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Security Policies in the Western Balkans: Croatia

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Croatia

Zvonimir Mahečić

Strategic Documents - Context

The process of preparation and passing of the strategic documents in Croatia was a long and troublesome affair. From the second half of the 90s, some political and scientific circles gradually became aware that it would be necessary to pass the main strategic papers in order to offer state institutions, and the society as a whole, some sort of anchoring point from which to shape the main parameters of security, foreign affairs and defence policies. However, until the year 2000, this awareness did not gain ground among all predominant political sector players.

The most common reservations occasionally expressed were that Croatia defended itself in the war without strategic papers, that the existence of the strategic papers did not guarantee the shaping of and pursuing a sound state policy (all the above mentioned policies included), that strategic papers, if accepted and passed by the state bodies, could even prevent pursuing adequate and necessary activities in the ever-changing global and regional environment, and finally, that for the well being of the society it was much more important to have quality people within the political process and sound, battle-proven professionals within the framework of the security and defence structures than just a sheer piece of paper.

The fact that the then President was not satisfied with sporadic drafts and strategic papers offered and presented to him was certainly one of the reasons why Croatia did not have strategic papers developed and adopted by that time. He believed that, with his political and historical scientific background, he was better suited to shape, direct and answer all strategic questions and issues Croatia might be confronted with.

It was only when the previous opposition in the form of the coalition of six parties, led by the Social Democratic Party, won the parliamentary elections in January 2000 that the issue of passing strategic documents became ripe for resolving, one way or another.

Croatian Strategic Framework

After many years of deliberations, the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Croatia (National Security Strategy, 2002) was adopted by the parliament in March 2002. On the very same day, March 19th, the parliament also adopted the Defence Strategy of the Republic of Croatia (Defence Strategy, 2002). Exactly one year later, on March 19th 2003, the President of the Republic adopted the Military Strategy of the Republic of Croatia (Military Strategy, 2003). However, in order to understand fully the Croatian strategic documents, we have to go back to the past to shed some light on the process of their development.



Very soon after coming to power, in the summer of the year 2000, the Coalition Government started the project entitled “Croatia in the 21st Century”. Within the framework of this project the most important strategic documents were to be proposed and passed in order to take effect¹. It was not only about the security and defence. Health care, economy, culture, foreign affairs and all other established and crucial state-related fields of activities were supposed to develop their strategic documents in order to decide on state policies and shape state activities in the future. This was an overwhelming and very serious task.

What was very important at that moment was the fact that the Government did not want ministries and assorted state agencies to develop their respective strategic papers. Instead, the Government contracted independent teams for each specific field of activities and tasked them with preparation of the strategic papers. State ministries and agencies were to offer all available support to all those teams in the initial phases of the project, and to review proposals of the strategic documents at the closing stages of the project when eventual discrepancies or different opinions between independent teams and state representatives were to be sorted out.

Title	Adopted	Amended or updated
National Security Strategy	March 2002	No
Defence Strategy	March 2002	No
Military Strategy	March 2003	No
Strategic Defence Review	September 2005	No
Armed Forces Long-Term Development Plan*	June 2006	No

Table 3: Strategic Documents of the Republic of Croatia

* Although theoretically speaking not really strategic document, part of its content covers some strategic considerations.

It must be said that the Government and its structures generally did not interfere with the work of the team that was tasked with covering the security of the state and society. However, at the end of the project, in the winter and early spring of 2002., after almost a year and a half of invested time and effort, some circles within the Intelligence Community and the Ministry of Defence were not satisfied with the outlook of the security sector offered by the National Security Study, and managed to reverse the situation. All the main ideas and concepts offered by the independent team were tacitly shelved, and a small group of people (five or six) from the main state ministries were tasked with drafting the strategic documents within a few weeks' time.

¹ The intention of the project was for the teams to propose strategic concepts, main strategic ideas, even more or less comprehensive and overarching drafts of the strategic documents, based on which official state structures would prepare the final documents to be passed in the Parliament.

Strategic Hierarchy

As we have already seen, in the case of the Republic of Croatia, two out of three security and defence related strategies, namely the National Security Strategy and Defence Strategy, were prepared in haste, over the same period, and passed in the parliament on the same day.

Consequently, it would be very hard to claim that the level of generalization and importance of these strategic documents is following any kind of smooth transition from the more general and important documents to more specific ones. This could apply only to the relation between the Military Strategy and the two strategies already mentioned, as the period of one year theoretically left enough room for the Military Strategy to be more specific and more rooted in the accomplishments of the two strategies passed before.

