

ENERGISING MILITARY REFORM IN UKRAINE: PROPOSITIONS FOR THE SUPREME COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF*

TO MAINTAIN CIVIC DIALOGUE



Jiří ŠEDIVÝ,
*Assistant
Secretary General NATO,
Defence Policy and
Planning Division
Co-chair of NATO-Ukraine
JWG on Defence Reform*

At the outset, I would like to welcome and thank the Razumkov Centre for the initiative in planning the 2010 Partnership Network for Civil Society Expertise Development Roundtable and, indeed, the NATO Liaison Office and the NATO Information and Documentation Centre in Kyiv for their support in organising this important event.

At NATO, we view with appreciation the objectives of the Partnership Network and see great value in supporting the efforts of enhancing the dialogue on defence and security sector reform in Ukraine at all levels of society. NATO Allies and Partners can claim experience in this field and we appreciate that Ukraine can and does draw on our lessons learned. These efforts are an important element of the cooperative relationship between Ukraine and NATO.

A strong civil society and its involvement in national policy formulation and implementation is an important facet of any democratic society. Since its inception in 2006, the Partnership Network has advanced in its objectives and become a fully-functioning programme with defined areas of work and concrete activities. The exchanges that have taken place in the fields of national security policy and reform; monitoring Euro-Atlantic reforms; defence industry cooperation and reform; building integrity;

human security issues in the context of security sector reform; and economic security demonstrate that we have moved well beyond facilitating dialogue between Ukraine's civil society and state institutions to veritable cooperation in formulating and implementing policies. It is worth noting in this context the timely consideration given by the Partnership Network to the implementation of the Annual Target Plans and recommendations for the development of the Annual National Programme.

Our round-table today is yet another such opportunity to engage a wide spectrum of actors in an open dialogue on defence and security reform matters, drawing on the expertise of representatives of Ukraine's new administration, civil society and NATO Allies and partners.

Today's meeting will enable us to discuss together the current state of Ukraine's defence and security sectors, assess the main challenges it faces in the field of defence reform, and discuss priorities for further reforms and how the Alliance, its members, and partners can assist Ukraine in these endeavours.

This event is a timely one as it is taking place in a new political environment. Ukraine's continued commitment to take forward the necessary reforms, albeit in a difficult economic reality, is recognised and welcomed. Against this background it is all the more important that the views and concerns of all interested parties are heard and addressed.

Ukraine is completing its Strategic Defence Review and today's workshop will provide a valuable opportunity to discuss the direction and priorities for reforms cognisant of the limitations posed by the resources at hand and other priorities. It will also allow us to discuss Ukraine's assistance needs, and explore ways in which NATO-Ukraine cooperation can support these reform efforts.

We have an ambitious and substantial set of issues on the table this afternoon and an impressive group of panellists and participants. I have therefore no doubts that our discussions will be most fruitful. ■

* The NATO-Ukraine Partnership Network round-table within a NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defence Reform took place on May 26, 2010. The texts of the presentations are transcribed according to the audio record, abridged, and placed in order of the speeches on the round-table.



ON THE ROAD OF MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS COOPERATION



Hryhorii PEDCHENKO,
*First Deputy Minister
of Defence of Ukraine*

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) appreciates all gains of cooperation with NATO and will do its best to provide for its development and attainment of practical results.

The MoD leadership abides by the principle of continuity and consistency of the defence policy and international cooperation and will further relations with NATO for the national Armed Forces (AF) building in line with the world best standards.

In early June, the MoD delegation will take part in a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission on the Defence Minister level in Brussels. During the meeting, it is planned to discuss with our partners the state and prospects of future cooperation with the Alliance.

The MoD continues to work on creation of a highly professional and mobile army in Ukraine that can promptly and adequately respond to any threats to the national security, reliably defend the state sovereignty and territorial integrity. The relevant activities are transparent and open – information on its key lines, results and problems can be found on the MoD web site.

Serious results were achieved with the AF professionalisation under the international Programme of professional training of the civilian personnel of the Ukrainian security and defence sector. We are grateful to the donor countries for their contribution to that programme, important for the Armed Forces.

The dynamic process of progress and development of the national army requires employment of the military,

Round-table, May 26, 2010



political, economic, social and spiritual potential of the state and society. We proceed from the assumption that society should not only know how the state defence policy is formulated and implemented, but also be involved in that process.

