



GENEVA CENTRE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF  
ARMED FORCES (DCAF)

WORKING PAPER NO. 84

## **ASSESSING DEMOCRATIC OVERSIGHT OF THE ARMED FORCES**

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Geneva, October 2002

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# ASSESSING DEMOCRATIC OVERSIGHT OF THE ARMED FORCES<sup>1</sup>

*Sander Huisman*

## I. Introduction

There is no such thing as *the* model for democratic control of the armed forces. Perhaps more influential than constitutional arrangements; historical legacies and political cultures are setting conditions. However, a few essentials or principles of democratic oversight can be discerned. This paper aims to provide an overview of the efforts of different post-communist states in establishing democratic oversight over their armed forces. The comparative analysis is based on a study that the staff of the Centre for European Security Studies has conducted last year (*Organising National Defences for NATO Membership – The Unexamined Dimension of Aspirants' Readiness for Entry*) and the experiences gained from a three-year multi-national programme that CESS has started in 2001 (*Democratic Control South East Europe: Parliaments and Parliamentary Staff Education Programme – DEMCON-SEE*). This programme is running in seven countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, and Serbia-Montenegro.

## II. How to Assess Democratic Control of the Armed Forces?

CESS has been working in the field of democratic control of the armed forces from the year the Centre was founded, in 1993. However, despite the practical experiences of conducting programmes in Central and Eastern Europe for several years, there was no clear idea within the Centre of what exactly constitutes democratic control of the armed forces. When CESS was tasked in 2001 to assess the progress made by the Membership Action Plan (MAP) states in their preparations towards NATO membership, the Centre decided to include in this analysis the development of democratic control of the armed forces.

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<sup>1</sup>Paper prepared for the Workshop "Criteria for Success and Failure in Security Sector Reform," held on 5-7 September 2002, in Geneva, Switzerland. The Workshop is organized by the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).

### ***The 'Carnovale-Simon' Test***

In an attempt to comprehend the expectations of NATO in the area of democratic control of the armed forces, CESS Research Director David Greenwood established a sort of reference list, composed of very basic elements that any country should have incorporated in order to have a healthy form of democratic control of the armed forces. Greenwood used for this list two publications, written by respected analysts on these matters. Marco Carnovale has worked at NATO's Political Affairs Division and wrote an article in that capacity in March 1997 in *NATO Review*. Jeffrey Simon is Senior Fellow at the National Defense University in Washington, and wrote a piece for *Joint Forces Quarterly* in 2000. Based on these two works, Greenwood constructed the 'Carnovale-Simon test', composing four principles that any MAP state should have established (*in our opinion*) in order to convince the 19 NATO members that they are meeting NATO's unclear requirements for democratic-style civil-military relations. In addition, these four principles should convince NATO that a MAP state is adhering to the alliance's set of democratic norms and values.

These four matters are:

1. a clear division of authority between the Head of State (typically a President) and the Head of Government (Prime Minister) and the latter's security-sector ministers enshrined in a written constitution or public law (and designating who controls the military, promotes officers in peacetime, has emergency powers in crises and the authority to declare war);
2. peacetime governmental or executive oversight of general staffs and commanders through defence ministries, with the ministry clearly responsible for all key choices about the size, shape, equipment and deployment of the armed forces (and accountable officials having the decisive voice);
3. legislative oversight of the defence organisation – primarily but not exclusively exercised through 'the power of the purse' – which (a) goes beyond perfunctory (rubber-stamp) approval of what the executive proposes, and (b) engages, through committees, the main opposition parties, and (c) is supported by knowledgeable parliamentary staff and 'outside' expertise; and
4. a popular perception of civilian and democratic control of the armed forces, with

(a) military staffs clearly answerable to civilian office-holders and (b) those civilian office-holders themselves clearly accountable to the elected representatives of the society-at-large.