However, this observation is valid only if we bear in mind the timeframe and the more specific topic and area of responsibility of the Military Strategy. Judging by the results, i.e., the resolution of some important topics in the Military Strategy (which will be dealt with to some extent in the further text), it could only be said that the time between its adoption and the adoption of two earlier strategic documents could have been used better.

Apparently, this explains some overlapping of the contents of the three strategic documents. What is even worse, reading the texts can become an arduous task, as they were all written in a very bureaucratic language which is often very hard to follow. For an average citizen and even some professionals, such as media reporters and scientists, reading the documents, understanding them and reaching conclusions from them can be a difficult task. This can partly be explained by the educational and professional characteristics of the group that drafted the texts.

Key Factors in Adopting and Updating of the Strategic Documents

The general social and political framework which influenced the final attempts at preparation and adoption of the first set of security and defence strategies have been explained to some extent in the first chapter. However, there is more to it.

Shortly after the coalition centre-left wing Government came to power in 2000, Croatia joined the Partnership for Peace Program. The Coalition Government soon realized that the existence of the key strategic documents is one (certainly not the only one and probably not even the most important one) of the pre-requisites for Croatia in order to prove the validity of its attempts to make up for the time lost in the first ten years of independence. The executive and parliamentary officials involved in security and defence affairs soon realized that all other countries had already passed or were in the process of passing their strategic documents. Thus, a logical conclusion was that Croatia had to do the same. Furthermore, strategic documents were seen as panacea that should prove to the then NATO member countries and western governments that the Coalition Government meant business. In that sense, strategic documents were expected not only to serve their purpose, but even to redress some shortcomings in other areas of domestic policies and international affairs and relations.



A quite similar situation occurred a few years later with the Strategic Defence Review. The plan for the preparation of such a document was first announced in the Annual National Program for 2003, despite the fact that no legal, procedural, strategic or doctrinal foundations existed for the adoption of this document. At that time there was no clear idea regarding the Review's content or its place in the hierarchy of security and defence documents. Its purpose, apart from emulating and copying other states, was equally unclear, as well as what state institutions should be involved in its preparation and adoption. The series of constitutional and legal changes and adjustments undertaken in the period 2000-2002 did not include provisions for preparing, passing and execution of such a document. All of a sudden, the Ministry of Defence officials realized this was a very important document in many countries, which resulted in its incorporation in the body of strategic documents. However, the preparation, adoption and execution of this document, not to mention the responsibilities of the state institutions, ministries, agencies and organizations involved in the process, was full of ambiguity for quite a while, because there were no legal provisions in any of the recently updated laws. In the end, the Strategic Defence Review was adopted in the spring 2005 and very soon became *ersatz* replacement for obsolete strategic documents hastily adopted a couple of years before..

Institutions Tasked with Preparation of the Strategic Documents

Generally speaking, during the first round of preparations of strategic documents there were very few legal provisions clearly stating tasks and authorities of selected state institutions in the process of drafting. Later, in the process of adapting security and defence legal framework, these authorities were introduced in the new versions of the main security and defence laws.

As mentioned before, it is also interesting that in the year 2000 the Coalition Government did not want sections, departments or individual experts from the governmental organizations to be significantly involved in the process of preparation and drafting of the strategic documents. They offered two reasons for such an approach.

First, they wanted a fresh approach in the preparation of the strategic framework; an approach that the majority of those who were involved in the then decision-making process believed could not be expected from established structures and institutional approach. Second, it was hypothesized that professionals working in the selected state institutions on various levels were simply involved too much in every-day operations and activities of their institutions and did not have time, strength and focus for the preparation of strategic documents.

Consequently, the work related to the preparation of the strategic documents was mostly completed by predominantly independent group of experts. As the preparation phase was nearing the end, certain problems arose threatening to jeopardize the whole process. It was decided that a specific set of strategies should be drafted independently from the work already done by the group involved in the preparation of the strategic framework. However, this task was assigned again to just a group of a few people from selected institutions who prepared the strategic documents almost overnight, without significant involvement of the structures as such.

Domestic NGOs were not involved in the first round of drafting of the strategic documents. This was partly due to the unwillingness of the official structures to give the NGOs a significant role in the process. But in truth, it was not really hard for the official structures to take such a position because almost none of the NGOs active and operational at that period managed to profile themselves as a significant and important subject in the security and defence matters.

It is estimated that there are approximately 20000 NGOs in Croatia. Out of this number, less than 1000 are operational and have only a few members. The security and defence oriented NGOs are almost non-existent. Some of them were established as the more or less private or family ventures. It is still not clear whether they will develop into real NGOs or remain just small security and defence related enterprises. Some others can hardly be considered NGOs due to their strong political ties with the political parties, especially those from the right-wing political background.

