

**Security Sector Education and Training:  
requirements and priorities for the second reform decade  
by David M. Law<sup>1</sup>**

**Introduction**

Over the last fifteen years, the security sector in what has become the Euro-Atlantic area has undergone changes that have been sweeping, structural in scope, and on occasion even surprising. Two major transitions delineate this period.

The first came with the end of bloc to bloc and superpower confrontation and the passage to the post-Cold War world of rapidly transforming relationships among erstwhile enemies, neutrals and bloc-free states. In this first post-Cold War decade, initial contacts were established, hands of friendship were outstretched, partnerships and new institutional affiliations were forged and the overall environment, with the exception of the countries and communities that were plunged into ethnic conflict, was one of deepening cooperation of all kinds.

The other transition has just recently come underway. It is being shaped by four developments that promise to alter the security sector no less radically than it was in the 1990s.

First, there are the mounting pressures to devolve a range of security responsibilities in and for Europe, and for its immediate periphery, from NATO to the European Union.

Second, a substantial enlargement of the two institutions is now on the agenda. Its likely result is that during the course of this decade a clear majority of the Euro-Atlantic states should be able to count themselves among the members of both the Alliance and the Union.

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Third, as security realities are becoming increasingly globalized, which states end up working together to address one or the other issue or contingency is more and more defined by factors other than geography. As a result, we are witness to new patterns of security interaction and cooperation on a global scale.

The fourth major development that preoccupies us this decade is how to respond to the triple challenge laid down by catastrophic terrorism, outlaw states and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The threat spectrum is undergoing a radical transformation, one that seems likely to be as significant as that which occurred after the first use of atomic weapons on the battlefield of World War II.

Taken together, these four developments point to a more daunting task that is no less necessary; namely, how to ensure that this evolving security sector is sufficiently transparent, accountable and responsive to those whom it is meant to serve.

Security sector education and training must clearly take its cue from what is at work in the Euro-Atlantic security environment and in the wider world. The approach in the second reform decade needs to be one of both continuity and innovation. In the 1990s, the leitmotif was understandably for western states to show the way to eastern states. Henceforth, the emphasis will be much more on states sharing their respective learning experiences as all members of the Euro-Atlantic community are called upon to make major adjustments in their security thinking, planning and behaviour.

Against this background, this paper will first briefly review the accomplishments and shortcomings of the first decade of education and training efforts within the security sector. The second step will be to discuss the new educational and training requirements that the very different circumstances of the second post-Cold War decade of reform would seem to impose. Finally, I will develop some ideas on how we might go about optimally organising and delivering educational and training programmes for the tasks at hand.

## The First Reform Decade<sup>2</sup>

During the first reform decade, security specialists from the transition countries attended in great numbers courses and training programs of various kinds organized by western countries. Just how many specialists were involved is unknown, but probably they can be counted in the thousands. These activities brought a wide range of benefits to those who took part as well as to their countries. Participants gained insights into western best practice in civil-military relations. They were provided with opportunities to do so in a context conducive to discussion and reflection, oftentimes in very mixed groups of specialists which would ideally include professional military and civilians from several countries from across the Euro-Atlantic area. Through these activities, contacts were established that would prove useful at the working level. The programs were part of the larger western outreach effort to help reform and stabilize transition country security sectors, where disarray, fragmentation and social marginalization were far too generally the order of the day. As such, educational and training programs for the security sector made a significant contribution to the overall reform process.

To paraphrase the analysis made in the Ukrainian contribution to this volume, which would appear to be representative of the situation as it had evolved in most transition countries, by the end of 1990s the legal and regulatory basis for the security sector had been established, a start had been made in securing inter-agency cooperation in dealing with the defence budget and other areas, the number of educational institutes had more than doubled and an effort had been made to ensure compatibility between military and civilian curricula.<sup>3</sup>

While the overall trend was definitely positive, in certain respects, the accomplishments of the first reform decade fell short of expectations and requirements. One of the more serious deficiencies that transition countries have inherited from the 1990s is an ongoing shortfall of qualified military professionals, security specialists for work in the security sector ministries and parliamentary structures and, outside government, in the media and the NGO sector. The problem in the new countries that emerged after the fall of the Soviet Union has been especially

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<sup>2</sup> The analysis in this and the subsequent section is based on the views formulated by security sector practitioners in transition countries in their contributions to this volume, which have been complemented as appropriate by the author's own findings.

