



CENTRE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

DEFENCE WHITE PAPER PROJECT

SERBIA 2010: DEFENCE WHITE PAPER ANALYSIS

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Introduction

Serbia is a country in the South-Eastern Region of Europe. For most of the 20th century, it was a part of Yugoslavia. It is a landlocked country which essentially located between the social, political, and geographical juncture of Eastern and Western Europe.

The Defence Policy of the Republic of Serbia is based on strengthening its defence capacities, and its cooperation with democratic and peace-loving nation-states. Besides this, we see that the defence policy facilitates the republic's aims to strengthen and tighten the European Orientation of its Foreign Policy. The defence policy is also based upon Serbia's ability to play an active role in processes of cooperation and joint efforts with other nation states and other actors in the international arena to build national, regional, and global security.

The Republic of Serbia's defence policy aims to create an effective defence system, a peaceful and secure environment, and integration into European and other international security frameworks. To achieve these goals, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has embarked on a reform aimed at constructing an effective defence system, ensuring its stable operation, and creating conditions for its interoperability with the systems of other countries participating in European security structures and the NATO Partnership for Peace programme.

Aims and Plan of Action

The Republic of Serbia has various interests in the avenue of defence which have been defined in the list of National Interests of the Republic of Serbia in the field of security. These interests essentially lay down the prerequisites for the overall growth of the Republic's democratic development, owing to which the Republic of Serbia has joined the ranks of all the states with a determined development program concept and a clear vision of future endeavours. These interests are essentially an expression of the vital values and needs of Serbia's citizens. These interests are:

- 'The preservation of the sovereignty and independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia and security and protection of its citizens.'

- ‘Confidence building.’
- ‘Improvement of re-regional security and stability and cooperation and partnership with international security organizations and institutions of democratic states.’

Furthermore, to understand the framework of the defence policy of Serbia we take a look at the Strategic Defence Concept of the Republic of Serbia.

Strategic Defence Concept

This Strategic Defence Concept is influenced and determined on the bases of the orientations and goals of the defence policy, evaluation of the challenges, risks, and threats, as well as new social and international roles of defence avenues.

This concept essentially equips the Republic of Serbia to evaluate the utilization of resources in a manner that safeguards and protects the republic’s defence and security interests. The Strategic Defence Concept of Serbia has it is founded upon the bricks of a joint engagement of various defence actors and various defence capabilities. The concept essentially appreciates the dire need of strengthening partnership and multilateral cooperation with other countries and actors (institutions and organisations) in the international arena that would safeguard and protect the defence interests of the Republic.

Additionally, we see that depending on the type and intensity of security challenges, threats, and risks this strategic concept would enable Serbia to protect its security interests through means of deterrence and joint and effective defence systems. Furthermore, the concept would enable the development of reliable partnerships and cooperation in the building of favourable security environments which would significantly contribute to the protection of such interests. In addition to this participation in multinational operations aimed at forming and sustaining peace in the region and throughout the world, as well as aiding civilian authorities in combating potential threats, are also crucial features of the defensive resources' engagement in protecting national interests.

Defence Reforms

In the efforts of the Republic of Serbia to become a promoter of stability in South-East Europe, the Republic has set up Reforms in the Defence Systems as its major priority. This process of reforming the defence system is being implemented continuously and transparently whilst considering the various capacities of the Republic of Serbia and its security environment to make it capable, flexible, and dynamic in facing the security challenges, risks, and threats and as a result, meet the needs of the citizens. A modernized, efficient, and economically sustainable defence system is what the future holds for the Republic of Serbia. In relation to this, we see that the development of strategic documents is one of the foremost and important steps taken by the Ministry of Defence toward the strategic, doctrinal, organizational, and functional regulation of security and defence in the Republic. The Republic of Serbia passed the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia and Defence Strategy in October 2009 this was the first time the Republic as an independent state specified its national interests in the realm of security, its vital defence interests, fundamental orientations and goals of the national security and defence policy. Some important strategic documents of the Republic of Serbia are:

- **National Security Strategy:** In terms of hierarchy is the most important document in the field of national security and defence of the Republic of Serbia. It highlights the basis of the national security policy related to the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Serbia. Furthermore, it reinforces the protection of citizens' national identities, the advancement of democratic systems and the rule of law, respect for human and minority rights, economic, technological, and cultural progress, the protection of citizens' lives and safety, and the preservation and protection of the Republic of Serbia's other resources and assets.
- **Defence Strategy of the Republic of Serbia:** This is the Republic of Serbia's primary defence strategy document. It establishes the framework for the organisation of the defence mechanism and the state's national defence function. The Defence Strategy is based on the Constitution and the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia and is directed at all people, government entities, and other stakeholders involved in the planning and organisation of defence and defence-related activities. The Defence Strategy establishes a

clear framework for the Republic of Serbia's defence system in the context of national security. The defence system is a collaborative, institutionally arranged, and functional network of defence forces and actors charged with defending the Republic of Serbia's security interests.

