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# **Harnessing Serbian Civilian Capacity for Peace Support Operations: A Nascent Community?**

MARKO SAVKOVIC\*

*Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, Serbia*

JOHN KARLSRUD

*Norwegian Institute for International Affairs, Norway*

**Abstract:** The article will explore the possible emergence of a civilian capacity community in Serbia comprised of Serbian policymakers, researchers and practitioners who are interested in peace support operations and willing to deploy Serbian experts through multilateral organizations such as the European Union, United Nations and the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe. Having recently undergone a security sector reform, Serbia can offer to share relevant experience and expertise with these organizations through secondment or direct hire, in order to support the countries experiencing complex crises or those that are emerging from conflict. Serbian expertise can serve to soften some of the criticism leveled against peace support operations and provide relevant expertise to those in the field.

**Keywords:** Civilian capacity; peacekeeping; peace support operations; Serbia; community of practice

## **Introduction**

The article aims to bridge the existing gap between theory and practice of Serbia's contribution of civilian capacities<sup>1</sup> to the peacebuilding process and provide policy-oriented recommendations to the emerging community of scholars and practitioners who are willing to become involved in this area. As practice of civilian contributions to peace support operations is underdeveloped in the entire area of Western Balkans, the same recommendations may be taken forward by the neighboring countries as well.

With the development of peace support operations, including the increased focus on peacebuilding tasks, the role of civilians has shifted from a peripheral support role to the heart of contemporary peace support operations.<sup>2</sup> However, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts have come under fire during the last decade for being a neo-colonialist

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1 For the purpose of this article, civilian capacities will be defined as civilian expertise in peace support operations, including the police.

2 Bellamy, Williams and Griffin 2010.

\* [marko.savkovic@bezbednost.org](mailto:marko.savkovic@bezbednost.org)

enterprise and not understanding and taking into account the local circumstances.<sup>3</sup> There is a growing number of critical studies that argue in favor of the importance of external actors being more context-sensitive and supportive of local ownership.<sup>4</sup> Concurrently, civilian capacity reform initiatives in the UN have emphasized the need to come up with more contextualized solutions for the use of capacities from post-conflict countries with relevant experience.<sup>5</sup> There is thus a growing recognition among scholars and practitioners of the knowledge that countries with recent experience in conflict, such as Serbia, possess and are able to share.<sup>6</sup>

With the provision of a military hospital to the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), deployment of Serbian Armed Forces (SAF) to Cyprus, continuous deployment of Serbian special purpose police unit to the UN Police contingent in Haiti, and the 2011 Contribution Plan,<sup>7</sup> Serbia has stepped up its engagement in peace support operations – mostly those led by the UN – during the last few years. Since 2011, key policymakers have suggested a possible change of policy, strengthening the civilian contribution to peace support operations, and underscoring the importance of sharing the experiences that Serbia had gained in the security sector, jurisdictional and institutional reform. Sending civilian capacities to peace operations was explicitly mentioned for the first time at a workshop hosted by the Ministry of Defense in November 2011.<sup>8</sup> The ambition was hinted at again in December 2011 by the then State Secretary Zoran Jeftić.<sup>9</sup> For the time being, it consists of a limited form of contribution, training and deploying civil-military cooperation –or CIMIC – teams, and is viewed as a potentially “suitable export product”<sup>10</sup> to be sent to peace support operations. It should be noted that CIMIC-teams would represent an outlier in terms of civilian capacities, as their function is primarily a military one.

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3 Chandler 2006; Autesserre 2010.

4 Pouligny 2006.

5 Guéhenno et al. 2011.

6 De Coning, Karlsrud, and Breidlid (Forthcoming).

7 Parliament decisions regulating the participation of Serbian personnel are adopted under the title “Plan of Using Serbian Armed Forces and Other Forces of Defense in Multilateral Operations”. We will use “Contribution Plan” as a short and more precise term.

8 The awareness-raising workshop for senior decision-makers on the need for participation of civilian personnel in peace support operations (PSOs), hosted by Ministry of Defense, Belgrade, 2–3 November 2011. Participants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Police Directorate, and other relevant ministries and departments attended. A Report from the workshop in Serbian language is available at [http://www.mod.gov.rs/novi\\_lat.php?action=fullnews&id=3955](http://www.mod.gov.rs/novi_lat.php?action=fullnews&id=3955)

9 Jeftić attended the opening of the exhibition “Through Australian Eyes” on Australian civilian work in Afghanistan. He used the opportunity to state that “Peace operations in Serbia are primarily observed through the role played by the military. However, the role of civilians may be even more important. Australian experiences may help us assess the capacities of Serbia and the eventual participation of our experts in peace support operations”. See: Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije 2012.

10 Jeftić 2009, 108.

Individuals who undergo training in order to be deployed to peace operations form the core of the nascent civilian capacity community. Policymakers and researchers occupied with the question of supporting and improving peace support operations also represent a part of this community. Using the theoretical framework of Djelic and Quack, we will take a closer look at how communities develop and how they can exert influence on national and transnational governance.<sup>11</sup> Transnational communities are “social groups emerging from mutual interaction across national boundaries, oriented around a common project or “imagined” identity.”<sup>12</sup> Methodologically, in order to examine the development of a transnational community on civilian capacity in peace support operations, we will examine the competent practices and performance in this field. In a process reminiscent to training and deploying military capacities, individuals who are working in various ways with peace operations are “bound by a shared interest in learning and applying a common practice.”<sup>13</sup> We understand this common practice as “competent performance” which may present “the dynamic material and ideational process that enables structures to be stable or to evolve – and agents to reproduce or transform structures.”<sup>14</sup> Therefore, explaining this process requires us to “place practices in the driver’s seat.”<sup>15</sup> What are, then, the practices with regards to civilian capacity in peace operations in Serbia and the region today?