The questions that were asked as part of the 'Carnovale-Simon' test centred on the following topics:

- *Constitutional and legislative provision*: whether there is a clear division of roles and responsibilities between (a) the president and prime-minister and (b) government (executive) and parliament on security matters; and clear relations between the different constitutional/legal players vis-a-vis the defence organisation and the armed forces.
- *Attitudes of the military towards politics*: the attitude of the military towards civilian expertise in defence affairs and politicians with defence responsibilities; the effectiveness of the civilian/political leadership in terms of style and knowledge; whether the ruling elites are generally sympathetic or not towards the military and defence matters; whether the professional military are on the defensive in politics; whether there are fundamental conflicts in goals between top politicians and the senior military; whether the military are a rather closed community or an open community in the polity and society; whether the politicians pay due respect to the professionalism of the military; and what the social status of the military is.
- *Transparency and accountability in the security sector*: the attitude of the defence organisation and the armed forces toward the legislature and 'watchdog' committees; the provision of information to *elected representatives* from within the defence organisation; whether there is a functioning *public* information system (serving society-at-large); whether an annual defence report and/or regular White Papers on defence exist; whether 'forward programmes' are produced (and published) from time to time (and whether they embody well-founded medium- and long-term costings and budgetary projections); whether these are produced after consultation with 'outside' expertise; what the influence of the legislature is in this; whether there is sufficient knowledge and expertise in the legislature and among parliamentary staff to exert real influence; whether parliamentarians have adequate – and genuinely independent – information; on the frequency of meetings of the (principal) specialist defence, security, and

foreign relations committees; and how often they initiate formal investigations/inquiries in a year.

- *Informed public debate*: on the scale, activity, assertiveness, knowledge and influence of NGOs and other *independent* policy analysis institutions that are active in the security area (including University-based centres); the presence and activities of government-directed and government-funded 'think tanks'; the presence of a broadly-based 'security community' outside government which engages in regular dialogue with the authorities and offers regular commentary on public policy; the influence of interest-groups (pressure-groups) in security and defence decision-making; the reporting on and debating of security and defence issues by the print and broadcast media; the level of expertise in these media so far as defence and security are concerned.

### ***DEMCON-SEE***

At the time of finishing the 'NATO study', CESS started a three-year programme that aims to educate parliamentarians and their staffers of seven South East European countries on legislative oversight of the security sector (DEMCON-SEE). The programme entails the organisation of several workshops in each country, in which parliamentarians from the host country and from neighbouring countries are engaged. Apart from instruction on the means of a parliament to exercise oversight, the workshops also provide a platform for legislators from the region to get acquainted, and to exchange experiences and viewpoints.

In DEMCON-SEE the basics of legislative oversight are elaborated upon by, again, David Greenwood. He has written an article that is being used to introduce the essentials of parliamentary oversight to the target group: the parliamentarians. DEMCON-SEE's subsequent sessions and workshops are dealing in greater detail with the essentials that are laid out in this article, which focus is on transparency and accountability.

The way for the legislature to effectively scrutinise the executive is through the democratic imperative of the right to know (on behalf of the people). Transparency is the key word here, as there should be 'open government' (i.e. providing information

about the business of government, including at least the general directions of the authorities' thinking prior to policy decision-making). A similar form of transparency should exist towards the media, NGOs, the civil society and the public at large.

The fundamental obligation for the executive is to be committed to transparency and to acknowledge that parliamentarians have the 'right' to know (there are some exceptions for state secrets), instead of arbitrarily providing information on the basis of the need to know. The government is accountable to the parliament for all it does. Executive accountability can be divided into two: policy accountability (the obligation to reveal and explain actions and decisions in all areas of public affairs) and financial accountability (the obligation to declare and justify expenditures for all public purposes).

The main responsibility for parliamentarians is to provide effective oversight on the different areas of the executive power, such as the scrutinising of policy-making, planning, programming and budgeting. This not only implies overseeing the different processes, but also to scrutinise the implementation of policies, plans, programmes and budgets and to expose the cases where executive action does not match with declaratory policy or where resources management has been uneconomic, inefficient or ineffective (through ex-post evaluation). The constitutional provisions that underpin the right to know are therefore essential to enable the parliament to exercise oversight: it must have the power to send for the people and papers that must be interrogated and inspected.