In this context, it is of great importance for us that we can use the opportunities offered by the NATO-Ukraine Partnership Networks. The MoD representatives regularly take part in informational and educational events intended to enhance the Ukrainian society awareness about cooperation with the Alliance. Seminars, workshops, round-tables, working meetings are held, NATO Weeks were arranged at the National Defence University of Ukraine, NATO Days – at high military academies.

The Defence Review is coming to an end, following which the Strategic Defence Bulletin through 2025 will be published. The draft of that document will be presented for public discussion. We hope that the Ukraine-NATO Civic League uniting representatives of 48 Ukrainian public organisations will take an active part in that process. ■

CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROCESS OF THE SECURITY AND DEFENCE SECTOR REFORM IS A KEY ELEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC GAINS IN UKRAINE



Marcin KOZIEL,
*Head of the NATO
Liaison Office in Ukraine*

The NATO Liaison Office in Ukraine as one of the coordinators of the NATO-Ukraine Partnership Network has the pleasure to be a co-sponsor of this important and topical event under the auspices of the NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defence Reform.

The issues presented for discussion are really vital and urgent. I would like to stress the strategic importance of the security and defence sector reform for the national independence and Ukraine's ability to adequately respond to global security challenges.

Furthermore, I would like to stress that civil society involvement in the security and defence sector reform is a key element of support for democratic achievements in Ukraine and provision of democratic control of the security sector.

I am sure that meetings of representatives of state institutions, non-governmental experts from Ukraine and foreign specialists present an effective tool for discussion of pressing issues, pronouncement and

substantiation of comments and recommendations by independent experts, and coordination of positions on strategically important issues.

The platform for discussion of issues important not only for Ukraine, but also for NATO was presented by target groups on specific segments established within the NATO-Ukraine Partnership Network framework: the security and defence sector management, monitoring of reforms in the field of Euro-Atlantic cooperation, public information, support for local initiatives, human rights, defence industry.

In those target groups, numerous public events were arranged, important and critical for Ukraine and NATO documents were prepared. One of them – “Energising Military Reform: Propositions for the Supreme Commander-in-Chief” – is presented for discussion.

Using this opportunity, I wish to thank all participants and sponsors of the round-table for their readiness to make a contribution to today’s discussion. Participation of the NSDC, MoD, Ukraine’s Security Service representatives in the event witnesses that the Ukrainian authorities realise the importance and value of civil society involvement in the process of the security and defence sector reform.

The NATO Liaison Office in Ukraine acting within the framework of the NATO-Ukraine Partnership Network will continue to support Ukraine’s efforts intended to expand the opportunities for civil society involvement in decision-making in the security and defence sector and public monitoring of their implementation. ■

GAINS OF THE MILITARY REFORM AND NEED OF INTERACTION WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR



*Viktor KORENDOVYCH,
Director,
Military Policy and Defence
Planning Department,
MoD of Ukraine*

Over all years of independence, Ukraine cared about reformation of the security and defence sector. Responding to those who say that reformation is deadlocked, I wish to note that **reforms have not stopped – they just reached the point where a pause should be made, the results assessed, the mistakes and gained experience thought over.**

If reforms in the security and defence sector are assessed impartially, gains are definite. The policy became more conceptual and feasible. While previously, emphasis was on the creation of the legal framework (a set of legislative and regulatory documents laying

Round-table, May 26, 2010



down principles of activity in the security and defence sector was developed and translated into English), in the past five years – on identification of conceptual approaches to reformation of the security and defence sector structures, strategic goals and their implementation.

There are some gains in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Armed Forces (AF) publicity. For five years in a row, the “White Book: Ukraine’s Defence Policy” has been published. The publication made the MoD and the AF the most open agency of the security and defence sector. At the outset, the publication was prepared for nearly six months, employing representatives of non-governmental organisations. Now, that work is done by the MoD and the General Staff (GS) officers much faster, but with the same quality and transparency. The information published in the White Book fully meets the requirements of the Law “On Democratic Civil Control over Military Organisation and Law-Enforcement Bodies of the Country”.