To fill the gap pointed out by the peacebuilding critique literature, the article will argue that Serbia may be able to provide more relevant experience to peace support operations precisely because of its experience with conflict; and that due to specific obstacles this had not been the case so far. The article will highlight the challenges involved in this endeavor, as well as some of the potential benefits, and lastly, how the provision of civilian capacities by countries such as Serbia can address some of the criticism leveled at liberal peacebuilding.

The article will proceed in five parts. First, we will present a general introduction to the development and current status of civilian capacities in peace operations. Then we will outline certain theories on communities, and the reach and explanatory use applied to civilian capacities for peace support operations in Serbia. We will continue by discussing its relative relevance to the discourse on peace support operations in Serbia and the Western Balkans.

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11 Djelic and Quack 2011, 73–109.

12 Ibid, 75.

13 Adler 2005, 15.

14 Adler and Pouliot 2011, 4.

15 Adler 2008, 196.

## Civilian Capacities in Peace Support Operations

Since the end of the Cold War, civilians have gone from peripheral to playing a central role in peacekeeping operations. This change has come about as mandates shifted from monitoring military ceasefires to supporting the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements, and rebuilding state institutions in countries ravaged by wars. 20,647 civilians are now deployed in peacekeeping operations, representing 17.5 per cent of the 118,100 UN peacekeepers currently deployed to 16 peacekeeping missions.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the UN's 13 special political and peacebuilding missions have also taken on an increasingly important role, currently deploying further 4,410 personnel, 3,963 of which are civilians.<sup>17</sup>

Civilians perform a wide range of tasks in multilateral deployments to conflict and post-conflict zones. Civilian components in UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations include, *inter alia*, political officers, civilian affairs officers supporting local level administrations, human rights officers, gender officers, and officers working on judiciary and security sector reforms. In EU Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) operations, civilians also play an increasing role, i.e. deploying judges and other civilian staff to the EULEX in Kosovo, police officers to Afghanistan and security sector reform specialists to the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>18</sup> The EU now has more than 20 different ongoing operations,<sup>19</sup> and more than 4,000 seconded and contracted experts were deployed in 2010, of which 191 were seconded from 3rd party states.<sup>20</sup> Serbia signed a Framework Agreement on the participation in EU crisis management operations on 26 May 2011,<sup>21</sup> and is now able to provide not only military and police capabilities, but civilian experts to EU CSDP missions as well. In a recent discussion on the role of civilian CSDP capabilities, the Council of the European Union stressed the need "to strengthen cooperation with third countries"<sup>22</sup> such as Serbia. In times of financial austerity, the EU has also seen the need and potential for better integration of civilian and military capabilities, e.g. setting up a common pool of security sector reform experts,<sup>23</sup> in which Serbian experts would be eligible to participate.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) also deploys a significant number of police and civilian experts in a wide range of fields including arms control, border management, education, elections, human rights, good governance, gender equality, minority rights and so forth. The majority of experts are seconded from member states, while others are contracted individually. However, experts of Serbian

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16 UN DPKO 2012.

17 UN DPA 2012.

18 European Union External Action Service 2012.

19 European Union 2012.

20 European Union 2011.

21 The Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia 2012.

22 Council of the European Union 2011.

23 European Union External Action Service 2012.

nationality have been contracted directly more often than they were seconded to OSCE field missions.<sup>24</sup> Information referring to the secondment of MFA personnel that is available on the Internet is clearly outdated.<sup>25</sup>

This shows that there is a demand for civilian expertise in a wide range of areas and through several mechanisms, either seconded to multilateral organizations, or hired directly by them.. Some countries such as Norway have established rosters of available experts. The Norwegian government seconds some of the staff through in-house mechanisms of its various ministries, but most secondments are handled by semi-autonomous institutions. The NORCAP-roster, managed by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), a nongovernmental organization, is the largest in Norway and seconds more than 180 persons totaling 1500 man-months per year.<sup>26</sup> The NORDEM-roster, managed by the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, seconds 80 persons totaling 300 man-months per year.<sup>27</sup>

### **Community in Social Sciences**

Community is a concept that is oft-used in the social sciences to mark groups that are joined by a common project. Communities have traditionally been formed within the states, but can also be formed across them, and in this paper we will call these the 'transnational communities'.<sup>28</sup> In the extant literature, a number of authors have pointed to the role of communities such as 'transnational advocacy networks'<sup>29</sup> and 'policy networks'<sup>30</sup> impact on decision-making at national and international levels. Haas and others have examined the role of 'epistemic communities' in transnational governance.<sup>31</sup> However, the focus on technical expertise limits the ability of this theory to grasp how policymakers and other actors who are not necessarily experts on a topic can also wield influence and act as part of a transnational community. According to Djelic and Quack, transnational communities are "actively constructed and shaped by people with multiple group affiliations interacting across societal and national borders."<sup>32</sup> The heterogeneity displayed among the actors can

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24 One expert who was seconded by the Serbian MFA to OSCE Mission to Georgia, having gained significant experience in working with civil sector in Serbia is Zarko Petrovic, ISAC Fund Research Director.

