

Canadian NATO
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the 67th Rose-Roth Seminar**

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

Belgrade, Serbia
October 25 – 27, 2007

Report

The seminar saw some 60 legislators, from NATO and Partner countries, come together to discuss some of the major regional security and political issues. The Canadian delegation was represented by Senator Jane Cordy.

Proceedings were opened by Mr. Milojub Abijanac, Vice-Chairman of the Serbian National Assembly. In his remarks Mr. Abijanac affirmed Serbia's commitment to the values and objectives shared by all European and developed countries. Jose Lello, President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly then addressed the gathering and recalled the tragic circumstances in which the 2003 Rose-Roth Seminar in Belgrade was held, following the assassination of Serbia's Prime minister. He went on to note that Serbia had come a long way since then, but that serious obstacles remained; of particular importance being continuing strained ethnic relations.

The key note address was presented by Kai Eide, Political Director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway. Mr. Eide argued that there was both reason for optimism and pessimism with regard to developments in the region. On the positive side one found the strong dynamics of Euro-Atlantic integration, economic growth, and regional cooperation. On the negative side one has the uncertainty over the future of Kosovo, potential spill over effects, and lingering divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In conclusion, he expressed a degree of hope noting that the region would be ready to take one step further towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

In her presentation, Judy Batt, Senior Research Fellow at the EU Institute for Security Studies in Paris, provided an assessment of recent developments in the Balkans. She noted that Serbia's European perspective is dying while that of Bosnia and Herzegovina is under threat. Although the political class and a significant part of the population are in favour of European integration there is a lack of "internal drivers" that could help make this a reality. Here, reform only happens under external pressure.

Ms. Batt's views were largely echoed by the next speaker Mr. Jaroslaw Skonieczka, Director for Euro-Atlantic integration and Partnership at NATO, but were not so readily accepted by Mr. Zoran Kovacevic, Deputy Director General for the European Union at the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Kovacevic insisted that Serbia had committed itself to European integration after the experience of the 1990s, and had engaged in far reaching reforms. He insisted that progress had continued despite the secession of Montenegro and the unresolved status of Kosovo. He concluded by arguing that Serbia's efforts were such that it should be granted candidate status by the end of 2008.

During ensuing discussions, Steven Schook, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Kosovo, presented an assessment of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). In his view the overall picture was good and that Kosovo's institutions have reached a substantial level of self-administration. Furthermore, crime levels are low and inter-ethnic conflict rare.

Jonas Jonsson, Head of the EU Preparation Team in Kosovo, summarized the EU's position in the Kosovo status process. He also went on to note that, in the current context, comfort could be found in the fact that the wish to become a citizen of the EU

unites the members of all communities in Kosovo. Kosovo, he argued, is a European problem and needs to have a European perspective.

Ljubomir Kljakic, Deputy Minister of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, strongly denounced the international community's actions in Kosovo. In his view, Kosovo has been an experiment in the deconstruction and reconstruction of states conducted by proponents of the doctrines of pre-emptive wars and humanitarian intervention. According to him, these amount to nothing less than neo-conservative colonialism.

Further discussion of Kosovo also raised the question of whether or not Kosovo is, or, could become a multiethnic society. Dusan Janjic, Director of the Belgrade Institute of Social Sciences, argued that the notion of a "multiethnic Kosovo" was little more than a mantra used by the international community to hide the reality created by 8 years of international administration of the province. According to him, Kosovo is not a multi-ethnic society rather it is an ethnically divided society, marred by underlying tensions and conflicts. During his remarks he also noted the importance of a re-emerging Russia in the region.

Members were also afforded the opportunity to discuss the role of the Hague Tribunal. Carla del Ponte, Chief Prosecutor at the ICTY, presented an overview of the Tribunal's achievements over the past 14 years. The ICTY had set a precedent for other international tribunals. It had contributed to raising the awareness of mass crimes and created hope for justice for the victims of these crimes. Ms del Ponte the Tribunal's role in trying war crimes in the former Yugoslavia was only one element in the process of reconciliation and the establishment of lasting peace in the region. It was now up to other local and international actors to use the Tribunal's legacy of facts and documents and to explain them to the local populations.

A final area of discussion was "defence reform in Serbia". Frank Boland, Head of the Force Planning Directorate at NATO, gave an overview of NATO's involvement in defence reform in Serbia. In his view, NATO's level of engagement with Serbia was far in excess to anything provided to any other country except Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina. NATO experts participate in the Defence Reform Group (DRG) which brings together representatives from the Ministry of Defence and other relevant ministries, from the General Staff, and from allied and partner embassies. This forum meets every 6 weeks in a plenary format, and more regularly in its 16 working groups.

According to Boland, major progress had already been achieved in reforming Serbia's armed forces, although reforms have not always followed the traditional path. When asked about Belgrade's level of commitment to co-operation with NATO, Mr. Boland acknowledged that there is some resistance from certain groups within the armed forces and the political class, however the current coalition was clearly committed to co-operating with NATO.

When asked about cooperation with the EU in the field of defence and security sector reform, Mr. Boland acknowledged that there was an institutional problem in Brussels, but also noted that difficulties should not be overplayed. NATO and the EU have common goals; co-operation exists and will grow in the future. In conclusion, he noted that although both organizations should not overlap there is no need for a strict division of labour.

Members also heard from Mr. Dragan Sutanovac, Serbian Minister of Defence, who provided an overview of Serbia's achievements in terms of defence reform. He noted that Serbia's joining the PfP programme had been a major step forward. However, Serbia still had to conclude a security agreement with NATO. Mr. Sutanovac regretted the delay and said that he was not convinced with the legal arguments used to justify it.

Finally, the group also heard from Lt. General Zdravko Ponos, Chief of the General Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces. General Ponos provided an overview of the transformation of the Serbian armed forces from an institution that favoured quantity over quality to one that would be able to face today's security challenges.

Following discussion the proceedings was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Senator Jane Cordy
Canadian NATO Parliamentary
Association (NATO PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
ACTIVITY	67 TH Rose-Roth Seminar
DESTINATION	Belgrade, Serbia
DATES	October 25 – 27, 2007
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Senator Jane Cordy
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$8,449.73
ACCOMMODATION	\$389.48
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$228.72
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$9,067.93