Regarding the AF reform, it should be noted that reforms became more systemic: short, middle and long-term planning has been introduced. This is proven by the second Defence Review and beginning of drafting a new AF development programme. A short-term plan of the AF development has been drawn up that makes it possible to plan and monitor the state of every military unit and current results of the plan implementation on a biannual basis, providing the grounds for more reasonable formulation of the budget request.

The MoD demands are usually met by the Government only by half, that is why one of the goals of the new planning system lies in more reasonable articulation of the AF needs. Meanwhile, **the MoD leadership realised that defence planning should be closely connected with state planning.** The MoD, along with other agencies, is well aware that strategic planning development is possible only in presence of mid-term forecasts of funding in the country.

The past five years saw serious changes in the development of the AF capabilities, which is proven with the practice of participation of their units in international exercises and operations. For instance, while previously units allocated to take part in international cooperation were formed by gathering officers and soldiers from all over Ukraine, in the past three or four years, rotation has

been performed by regular units. This makes it possible to accumulate and spread the experience gained by military units, not only individual servicemen.

Ukraine's participation in four out of five NATO operations proves the importance of such cooperation for the Ukrainian side and presents serious contribution to the Alliance's efforts at strengthening regional and global peace and security. It was proposed to Ukraine to allocate units to the NATO Response Force, appropriate regular training was provided. This year, a Nuclear, Biological and Chemical unit took part in exercises abroad where it got necessary training, passed tests and obtained rather high marks.

Units of Ukraine's Armed Forces gain the required level of interoperability with those of partner armed forces. Five years ago, Ukraine's AF had just two or three such units. Today, all units allocated for participation in the Planning and Review Process under the Partnership for Peace Programme have passed assessment of the first (national), some of them – of the second (NATO) level and are considered “partially interoperable”.

Target Plans of cooperation with NATO was transformed into the Annual National Programme, acquiring a systemic character. The events of its military section correspond to the objectives defining achievement of criteria of NATO membership in Target Plans. **It becomes ever clearer that military criteria of NATO membership are the criteria of the AF readiness to perform their assigned tasks. It should be specially emphasised that the AF readiness to guarantee the defence of the state also depends on their ability to take part in international operations, i.e., the level of their interoperability with armed forces of foreign partners.** Without all that, armed forces are irrelevant.

Recently, military reforms have seen serious problems and challenges. **First, funding was cut unprecedentedly this and last year.** Last year, the level of defence expenditures on the average made UAH 3,600 per military servant a month. In 2010, it will make UAH 4,000, but there are fears that such growth will be eaten up by inflation. So, the MoD has, on one hand, to call upon the state to raise funding, on the other – to think how to use the limited funds in the most effective way.

Provision of consistency and continuity of reforms is another challenge. Presidential elections have passed. **Fears of deterioration of the situation in the result of the new leadership coming to power so far remain exaggerated.** One good example is presented by the smooth passage of a decision on conduct of international military exercises – for the first time in several years. So, consistency and continuity, in particular, cooperation with foreign partners, will be ensured. We heard statements by political leaders reiterating plans to continue cooperation with the Alliance and to enhance its practical content.

Implementing reforms, the MoD is greatly assisted by the NATO-Ukraine Partnership Network. The MoD sees the Network's long-term priorities as follows:



Round-table, May 26, 2010

- provision of more effective management of the defence sector, first of all, improvement of the legal framework. For instance, the legislation widely uses the term “military organisation of the state” and actually makes no mention of the “security and defence sector”. Today – by contrast to 1990s – the military organisation in fact includes only the AF, although defence tasks are also vested in other agencies. The military organisation leadership is well defined, while the new notion (security and defence sector) is not properly used in the legislation yet. This is one of the problem issues where the MoD hopes for assistance of partners from the non-governmental sector.
- analytical support and testing of approaches to reformation of the security and defence sector structures. The MoD and GS have done a lot in that domain: foreign experience is being studied, advanced approaches and methods of planning, command and control are introduced and adapted not only to present-day, but also to would-be realities. Still, a lot remains to be done: review of conceptual, doctrinal and programme documents, formulation and assessment of alternatives of the following stage of defence-building, improvement of principles and mechanisms of democratic control, etc. Employment of the scientific potential of the non-governmental sector for that purpose, proof of scientific hypotheses and implementation of survey results may provide the basis for mutual interest and interaction.
- promotion of consistency and continuity of reforms, development of reformation mechanisms that demonstrated their effectiveness and will ensure success of the planned measures in the future. The MoD and GS count on proposals from independent experts regarding the systemic character of the military reform, its correspondence to trends in the security environment, processes taking place in society and the economy – being a precondition for realism, public support and irreversibility of reforms in the Armed Forces. ■