25 Serbia Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012.

26 Norwegian Refugee Council 2012. NRC has MoUs or Letters of Assist with 17 different UN agencies. The NORCAP-roster is also open to nationals from countries other than Norway, predominantly from the Global South.

27 NORDEM 2012. In addition, there are several smaller rosters and secondment mechanisms for e.g. humanitarian, security sector and judicial reform expertise.

28 Djelic and Quack 2011, 75.

29 Keck and Sikkink 1998.

30 Stone 2008.

31 Haas 1992.

32 Djelic and Quack 2011, 75.

bring challenges when a group is creating a common agenda for transnational governance reform, but it can also be counted as strength, as it allows for more pragmatic approaches, cutting across “entrenched perceptions and interests.”<sup>33</sup>

Djelic and Quack argue that transnational communities represent background processes of limited liability. Limited liability is originally a legal concept, meaning that there is a limit to the degree to which a person would be financially liable in a given venture.<sup>34</sup> A member of a transnational community has a similar limited engagement in advancing a certain issue. International communities are dynamic processes in which members are engaged for shorter or longer periods and with varying degrees of engagement. Participants also come from various backgrounds, finding a common issue to rally around, such as “common interests, projects, values, or constructed identities.”<sup>35</sup> Djelic and Quack identify six roles that transnational communities can play in processes of cross-border governance:

First, transnational communities contribute to the definition and framing of governance issues. Second, transnational communities mobilize collective action. Third, they help delineate public arenas. Fourth, they have an impact on preference transformation. Fifth, they are instrumental in the process of rule-setting. Sixth and finally, they can play a role when it comes to sanctioning and control.<sup>36</sup>

Transnational communities are able to identify and structure the debate on a particular issue, and thus frame the debate.<sup>37</sup> This is a key role, as it also frames the participation of actors who are not necessarily part of the community. The next step would be to define common goals and generate the requisite strategies and resources to reach them. Thirdly, an international community can, itself, act as an arena for the debate around the issue area, thus managing the debate, but also managing the conflict around key concepts and challenges, while also organizing consultations, expert advice and other compromise mechanisms. In this way, transnational communities are fostering preference transformation among some or all of their members through mutual learning, peer pressure, and soft coercion. From this process, coordination of policies and rules will start to emerge along with the establishment of joint principles and doctrines. Finally, the community will try to ensure the compliance with the established principles through monitoring, informal sanctioning, peer pressure and penalization mechanisms.

According to Djelic and Quack, transnational communities can be built bottom-up, progressively and often slowly around issues of common concern across borders, or

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33 Ibid, 96.

34 Ibid, 77.

35 Ibid, 86.

36 Ibid, 93.

37 Ibid, 93–98.

top-down, focused around “problems of global concern.”<sup>38</sup> Bottom-up processes involve mutual learning and the slow adoption of common goals as well as the “acceptance of a fair degree of remaining heterogeneity.”<sup>39</sup> We will now turn to Serbia and the wider region to see whether or not the seeds of a national community on civilian capacity for peace support operations may be found therein.

### **A Serbian Civilian Capacity Community?**

To date, Serbian participation in peace support operations has been focused on the participation of the military and the police. However, applying the concept of communities to the field of civilian capacities in Serbia, we are noticing a growing awareness and recognition of the fact that civilian capacities represent an important constituent factor in supporting peace support operations. The first workshop concerned with the raising of awareness regarding the importance of civilian capacities in peace support operations was held in Belgrade on 2-3 November 2011. It was attended by government officials from the MFA, MoD, Ministry of the Interior, Police as well as other ministries. State Secretary Tanja Miscevic noted that “we are starting something that is completely new to Serbia, something that represents a wider partnership with international community.”<sup>40</sup> She added that Serbia, “having gone through 11 years of institution-building at home [...] has created capacities [...] which may be offered and used in establishing a system of training and deploying civilians in peace operations [...] and that the] list of reform processes that can and should be presented to others does not only refer to the defense reform, but also intelligence, police and justice reform.”<sup>41</sup>

The new Government of Serbia has only been in place for a few months, and it appears that it has taken a more hostile stance towards NATO than the government that preceded it. If there is to be a focus on civilian capacities, it is more likely to occur in the context of UN, EU and OSCE peace operations. Nevertheless, the impetus for considering development and deployment of civilian capacities has come precisely from Serbia’s cooperation with NATO, within the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Program.

The 2011-2012 Individual Partnership Program (IPP) mentions contribution by civilian capacities to peace operations as one of the “partnership goals”; for this reason, Serbia has promised to establish, select and train its own “functional specialists.”<sup>42</sup> A “functional specialist” (within the CIMIC discourse) may be any individual – enlisted, on reserve, or

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38 Haas 1992, 1.

39 Djelic and Quack 2011, 89.

40 Awareness-raising workshop for senior decision-makers on the need for participation of civilian personnel in peace support operations (PSOs).