The influence and the role of NGOs, as an instrument for establishing the civilian oversight and influence of the civil society on the operations of the national security structures, including the process of preparation and adoption of the strategic documents, cannot be overestimated. But we still have to wait for them to develop up to the desired level and take the role that belongs to them in establishing democratic and civilian control and oversight over the defence and security structures.

The situation was somewhat different regarding the involvement of the international organizations or other states. On one hand, all support, advice and recommendations that was obtained from international sources were welcomed either by the independent expert group that was drafting the strategic framework or by the official state institutions. The contacts with their representatives were established on almost daily basis and both sides were paying serious attention to anything coming from these sources. This does not necessarily mean that every advice was readily accepted.

On the other hand, the official state institutions and structures did not want the international subjects to be involved in the process of preparation of the strategic framework. Both state institutions and the independent group felt that we should be able to prepare, draft and pass the strategic framework on our own. This was not the consequence of any antagonism towards any particular side, but simply the result of the belief that there must exist within the society a critical mass of expert knowledge reliable enough to safeguard the preparation of the strategic framework on our own.

As for the public, the media followed very closely all the steps leading to the preparation of the strategic framework and offered to the public and the citizens a lot of information along the way. The public, although not directly involved in the process of the preparation of the documents, was at least well informed about it. The media represent an important corrective instrument in the operations of the security and defence structures. Unfortunately, it is more than obvious that reporters and editors do not have the necessary knowledge to cover the security and defence issues. It is sometimes frustrating to read the articles in the newspapers, only to find out that their authors are not comfortable even with the security and



defence related legal framework. If they cannot keep the track of the laws that are accessible to every citizen, it is almost impossible to expect them to have any deeper knowledge about the security and defence structures, operations, reforms, changes in the security and defence environment, etc. Furthermore, we have to face the truth that the media are mostly interested in scandals and political struggles resulting from or influencing the security and defence structures and functions. It is noticeable that almost every daily newspaper has a favourite political option which is used to filter the information according to political affiliations.

The general public is too concerned with the survival and its economic well-being to pay much attention security and defence issues. There is also a serious lack of security and defence related knowledge among the general population that prevents the establishment of any coherent views on the part of the general public. In addition, what has already been said about the media is also true for the public. People tend to take sides according to their political views, disregarding any information that might shed a different light and perspective on certain security and defence related issues. The necessity of the defence reform is a clear sign. Most people do not understand all the intricacies of the reform and the fact that some people might be 'hurt' by undertaking the process of the reform.

Lastly, there is no regular annual publication covering the security and defence matters with the objective of informing and educating the public about all important events regarding the armed forces' operations. It has been already noticed that more information is available to the international organisations and other states than to our own public. This is partly the consequence of the lack of interest on the part of the general public and the weak position and influence of the NGOs, and partly the result of the lack of understanding and initiative in the Ministry of Defence, the Armed Forces, but above all the political institutions responsible for the security and defence operations. This will hopefully change in the future.

On the other hand, the academia and the scientific community were represented in the independent team, though not at the level that some scientists, from state or other institutions believed was necessary. This very fact at the end of the process of preparation of strategic framework proved to be decisive in its tacit demise. Some professionals and scientists started an organized attack on the resulting study containing strategic framework and managed to find support among the officials in some of the key state ministries and agencies. In the end, they succeeded in abolishing the results of the eighteen months long work. It should be mentioned that the core of the independent group tasked with the preparation of the strategic framework consisted of thirteen professionals, scientists, experts and officials, while nearly two hundred other professionals, scientists, experts and officials were involved, one way or another, in the preparation of the strategic framework. But obviously it was impossible to involve everybody who felt hurt by the omission.

Croatian parliament adopted the strategic documents which had been prepared overnight, within only a couple of weeks, by even smaller group of people from various institutions and without any significant public, professional or scientific involvement and review, without public workshops and round tables that would enable representatives of different social groups to have a say regarding the re-

sults of the work. A discussion in the Parliament's Committee about the content of the proposed strategic documents was organised when the work had already been over and just before the adoption of the documents in the Parliament.

Responsibilities in the Process of Preparation and Adoption of Strategic Documents

The Croatian parliament has a significant role in shaping the security and defence policy. Its key authorities and responsibilities regarding the main strategic documents are as follows:

- It adopts the National Security Strategy and the Defence Strategy;
- It approves the Armed Forces Long-Term Development Plan, etc.

According to the then and present Constitution, the President's authorities and responsibilities regarding the preparation and adoption of the main security and defence-related strategic documents are as follows:

- To approve the proposal of the Defence Strategy,
- To adopt the Military Strategy.