<sup>3</sup> Ukraine, p.2

chronic. For example, we are told that Moldova ushered in its newly won sovereignty with “... in the air force... only eighteen technical officers and no pilots ...(whereby) in the artillery ... there were only seven officers.”<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, civilian experts remain seriously underrepresented relative to their military counterparts. This is a matter of no little concern. As one contributor to this volume has remarked, “... the development of programs in the absence of expert civilian personnel causes military solutions to prevail...”<sup>5</sup> Yet another problem is the still poorly developed security sector infrastructure, which manifests itself in a variety of ways, from a lack of quality national learning institutions to a deficit of reference materials to support security sector decisionmaking.

If much more remains to be done, what needs to be done also needs to be done better. A major shortcoming that has been pointed to in the assessments of the contributors to this volume is that the first generation of programs were not always conceived and delivered with a view to the most pressing needs of transition countries security sectors. For example, an assessment made in the contribution on Croatia is that “programs offered by the West have been helpful but often did not meet the (its) needs.”<sup>6</sup> Another evaluation, this time in the Moldovan contribution, is that “...the majority of courses that have been offered by foreign institutions... (have so far not focused) on the future job (requirements) of personnel or (tried) to fill gaps in expertise.”<sup>7</sup> .

There would appear to be two main reasons for such failings. One is that western practitioners sometimes lacked sufficient knowledge of the security sector in individual countries and of specific requirements in the area of education and training. The other reason is that western practitioners were not always sensitive to the need to adapt their approaches to the very different conditions prevailing in the transition countries. Programs needed to be, in the words of one contributor, “...less general, more specific, more coordinated and more targeted...” on specific requirements.<sup>8</sup> Most western programs used evaluation schemes of one sort or the

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<sup>4</sup> Moldova, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> Macedonia, p.9.

<sup>6</sup> Croatia, p11.

<sup>7</sup> Albania, p14.

<sup>8</sup> Ukraine , p.18

other to elicit critical comments from participants in training programs, which led to improvements being made as the decade progressed. Nevertheless, the responsiveness of western programs to transition countries needs has remained a central issue.

## **Second Decade Requirements**

This section will look at second decade requirements from several perspectives: the objectives of security sector reform, the approach to be taken, key themes for courses, and teaching methodologies.<sup>9</sup>

### Objectives

What should be the objectives for the second reform decade? The contributors to this volume make it abundantly clear that they see training and education programs as a vehicle for not only upgrading the competencies of individuals and the various groups that are active in the sector, but also for transforming relationships at home and across national borders.

Summarized, the overarching goals that they identify for security sector education and training activities are the following. A first objective is to enhance civil-military interaction, *inter alia*, by improving the qualifications of civilians, ensuring a better integration of the latter within the security sector and a more balanced representation of civilians and professional military. A second objective is to raise the overall efficiency of the security sector, especially as concerns the decisionmaking process. Third, the focus in their view must be on establishing a cohesive national security community, one with a common language and purpose. A fourth concern is that security sector reform should have the effect of improving the social, economic and administrative status of those who work within it. Fifth, the idea is to replicate these goals on the regional and extra-regional levels with a view to forging a wider community of like-minded experts capable of maximising cooperation in addressing common security concerns.

Needless to say, these are ambitious but also unquestionably worthwhile objectives that education and training programs should aim to support.

### Priority Approaches

In view of the above, what approaches should be privileged by security sector educators and trainers? Several ideas recommend themselves. The key concepts here are enhancing differentiation, building decisionmaking capacity, teaching teachers and developing educational infrastructure.

In the past, program development and delivery tended to cater to the general training needs of the security sector. To quote from the Bulgarian submission to this volume, a priority in this second reform decade must be to find a synthesis between these general needs, the varying requirements that exist on the “...functional level...” and the necessity of possessing “...much more interdisciplinary knowledge...”<sup>10</sup> Civilians and military may have similar objectives, but they also typically have different backgrounds, work in different environments and, as they go about their functions, are faced with different sides of what is often the same coin. The situation is similar for subordinate categories of security sector professionals – from serving soldiers, intelligence specialists, police officers and customs officials, to the specialized media, parliamentary staff and the personnel of non-governmental organizations. All these groups have different training requirements. At the same time, however, they are increasingly being called upon to cooperate across specializations and departmental compartments.