41 Ibid.

42 It is, however, as stated by an interviewee, “only a grade 3 (a relatively low priority) goal”. Source: Interview with MoD official, 16 July 2012.

a civil servant – possessing specific civilian expertise that can be utilized in the context of a military operation. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, functional specialists within SFOR were organized into teams specialized in specific areas (i.e. infrastructure). These teams were supposed to assist the governmental institutions and NGOs in their efforts, but also to transfer knowledge.<sup>43</sup>

MoD and MoI employees have attended numerous training programs, at home and abroad. Since 2008, nine Serbian civilians have participated in the training courses organized at the German Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF): four have attended the Field Security Training (two in 2008, one in 2009 and one in 2011), four the Core Course Peace Operations (three in 2011 and one in 2012), and finally, one has attended the Short Term Election Observation Course.<sup>44</sup>

Bilateral Plans of Military Cooperation, signed annually by the Serbian MoD and other countries' respective ministries, entail provisions regarding different types of training<sup>45</sup> for participation in peace operations. More recently, such plans were signed with Austria (February 2012), Denmark (February 2012), Norway (March 2012), Poland (May 2012), Czech Republic (May 2012) and Croatia (June 2012). Since the contents of these plans have not been posted online, it is difficult to understand exactly what kind of training will be undertaken. Denmark, for instance, plans to assist Serbia in sending MoD and SAF personnel to the Baltic Defense College.<sup>46</sup> This institution has, since 2001, organized the "Civil Servants Course", with the aim "to improve the skills of the students as policy advisors and to deepen the understanding of their role as civil servants in defense and security community". The 2012 edition of the Civil Servants Course will give special attention to "building skills and knowledge necessary for contributing to the international operations, both at the strategic and operational levels".<sup>47</sup> According to the syllabus, one of learning outcomes for attending civil servants will be to "understand the contemporary operational environment", while one learning objective falling under this specific outcome is "to interpret the capabilities and responses of joint forces in operations other than war/peace support operations".<sup>48</sup> The aim of one of the planning exercises is to "improve understanding of concepts and procedures in planning Combined Joint Peace Support

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43 NATO 2000.

44 Communication with Head of Training, ZIF. [Email]. 10 August and 5 September 2012. Most of these were already hired in OSCE missions. A detailed overview of ZIF courses is available at [http://archiv.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/training/dokumente/ZIF\\_Course\\_Overview\\_2012.pdf](http://archiv.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/training/dokumente/ZIF_Course_Overview_2012.pdf). A substantial number of individuals from the Former Republic of Macedonia and Croatia have also participated in trainings at ZIF.

45 MoD also uses the euphemism „exchange of experiences“, which amounts to training.

46 Ekapija 2012.

47 Baltic Defense College 2012.

48 Baltic Defense College 2011, 8.

Operation at the operational level”.<sup>49</sup> However, it remains unknown how many servicemen and civil servants – if any – will be sent to this Estonia-based college.

The MoD has also decided to begin the development of two advanced distributed learning (ADL) courses designed to “educate applicants to participate in peacekeeping operations mandated by the United Nations”. To this end, a group of Serbian experts attended a course at the Norwegian Defense International Centre (NODEFIC) in March 2012.<sup>50</sup> Once completed, e-courses should be made available via the MoD’s ADL portal to military and civilian personnel working in the defense system.

Meanwhile, out of six courses planned by the SAF Center for Peacekeeping Operations (CPO) in 2012, two are nominally open to civilian experts working in any of the Government ministries and agencies. In April 2012, CPO has organized the “Basic Course for Participation in Multilateral Operations”, while it is currently preparing the “Law of Armed Conflicts Course”, scheduled for October.<sup>51</sup> CPO also organizes training exercises attended by servicemen and civil servants. In June 2011, it has hosted the “CARANA” exercise, with the stated goal of “training military, civilian and MoI personnel in disarmament, demining, force protection and protection of population”.<sup>52</sup> Primarily intended for students of the SAF General Staff Course, the exercise was attended by representatives of the MoI and the Gendarmerie – Ministry of Interior’s heavily militarized, special purpose, battalion size unit. However, they were not invited to participate actively, but only as observers.<sup>53</sup> It is encouraging, however, that lecturers and professors working at the Military Academy of the SAF have undergone ‘practical training’ so that they could, given reasonable time, organize identical or similar exercises themselves. Experts from Netherlands, Germany, Norway and the UK were invited as trainers.<sup>54</sup> The Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS)<sup>55</sup> was also present, co-organizing two tactical-level courses on CIMIC with the CPO.

It is clear that the bulk of the training provided in Serbia is intended primarily for military personnel. Civilian capacities are discussed almost exclusively in the context of CIMIC, and are included primarily in order to further military goals. This may very well be one of the reasons why some of our respondents argued that there was still no community

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49 Ibid, 13.

50 Ministry of Defense ADL 2012.

51 Vojska Srbije – Centar za mirovne operacije 2012.

52 Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije 2011.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 NORDCAPS “aimed at strengthening and expanding the existing Nordic co-operation in the field of military peace support operations, focusing on the foreseen requirements for political as well as military timely consultations and co-ordination”. It was guided by a Steering Group “of Director General or Deputy Permanent Secretary of State for Defense level”. As part of long standing Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFECO), NORDCAPS activities were concluded by July 2010.

interested in civilian capacities, and that those who were interested in this issue were “few and far between.”<sup>56</sup> The scope and purpose of the training has since 2001<sup>57</sup> been shaped and directed by the SAF. The General Staff (GS) J-9 (CIMIC) Department has been tasked with laying the foundation for the deployment of civilian capacities. After all, CIMIC is concerned with same set of issues – internally displaced persons, damaged infrastructure, non-existent basic services, absence of the rule of law, and a great number of actors rarely working in concert.<sup>58</sup>