The Government's responsibilities and authorities, as the main operative body tasked with the management of the state affairs, at the time of preparation of the first round of strategic documents included:

- proposal of the Defence strategy to the parliament,
- proposal of the Armed Forces Long-Term Development Plan to the parliament,
- presenting of the Annual Report on the Defence Readiness to the parliament,
- control of the operations of the security structures, etc.

At that period, the civilian Minister of Defence represented the first step in exercising democratic control of the Armed Forces. The change of the Constitution and defence-related laws did not alter significantly the competencies and responsibilities of the Ministry of Defence, though it did introduce more streamlined relations with the General Staff. Also, these changes created a relatively clear position of the Ministry as a middle step between the General Staff as a professional body and the Government, the President and the parliament as the top political institutions responsible for the national security and defence of the country. The strong position of the Ministry was evident from the fact that basically all proposals, acts or documents of the General Staff had to get the minister's signature or at least consent, before being presented to the above mentioned political institutions.

The responsibilities of the Ministry of Defence included:

- the preparation of the Defence Strategy draft;
- the Military Strategy draft had to be approved by the Minister;
- the preparation of the Annual Report on Readiness,
- the preparation of the Armed Forces Long-Term Development Plan,



- contributing to the process of preparation of the National Security Strategy, etc.

A revised legal framework also made the role of the General Staff much clearer in preparing all major acts and documents regarding the security and defence of the country. In the past, the position was not so clear because the General Staff's responsibilities and its relation with the Ministry and the top political institutions were in most cases not mentioned in the laws. The roles and responsibilities of the Armed Forces or the General Staff were to:

- prepare the Military Strategy,
- participate in the preparation of the Defence Strategy,
- participate in the preparation of the Armed Forces Long-Term Development Plan, etc.

According to the provisions of the Security Services Law, the National Security Council (NSC) exercises democratic control of the security services. This is a political body tasked with facilitating the co-operation between the President and the Government in directing the operations of the intelligence and counter-intelligence agencies. The members of the NSC are the President, the Prime Minister, a member of the Government responsible for the National security, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Justice and the Chief of the General Staff. Other politicians, scientists and professionals can be invited if necessary.

Internal coherence and soundness of the Strategic Framework

The preparation of the first round of strategic documents brought to the light certain elements of vital importance for the future security of the state and the nation, as well as other elements, some positive and some negative, which directly influence the future cooperation of state institutions.

Regarding the relations between the government and the parliament, it has to be taken into account that the parliament's role is not to take the operational lead in state affairs. The duty of the parliament is to exercise democratic oversight - not democratic control - of the security and defence structures. Democratic control belongs to the Executive branch, which in turn can be held responsible to the parliament for any action taken. A common practice in this area is that legislative bodies set the legal framework for the development and execution of strategic documents, discuss them and give their opinion on the documents. The top executive level usually gives approval for these documents and bears responsibility for their application.

According to the Constitution and the security and defence related laws, it is a responsibility of the parliament to pass both the National Security Strategy and the Defence Strategy. This seems to be a common solution in the countries in transition, as they have the same historical background. It is true that, in the case of Croatia, the parliament was overly neglected in the past (the first ten years of independence) and the Government was responsible more to the President than to the parliament. However, since the year 2000, when the Coalition Government

came to power, the pendulum has obviously swung in the opposite direction. At the time of adoption of the strategic documents there were clear signs that the parliament was intent on taking certain competencies that did not belong to the legislative body. Actually, this statement would hold even more truth if some intentions, proposed in the drafts of the security and defence laws, were not stopped at the last moment. For instance, during the process of drafting the laws there was an attempt to put Internal Intelligence Control directly under the parliament's oversight. It has finally been changed in the last version of the Security Services Law. If it gets approval, it would mean that the top representative body elected by the people would have the part of the repressive apparatus and armed officials at disposal as well as operational control, which would lead to the establishment of some sort of the parliamentary autocracy or dictatorship. Unfortunately, this was also one example of the political thinking supported by the professionals ready to trade their professional expertise which leads to a complete distortion of the democratic principle of separation of the powers within the society.

The current constitutional regulation by which Croatian parliament is authorized to approve the National Security and Defence Strategy is illogical, because it enables the legislative body to enforce basic documents of the executive branch. The consequence is that the executive body is in the long run practically not responsible for the contents of strategic documents, and can always avoid responsibility or put the blame on the parliament. If the parliament has any issue with the content of the strategic documents it can use its power and authority to demand the resignation of the respective ministers. However, putting the decision making on the content of the fundamental policy documents in the hands of the executive branch seriously undermines the parliament's credibility and dignity and renders it powerless should any issue with the content of the strategic documents occur in the future.