ARMED FORCES NEED REALISTIC PRIORITIES AND RESOURCES


Yevhen SHELEST,
Chairman of the Board,
Defense and Security
Policy Centre, Ukraine

The year 2010 is very special for the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the General Staff (GS) of Ukraine's Armed Forces (AF), and for the AF proper. This year, it is planned to accomplish the Defence Review and draft the State Programme of the AF of Ukraine Development for 2011-2016.

Those tasks are complicated by the uncertainty of forecasts. The Finance Ministry drafted the resolution "On Forecasted Indices of Expenditures from the General Fund of the State Budget on Defence Needs through 2023". Of course, it is a working document and the indices presented there may change, but they already make us think about the difficult situation in which planners appeared, along with the MoD and AF leadership.

What do the amounts of expenditures presented in the draft mean in practice: 9.6 billion UAH in 2011 and 15.9 billion UAH in 2023? Given the GDP (4.0-4.1%) and inflation (9.0%) growth rates predicted by the IMF for 2011-2015, those sums will not exceed 1% of the GDP.

Planning bodies in the developed countries have long used tested methods that give rather an accurate assessment

of aggregated quantitative and qualitative parameters of the AF by the defence budget indices. To be sure, their use requires account of the national specificity, the actual state of the AF and many other factors – from the probability of threats to the social standards in society and the army.

The method rests on the conventionally optimal structure of defence expenditures: **defence budget – at a level of 2% of the GDP; in that, 50% – AF maintenance; 25% – arms, military equipment and infrastructure development; 25% – AF training.**

Neglect of those proportions results in the AF ruination, demonstrated by the experience of the Ukrainian AF, as in the recent years the bulk of funds has been spent on personnel maintenance (for instance, in 2009 – 88.2%, less the special fund that gave only some 4% of the planned revenues; in 2010 – 87.1% under the general and 69% – under the special fund).

Clearly, expenditures on personnel maintenance cannot be arbitrarily cut, since money allowance payments, meals and uniform for military servants are all priority items of expenditures. Therefore, the **structure of expenditures close to rational may be provided only in two ways: either to raise total expenditures, or to cut personnel (if necessary, introducing relevant changes to the AF structure).**

The possibility of raising expenditures on defence needs, especially in the conditions of an economic crisis, is a rhetoric question. Another alternative is to cut the AF number.

On the condition of abidance by the Finance Ministry forecasts, the above rational structure of defence expenditures and requirements to combat readiness, manning, all-round provision and social protection of the AF, personnel number can be estimated by easy calculations.

To simplify calculations, we confine ourselves to just 10 items of personnel maintenance – from allowances

Rough calculation of tentative AF number according to the Ministry of Finance forecasts on the condition of allocation of 50% of the planned defence budget to personnel maintenance

№	Category of military servants	Share in total number of military servants, %	Annual average expenses on maintenance of one military servant (under the 2010 norms), UAH	Estimated defence expenditures and AF number, persons	
				2011	2023
				9,585.3/ 4,792.7 million UAH**	15,864.3/ 7,932.2 million UAH**
1.	Generals	0.1%	141,151	139	109
2.	Officers	31-32%	39,939	35,271	27,493
3.	Contracted military servants	38-39%	33,193	43,900	34,218
4.	Conscripts	26-27%	22,324	30,045	23,419
5.	Cadets	3-4%	22,653	3,802	2,964
Total military servants				113,157	88,202
6.	Employees	32%*	43,499	26,443	20,611
Total personnel				139,600	108,813

* percentage in total number of military servants of the AF;

** forecasted amount of the general fund of the defence budget/50% of expenditures to be spent on the AF personnel maintenance, with account of inflation.



Round-table, May 26, 2010



to bathing. At the end of 2010, the annual average cost of maintenance of an officer will make UAH 67,345, a conscript – UAH 22,324, a civilian employee – UAH 43,499.

