

**SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**

**JOINING  
PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE (PfP)**

**Lieutenant General Milan Zaric, Assistant Minister**

**50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Atlantic Treaty Association  
Rome, December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004**

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to express pleasure with the fact that Serbia and Montenegro has the opportunity of attending the General Assembly of the Atlantic Treaty Association. We consider our participation at this Assembly as an important instrument for mutual understanding and, at the same time, a kind of encouragement for our efforts to join Euro-Atlantic integrations as soon as possible.

As you well know, changes in our country in October 2000 brought a new, democratic government and broad public support for radically redefined foreign and security policy goals.

After decade of wars and conflicts, it is quite normal to look at the Western Balkans, first of all, as an area of instability.

Regardless of positive trends and developments in resolving the security issues of the region, threats of reopening of crises and conflicts have not been finally eliminated. We can not say that extreme, possibly, violent nationalism is not a threat. Religious and especially ethnic intolerance are not completely matter of the past. The violence in Kosovo and Metohia in March this year, more than everything, brought again attention of the world to these sources of instability. Fears sometimes caused by ignorant policy of international administration towards possible violence against ethnic minority in the province were proved in worst possible manner. But those events, on the other hand, firmly stay as a reminder of the fact that close co-operation, mutual understanding and confidence building between Serbia and Montenegro and institutions representing international community are very important and could be one of the best ways to prevent new outbursts of violence inside the province.

New threats - terrorism, organised crime and, especially, trans-national crime - continue to make it difficult to find the most favourable solutions. Despite the efforts of states in the region and indispensable assistance of international community, non-compliance with the democratic principles and practices and difficulties in establishing multiethnic democratic principles in the post-conflict societies are additional reasons why security in South Eastern Europe has not been completely stabilised yet.

Reform of the security systems is one of the basic preconditions to improve security in all South East European countries.

Current security system reform is a result of broad political consensus of all relevant political factors in Serbia and Montenegro, and it clearly and openly defines national interests, risks, threats and challenges, as well as missions and tasks of the Armed Forces and the overall organisation of the security sector. Intensive and coordinated support of NATO and EU has ensured the right direction for successful incorporation into regional security system, and broader Euro-Atlantic security structures.

Despite many difficulties, so far we have accomplished the following:

- Ministry of Defence has been profoundly reorganised. The General Staff of the SMAF is subordinated to the Ministry of Defence, likewise the Intelligence and Counter-intelligence services, which is a crucial step in establishing democratic, civil control of the Armed Forces;
- The border control in Montenegro has been handed over to the police. The same process will be done in Serbia next year.
- Resettlement programme has started;

- Civilian conscript service has been introduced;
- Fund for Defence System Reform has been established;
- Strategy of Defence has been adopted and that has opened the process of further refining of other essential documents already drafted.

Taking into account that in current conditions national security is linked to the security of other countries, joining PfP is the first priority of our foreign policy.

Due to the fact that the idea of stability is now radically endangered by the phenomenon of terrorism and other risks and threats, it is in our interest, but also in the interest of the international community, that Serbia and Montenegro becomes an active part of the modern trans-national processes, above all by joining PfP.

Despite the fact that process of joining PfP is slow, our side has undertaken concrete measures and activities as a prelude to joining the Programme.

Within the programme of co-operation for the year 2004, considerable progress in the development of relations between Serbia and Montenegro and NATO can be noticed. Among many contacts and bilateral activities, it is necessary to mention full cooperation of our Armed Forces with NATO during the escalation of unrest in Kosovo and Metohia, within the period of 17-20 March. Minister Tadić met NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Admiral Gregory Johnson, Commander of Allied Forces South, in order to solve the situation within the framework of the UN Resolution 1244 and the Military-Technical Agreement. This successful endeavour was based on positive experiences in cooperation between Serbia and Montenegro Armed Forces and KFOR established during the crises in Southern Serbia in 2000 and 2001.

Considering number, scope, intensity and design of the activities one can say that Serbia and Montenegro is already a partner country. But, unfortunately, it is not true. Further cooperation with NATO is really limited by the fact that we have not joined PfP so far.

In preparation for PfP, Serbia and Montenegro is determined to:

- continue with the implementation of reform of its security system, defence system and Armed Forces;
- continue with further strengthening of civil and democratic control of Armed Forces;

- update remaining doctrinal documents and initiate procedures for their adoption;
- work on the adoption of basic documents for joining Partnership for Peace;
- define programmes that may be offered by the Armed Forces, the Police, the Service for security of the state border and other state agencies and institutions to future associates, within the framework of PfP cooperation.

I also have to remind you that this year three important joint exercises were conducted: "Blue Road" with Romanian Armed Forces and other agencies as combined anti-terrorist exercise, "Mutual Horizon" with Italian Navy, and "Cooperative SAREX", organized by Hungarian Air Force. These exercises clearly showed that our Armed Forces could respond to actual and future threats according to the highest professional standards.

With great satisfaction we can say that there is a very good chance to improve mutual understanding. In September this year, NATO expert team visited Belgrade in order to consider continuation and enlargement of so called Special Tailored Cooperation Programme with Serbia and Montenegro for 2005. Both sides agreed that in next year we should concentrate on the specific needs of Serbia and Montenegro. After that, our Ministry of Defence defined several priority areas of cooperation with NATO, including:

- reform of security and defence sectors,
- civil defence planning,
- conversion of the military bases
- some of the activities from Partnership Work Programme, concerning preparation for possible membership in PfP,
- fight against terrorism,
- language learning,
- security arrangements concerning confidential NATO information.

And at the very end, I would like to mention that it is true that the Balkans has produced more history than it can be consumed. Now, we are trying to produce the future we can and want to consume.

We are prepared to extend the circle of our friends and partners in the defence field for purposes of achieving our shared goals in future. We shall be reliable security partner, while expecting, in turn, the full support of the International Community in eliminating any residual security vacuum in the region of South East Europe.

Thank you very much for your attention.