The ‘case of Serbia’ is somewhat specific not only because the MFA has been absent from the process, but also because the MoD does not have a department corresponding to GS’s J-9; “it’s all left to the uniforms.”<sup>59</sup> With almost a decade of peacekeeping practice under its belt, Serbia should finally reconsider the role played by the MFA; especially in light of the fact that this Ministry is leading the process in many countries, deciding what to fund and where, and providing functional specialists.<sup>60</sup>

The head of the J-9, Colonel Pesic, explained that the principal motivation behind the development of CIMIC within the defense system was “to become interoperable with modern armies”; and that this function was “not set up in order to resolve issues and problems of civilian population, but to help commanding officers in their decision making; and finally, to execute mission tasks within a civilian environment with minimal engagement of military capacities for solving civilian problems.”<sup>61</sup> All this is in line with the NATO doctrine proscribed by its „Military Policy on Civil-Military Cooperation”. The shortfall of such an approach is that civilian capacities are being considered only within the context of deploying CIMIC teams.

With its 2012 Action Plan, the J-9 Department has aimed to “inform different state institutions and train potential candidates for CIMIC specialists”, while hoping to reach “other [...] representatives of defense system, [...] individuals outside of the system, who may later be called to deployment if such need arises.”<sup>62</sup> The Department has produced a “Doctrine of Civil-Military Cooperation” and is preparing the “Rules for Civil-Military Cooperation”, with similar regulations adopted by Canadian, Japanese and Austrian armed forces taken as models.<sup>63</sup>

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56 Interview with MoD official, 16 July 2012.

57 Since the establishment of the CPO and its Training Unit.

58 Jeftić 2009, 108.

59 Interview with a Minister-Counselor working in MFA’s Multilateral Cooperation Sector. 5 May 2011.

60 Jeftić 2009, 108-109.

61 Vojska Srbije 2011.

62 Vojska Srbije 2011.

63 Ibid.

According to one of our respondents, it is expected to have its functional specialists selected and trained by 2014. However, in the MoD's operationalization of the Partnership Implementation Plan there is no reference to whether this will happen by 1 January or 31 December 2014.<sup>64</sup> It is also interesting to gain a glimpse of what the MoD and the SAF perceive as Serbia's niche capability: provision of humanitarian assistance; expertise in "culture"; and "languages".<sup>65</sup> At best, the training might commence sometime in 2013.<sup>66</sup> Prior to this, a new bylaw regulating civilian contribution to peace support operations must be adopted in the National Assembly. The bylaw in question will regulate "everything... from conditions, procedures, means, training, incentives, to benefits for civilians willing to participate"<sup>67</sup>, and is to be structured in accordance with a similar bylaw adopted in Slovenia.

The first challenge the J-9 Department will face will be to define their future civilian experts. In our paper we are confronted with the same dilemma: the need to identify members of a nascent community on civilian capacity for peace support operations. To our understanding, the community should include policy makers from member states and from international organizations; practitioners in the field, particularly mid-level professionals working in ministries and agencies involved with the planning and executing one nation's contribution to peace operations; members of the wider research community, including journalists, independent commentators and analysts; as well as members of civil society organizations, think-tanks and research institutes who are working on this topic.

If we view our "nascent community" from the standpoint of Djelic and Quack's concept, we can note several issues. According to Djelic and Quack, the common identity of our nascent community could be constructed either bottom-up or top-down. The empirical material gathered to date seems to indicate a combination of these. Internationally, there is already a transnational community dealing with these issues, the UN having identified the topic as one of the key areas of reform. As we have discussed, other international organizations and member states are also working on this issue. In Serbia, donors have supported trainings and awareness-raising, and national authorities have been implementing international standards and policy. Bottom-up impetus is being generated by Serbian citizens who have participated in trainings and are doing research on the topic. However, many of the opinion makers we have encountered, working within their respective administrations, found little support for what they saw as an effort to follow contemporary trends in armed forces reform.<sup>68</sup> In the post-conflict context of Western Balkans, they had to initiate and run two processes simultaneously: disseminate knowledge among the lower ranks; and, re-establish ties broken by the war. To some extent, the latter process was aided by common socialization. Officers who took charge of international

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64 Interview with MoD official, July 16, 2012.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Interview of an Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina Brigadier, 14 December 2011.

military cooperation in early 2000s went to same military schools, underwent the same training, and moved up the ladder in more or less the same way.

If there is one significant goal or project our community could be “structured around”<sup>69</sup>, then it is the need to “modernize armed forces” and “align them with NATO standards”. For policy and decision makers from countries that are in transition towards becoming consolidated democracies, participation in peace support operations presents, all in one, (a) the impetus, (b) a shortcut and (c) a formative experience in the (democratic) reform and modernization of armed forces. It presents an impetus since it offers a promise of tangible foreign policy benefits; and it is both a shortcut and formative experience because it raises important issues of interoperability.<sup>70</sup> What stays with individuals who return from operations, ideally, is a sense of “shared values, knowledge and skills.”<sup>71</sup> In terms of our analytical framework, we see the combination of peer pressure by other member states and international organizations, and the individual incentives creating both push- and pull-factors for the strengthening of a civilian capacity community in Serbia.