Country situations also differ considerably. The three transition countries that became NATO members in 1999 are already well advanced in the process of integration into western institutions. They are scheduled to be joined by a further five transition countries in 2004. Others may be brought into this process in a third wave of NATO expansion or a second wave of EU enlargement. Then there are those that may never be engaged in either integration process because of their recent history of conflict, sheer size, peripheral status or preference for

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<sup>10</sup> Bulgaria, p.24. Differentiation should also take into account the needs of senior-ranked individuals, those at the beginning of their careers, and those in mid-stream.

neutrality. While these groupings will share many common needs, certain requirements will vary considerably. For example, transition countries that underwent serious conflict during the 1990s – the case of approximately half of the new states that emerged after the end of communism in Europe – will have a need for capacity-building in the area of post-conflict resolution that others which have been spared armed strife will not. Similarly, there are the newly constituted or reconstituted countries - a group that largely overlaps with the former group - that emerged after the end of the East-West conflict. These states, not a small group representing as they do over 40 percent of the members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, are not unsurprisingly still in the process of constructing the apparatus of state, including its security sector, on the basis of what was often inherited piecemeal and in a state of dilapidation a little more than ten years ago. The submission on the recently renamed Serbia and Montenegro, which falls into both these categories, underscores that this country is in many ways several years behind many other transition countries, and is still really only in the process of taking stock of available resources within the national security sector and its anticipated requirements.<sup>11</sup> Other countries, in particular, Romania and Bulgaria, have made great strides in recent years, especially since NATO membership began to be seen as a real prospect. Such circumstances again underscore the need for differentiation.

A second priority must be to expand decisionmaking capacity within the security sector, the lack of which is common to all transition countries, again with major differences of degree. After the fall of communism in Europe, what typically happened was that the decisionmaking capacities that had been concentrated in the party were dispersed or became discredited. Bodies that hitherto been responsible for mainly executing the decisions of the party and its apparatus almost overnight found themselves entrusted with not only policy implementation but also policy development. Contributors complain for example of “...experts’ limited scope for addressing the key issues of today’s debates...”, or of the lack of “...experts capable of long-term strategy development...”<sup>12 13</sup> A crucial dimension of security sector training and education must therefore be to help develop the personnel resources on which these critical new responsibilities must now rest.

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<sup>11</sup> FRY, p.1

<sup>12</sup> Bulgaria, p 21.

<sup>13</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina, p.12

Thirdly, the onus has to be on teaching teachers. The situation at the national military academy described in the contribution for Albania seems to be typical: there is a chronic shortage of “.. qualified teachers in fields ...( ranging from) ...management...(and) ...research methodology to security studies, social and development studies and political studies...”<sup>14</sup> Western resources are too modest and transition country needs too great to expect that they can be met by putting all transition country specialists through courses and programs sponsored by western countries. Rather, one should seek to train those in transition countries who can train others, wherever this is possible and also sensible. This implies that those who are involved in program design will have to turn a conceptual corner, focussing not only on teaching best practice to transition country practitioners but teaching trainers how to impart such knowledge to others. Several areas where such an approach recommends itself have been mentioned by transition country contributors to this volume. One is teaching personnel managers how to design and institute effective systems for personnel management and advancement. Another is how to devise “...and man a multi-year, multi-level and multi-agency budgetary planning process”<sup>15</sup>. Yet another problem of critical importance for the overall functioning of the security sector is how to develop and implement the various information systems that are required in today’s environment. Transition countries security sector specialists also seek instruction on how to set up an efficient structure for national security policy decisionmaking - for example, on how to go about establishing a national security agency. In addition, advice is sought on how to found think tanks and “...establish a network of security research organizations in leading universities”.<sup>16</sup>

A fourth and related priority has to be support for the rebuilding of educational infrastructure in transition countries. Critical shortcomings in this regard remain prominent throughout the region. The educational sector remains fragmented. Training programs do not always support the very different paths that can lead to a career in the security sector, nor the need for continuous learning opportunities. Institutions of learning lack critically important resources. More indigenous educational opportunities are required, particularly in the area of graduate and post-graduate education. Military academies need to be re-energized or built anew. Libraries are under resourced, key documents are not always available in local languages and

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<sup>14</sup> Albania, p.13

<sup>15</sup> Albania, p.5

<sup>16</sup> Ukraine, p.18



access to the internet remains limited. Teachers need advice on how to design curricula as well as instruction on the latest teaching techniques. The list is almost endless.

Finally, there is a requirement for expanded interchange among the security sector practitioners of different countries. There is a crying need for more exchanges, internships and placement opportunities of all kinds both in national administrations and with international bodies. Transition country experts can profit enormously from exposure to western security sector environments, as can western practitioners when they are put in a position that allows them to come into more intense contact with transition country realities. This should be very much a two-way street. A related issue that is seen to be critical by several contributors to this volume is that, whenever appropriate, participants in training programs and traineeships should receive credit for their involvement towards their education and suitable recognition within their professional environment.

