities and building new ones. A critical first step is the identification of those existing capabilities and developing consensus across partner nations of their use. Building new capabilities to address shortfalls requires acceptance of a shared vision and goodwill. From those foundations partner nations can engage in short and mid-term planning leading to implementation.

Implementation of the Smart Defense concept requires first of all strong political will at the national and regional levels. It will require new legal arrangements from all regional countries, either members or aspiring members of NATO and the EU. These changes to the training and education of armed forces should be reflected in defense and security policy documents from all partner nations, including National Security and Military Strategies. States in the region can not afford to consider their security and

³¹⁷ Demi and Hudhra, “‘Smart Defense’ - A Smart Approach for the Balkan Region.” 3.

defense in isolation. We have common challenges, regional and transnational risks, and threats that require management through regional approaches, capabilities, and solutions.

Analysis and findings lead to the following recommendations:

Pooling and sharing some national training and education institutions, when necessary, is a very efficient tool to build close cooperative relationships between the armed forces in the region and would reduce spending. The efforts made so far in this area are evident, but the vigorous promotion of a framework of regional cooperation on training and education capabilities under the “smart defense” concept is a project worthy of support by all partners in the regions.

WBC together should build a new mentality for better cooperation in the area of joint and common capabilities needed to face common threats and risks to the region. In the emerging security situation, no country in the region can develop all the required capabilities to deal with the full spectrum of threats they are facing today and tomorrow.

The secretary Rasmussen Security Conference, Munich, on February 2011 noted: Where necessary, “regionalization”³¹⁸ of some defense capabilities, based on NATO standards, is a smarter choice to be considered by all our countries.

WBC needs a Smart Defense in support of Education and Training. “Pooling and sharing” some of the national training and education institutions, where necessary, is a very efficient tool to get closer our armed forces, and save considerable spending.³¹⁹

³¹⁸ NATO, “Smart Defense.”

³¹⁹ Demi and Hudhra, “‘Smart Defense’ - A Smart Approach for the Balkan Region.”

A joint educational institution for senior staff officer training will increase and strengthen the co-operation and understanding between the armed forces of partners in the region. All the interested countries have indicated their willingness to support each other to facilitate achieving shared strategic objectives. The logical recommendation is the WBC governments overcome all divergencies and establish a joint multinational military training and educational institution.

This institution should provide the most effective education in the defense domain within the region with the capability to train officers of all ranks. This institution should be able to conduct courses equivalent to the Basic Officers Course, Captain's Career Course, Command and General Staff Officer's Course, and War College. This list can be extended. As a Center of Excellence for Balkan Security, it can host high-level conferences and seminars on a range of topics from Balkan security to NATO and European issues.

All military officers, civil servants, and other personnel who are members of WBC armed forces can receive advanced training and education.

The language is recommended to be English as the language most commonly used by NATO countries.

The institution shall be funded by all WBC, and all partners should provide staff, instructors and other personnel needed. These contributions should be agreed to as part of any specific agreement.

The program should be guided by principles and standards established by NATO. This will facilitate the preparation of the parties for NATO membership. The training program and activities should consider the general political and geographical conditions

of the parties. Should reflect national defense objectives and tasks of the armed forces of the WBC. Also, the institution should extend its role in providing a common understanding of the role of international organizations in the security domain.

WBC should consider international support enabling these capabilities with donating equipment, providing experienced personnel, and apply for direct financial support by NATO and the USA, especially for the first phase of the process, as well as by providing external lecturers.

Shared funding by WBC, better coordination of current capabilities, pooling those capabilities and providing this institution the best expertise that respective armed forces have will create a modern multinational educational institution in the region, with high standards compatible with NATO training and education institutions. In addition, this will facilitate achieving the shared objective to join Euro-Atlantic organizations.

Recommendations for Other Research

The “Smart Defense” concept is broader than just Training and Education. It includes all armed forces capacities. It facilitates establishing better defense against common threats in the region and enhances the security environment. There are two fields that need further researches within the Balkan region. First, the training and education system needs to be researched in detail. It is essential to address all the training and education capabilities that exist in the Western Balkans, which can be pooled and shared in the future by regional partners and allies. Also, is there any other model that can more effectively meet the needs of the Western Balkans?

Second, an analysis of all fields of defense and security where Western Balkan countries can cooperate to build more common capabilities within the region. This

analysis could include air and maritime capabilities in addition to land. This analysis would discern how regional partners can use each other's military capabilities to enhance their security. An extension of this would be an analysis of civil security and identification of potential sharing of joint capabilities to respond to common and evolving threats. This is another opportunity to pool and share capabilities across the region. It would avoid duplication of capabilities, and would reduce the financial burden of each state.

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