- **The Serbian Armed Forces' doctrine:** It is based on the Republic of Serbia's Defence Strategy. On February 25, 2010, the President of the Republic of Serbia signed the document's adoption decision. The Doctrine of the Serbian Armed Forces is the fundamental doctrinal document that defines the general orientation of the Serbian Armed Forces' military activities, organisation, preparations, use, and support in peacetime, wartime, and emergencies. It is essentially a theoretical framework for use of military power in Serbia.

When we talk about reforms in the Defence Sector of the Republic of Serbia, we take a look at the various Organisational and Functional Changes taking place these changes are dynamic and are aimed at building a more efficient and more economically sustainable defence system. The paper suggests that significant progress has been made in terms of maintaining and developing existing and new operational and functional capabilities through organisational and functional changes in the defence system and the Serbian Armed Forces, professionalisation of the Armed Forces, modernization and equipping with modern combat means, intensification of collective and individual training, participation in multinational operations, and NATO programme Partnership for Peace.

National Security Environment

To better understand the Defence Policy of the Republic of Serbia we need to consider the security environment of the nation-state. Numerous factors contribute to the Republic of Serbia's security environment. The changes in international relations that occurred during the final decade of the twentieth century were reflected in the state of global infrastructure at the turn of the new century and millennium. These changes have been most visible in the reconfiguration of diplomatic relations and geopolitics in the international forum, which contributed to the emergence of a multi-

polar world. Although the risk of global war is almost non-existent in such conditions, immense discrepancies in economic development, an ever-growing resource deficit, the consequences of climate change, infringements of fundamental principles of international law, and other obstacles, risks, and threats can provide a potential basis for the emergence and spread of regional and local conflicts.

As we see that South-East Europe (SEE) has entered this iconic stage by electing to go through the transition period and committing to European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Although the region's security situation has not been fully stabilised, the states in the region, pursuing their primary objective of meeting the necessary conditions for accession to the European Union (EU), work to strengthen mutual trust through active cooperation and, by sharing responsibility for the common area's security, contribute to its overall development and welfare of their citizens.

In addition to this, we also see that NATO and the European Union will continue to play critical roles in promoting regional stability. Encouraging countries in the region to join NATO and the EU will help reduce the likelihood of conflict and improve the security environment. Regional security is becoming increasingly concerned with coordinating measures in security, politics, economics, and other areas to maintain regional stability and avoid crises. This contributes to reducing the influence of past hostilities, historical inconsistencies, and ongoing conflicts between nations and countries in Southeast Europe, notably the Balkans, on the state of security. In case the Republic of Serbia faces enormous security challenges it seeks to defend its territorial integrity by diplomatic and legal measures, as well as through its position in the international community and the region's and world's new security architectures. The illegal unilateral proclamation of Kosovo independence, a violation of international law, is the greatest threat to the Republic of Serbia's security.

To understand the relevance of the Defence Policy to the given security environment we see that Serbia is quite committed to joining the European Union and NATO it also explicitly mentions that it wants to emerge as a promoter of peace and stability in the South-Eastern European Region. Furthermore, we see that the nation-state is committed to the modernization of its armed forces and wishes to extend multilateral cooperation to instil peace and stability in the region which is seen in its contribution and participation of the Serbian Army in three multinational operations of the European Union along with 17 members which are namely:

- EUTM Somalia (6 members, participating as of 25 April 2012)
- EUNAVFOR Somalia – Operation ATALANTA (4 members, participating as of 6 April 2012)
- EUTM RCA (7 members, participating as of 15 December 2016).

It also participates in various EDA (European Defence Agency) led initiatives where it wishes to improve and create a seamless integration with the EU Member States, upgrade the military industry and research capacity of national institutions, modernise the Serbian Armed Forces technologically, and increase military and defence capabilities. Furthermore, the Republic of Serbia is one of only four non-EU countries which signed administrative arrangements with EDA. It also joined the EU battlegroup concept, i.e., HELBROC Battlegroup.¹

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