#### Program Subjects, Methodologies and Formats

Themes identified by transition countries security sector specialists for inclusion in training and educational programs are numerous and varied. However, three main, loosely grouped, areas stand out: system knowledge, sectorial expertise and technical competence.

By system knowledge is meant subjects such as international relations, conflict and peace studies, dynamics of the international system and similar courses that have traditionally been available in quality university curricula.

Sectorial expertise includes familiarity with the decisional culture and operations of the international institutions with a role in Euro-Atlantic security as well as those of the various actors that comprise the domestic security sector, and its overall organization and direction. Issues ranging from civil-military relations and parliamentary oversight to defence management fall under this heading. The Croatian contribution emphasizes in this regard the kind of knowledge that is needed for service with an international organization, namely, "...interoperability, inter-agency stratagems, and the procedures of multi-national civilian-

military bureaucracies.”<sup>17</sup> Then there are a series of other issue areas that can straddle the mandates of several national jurisdictions or which by definition necessitate a cross-border approach: management of large movements of people, the struggle against corruption, organized crime and human trafficking, civil emergency preparedness, small weapon monitoring and control, and so on.

Under the third broad category - technical competence – falls everything from courses to improve proficiency in English, or other languages, and in the use of information technology to training in negotiating and conflict resolution techniques and change management.

Education in many of these subject areas either did not exist under the communist system, or tended to be reserved for the party elite. Even now opportunities to study them in transition countries remain limited.

As concerns methodologies, several suggestions have been put forward. There seems to be a marked preference for learning environments that are interactive, offer opportunities to work in teams, are oriented towards case studies and use modelling and simulation. The Romanian contribution, for example, makes reference to the importance of “...cooperative teaching activity, where teachers and students work together in developing all kinds of subjects, including the modelling and simulation of real-life situations”<sup>18</sup>.

There is indeed a great deal that can be put on offer along these lines. For example, in my own courses on security issues, I make extensive use of practical, interactive exercises to reinforce lecture material. This can involve individual or group work in which students draft and then debate different kinds of documents that are commonly used in national and international institutions such as talking points for meetings, communiqués, press lines, questions and answers, or policy planning papers. Another interactive learning methodology is scenario planning, which involves a group in a multi-step exercise on an issue such as the future of transatlantic relations or of the European Union. The exercise is designed to give them insights into the many forces at work in shaping such phenomena over the longer-term and into the

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<sup>17</sup> Albania, p.8

<sup>18</sup> Romania, p 12

various ways that the present can become future. Simulation exercises that allow participants to role play in crisis situations can also be a highly useful tool for bringing to life the operational and decisional culture of different security actors.

In terms of program format, for transition countries security specialists the key criterion is accessibility. The longer the program, the more difficult it becomes for more senior people to take part. But with personnel resources scarce in the transition countries security sectors, even junior staff can experience difficulty in attending programs that keep them away from their desks for any length of time. Hence the various suggestions that have been made for short courses for security sector managers, study tours for media representatives and working visits for parliamentarians, and so on. This does not mean that multiple-month programs do not have their place, but the short-formatted activities are clearly more within the reach of most practitioners. One also sees greater potential for online and distance learning as a way of complementing traditional teaching environments and extending the reach of programs on offer.

### **Some Ideas on the Way Ahead**

The training and education requirements formulated above are as ambitious as they are worthwhile. Meeting them will be challenging even if the necessary resources are forthcoming. But the prospects of responding successfully to these needs can be enhanced if we ensure that the resources that are available are deployed in an optimal fashion.

How to go about this? What is above all necessary is a transparent, timely and easily accessible system of conveying and retrieving information about the programs and courses that are on offer. The initiative to produce this volume marks an excellent step in the right direction. Having hopefully now proven its value, it needs to be complemented by a more comprehensive and systematic effort. A list serve for the circulation of information about training courses and education programs open to transition country experts would be of great assistance in this regard. This would be a vehicle for participants as well as for those who develop and deliver educational products to post their assessments of the programs, courses and exchange

opportunities that they have participated in or sponsored. Ideally, this would be enhanced by a website where the information made available on the list serve would be presented in a more systematic framework.