In order to make the national security structures operate successfully, it is necessary to fulfil the following:

1. Every institution and organization of the national security system should participate in preparing the strategic documents. This should be the provision of the National Security Law.
2. In the preparation phase, the parliament should develop basic principles and directions and pass them in the form of the Declaration on National Security. These principles and directions should be respected in the final version of the strategic documents.
3. After the proposals of the strategic documents have been prepared by the executive branch, Croatian Parliament opens discussion and gives its opinion.
4. The President and the Prime Minister, as the Chairmen of the National Security Council approve the strategic documents.

It is essential for the national security system that organizations of the national security structure participate in preparing legal proposals, strategic and planning documents, and carry out an objective evaluation. In addition, they must be empowered or accountable for enforcing by-laws and other doctrinal documents that must be at some point approved by state authorities.



The right of the parliament to discuss the strategic papers is definitely not to be questioned, but on the other hand, it is somewhat puzzling that provisions of the Constitution and the laws, which envisaged that the parliament is in reality the institution which approves and adopts the strategic documents, were not seriously challenged by scientists, professionals, the media and NGOs. Unfortunately, the President, bearing in mind his (or, one day, her) authorities in the defence area, foreign policy and security affairs, does not have a say in this process. Moreover, it is strange that the President has no legal or institutional influence on the process of allocating parts of the state budget to the security, intelligence and defence sector, while on the other hand the President shares responsibility for the security and defence of the country with the government. In this light, the accepted legal provisions might have serious consequences on the development and execution of the security and defence policies, as they logically should be based on the approved strategic documents. How and to what extent this is going to influence the security and defence of the nation remains to be seen.

The results of the Risk Analysis

A complete (with some reservations explained later) list of challenges, risks and threats identified in the still operational and valid Croatian strategic framework is provided in the Table 1 in the Annex to this text. There are, however, some very important remarks that have to be made and taken into consideration in the evaluation of the results of the risk analysis process within Croatian state institutions during the process of preparation of the strategic documents.

The Risk analysis identified nearly twenty different issues that should be included in the content of the National Security Strategy. The first seven issues listed in the Table 1 were actually a part of the Chapter I - *Security Environment and Challenges to the Republic of Croatia*. The rest were the part of the Chapter II -: *Challenges, Risks and Threats to the Republic of Croatia*. One can wonder if this was done by accident or on purpose. Chapter I was meant to offer a more conceptual approach to certain security issues and Chapter III should have been devoted to the enumeration and description of the challenges, risks and threats. The author of this text wonders why some elements were mentioned in Chapter I and then the same ones were partly rephrased later in Chapter III, nor does he understand if this was a sort of message to both local and international readers. But the end result was a somewhat confusing content of the National Security Strategy. This also leaves room for speculation about a possible prioritization of the enumerated threats. It is probably true, although it is not specifically stated anywhere, that the order in which the threats were listed actually represents a certain level of prioritization. Consequently, bearing in mind what has been said about the same threats mentioned in two different chapters, it could be concluded that first seven threats were considered priorities by the authors and MPs. However, this is just a speculation as there are no clear statements in the text of the strategy that might explain this.

If the Risk Analysis description is read carefully, it soon becomes obvious that the authors of the strategy, and later, of course, parliamentary representatives who approved of this document, did not bother too much to specify whether some

of the elements in the Table 1 were considered to be threats, risks or challenges. Consequently, the author of this text was forced to make his own conclusions from the wording and the general idea of the text whenever a clear distinction was not given in the description.

This applies to the subject of the threat as well. Except for some parts of the text that stated more or less clearly that the objective of the strategy was to protect the nation and the citizens from certain threats, in many cases it remains unclear as to what extent certain challenges, risks and threats represent a threat to the state, nation or the society in general. Correspondingly, it is very hard to find a clear statement as to what or who the object of protection is.

The sources of threats were in most cases also not clearly specified. However, when dealing with certain regional affairs and relations and the security environment shaped by them, the strategy does specify some states in the region or the region as a whole as a designated source of threat. This also applies when we try to find information related to the sector where the listed threats belong or are coming from.

In conclusion, it can be said with certainty that the authors and the parliament did less than a satisfactory job in providing the state institutions and the society, as well as partners in the international community with a clear and unambiguous vision of the security and strategies pertaining to it.