As the transnational civilian capacity community already exists, a Serbian community needs to sustain no formal organization.<sup>72</sup> It is not entirely a “virtual”<sup>73</sup> community. Its members meet at regional forums, there are structured mechanisms of cooperation on ministerial or General Staff level, such as SEDM or SEEBRIG initiatives; the training events organized by RACVIAC Centre for Security Cooperation, for instance, present a good example of this. Also notable is the practice of Peace Support Operations Training Centre (PSO TC).

Janowitz’s “limited liability” concept implies only a “certain level of personal engagement” with a certain community, not achieving an “unshakable collective identity.”<sup>74</sup> This is mostly true for the Serbian civilian capacity community, where members would have to rationalize their commitment, given that “membership” in other communities may prove to be more rewarding; or simply because they are positioned higher on the list of policy priorities. Also, potential member of the community would hardly be able to associate, or dissociate freely from different communities, precisely because he or she must act within a given policy framework. This would go against the proposition that “in a highly mobile society, people may participate extensively in local institutions and develop community attachments, yet be prepared to leave those communities if local conditions fail to satisfy their immediate needs or aspirations.”<sup>75</sup>

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69 Djelic and Quack 2011, 87.

70 Savkovic and Milosevic 2011, 22.

71 Djelic and Quack 2011, 87.

72 Djelic and Quack 2011, 75.

73 Ibid, 87.

74 Ibid, 76.

75 Kasarda and Janowitz 1974, 329.

Again, according to Janowitz and Suttles, community could survive with a small minority of “active custodians”; while the rest of the membership would remain connected “in a more passive manner”<sup>76</sup>. In the case of a Serbian civilian capacity community, this depends on just how long the opinion makers would be able to endure internal power struggles within their respective administrations. The other distinction made by Janowitz – between the *elite nucleus* and the *elite cadre* – is hardly applicable in our case; not only can the nucleus members be imposed by foreign (international) actors and donors, and have little or no legitimacy within the ranks; the cadre is also always in fluctuation, looking for a new secondment or promotion.

As for potential roles the Serbian community might play operationally, first, at the time of their deployment, servicemen and women as well as police officers were mid-level professionals, staff officers, or police inspectors at best. As we have learned from our conversations with MoD and MoI personnel, experience gained abroad has done little for their advancement through the ranks.<sup>77</sup> These individuals do take part in drafting strategic documents and action plans for their implementation, since they are the only ones who possess expert knowledge. However, they are not that influential in regard to prioritization of certain issues. That role, which carries more political weight, is played by a group of officials close to the Minister’s cabinet who select problems from a list compiled by experts working in the ministries. One process through which we may understand how this works is the Serbia-NATO Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP).<sup>78</sup> Practitioners’ input may therefore be held in high regard yet have little influence on the process as a whole. And this influence is instrumental in changing the ruling elites’ preferences.

“Collective action” may be possible if what was achieved in PSO could receive greater public recognition, leading to a community where there are more actors involved; such as media personalities or aspiring politicians. This “coalition building” may not be an easy feat to accomplish. First, in their access to other stakeholders, the above mentioned mid-level professionals are restrained by tight internal rules regulating public appearances and communication with other actors in the policy process.<sup>79</sup> Second, Serbia lacks skilled

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76 Suttles 1972, 9.

77 Good result on half-year’s physical may contribute more to one officers’ scorecard than spending six months in Lebanon.

78 Available at [http://www.mfa.gov.rs/Srpski/spopol/Prioriteti/prezentacioni\\_dokument\(PzM\).pdf](http://www.mfa.gov.rs/Srpski/spopol/Prioriteti/prezentacioni_dokument(PzM).pdf)

79 Article 14a of the 2007 Law on Serbian Armed Forces, incorporated in October 2009, explicitly prohibits servicemen and women from “taking part in activities of associations which have following goals: reform of defense system and Serbian armed forces, alignment with standards and rules of the European Union, creation of the Strategy of Defense and Doctrine of the Serbian Armed Forces (*as documents*) which decide on composition (*and*) organization of the Serbian Armed Forces; their operational and functional capability; armaments and military equipment; command and management of the defense system; *participation in multilateral operations* (sic!) and internal relations in the Serbian Armed Forces”. BCSP researchers and colleagues from different NGOs have criticized this article repeatedly, but to no result.

journalists who are trained in following different security policies (deployments to PSO being one of them). More importantly, these individuals lack dedication; for many of them, issues surrounding participation in PSO are only used in the context of a wider argument, say, pro et contra Serbia's deeper cooperation with NATO. Same can be said for young, aspiring politicians. In a recent meeting with the representatives of youth movements, active on behalf of Serbia's parliamentary parties, BCSP researchers were surprised to find just how low, in terms of policy priorities, security cooperation has fallen.<sup>80</sup> Most influential political commentators (called analysts, *analitičari* by the Serbian media) are shallow in their understanding of the contribution's scope and purpose; and interpret it in line with their preferred political options.

With doubtful chances for collective action, "delineating public arenas" seems improbable. However, this is precisely where further action coming from non-governmental actors is necessary. With the deployment of Serbia's first company-sized unit to Lebanon expected in September,<sup>81</sup> and the new minister outlying his defense priorities<sup>82</sup>, there is an opening for a more focused discussion on the contribution that Serbia is making to peace support operations, including their civilian dimensions.