There would be several advantages to such an approach. Specialists looking for training in a specific area would be able to make a more informed choice about the best program for their needs. Program developers and deliverers, for their part, would be encouraged to ensure their product optimally met practitioners' requirements. Such a system should also lead to a more effective deployment of resources. Countries sponsoring activities could more readily decide whether they should join forces with other sponsors to avoid duplication or rather not to do so where a continuing overlap might be beneficial. A list serve, supported by a website, could also serve as a repository and disseminator of insights into best practices and changing priorities for training and education activities in the security sector. They could be complemented by periodic gatherings of those who produce and deliver programs, and those who consume them. There are several precedents for such an approach. For example, in the context of its reconciliation activities for the ex-Yugoslav states, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe has recently launched an online database to catalogue mechanisms and strategies that have been developed to reduce the potential for conflict in the area, overcome hostility and foment cooperation and mutual respect.<sup>19</sup>

**The Stability Pact, which has co-sponsored this volume, would also be well placed to assume responsibility for spearheading an initiative to follow on this project. Its writ extends to not only Southeast Europe but also other neighbouring transition countries, many of which have participated in this study, and it encourages regional approaches. It entertains privileged relations with the main actors on the institutional scene, with the EU, NATO and the OSCE and the IFIs, as well as with regional bodies such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Pact. It is on record as being interested in expanding the successful cooperation patterns that it has sponsored in Southeastern Europe to other geographical areas. Moreover, the Stability Pact seeks to be a gathering of equals, in much the same way as does the OSCE, whose example has served as its guide. Similarly, it operates multidimensionally, recognizing the need to**

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<sup>19</sup> "Newsletter of the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe", issue 17, 17 February 2003, p.6.

**promote in parallel, initiatives to promote a secure environment, good governance and economic welfare. Stability Pact programs have targeted several areas that are crucial to successful security sector reform – for example, the retraining of military officers and police officials as well as the strengthening of media and parliamentary expertise in the area of security. Beyond that, the Stability Pact has a certain experience acting as a promoter of transparency and as a clearing house when it comes to initiatives in the area of education.**

**All this being said, the Stability Pact would have to make some adjustments in its approach to do justice to the challenges inherent in the area of security sector training and education.**

Security sector reform is a step-child of the overall process of democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. It is obviously about security. It is also clearly about governance. But as such, security sector reform runs the risk of slipping through the cracks of institutions that tend to look at governance and security as separate dimensions of the broader process of transition. In fact, they are intensely inter-related phenomena. This is a problem for both the Stability Pact and its institutional mentor, the OSCE.

The Stability Pact's notion of even playing field for participants opens the way to another idea that I would like to promote in this conclusion, namely, that developed and transition democracies need to rethink the way that they work with one another in developing and delivering programs. As pointed out in the introduction, the philosophy of second decade reform efforts should be rather different from that of the first. The state of the security sector in western countries remains in many critical respects qualitatively different from the situation in the transition countries. That being said, the circumstances of the second reform decade tend to put before both transition and western countries a similar array of challenges and unknowns, even if their starting points and perspectives on one or the other issue can vary considerably.

Several examples can be cited. The partial devolution of NATO responsibilities to the EU means that members of both organizations countries will need to be able to operate in one or the other jurisdictions or in both simultaneously. Western and transition countries understandably approach the issue of NATO and EU enlargement from different vantage points, but all will have to address the major adjustments that the two processes will entail. Several members of the Euro-Atlantic community have recently found themselves operating well beyond the bounds of

the NATO or the EU treaty areas, something that for most of them was unimaginable just a decade ago. Who would have thought, for example, at the beginning of the 1990s that countries with such diverse security profiles as Bulgaria, Canada and Germany would find themselves deploying to Afghanistan to do battle in the struggle against terrorism? Then, while the threat emanating from weapons of mass destruction, outlaw states and catastrophic terrorism is not perceived uniformly from country to country within the Euro-Atlantic community, no state can escape the consequences of what the United States and others see to be a tectonic shift in the international threat environment. Finally, there are the common challenges of ensuring security sector transparency, responsiveness and accountability. The persistent weakness of democracy in transition countries is well known. But the performance of developed democracies also leaves very much to be desired. Here, the pattern is one of falling electoral turnouts, decreasing party memberships, failing trust in the rationale behind government decisions, and in certain cases even gross miscarriage of electoral procedure.<sup>20</sup>

In view of this, there is strong case to be made for reorienting the way western and transition countries deal with one another, both generally in addressing the overall process of reform as well as more particularly when it comes to security sector education and training. At a minimum, western and transition countries should act as partners in determining curriculum requirements, formats and teaching methodologies. Beyond that, there is much to be gained by ensuring that training and education programs offer ample opportunity for co-learning and the exchange of best practice from all quarters.

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<sup>20</sup> For more on this point, see David M. Law, “[Democratic Deficits, North America and Security](#)”, *Connections*, Partnership for Peace Consortium, Volume 1, September 2001.