Instruments That Provide Security

Strategic documents, especially the National Security Strategy, offer different tools for providing and building the necessary level of the security to the nation. The first tool represents a relatively comprehensive list of the National Security Objectives that should serve as security policy framework for all the state institutions involved. The second tool should have been the security concept, but in the end there is no security concept as a higher level of conceptualization of pursuing the security policy. Instead, the strategy requires the security concept to be derived from security objectives, so that every reader is left to his or her own devices and imagination in trying to synthesize strategic conceptual premises of the Croatian security policy. And third tool is represented by the Principles of pursuing the national security, among which the most important is the understanding of necessity of cooperation between all the state institutions if desired level of security is to be reached.

This immediately answers one very important question which can be summarised as an understanding and intention that most, if not all, state ministries and agencies should cooperate in pursuing a desired level of national security, each of them within the range and scope of its authorities and responsibilities, and the whole work is integrally managed and coordinated by the highest state institutions, the parliament, the President and the government. These are the most important and responsible state institutions for providing the state and the nation with a reasonable, expected and desired level of security.



Strategies vs. Strategic Defence Review

Ever since their coming into effect in 2002, and despite all changes in the global and regional security environment, Croatian strategic documents have not been modified. However, as Strategic Defence Review actually became more or less a new strategy, it was interesting to notice the main strategic provision which was clearly and openly stated in the Spring of 2005, that this document had been prepared on the premises that Croatia was already a member of NATO. As we know now, though it was quite obvious even then, this stand had been taken four years before Croatia really became the member of the alliance.

The main arguments for considering this document a replacement for the national security and defence strategy lies in the fact that it provides an incorporated assessment of the security environment, the analysis of the national interests and objectives of the Republic of Croatia, risk and threat analysis, as well as the analysis of international obligations and international geopolitical and geo-strategic environment.

Therefore, this document partly follows the key provisions and statements of the previous National Security, Defence and Military strategies, but partly defines some new elements that should remain within the framework of the possible new set of the above mentioned strategies. For example, military missions and tasks were significantly revised. Such a development led to the conclusion that the previous set of strategic documents was tacitly abandoned and was mostly forgotten, whereas the Strategic Defence Review became a new holy scripture of the Croatian strategic security and defence thinking. The conclusion is obvious. While strategic documents have not been changed and adapted to the new security environment, in reality Croatian strategic outlook has changed. This is evident from the list of challenges, risks and threats accepted in the Strategic Defence Review which differs significantly from the same list accepted in the National Security Strategy three years earlier.²

The reason for such development can partly be found in the sphere of political power, influence and interests. In 2002, there was a clear understanding that something had to be done in terms of strategy. Political differences were put aside and key political institutions worked together, albeit hesitantly, to provide the nation with the first set of strategic documents. After that there was no more internal or external impetus strong enough to force them to repeat the process. And then, at least in the last couple of years, Croatian accession to NATO has become the strongest element in preventing the preparation and adoption of the new set of strategic documents. Both the security and defence institutions believed that it would be useless to adopt strategic documents and then change them after joining NATO. So the work was postponed first for the time after joining the alliance, and then for the time after the new NATO Strategy will have been passed (which is actually expected to happen this spring).

It is very interesting that the Strategic Defence Review was quite optimistic in enumerating all sorts of military missions and military tasks. It is quite obvious that Croatia does not have the necessary resources to provide for all these missions

² The information about this differences can be found in the column "Remark" in Table 1.

and tasks. At the time of the adoption of the Strategic Defence Review there was a clear dilemma whether our tasks and objectives should be measured according to the available or realistically reachable resources, or vice versa. The prevailing attitude is that by adopting such a list of tasks and missions the state institutions will burden themselves with obligations that will be hard to fulfil eventually.

Relation between Strategic Framework and Security Sector Reform

Since the elections in January 2000 the Croatian Parliament adopted two changes of the Constitution. Moreover, after prolonged preparations, it finally passed new security and defence related laws in March 2002, exactly at the same time when the strategic documents (two out of three) were approved. Among those were the Defence Law, the Law on Armed Forces, the Security Services Law, the Law on Deployment of the Armed Forces Personnel and Units Abroad, and others.

Apart from the change from the semi-presidential system to the parliamentary system (but with the strong role of the President of the Republic in the security and defence matters), the most important change was that there were always two, sometimes even three instances involved in the process of preparing and approving of some of the key decisions regarding the operations of the security and defence structures.

These laws, although not ideal (there were some serious flaws which have already been or will be considered later in the text), represent an acceptable starting point for achieving co-operation and co-ordination of the security and defence structures and political institutions. But this did not happen without a cost. The process of changing the laws started in the second half of the year 2000. Hence, it took almost two years for the institutions to finally pass the new laws. This happened mostly because it took too much time to reach the consensus about the security and defence-related legal framework among the institutions involved. This was the result of different political interests of the key political players, interests much more related to specific personal and party goals and objectives than those of the nation as a whole.