The annual average figures of money allowances for each category of military servants are calculated with account of the inflation rate as per the Cabinet of Ministers' forecast: 2011 – 9.2%, 2012 – 7.9%, 2013 and beyond – 5.5%.

With the present norms of expenditures per military servant, with account of rational ratios of maintenance of different categories of personnel and the inflation rate, it is not difficult to calculate that the AF number that can be maintained by the state is to make 139-139.6 thousand men in 2011 and 108.8 thousand men in 2023 (See Table).

Therefore, to maintain combat-efficient, properly trained AF, equipped with advanced arms and military equipment, they either must be cut almost by half, or expenditures should be raised substantially.

The produced assessments are not exhaustive and rather reflect only the negative trends in the AF funding. The main factors influencing the accuracy of assessments are the following.

Calculations were made with account only of the general fund of the defence budget set by the Ministry of Finance (the special fund share in the total defence budget makes 30-35%). This somewhat understates the assessments, but given the low level of the special fund revenues (except the crisis years of 2008-2009, annually – some 20-30%, mainly at the year end), that error is close to 10%.

Furthermore, they did not take into account the need of a substantial increase in the share of expenditures on technical modernisation of the AF, since the funds allocated for that purpose in the previous years were clearly insufficient – therefore, solution of the stocked problems requires huge funds, comparable to the total defence budget, and fundamental changes in the defence industry.

Omitted are also expenditures on transition to contractual service and the needs of raising personnel

money allowances to the level making military service competitive on the labour market – let alone approximation to the standards of armies of advanced countries.

An increase in defence expenditures is necessary to solve rather a pressing problem of housing for active and retired servicemen – given the housing queue length (nearly 40 thousand persons) and present approaches to the problem, the last servicemen in the queue may hope to get housing only in 100-150 years.

With account of these (far from all) problems, the cited assessments of the possible AF number may be considered even overstated.¹

Despite that, according to some experts, the current structure and number of Ukraine's AF correspond to the level of threats, the non-aligned status of the country and the political leadership's ambitions. Reserves available to improve the situation are limited: growth of outsourcing, deprivation of the army of non-organic functions, cuts of redundant structures and, respectively, their personnel, automation, etc. They do not solve the problem in general and, furthermore, require additional costs.

The MoD and AF leadership is in a tough situation – **defence planning is under pressure of the political situation, the alarming state of the AF, social standards and reluctance of the state to take resolute steps for the enhancement of the defence potential.** The situation is aggravated by the critical state of the economy, so that it is not too ethical and promising (from the viewpoint of public support) to demand additional funds from the state, due to the low level of social standards in society.

On that basis, one can develop only a programme of AF development in advance doomed to failure and intended to “stabilise” the situation from year to year. The only hope is for the new leadership's ability to reverse the situation and work out realistic plans of the AF development.

For that, there is something that was absent previously:

- concerted efforts of all branches, which gives hope that efforts will be made to collect revenues for the special fund of the defence budget rather than struggle for financial flows;
- political will of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief that, if correctly used and regularly supported by his milieu, might be enough to establish order;
- positive experience gained in course of planning and implementation of previous programmes and lessons of their disruption.

Political leadership can act effectively if it is aware of the real state of affairs, reasonable forecasts, AF plans and objectives. Only then may one hope for control and responsibility, high executive discipline, and noticeable results.

But the experience proves that it is not easy to tell the truth in a comprehensible and constructive form. Attempts to report on the level of the AF funding in the percentage of

¹ According to Razumkov Centre's rough forecasts made yet in 2002, if European average norms of personnel maintenance are introduced in Ukraine's AF, a defence budget of \$1.2 billion (close to the level planned for 2011) would be enough to maintain an AF of 50-60 thousand men. See: Transition to professional armed forces in Ukraine: the problems and prospects. Razumkov Centre Analytical Report. – *National Security & Defence*, 2002, No.5, p.20.

the minimum need will produce no result, since it tells little to the President and a National Deputy alike. It might be more effective to report, say, on the number of combat-efficient/inefficient military units, the AF tasks that can/cannot be performed on the condition of allocation/non-allocation of required funds.