It is impossible for there to be meaningful oversight if the legislature is denied access to information about at least the general directions of the administration's thinking before policy decisions are taken and about objectives once decisions have been taken (so that it can function as an interlocutor on policy formulation); and about the content of resultant governmental plans, programmes and budgets (so that it can comment on policy implementation). Similarly, legislators must have access to detailed material about intended expenditures, preferably data relating funds to programmes – and hence objectives – and ideally multi-year projections and not simply the current or immediately forthcoming year's figures (if they are to approve the allocation of resources); and they must receive a detailed record of actual expenditures on personnel, supplies and capital projects in every area of the state's



business (if they are to fulfil their classic and value-for-money audit responsibilities). None of these facts and figures will be forthcoming unless the elected representatives have established their 'right to know' about the relevant matters.

Legislators have various institutions and procedures at their disposal to conduct their role constantly and effectively. Concerning institutions: (a) specialist committees are the prime instruments for a successful oversight, as these can organise hearings in which to interrogate individuals and focus on the continuous inspection of documents (these committees can issue reports that contribute to the debate on policies and resource allocation and management); (b) permanent parliamentary staffs are not a *fait accompli* for every parliamentarian, but it is considered as a force multiplier as it serves the parliament and its individual members; and (c) the audit office is a crucial support for the legislature, as its professional staff acts as a financial watchdog. Regarding procedures: (a) the establishment of a question time is of enormous value as well, since the executive has to come to the legislature to give account to the parliament. It is a procedure to get information directly from the executive. When televised, government officials will be even more careful and cautious in their preparations. In addition, when the minister has to personally provide answers, his bureaucrats will be pressed to prepare best. (b) Special debates are also important, as they can be organised due to the appearance of an important government policy statement or of a major parliamentary report. (c) Routine debates can be invoked to consider the overall state budget. This procedure is important for two reasons: first of all regarding the principle 'no taxation without representation', and secondly the parliament's right to oversee the spending priorities. (d) Government publications on its work also enhances the effective legislative oversight, as there are: major policy statements (reports and budgets), a detailed budget for the forthcoming year, annual accounts, performance reports, project statements and manpower reports.

When a government is half-hearted in its commitment to transparency and 'open' government, then democratic oversight will fail. One reason for this is that openness is a precondition for the emergence of a 'security community' of NGOs, think tanks and academics who pay attention to these affairs, *and* for informed coverage of security issues in the print and broadcast media. This combination is valuable because it not only feeds the legislature and improves elected representatives' ability to exercise oversight, it can also generate information and promote debate, facilitating the engagement of society-at-large in defence-related matters.

### III. The Practice of Democratic Control of the Armed Forces

#### *The MAP States*

In October 2001, the division of roles between the President and the government in **Estonia** was still unclear. The command chain was uncertain, resulting in a modus vivendi between the President, Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Defence Forces. The Chief of Defence Forces until mid-2000 was not subordinate to the minister of Defence, but to the President. With the pater patrias Lennart Meri now out of the Presidency (who had a firm grasp on the command chain) it might become easier to solve the remaining issues. The MoD is almost exclusively staffed with civilian officials (many lack defence expertise) and sometimes struggles with the GS over the division of roles. However, there are also frequent meetings between the two. Legislative oversight is firmly established, as the parliament has considerable powers, the defence committee meets three times a week, the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence or CHOD appear for parliament weekly, and MPs personally know military officers. State Defence Courses are provided to MPs and other groups (e.g. journalists, who lack knowledge and expertise on defence and security matters). The popular Defence League also enhances the development of knowledge of military affairs. The NGO and academic community is not very influential.

With regard to democratic civil-military relations all **Latvia's** legislation is in place and there is a clear division of roles and responsibilities between the President, Prime Minister, government and parliament. However, Riga obviously misunderstands civilian control: except for the NATO Integration Secretary there are only civilians working within the MoD, which results in a lack of professional military knowledge. In this respect the GS is complaining about the sometimes-difficult co-operation with the MoD. Elected representatives play a prominent role in defence affairs. Over the years expertise has grown within the parliamentary defence committee, which has an excellent relationship with the armed forces. The provision of information from the MoD is excellent as well. In addition, the defence establishment is highly rated by the public (e.g. the MoD cannot keep up with volunteer service demand), and security and defence issues receive wide attention in the media. Furthermore, the MoD offers basic education to journalists (also to those from the Russian minority). There also is

a small but active security community outside of the government, e.g. NGOs and academic experts.