In addition, there was a fundamental flaw regarding the background of the legal changes, the flaw that also prevented the legal changes to be prepared and approved sooner. The ruling coalition politicians have explained many times that the change of the legal framework is a precondition for the necessary security and defence reforms. Actually, the previous laws by no means hindered the work on the security and defence reform. The reform could have been and should have been started very soon after the governing coalition won the elections without waiting for some magical legislative changes to happen.

So the answer to the question of the degree of interrelatedness between the strategic documents and Security Sector Reform would be at best very ambiguous. The reform process followed the adoption of the Strategic Documents and public statements of the highest-rank state officials. One almost philosophical issue that deserves a completely separate analysis is whether the activities could really be called reforms. Nevertheless, disregarding this issue, it can be concluded that the reform process in Croatia was nominally based on the set of the Strategic Docu-



ments passed in the first round of their preparations in the years 2002.-2003.

In reality, the reforms were carried out quite randomly and represented various political and ideological views and ideas. The reason for this is twofold. First, at the time of preparation and adoption of the Strategic Documents, the top priority was to prepare and adopt whatever set of documents could be prepared in the very short period of time. That is the reason why it is very hard to find coherent reformative ideas and visions in the finally accepted set of the Strategic Documents.

Second, when the Security Sector Reforms finally came to the fore, it became quite obvious that the Strategic Documents represented a very weak foundation for serious and coherent reforms which paved the ground for the forthcoming reforms to be individually, politically or ideologically driven.

Conclusions

A clearly defined framework is a precondition for every social activity to be carried out successfully, no matter whether it is a legal, procedural, behavioural or doctrinal activity. Legal regulations create a socially acceptable framework for the functioning of the national security system. This refers to constitutional and all other laws and by-laws, either of domestic or international origin. The pivotal role in its enforcement is attributed to the legislative body consisting of representatives selected by the people and among the people. They are appointed to pass regulations and exercise democratic guidance and oversight over the functioning of the state administration system.

Strategic, doctrinal and planning documents set framework for the functioning of the national security system and specify the implementation framework of activities. They must be harmonized with current regulations, i.e., proclaimed goals and adopted aims of strategic and doctrinal ideas. The executive authority must have the most important role in preparing, enforcing and implementation of these documents. This, however, does not undermine the importance of the legislator in providing necessary approval, supervision and guidance. Moreover, such correlation and cooperation is a key to successful functioning of the national security system.

Strategic documents are the basis for the proper functioning of the national security system. Their nature is such that the turn of events and a passage of time confirm or deny their validity. This is why if proven wrong, in urgent and unexpected situations, their modification is impossible, overdue or irrelevant. In order to achieve their goals, the strategic documents need to be clear, conceptual statements of the security-related intentions and visions of state institutions. This is the reason the author believes that in the case of the Republic of Croatia we have strategic documents that are overlapping while at the same time failing to identify all the necessary strategic and security parameters. The fact that, in the end, we produced three strategies is partly due to the education and the way of doing business inherited from the previous state and political system. For all security purposes it would be enough to have just two strategies, the National Security Strategy and the Military Strategy. Defence Strategy is the relict of the past and in

contemporary global and security environment all necessary defence parameters crucial for the state and the nation are, and should be, encompassed within the National Security Strategy.

The widest possible participation of the public is necessary in the process of the preparation of strategic documents. This would guarantee that different opinions and interests of all parts of the society are represented in the process. Moreover, it is required that every institution, body and organization provide answers to key issues relevant for the functioning of the national security system.

Strategic documents in this area are based on the evaluation of the security environment. Professionals and scientists from independent and non-governmental organizations should be used as a corrective pool of knowledge and experience in supporting official institutions, state administration bodies and organizations of the national security system. Equally important is the estimate of available resources and abilities which the nation can rely on in carrying out its activities.

The strategic concept is a brief and clear sublimation of how the national security system uses economic, diplomatic, military and other instruments in accomplishing its goals and implementing a well-defined policy. Strategic documents clearly define goals to be accomplished by institutions using the measures of security, foreign, economic, defence policy and others. A hierarchy and priorities of goals must be provided, according to the level of importance and time schedule, whenever possible.

The mechanism of regular periodical review of these documents is another tool for starting timely actions and correcting falsely defined strategic concepts. The same process is applied in elaborating every other document developed from strategic documents to make it consistent and applicable. Goals will be reviewed in case of a large discrepancy between the needs and wishes based on estimations of the security environment and the lack of resources. It is vital to balance the goals with existing instruments and skills. Any change in this respect will initiate changes in the use of certain instruments which the society and state administration have at their disposal.