The influence of the civilian capacity community grows as we turn to roles "5" and "6": since relevant capacity can be found nowhere else, there is no competition with regard to rule setting, sanctioning and control, while external frameworks are readily imported. The IPAP framework we have mentioned is moving forward by meeting different priorities. For instance, one such priority stipulates that Serbia defines the framework for deploying civilian experts. General Staff Department for CIMIC is tasked with providing information containing basic requirements of such process and with drafting secondary legislation that would, eventually, regulate all issues concerning the deployment of civilians. In performing this role, General Staff's Department for Civil-Military Cooperation (J-9) faces no competition and acts as the facilitator of foreign best practices. With deployment characterized as a highly technical process, activities which are sanctioned by these rules will not be questioned by political elites.

Other issues are of more practical nature. With the new Government of Serbia formed in July 2012, it will likely take new leadership "from three to six months to get a hold on what has been done so far."<sup>83</sup> In regard to training, the course outline and syllabus are still in the works and many difficulties are yet expected to arise. As our respondent had

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80 Belgrade Centre for Security Policy 2012.

81 Politika 2012.

82 In his first month as Minister of Defense, Aleksandar Vučić seems to have invested more effort in his other position – "First Vice-President of the Government in charge of defense, security and fight against corruption and organized crime".

83 Interview with the MOD official, July 16, 2012.

noted, “humanitarian assistance in NATO understanding stands for much more than we in Serbia think.”<sup>84</sup>

Several important decisions have to be made; first and foremost, the exact model of engagement. Should Serbia simply include civilian capacities in its “stand-by” commitment, in accordance with the UN practice? Or should it opt for some kind of “active reserve” that would complement the available military personnel? No final decision has been made. The stand-by system, however, with a number of selected individuals under contract seems more plausible.<sup>85</sup> It is here that the issue of hiring people outside the government system will have to be resolved. Only in Italy, over 200 individuals are directly hired as functional specialists, and many of them were deployed.

Once the new Government begins to decide on further engagements, financing will have to be addressed as well. So far, Serbia has financed its contribution to international peacekeeping efforts rather traditionally, from the MoD and MoI’s annual budget. This allows for little flexibility in case of unexpected circumstances, and provides no insight into how civilian experts on secondment will be paid. In Hungary, there are two sources of financing of all CIMIC-related projects: one is “military”, where part of the funds is provided from the MoD’s budget, another is the MFA’s budget; while yet another, called “civilian”, is provided jointly by the MFA and the government’s humanitarian institutions - organizations (such as National Red Cross).<sup>86</sup>

### **Serbia and the Transnational Civilian Capacity Community**

Continuously present in Afghanistan and Kosovo, Croatia has been the one country in the region that has acquired the most experience in deploying civilian capacities. Also, it was the first country to encounter some of the difficulties awaiting its neighbors in relation to planning and implementing civilian contribution.

Since 2005, a senior MFA official (equivalent to Minister-Counselor) has performed the role of Deputy Head for Civil Affairs in German-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), situated in Feyzabad. He was appointed to the same position for the second time in 2010. The time spent in one of the PRTs is important, since they may well represent the “most sophisticated and important way of implementing CIMIC in peace operations.”<sup>87</sup> As a second Croatian civilian official deployed to ISAF, Ivan Velimir Starčević remains an

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84 Interview with the MOD official, July 16, 2012.

85 Ibid. Again in his view, concept of active reserve will be difficult to implement, since private businesses will not be ready to allow their employees to leave without significant compensation being paid.

86 Jeftić 2009, 115.

87 Jeftić 2009, 112.

important opinion maker, region-wise, in debates on contemporary engagement.<sup>88</sup> Croatia has also been an active contributor to EULEX – the EU rule of law mission in Kosovo – as the first and so far only country in the Western Balkans to send judges and prosecutors.

Including civilians in PSO was highlighted by Foreign and European Affairs Minister Vesna Pusic as one of Croatia's foreign policy priorities. For this reason Croatia has joined the United Nations' CAPMATCH initiative – a “self-service online platform [...] whose purpose is to better match the demand and supply of specialized civilian capacities for countries emerging from conflict”<sup>89</sup>. In May 2012, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Civilian Capacities, Sarah Cliffe, visited Croatia and met with Minister Pusic.

According to Mr. Starcevic, the Croatian Government is considering seconding civilians to PSOs from e.g. the business sector and civil society. Yet in doing so it has encountered problems similar to those of Serbia. First, the existing legal framework has to be amended; and second, a ‘pool of experts’ must be created. The latter issue could be properly addressed by the Government adopting a Regulation in order to create a database of available experts.<sup>90</sup> Starcevic argues that any country willing to deploy civilians should first make an assessment of what her niche capabilities are. With such an assessment under way, Croatia is planning to focus its civilian contribution on the areas of education, health and empowerment of women and girls.<sup>91</sup>

This country is also considering ways to improve the process of planning its contribution to international peacekeeping. At the moment, each ministry decides for itself when sending people abroad, provided that it has received the Government's approval. This issue should also be resolved by specific Government Regulation, with the prevailing opinion being that the central role should be played by Croatia's Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

Finally, in terms of financing its contribution, Croatia is moving closer to creating a dedicated development agency based in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. It is important to note that in these four processes – drafting of new legislation; creation of databases; assessment of niche capabilities; and lastly, financing – civil society organizations are welcome to take part; according to Starcevic.<sup>92</sup>

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88 A simple Google search shows Mr. Starčević being perhaps the most prolific presenter in regional fora regarding PSO; and with his Ph.D. “Peace Operations in Post-Modern Era”, he was, to the best of our knowledge, the first researcher in the region who has earned his PhD degree in a field of study concerned with civilian capacities.

