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## Year’s Final Event on Engaging Women in Security, Defense, and Peacekeeping held in Sarajevo

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Article by Maggie Spivey

In late September the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) Peace Support Operations Training Centre (PSOTC), both in their roles as NATO Partnership for Peace Training and Education Centers (PTCs), put on the event, “Engaging Women in Security, Defense, and Peacekeeping: Curriculum Development Workshop.”

Held at the Army Hall in downtown Sarajevo, this 3-day workshop marked the end of a productive year for the two PTCs with their collaborative efforts on the topic of engaging women in security, defense, and peacekeeping. In addition to this workshop, the two PTCs also put on a combined conference and workshop in Sarajevo in March and a working group session in Arlington, VA, in June.

The PSOTC Commandant, Col. Kenan Dautovic, had this to say, “We have had many successful projects and achievements organized jointly with the US Naval Postgraduate School from Monterey, so far...I am more than confident that this fruitful cooperation between the two PTCs will continue thus serving as a role model for future development of the PTC community.”

Led by NPS Visiting Professor Maria Pineda, the two PTCs have been working together on this project to develop a course that will be taught at the PSOTC and focus on topics including military/defense and the reserves; police/security; peacekeeping; stability and development; and recruiting and career path. The course will include instruction on two core themes—leadership and gender policy—and utilize case studies to integrate these core themes within the different topics.

The course will be geared towards both men and women who are mid-to-senior level military officers and equivalent civilian and police attendees from BiH, the region, and other interested nations. In keeping with the current PSOTC mission, this course will focus on educating and developing leaders who will be able to lead and train others in multinational peace support and humanitarian operations. The course also will advance the country’s profession of arms in support of the armed forces operational requirements, thereby expanding the PSOTC capabilities as a professional and military defense center.

One of the purposes of this workshop and the year’s two previous events has been to gather input and garner buy-in from essential stakeholders throughout the country and the region. “In developing the curriculum, we have been mindful to bring in all sides and build a base of support. When making a space for new things within an existing structure, you have to look at how institutions have to adjust and create space so they can include new resources and capabilities in building a ‘whole of society’ security and defense,” stated Pineda.

“Historically in Bosnia and Herzegovina, women have participated [in security and defense], but it is a new issue when starting to institutionalize it. Any time there is structural change, there is need for adaptation and learning—institutional change needs to happen. You need both the supply of qualified women and also the demand. The current leadership welcomes and embraces the contributions of women.”

Following this workshop and two others—Building Integrity in Defense Acquisition and Collaborative Strategic Leadership in Complex Environments—organized jointly by NPS and the PSOTC, the BiH Minister of Defense, Dr. Selmo Cikotic, sent a letter to Adm. James Stavridis and stated, “The partnership with NPS and the first three programs we have instituted are all unique and at the same time very relevant, important and well received by the target audience—strategic leadership and tactical implementers. The partnership and programs are based on a capacity building effort aimed at creating self-sustainable courses which would eventually be run by the PSOTC.”

During this workshop, over 30 participants from BiH, the region, Western Europe, and the US had the opportunity to provide input on the proposed course structure, content, and accreditation. Specifically they contributed within a working group by evaluating relevant case studies, developing recommendations for the course, and discussing their findings with the larger group.

With speakers and facilitators from the BiH Ministry of Defense, UN’s Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), NATO Headquarters, NATO Allied Command for Transformation (ACT), Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF), Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), NPS’ Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR), and the USPTC Program Office, participants were exposed to a variety of viewpoints and considerations when formulating their course recommendations.

With this valuable input from the workshop participants and support from the country’s leadership, the course on engaging women in security, defense, and peacekeeping will soon come to fruition. A pilot course is planned to be offered next fall, and also within the year, 1-day modules are expected to be incorporated into existing PSOTC courses, bringing this topic to an even broader audience, including senior non-commissioned and junior officers.

Going forward, NPS and the PSOTC will continue this project on engaging women in security, defense, and peacekeeping along with their other collaborative PTC-to-PTC efforts begun during this past year. Stated Dautovic, “During these workshops, I had a chance to hear new ideas, see many views and opinions that reinforced my belief that this project marks a significantly important step forward for Bosnia and Herzegovina as well for the whole region.”

Posted November 13, 2010



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