In setting up strategic documents, the system will consider multiple choice options for accomplishing its goals. Only those offering best chances, minimum expenses and burden to citizens, institutions and a whole society will be selected. Also, strategic documents are worked out by applying different methods. Only the parallel use of different methods, while taking into account the national resources, makes the potential risk of committing errors acceptably low.

The main intention of the nation's top political decision-makers concerning the national security should be to enable every institution or individual involved in the national security issues, to articulate their opinion in order to add extra value. Consequently, they would set the preconditions which will make it impossible for any important or knowledgeable factors to be left without a chance to voice their opinions.

In order to be able to do so, we need to have clearly defined security and defence structures. Their general layout has to be defined in the Constitution and



corresponding laws (Defence Law, Security Services Law, etc.). Also, authorities and responsibilities of the political institutions and professional organizations of the security and defence structure have to be clearly defined in the same legal acts mentioned above. It is not enough to have defined and created institutions only, without putting a serious effort in order to distinguish their authorities and responsibilities. This is the only safeguard against their attempts to take someone else's job and influence the outcome of the tasks that were not supposed to belong to them. This is true for the political institutions and professional organizations of the security and defence structures alike, and it is probably nowhere else as important as it is in the field of preparation, passing and execution of the security and defence related strategic documents.

At the everyday operational level regarding the execution of the strategic documents, we have to make sure that the existing procedures of co-operation are observed and followed by all the institutions involved. Finally, we have to secure the proper use of information by the key players of the security and defence structures. This does not only mean that we have to safeguard the information from improper use. Even more importantly, we have to educate and train the personnel (the representatives in the parliament, members of the executive branch, soldiers and intelligence services officials, but also independent scientists, members of the media and NGOs, etc.) to use the information to the best benefit of the society.

One very serious shortcoming of the legal framework regarding the process of preparation and passing of the basic security and defence strategic documents is that there are no clear provisions for the timeframe in which strategic documents have to be renewed and adopted. It is quite irrelevant if that is a fixed period of roughly four years, or immediately starting after regular parliamentary elections, or any other timeframe, for that matter. What is crucially important is that without such legal provision there is no obligation for the institutions to undertake a periodic process of renewal and updating of the strategic documents. This is the reason why, in the case of the Republic of Croatia, it was possible for the President of the Republic, certain Prime Ministers and even Ministers of Defence to turn a blind eye to the need for the adaptation of basic strategic documents, in the midst of serious and fundamental changes in the international security environment. The strategic documents of the Republic of Croatia are in fact waiting for the new NATO strategy to be adopted and only then will domestic political institutions, most likely in haste and more than willing to copy the new NATO strategic provisions, prepare and adopt new security, defence and military strategies, without putting much effort in serious considerations about their appropriateness with regard to the needs of the Croatian society and the state in the future.

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No	Title	Category			Width					Source	Sector	Protecting	Remark
		I	R	P	G	R	N	PN	P				
1	Local and regional crisis	+				+		+		Unstable neighbourhood	Political	Croatia	
2	Globalization	+			+					Global economy and geopolitics	Political	Croatia	
3	WMD Proliferation	+			+					Terrorist groups	Political	Croatia	4. in SDR
4	Organized crime	+				+				Organized crime	Criminal	Croatia	5. in SDR
5	Refugee crisis	+				+				Unstable neighbourhood	Political	Croatia	
6	Ethnic clashes	+				+				Unstable neighbourhood	Military	Croatia	
7	Terrorism			+			+			Terrorist groups	Political	Croatia	3. in SDR
8	Aggression (military attack)			+				+		Unstable neighbourhood	Ideological	International community	
9	Regional crisis			+				+		Unstable neighbourhood	Religious	Croatia	1. in SDR
10	Command of the transit pathways			+			+			Unstable neighbourhood	Political	Croatia	2. in SDR
11	Transitional problems	+				+				Global economy and geopolitics	Military	Croatia	
12	Domestic transition	+						+		Unstable neighbourhood	Political	Croatia	
13	Judicial reform	+							+	Domestic instability	Economy	Croatia	
14.	Protection of ethnic minorities	+							+	Domestic reform processes	Political	Croatia	
										Unstable neighbourhood	Economy	Croatia	
										Domestic instability	Social	Croatia	
										Unstable neighbourhood	Political	Croatia	
										Domestic instability	Social	Croatia	
										Unstable neighbourhood	Political	Croatia	
										Domestic instability	Military	Croatia	
										Domestic instability	Social	Croatia	