In **Lithuania** necessary legislation with regard to democratic civil-military relations has been put in place; and in practice divisions of authority, civilian control of the armed forces and democratic oversight of the defence organisation are well established. Both the President and the parliament make decisions on mobilisation, declaration of a state of war and the deployment of armed forces. To enhance co-ordination a National Security Authority has been established (including various government institutions). The Defence Staff is integrated into the MoD and falls under the authority of the Defence Minister. Civilians and military work closely together. Within the Seimas the Defence Committee, National Security Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee and the NATO Commission are closely following the activities of the MoD and MFA. Legislative oversight could probably be more effective: the constraint is that some parliamentarians have little knowledge of defence affairs. Public confidence in the country's armed forces could be higher; but since mid-2001 the country has been improving information channels to inform the public about the military. The relation between the military and academic institution and NGOs is good, with many joint activities. Also more NGOs are becoming involved in defence and security issues.

In **Macedonia** clear divisions of authority and civilian direction of the military have not been established. Civilian control over the national security system depends more on personal authorities within the executive than on constitutional mechanisms. Personal assertiveness and authority determines executive direction, as neither the constitution nor the Defence Law has clarified the competencies and responsibilities between the President and the government. In this respect Prime Minister Georgievski has taken the reins from former President Gligorov, at the expense of the current President Trajkovski. Within the government it is sometimes unclear where the authority lies concerning internal security, with the Defence Minister or the Interior Minister. The parliament is generally disposed to support the government's proposals. The nine-member committee on internal policy and defence (with three expert-members) is diversified by party-affiliation and by ethnicity, but rarely meets and lacks the capacity to conduct its work effectively. The security community outside

of the defence establishment and the government is weak, with a few NGOs working mainly on human rights and minority issues.

**Slovenia** has an institutional and legal framework that clearly stipulates the powers of the President, the Prime Minister, the government and the parliament. The General Staff is an integral part of the MoD and the Chief of Staff is answerable to the minister. Concerning civil-military relations, the inherited weak military after the breakaway from Yugoslavia caused an 'overcivilianisation' of the defence apparatus. The lack of military culture and professionalism resulted in a weakening of the GS, which is even overruled by the MoD in technical military matters. Concerning legislative oversight, the parliament exercises very strict control. On the other hand, legislative oversight is not sufficient – with no effective oversight of the intelligence agencies, no transparency in procurement decisions and insufficient information on defence budgets. There is also an insufficient knowledge within the defence committee, nor is there a strong security community upon which it can tap.

In **Albania** a small community of individual experts and NGOs supports the legislature. Many observers say that the parliament is only pretending to exercise oversight. There are monthly meetings, but the legislature has traditionally not been very much involved in overseeing the armed forces and many reforms have been approved without prior discussion. There are monthly committee meetings, but there is only rubber-stamp approval on security-related issues. It helps that the Socialists have a majority in the legislature and that government's decisions therefore have been very easy to pass, without any prior discussion. The country has implemented only some of the basic features of a democratic, transparent and civilian-controlled defence planning system, and also officials recognise that much more needs to be done.

**Slovakia's** legal and constitutional provisions already stood the test during the Meciar period. In 1999 the executive power of the President was limited, and the division of competencies between the President and Prime Minister, as well as the role of parliament and its bodies, was clarified by the Constitutional Court. Since September 1998 things have improved. There is clear policy direction. The General Staff has now been brought from Trencin to Bratislava and is being integrated into the MoD. The parliament is well-informed and actively involved in policy formation.

Parliamentary oversight is exercised through the Council of Defence and Security, which exercises budget authority and approves of the main security and defence documents. Within the parliament there is a large majority that supports NATO membership, and also supports the main documents that are now adopted. Outside the defence establishment there is a lack of knowledge and expertise, also within NGOs and academic institutions and the media. The debates conducted outside the defence community are therefore of a different nature.