I am sure that the experience gained by the MoD and GS planning bodies will help bring the data of the real state and needs of the AF to the attention of the political leadership and the executive branch. ■

NATO IS THE BEST PARTNER FOR UKRAINE



Robertas ŠAPRONAS,
Director,
International Relations and
Operations Department,
Ministry of National
Defence, Lithuania

As the only non-Ukrainian on this panel, I feel being in a certain disadvantage vis-à-vis my esteemed colleagues. While I take great interest in foreign and security policy developments in your country, I can only observe them from a certain distance and with somewhat lesser intensity than local experts. Therefore, my interpretation of the processes in Ukraine may be marked by a somewhat superficial understanding of the local context. Just like other outside observers of Ukrainian politics, I am trying to read into the real meaning of those important political changes, which have followed after the highly turbulent election period.

It is certainly too early to make any definitive conclusions and, as we know, pre-electoral statements often remain just that. But it would be fair to say that the predominant *perception* in the West today is that Ukraine may be seriously changing its foreign policy priorities. What, I think, is important to understand – it is that the *perceptions*, even if not entirely correct, matter. They invariably shape attitudes and policies of other countries towards Ukraine.

Ukraine is one of the key cooperation partners of the Alliance and a highly significant contributor to NATO's operational activities. While reaching consensus within the Alliance on Ukraine's membership aspirations has never been easy, all NATO countries highly value and place high importance on developing close and active security and defence cooperation with Ukraine. Over the past years we have created solid foundation for the development of our relations with the establishment of NATO-Ukraine Commission, thematic working groups, and NATO Liaison Office in Kyiv. A number of Allies have been supporting restructuring and modernisation of Ukraine's Armed Forces through their bilateral programmes. Hence, our concern that changes in foreign policy priorities may somehow undermine the progress and achievements of the past years.

Therefore, I was so pleased to hear the reassurances of Ukraine's senior representatives at the JWG meeting today that all cooperation programmes between Ukraine and NATO, which have been launched under previous administration, will continue with the same pace and intensity. We have heard from very senior Ukrainian officials that your country will keep on reforming its defence structures and will continue to be active member and NATO partner in international operations. These are very important statements. They will certainly help me in my quest for budgetary allocations for cooperation programmes with Ukraine in the coming years. As many of my NATO colleagues would confirm, getting funding for such cooperation programmes is a truly uphill struggle these days.

Therefore, my plea to all our Ukrainian colleagues is – please, **keep hammering** this important message of policy continuity at all levels. Furthermore, make sure that your **actions and practical steps confirm and reinforce** this message. Also, very importantly, make sure that those Ukrainian structures and institutions, which work with NATO on a daily basis, get sufficient and **adequate resources** – both financial and human. Straightforward messages with actions, which reinforce them, is indeed something what Ukraine's friends in NATO and EU badly need today.

In agreeing to speak at this round-table, I also wanted to present Lithuania's approach to cooperation with Ukraine. My country, as you know, has always been one of the closest partners and staunchest supporters of Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations. This is partly based on our perceived national security policy interest but, even more importantly, we truly believe in what could be called Ukraine's "European destiny" i.e. that Ukraine's future lies with the EU and, most probably, NATO as well. With this in mind, Lithuanian MoD authorities are determined to continue their support to Ukraine's defence reforms and modernisation efforts as long as our Ukrainian counterparts express their interest in the further development of security and defence cooperation.

Over the past years Lithuania and Ukraine have conducted very rich annual bilateral defence cooperation programme (which, unfortunately, lately had to be scaled down somewhat due to the harsh constraints imposed by the economic downturn). Lithuania over the years sponsored Ukrainian students at the Baltic Defence college in Tartu and in various training institutions in Lithuania; we continue providing expert advice in such areas as military law, public relations and others. At the same time, Lithuanian helicopter pilots and other experts regularly take advantage of the excellent training infrastructure in Ukraine, making this cooperation mutually beneficial.

Our countries and militaries have developed a truly special cooperation in the field of *international operations*. For a number of years Lithuanian and Ukrainian troops have served together in Kosovo (as part of a joint battalion with Poland); today this cooperation continues in Afghanistan. I was visiting Afghanistan last week and I have had an opportunity to meet a number of Ukrainian officers serving there. They are all very professional and are highly valued by NATO's military authorities.



