

Remarks by the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown at the Peace Support Operations Training Centre

8 February 2005

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The role of Peace Support Operations in military doctrine has evolved dramatically in the last 15 years.

This reflects the fundamental changes that have taken place in the nature of global military deployment since the Cold War.

The number of Peace Support Operations has increased – in tandem with the number of humanitarian interventions – and the chains of command in multinational forces (utilizing ever more sophisticated communications capacity) have become both more complex and more responsive.

The primary object of Peace Support Operations, clearly, is to buttress political conflict settlement – and to stabilize peace after the conflict is over. Few nations in the world understand what that is like – pitfalls and the challenges – better than BiH.

Former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, put it well when she noted that “troublemakers” in conflict zones – I quote – “cannot simply be wished away, they must be contained, captured, convicted or converted, which, in every case, requires resources.”

And a key element of these resources is the military element.

The IFOR, SFOR and EUFOR deployments in BiH are among the most successful examples of military deployment in support of peace operations in the post-Cold War era.

This gives officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina an unusually comprehensive insight on what makes peace operations succeed.

In BiH we have seen the value of key components at different stages of the process:

- the 1996 peacekeeping deployment *in force*,
- the very clear mission statement of IFOR and its follow-on missions, and
- the overarching importance of a simultaneous multi-national political and economic reconstruction effort.

The military cannot do the whole thing on its own. Nevertheless their job is to “hold the ring” until politics and democracy take over. At the same time, the international military operation in BiH has been called upon to undertake an exceptionally broad range of activities – from infrastructure reconstruction in the early days, through policing and community outreach – on top of its core mission to maintain a safe and secure environment.

Each peacekeeping operation has a specific set of mandated tasks, but all share certain common aims – to alleviate human suffering, and create conditions and build institutions for self-sustaining peace.

Peacekeeping operations may involve:

- Preventing the outbreak of conflict or the spill-over of conflict across borders;
- Stabilizing conflict situations after a cease fire, to create an environment for the parties to reach a lasting peace agreement;
- Assisting in implementing comprehensive peace agreements;

- Leading states or territories through a transition to stable government, based on democratic principles, good governance and economic development – which is where BiH is today.

All require unusually varied logistical capability and expertise.

I believe there are two other areas of significance that we should focus on, as we examine BiH's strategy for developing its own capacity to take part in Peace Support Operations.

As peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions have become an increasingly integral component of diplomacy, so the capacity of nations to participate effectively in these operations has come to have a direct bearing on the influence that capitals wield in international affairs.

I don't say it's the *deciding* influence. Moral authority sometimes speaks louder than military capacity. But military capacity – in terms of expertise and leadership as well as logistics and equipment – can be an effective *extension* of a country's ability to make its voice heard and to be a force for good.

Peace Support Operations are not a "boutique" issue. They are not a luxury that countries can get round to when they can afford it.

The ability to contribute to multinational interventions helps determine a country's international profile. It also reflects its internal organization and efficiency.

In this respect, I believe it is particularly significant that BiH is now beginning to develop its own capacity to participate in Peace Support Operations overseas. This speaks volumes about the progress it has made in its postwar recovery.

And it speaks volumes about what has already been achieved by the defence reform process.

BiH military doctrine is being rationalized, in the context of eventual NATO membership, so that the armed forces can discharge their fundamental duty, to ensure the security of citizens.

This requires, first and foremost, democratic control of the armed forces.

It also requires that the armed forces at a troop strength and with a territorial disposition that is no more than absolutely necessary to provide the country with plausible defence coverage.

In the words of General Eisenhower: *“Every gun that is fired – every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed – from those who are cold and are not clothed. The world in arms is not spending money alone – it is spending the sweat of its labours – the genius of its scientists, the hope of its children.”*

The demands of serving in a conflict or post-conflict area are exceptionally high. You have been chosen because you have the ability to meet those demands. You are among the best in the Bosnian Army.

You already possess the qualities that are necessary in a modern peacekeeper – high morale, flexibility, autonomy and initiative, tact, patience and diplomacy. And your training here can equip you with the necessary specific skills, knowledge and attitudes you will need once you are deployed in a peace support operation.

Before I finish, let me *urge* you to use the defence reforms that lie ahead in BiH as an opportunity. The AFBiH are transformed into a modern, cost-effective military force. This

means that different systems will be merged, and different ways of doing things will be harmonized in a new and more efficient structure. The experience you gain from this process will prepare you for working in the multinational and multidisciplinary environment of a modern 21st century peace support operation.

I would like to thank Colonel Philip Lilliman and the staff of the Peace Support Operations Centre for the excellent work that is being done here. It is my pleasure to take part in this discussion this morning.

Thank you