In **Bulgaria** the responsibilities and powers of the President, Prime Minister and the government are all legally underpinned and clearly defined. The military is also subordinate to the civil power. There are civilian defence minister (and deputies), and civilians and military work side-by-side in the MoD. Legislative oversight is formally in place. However, the practice shows a different picture, with only limited control by the parliament. Over the past years, governments have not been committed to transparency (they did not routinely publish details). Discussions on defence matters were limited to scrutiny of an abbreviated budget, and to specific issues. Even recently the MoD has been criticised for its behaviour in procurement issues, as it sometimes makes use of the secrecy clause in the Law of Public Tender in order not to involve parliament in their decision-making. Nevertheless, under the new chairman of the parliamentary committee, the elected representatives are more energetic conducting their work. The legislature also can rely on a wide security community of NGOs and academic institutions. The print and broadcast media provide good coverage of security matters. The parliament is currently upgrading its website, in order to meet the criticism that insufficient information on the reports of hearings is being provided to the society-at-large.

In **Romania** there are two executives, since the responsibilities of the President and the Prime Minister show considerable overlap. The government is directly answerable to the parliament, but the president is not. He chairs the National Supreme Defence Council (NSDC), which deals with internal and international security (including secret services), prepares main security documents, and approves them as binding decisions. So the NSDC structure and position mirrors a strong tendency towards a presidential political system within a parliamentary-constitutional democracy. Next, the procedures for legislative oversight are in place, but the extent to which they function is a different question. There is a general sense that too much

legislation is achieved through the issuance of emergency ordinance. There are two committees for defence, public order and national security (one in the Senate and one in the Chamber of Deputies), with experienced members in them, but also much overlap between them. The executive provides only limited transparency regarding the defence budget and procurement (although there have been some improvements recently). There is a lack of structural transparency, and much depends on 'old boy' networks. Oversight also suffers from a lack of independent expertise, and the lack of authority to summon governmental experts. Finally, there is no rotation of security experts between government and independent scholarly institutions and real dialogue on security and defence issues is non-existent. Also within the media the level of expertise is low.

### ***The Three New NATO Members***

In the area of civil-military relations, well before Madrid the **Czech Republic** had the necessary legal provisions in place and a stable political environment. However, regarding civilian direction of the armed forces there was no clear division of labour between the political leadership and the GS. Legislative oversight suffers from a very peculiar problem: a lack of interest among parliamentarians in defence affairs (which seems to be mirrored in the Czech society). Even the issue of accession to NATO was only a minor subject for discussion during the later 1990s. Only a month before Madrid an interdepartmental committee was set up by the government to promote the Czech candidacy. Political parties did not focus on military and security matters until it became clear that NATO enlargement was imminent. Little or nothing was done to raise public awareness on the issue. Nor was there much pressure on the defence organisation to show its seriousness by streamlining itself. Also after gaining membership the preparations were sluggish (e.g. in military academies English was initially not even made a compulsory subject).

In **Hungary** the separation of the MoD and the General Staff was not tackled until end-2001. The role and extent of influence of the Prime Minister in defence and security is dependent on leadership style. Former Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Secretariat has since 1998 played a large initiating and co-ordinating role. Parliamentary control of the defence organisation tended to be reactive and superficial (negative control). A slight improvement is reported in recent years. Better

information provision by the MoD to Parliament – especially in budgetary matters – and more civilian expertise at the disposal of the parliamentary committee on defence was necessary. The lack of (independent) knowledgeable civilians has been the main problem in the area of civil-military relations in Hungary. However, the new government of Peter Medgyessy seems to be more committed to a constructive co-operation with the parliament, and towards an 'open government'.