Round-table, May 26, 2010



There are plans to expand our cooperation in Afghanistan: Ukraine has agreed to deploy additional explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) experts to the Ghor province (where Lithuania leads ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Team) as well as to join a Lithuanian-led Air Mentoring Team for Mi-17 helicopter pilots. As far as we know, these plans to expand Ukraine's participation in NATO's operations in Afghanistan, which have been initiated by the previous administration, have been approved by the new Government. We sincerely appreciate and welcome this continuity.

Looking at the longer term perspective, I can't fail to mention the plans to develop a joint trilateral Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade, which is our most ambitious long-term defence cooperation project. Obviously, the brigade, once established, would be operating in accordance with the NATO standards and procedures and will be able to generate subunits for the EU Battle Groups and/or NATO Response Force. We very much hope that the new Ukrainian leadership will continue supporting the idea and will allocate resources necessary for its implementation.

Furthermore, I have invited my Ukrainian, Polish and Belarusian counterparts to discuss prospects of regional security and defence cooperation among our four countries. We in Lithuania hope that this will lead to the emergence of a new important regional cooperation format.

I mention all these practical examples of bilateral and regional defence cooperation in order to illustrate how much has been achieved so far and how wide and deep Ukraine's security and defence engagement is with just one (and rather small) NATO Ally like Lithuania. Obviously, Ukraine benefits from similar cooperation programmes with a large number of Allies and I have no doubt that all these bilateral and regional cooperation activities contribute to the *modernisation* of Ukraine's military. Regardless of specific foreign and security policy objectives, *modernisation* of national military must be on the top of the priority list of every Ukrainian Government.

Cooperation with NATO within the *PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP)*, in particular, provides a great opportunity for the Ukrainian authorities to get unbiased, detailed and comprehensive assessment of the progress, which was achieved in the implementation of targets and objectives. Very importantly, Ukraine will always be

able itself establish its objectives, level and intensity of cooperation within the PARP process. Mr. Frank Boland and his team at the NATO International Staff as well as NATO Liaison office in Kyiv, have a wealth of experience, which is always at Ukraine's disposal. I believe, Ukrainian political leadership, whatever its ambitions towards the Alliance, would be wise to continue taking advantage of this external expert audit of its Armed Forces and development plans.

Earlier today we have heard a presentation about Ukraine's Strategic Defence Review (SDR), where my Ukrainian colleague has outlined long-term objectives with respect to the development of Ukraine's Armed Forces. While NATO has developed sophisticated methods and tools to assess progress (or lack thereof) in defence reforms, I would like to end my presentation by suggesting for the Ukrainian authorities three simple yet, in my view, essential criteria to judge the success implementation of your SDR:

Firstly, **is the country proud** of its national Armed Forces? If young people are ready and willing to join military service and their parents are not afraid to let them go and serve in the Armed Forces – this is a very good sign that you are on a right track. Having Armed Forces popular among the population can have particular benefits for Ukraine. In itself, the Armed Forces are a symbol of national unity and therefore the military can play vital role for the consolidation of Ukraine's society and healing some of the political divides between the East and the West.

Secondly, the adequacy of your Armed Forces will be judged by their ability to **support national foreign and security policy objectives**. I can't think of Ukraine, (given its size, geographical location and its European vocation) being any other than active member of the international community, taking active part in discussion on and resolution of international security issues. Indeed, within the current security context in Europe, where the likelihood of major conventional war is so slim, the military is increasingly looked at as foreign and security policy tools. By participating in (or abstaining from) certain international operations countries are often making distinct foreign policy statements. Indeed, Ukraine has vast potential to increase its role and participation in international operations once economy recovers. Just think of Poland – Ukraine's close neighbour and a country of comparable size – which currently has over 2000 military deployed in Afghanistan alone.

Last but not least, the SDR should ensure that the defence and security structures are **affordable**.

Ukraine clearly has a major problem in this regard. But you are not alone. With resource allocations for defence at historically lowest levels in many European countries (and diminishing further), the size of defence structures needs to be regularly adjusted to preserve their military effectiveness. This invariably involves politically unpopular decisions, which politicians in all countries are faced with. Unfortunately, there is no magic recipe or easy way around it, but careful planning is a key to making these reforms somewhat less painful. Our experience with defence reforms suggests that NATO is probably the best partner for Ukraine also for this onerous task. ■