89 NUPI 2012.

90 Communication with H.E. Ivan Velimir Starčević, Ambassador of Republic of Croatia to the Hellenic Republic, [E-mail]. September 5, 2012.

91 Ibid.

92 Communication with H.E. Ivan Velimir Starčević, Ambassador of Republic of Croatia to the Hellenic Republic, [E-mail]. September 5, 2012.

As for the rest of the region, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), as well as Croatia, all have dedicated training centers. So far, however, only the Peace Support Operations Training Centre (PSO TC) based in Butmir (BiH), has been accredited by NATO as a “Partnership Training and Education Centre”. The need for coordination between the regional peace support operations training centers was recognized by NORDCAPS in 2009-2010, when it initiated a series of “Western Balkans Regional Training and Education Meetings”.<sup>93</sup>

In December 2011, in cooperation with RACVIAC – Centre for Security Cooperation and PSO TC, the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (Serbia), organized a seminar “SSR in the Context of PSO” which dealt – among other issues – with the potential role of civilian capacities.<sup>94</sup> The seminar concept and outline was taken forward by the Center for Security Studies Sarajevo (BiH) which, again in cooperation with the PSO TC, arranged two additional courses for security sector reform (SSR) experts in peace support operations.<sup>95</sup> Both of these seminars were, however, intended for BiH students only.<sup>96</sup>

Internationally, we have already detailed the UN Secretary-General’s reform process initiative to make better use of civilian capacities in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, and the EU’s efforts in the same area. Communities of practice (CoPs) have been established across borders to inform of developments within the field and discuss practices and policies. In the area of civilian capacities, the “Stabilization and Peacebuilding Community of Practice” is one of several.<sup>97</sup> Other communities of practice are more narrow, focusing on practitioners within an organization,<sup>98</sup> and perhaps limited to a particular group of experts such as the “ISSAT Security and Justice Reform Community of Practice.”<sup>99</sup>

Non-governmental actors are also active – the Norwegian rosters NORCAP and NORDEM are important examples, as is the website [civcap.info](http://www.civcap.info), supported by Germany.<sup>100</sup> This website hosts a CoP on civilian capacities, as well as International Stabilization and Peacebuilding Initiative (ISPI), “an informal, working-level network of governments and international organizations that have joined together in their commitment to enhance

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93 NORDCAPS 2012.

94 Belgrade Centre for Security Policy 2011.

95 Centre for Security Studies 2012.

96 Peace Support Operations Training Centre 2012.

97 Stabilization and Peacebuilding Community of Practice (CoP) 2012.

98 E.g. the UN Rule of Law Network. For a list of CoPs in the area of Rule of law, see [http://www.unrol.org/article.aspx?article\\_id=39](http://www.unrol.org/article.aspx?article_id=39)

99 ISSAT Security and Justice Reform Community of Practice CoP. Available at <http://issat.dcaf.ch/Home/Community-of-Practice/>

100 The initiative is supported by the German Federal Foreign Office, see <http://www.civcap.info/>.

civilian capacity globally and increase interoperability among international actors.”<sup>101</sup> There should, thus, be ample evidence for a transnational community emerging on the topic of civilian capacities.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Looking at the practices related to peace support operations in Serbia and neighboring countries, we have only found moderate evidence for an emerging community on civilian capacities in Serbia, as well as in the Balkans. The awareness raising workshop held in November 2011 was a positive first step, but so far there seems to be a lack of concrete follow-up and implementation of recommendations. This may be due to the change of government during the summer of 2012, or the very nature of policy change which takes time. However, the fact that a number of Serbian nationals have undergone training and the continuous deployment, signal that Serbia might become increasingly engaged in peace support operations with civilian capacities as well.

There is no doubt that there are many Serbian nationals who possess expertise that would be valuable in international peace support operations, and that expertise from Serbia can be particularly appreciated as these individuals have had recent experience in security sector reform and other relevant areas. So far, there is no information regarding the number of Serbian civilians who have served in peace support operations, and in which capacity. Serbia may have, and has had, a number of civilians deployed in multilateral operations, but this would have to be mapped in order to obtain a good picture of their areas of expertise and the organizations in which they worked.

Under the previous government, there have been signs that Serbia may form a strategy and approach this issue in a more concerted manner. However, with the new government in place, this process is now at a standstill. The fact that the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ivan Mrkić, has received United Nations Disarmament Fellowship (1979) and worked at the Permanent Mission of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations (1982–86) could contribute to greater knowledge and interest in providing civilian expertise to peace support operations. This, however, remains to be seen. The framework agreement with the EU enabling the provision of Serbian civilian expertise to CSDP missions is another step that provides an agreeable environment for secondment of Serbian civilian capacities.

This article is also a testament, however minute, to the fact that the research community in Serbia is now becoming more interested in this topic. Hopefully this could mark the beginning of additional research on how Serbia and other states in the Balkans might

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101 ISPI. Available at <https://www.civcap.info/home/international-stabilization-and-peacebuilding-initiative-ispi.html>

be able to contribute with their expertise and experience to peace support operations, whether they be managed by the EU, UN, OSCE or NATO.

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