In **Poland**, within the civil-military relations area the unclear division of responsibilities between the President and the Prime Minister during wartime has been the most important ambiguity. The relationship between the MoD and the GS has been put on a proper basis only since Poland's accession to NATO. Within the MoD though, only 20 per cent of the personnel are civilian, resulting in a lack of expertise in its central institutions. The legislative oversight seems to be in a good shape, with many experienced members in the relevant committees (budget, defence and NATO integration). The Sejm has its own capacities to analyse defence issues, and it also engages outside expertise and institutions. The provision of information from the MoD to the parliament is still improving. The armed forces are among the most trusted state institutions in Poland. The media is also giving considerable attention to defence and security matters.

### ***States that have been created out of a Violent Conflict***

Regarding democratic control over the armed forces in **Croatia**, there has been considerable progress since the current government came into place. Different acts and legislation have been passed since January 2000, and many of these have been prepared with the active involvement of NGOs and academics. Due to the new legislation the parliament acquired new tools to exercise its accounting function. The Sabor now passes the budget, decides upon peace deployments and appoints high military officers. However, there still is a lack of expertise and knowledge among parliamentarians, and a lack of capable staff. In addition, the media is not playing a particularly constructive role. This can be explained by the lack of knowledge and by the lack of communication with the government (mainly MoD) and armed forces, which results in a suspicious media. The problems concerning security sector reform (i.e. mainly downsizing the armed forces) lie in the absence of political decision-making. Whilst the legislation is in place, the implementation is not taking place.

Legislative oversight in **Serbia-Montenegro** is a special case, as under the current constitution (that will probably be replaced at the end of August) two parliaments have different powers in controlling the armed forces (the Serbian legislature deals with police forces, and the Federal legislature with the military). In addition, the parliament is not controlling the government but still trying to deal with itself. Miroslav Hadzic argues that except for adopting a restrictive military budget, the federal parliament has not made one move to establish its oversight over the military. Next to that the public has no idea of the procedures for decision-making in the supreme civil command, or of the degree of accountability to the parliament (however, even parliamentarians seem to be unaware of their powers). Hadzic also says that in the absence of a state plan to transform the two armies and the two civilian supreme commands, the military is drafting the strategy instead of the inconclusive parliament.<sup>2</sup> The fundamental weakness of MPs in the FRY is that they are not protected by a secure tenure. They have to give in to party pressure, and thus are not able to operate independently. It has been said that the issue of legislative oversight cannot be solved in the parliaments but has to be solved in party offices, because that is where the real power lies. Furthermore, a framework of rules and procedures is present in the FRY. Therefore, the obstacle for effective legislative oversight seems an absence of political will among the ruling coalition.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is encountering problems that are shared by other former Yugoslav republics, but also some which are very specific. It is for example not clear to whom political institutions are accountable, nor for which purpose some institutions exist. The Dayton Agreement resulted in a framework where the local people have no authority or responsibility, as BiH is effectively a UN protectorate. Therefore, the parliaments are too weak to establish legislative oversight over the armed forces. A common problem is the control retained by former political parties. The current problems of legislative oversight are manifold: such as an insufficient parliamentary framework; no state level MoD; no linkage between the Standing Committee on Military Matters (in absence of the MoD acting as such) and the parliament; and no relation between press and parliament. The division of power and tasks between the parliament and the president (presidency) also needs to be clarified. Another problem is the lack of journalist expertise and knowledge on defence issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Miroslav Hadzic, A Reform Concept still Lacking: Parliamentary Control in Yugoslavia, PCAF e-News, March 2001.



## IV. Concluding Remarks

The initial conditions under which the former communist countries had to set up mechanisms of democratic control of the armed forces vary greatly. The Baltic States had to do this from scratch, whereas other countries had to convert inherited Warsaw Pact defence structures. Perhaps more importantly, in the Baltic States and the Yugoslav successor states new political elites emerged, of which only some played a role under the communist regimes of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. It was therefore easier for these countries – compared with Albania, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania – to establish a framework for democratic control of the armed forces. In addition, the historical legacy affected the political culture (the Baltic States and their smouldering quest for independence, Macedonia and Slovenia as republics of the relatively liberal communist Yugoslavia, again compared with the more dictatorial regimes in Albania, Bulgaria and Romania, or with the violent past of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia-Montenegro).

