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## Security and Defense Sector Reform in Ukraine: lessons learned and perspective

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Abandoning of the so-called "non-block" status and resumption of Euro-Atlantic integration policy should be considered as the most important preconditions for starting effective Security and Defense Sector Reform (SDSR) in Ukraine. Basic areas of the national SDSR were rather clearly identified upon the adoption of a new National Security Strategy of Ukraine and revised Military Doctrine of Ukraine that finally came into force this year.

Even though there is still a lack of major normative provisions for creation of robust defensive capabilities providing adequate level of deterrence on the backdrop of existing threats and challenges to national security. The basic legislation defining normative framework for SDSR in Ukraine may be generally considered as being created, but the process itself has not been completed yet.

According to official estimates, current progress in reaching national SDSR's objectives is about 55 percent, as of beginning of October 2015. One of the reason of such slow downing could be eventual shifting of priorities to counter internal problems because of military threats appear to become less visible irritating factors.

The process of SDSR in Ukraine is characterized by own special features related to obtaining practical experience, both positive and negative one, in addressing current threats and challenges to the national security. The above experience requires urgent consideration in the common practice of SDSR, including in other East European countries being in the area of immediate interests of the Kremlin.

On the backdrop of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) appeared to be a central element within SDSR completing front-line tasks on protecting Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The most substantial changes in reforming defense sector occurred in the area of combat warfare tactics where new views and approaches were widely implemented through improvement of the existing and creating new organizational structures of the regular armed forces, executing new forms and methods of combat warfare that resulted in strengthening combat potential of the UAF.

Despite of available equipment and armaments, the UAF urgently require, among other things, air defense systems, tactical missiles, coastal defense systems, high-precision ammunition and weapons, etc. The best way out is to establish a joint production of all critical armaments and equipment Ukraine is lacking now. But this task could not be achieved without coordination of the national defense industry activities under a new framework for military-technical cooperation to be developed.

At the same time, many changes have purely quantitative nature. It goes without saying that UAF are undergoing re-equipment now, but this process is far from been completed. Reestablishment of the UAF with declared strength of 280 000 servicemen mostly equipped with armed combat vehicles, tanks and artillery systems inherent to the former Soviet Union empire could not meet today's requirements for effective and adequate response in case of new military incursion, if any.

Based on the results of last calls for mobilization, there is a clear need to change existing conscript system to professional one. Delay with this transition would mean wasting time and losing current wartime opportunities. To begin with, it was proposed to set up a professional core in so-called “elite” units of the UAF. Despite of relative success on strategic level as well as different combat experience gained by the UAF, there is a need for further improvements on the ground to meet modern warfare requirements.

Thus, the UAF under extremely tough conditions do managed to change themselves radically being reinforced, duly trained and experienced. Now they completely differ from those that existed prior to the Russian aggression. But there is still a lot of to be done, never minding the tendency for shifting priorities amid full-scale military conflict with Russia seems to become less apparent.

At the same time, due attention is paid to security sector reform to ensure sustainability of the State Security System and strengthening the rule of law, increasing its legitimacy and raising public confidence based on human rights and according to the process of Constitutional reform.

The critical point here to overcome is a different perception of the semantic meaning of a security sector itself in the Western countries and Ukraine along with other post-Soviet counterparts. The main objects of security sector reform are the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) together with all subordinated structures (incl. National Police, State Border Guard Service, National Guard, etc.), Judiciary, Public Prosecution, Penitentiary and State Security Services.

The MIA remains to be a main governmental institution integrating the majority of security sector components being on the top of reforming. Among the basic achievements, here is a new Law on the National Police, which was adopted together with a package of Laws improving the collection of traffic fines and reorganizing traffic police registration centers, known to be highly corrupt. This Law came into force at the beginning of November this year.

With a 2015 increase in funding, the Ukrainian National Guard has started building up its capabilities through increasing the number of subordinated units, modernizing weaponry, and upgrading training programs. The main missions of the National Guard were defined as fighting against Russian combat battalion tactical groups manned by contracted personnel, and executing counterterrorist operations against subversive enemy units.

The issues of having deal with volunteer battalions has been mostly resolved, at least on paper. All 24 of them are officially subordinated to the MIA. According to the agreed procedure, all volunteer battalions within next 1,5-2 years will be completely disbanded, so that their personnel were proposed to make a choice – to join National Police or National Guard units.

Hence, the reforming of the Ukraine’s security sector is also quite a difficult task because of the need changing conceptual approach and national mentality. It’s rather a time consuming procedure oriented on the years to come but with urgent request to do something visible for public despite of being a bit controversial. Nonetheless, under current circumstances, the importance of security sector reform is hardly to overestimate, especially in view of countering Russian hybrid warfare, being extensively used from within.

International support in SDSR is crucial in terms of urgency, scarcity of national resources and required compliancy with high international standards. There is a sort of division of labor inherent to SDSR in Ukraine, namely NATO is primarily engaged in defense sector reforming whilst the EU concentrates on providing support to civil security sector reform. As far as NATO allies and the EU members are concerned, they are quite active in both sectors of reform depending on the available potential and national priorities. According to official reports, the most active contributor is the U.S., whose experts participate in different bilateral projects dedicated to SDSR as a whole. The U.S. government since 2014 provided more than 266 million USD while assisting in implementing various projects within SDSR in Ukraine .

At the same time, a key for solving current security conflict remains both at hands of civilized Western world, the interests of which is concentrated in the EU and NATO framework, as well as at own hands of Kyiv being responsible for carrying out uncompromised structural reforms.

There has been an obvious increase of the national defense and security potential, though more quantitative then qualitative one. At the same time, it could hardly be argued that the soviet type inertia in the Ukrainian Security and Defense Sector Forces has been finally overcome.

Taking into account resent security developments, one cannot ignore the possibility of repeating the so-called “military options” by Russia already next spring. In a situation when Washington will be engulfed in upcoming presidential election campaign, and Europe, in its turn, will be flooded by refugees amid increasing desire to re-

new its cooperation with Moscow in order to return to an era of well-fed prosperity, the above scenario could come true. Moreover, we should speak not only about an open aggression, but also not to forget the increased Russian subversive activities from within, based on breeding grounds for political disturbances and declining socio-economic conditions. Having all these in mind, it is apparent to pay more attention to SDSR based on lessons learned and experience gained.

One of the future possibilities to strengthen the national deterrence capabilities should be based on the development of asymmetric strategy and relevant approaches to SDSR, including effective preparation and conducting of information and physiological operations.

To be successful in realizing current tasks for SDSR, we should adopt not only the Western principles of selection, but also the Western model of governance. National legislation must be adapted to these tasks and goals. It is the painstaking work, which is a part of the SDSR and should be a priority. In Ukraine, there is no struggle between good and poor methods for executing reforms,

what we have here it is a contradiction between the feudal proprietary approaches and attempts to build a professionally organized state structures and institutions. This contradiction could not be eliminated only through elaborating appropriate legislation - there is a need for irreversible change in the minds.

Nowadays, it is unlikely to believe that the Kremlin gave up the idea to destroy Ukraine as independent and prospering country. The aggression against Ukraine will continue in different forms. Moreover, Moscow's military engagement in Syria along with deployment of Russia's military base in the vicinity of Ukraine's eastern border as well as insistence on Minsk to create another military stronghold provide clear warning messages to Ukraine proving the high probability of worse-case scenario to happen.

Modern security and defense sector will provide not only reliable protection from external enemies, but also significantly strengthen internal security while balancing the influence of all players involved.

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