Turning to the purpose of my presentation – the evaluation of the efforts of post-communist states in setting up frameworks of democratic control of the armed forces – some general conclusions can be made. I am not basing them on the continuous and country-by-country comparison of certain yardsticks, but on the practical experiences of the work that CESS has conducted in the area as has already been explained.<sup>3</sup>

1. There should be a clear division of authority between the head of state and the head of government and the latter's security sector ministers. In peacetime, the overall authority has to lie with the Minister of Defence. The government should be committed to transparency.
2. The GS has to be integrated in the MoD, with clearly separated roles and responsibilities. Some countries have had difficulties to integrate the General Staff in the structure of the MoD. Also the division of roles and responsibilities between the MoD and the GS has been problematic or still needs to be solved. Concerning civilian control of the defence organisation, in some countries there

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<sup>3</sup> Even though the CESS 'NATO Study' posed a whole list of questions (see page 4) under the heading of the Carnovale-Simon test, the report highlighted only those areas that required improvement, or that were being dealt with. I have used a similar approach towards the other countries that are part of DEMCON-SEE.

have been great misunderstandings. In some countries there are hardly any military servicemen working within the MoDs, resulting in a domination of civilians, who mostly lack the necessary expertise.

3. Also the relationship between the executive and the legislature should be clearly defined. However, there are often significant problems with the practical execution of the roles and responsibilities of the legal and governmental institutions mentioned in the constitution. As David Betz has remarked, although in theory the nature and limits of parliamentary oversight are determined by the constitutional and political nature unique to that state, in practice it does not necessarily follow this pattern. Parliaments may have the legal right to perform general and budgetary oversight while at the same time for practical and political reasons they fail to do so.<sup>4</sup> Procedures have to be established between committees, ministerial departments and the government. Members of opposition parties should be included in the defence committee. Parliamentarians should not be deliberately acquiescent to the executive. It is therefore crucial that political power lies in the parliament, and not in the offices of political parties. Logically, MPs should be protected by a secure tenure. Permanent and capable staffers should assist parliamentarians. Currently in many countries a lack of information and a lack of knowledge obstruct effective legislative oversight. When parliamentarians are approving essential documents and legislation without even knowing why, then legislative oversight might even be counter-effective. It could also lead to a stubborn legislature, that avidly tries to influence the military with whatever means are available, and which does not pay due respect to the military's special skills and expertise. Another complicating factor is that parliamentarians in defence committees are often too overburdened with responsibilities.
4. The government and the armed forces should raise the awareness of security and defence issues among the civil society (NGOs, universities, and media) through the provision of information or even education. Only when the public knows the rationale behind defence and security policies, will it be able to give support. Concerning popular perception of democratic control of armed forces, the print and broadcast media should receive attention as well, as they were for a

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<sup>4</sup> David Betz, *Democratic Civil-Military Relations in Practice: Implications for Theory*, Taking Stock on Civil Military Relations Conference, organised by the Centre for European Security Studies, The Hague, 9-12 May 2001.

long time not able to develop or acquire any knowledge on defence and security affairs. The government should develop a PR strategy in this respect, as well as create channels to disseminate information. NGOs, research institutes and universities have roles to play as well. These organisations and the media can put tough questions about defence to the authorities and can inform the society-at-large about the answers conveyed. In order to guarantee popular confidence in the security sector, the authorities should also be committed to transparency towards the media, NGOs, the civil society and the public at large. The media should be provided with sufficient information on the country's defence organisation and its plans and programmes. A lack of co-operation between the media and the government (especially the MoD) might create suspicion or even distrust.



Established in 2000 on the initiative of the Swiss government, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) encourages and supports States and non-State governed institutions in their efforts to strengthen democratic and civilian control of armed and security forces, and promotes international cooperation within this field, initially targeting the Euro-Atlantic regions.

The Centre collects information, undertakes research and engages in networking activities in order to identify problems, to establish lessons learned and to propose the best practices in the field of democratic control of armed forces and civil-military relations. The Centre provides its expertise and support to all interested parties, in particular governments, parliaments, military authorities, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, academic circles.

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