

# ICPS newsletter<sup>®</sup>

## The National Security Council could be used to coordinate public reforms

***The time has come for Ukraine to reform its security institutions that too often still operate on principles established during soviet times. To maximize their efficiency, security institutions need to be reformed from the outside—and this process should be directed by the National Security Council (NSC). This Council could also become the center for coordinating other key reforms. All these ideas came up at an international conference in Chisinau on 12 July 2005 under a project jointly implemented by Ukraine's International Centre for Policy Studies, Moldova's Institute for Public Policy and the Romanian Institute for Public Policy***

The experience of Moldova, Ukraine and, to a certain extent, Romania has shown how difficult it is to carry out large-scale transformations in the defense and security sectors. Initiatives are hamstrung by shifts in priorities, limited resources, lack of skills, weak leadership, and complete novelty of the process of transformation. Without the necessary level of planning, coordination and oversight of how decisions are implemented, it is impossible to ensure the right level of national security in a country. Art. 107 of the Constitution of Ukraine assigns these tasks to the National Security Council. For this body to develop further, the experience accumulated over the last years of its activity and the experience of similar foreign structures must be incorporated into any strategic planning and management at the highest level of government.

### The Council is not just about defense

Today, there are few policy areas that are not directly or indirectly related to the issue of national security. In most countries, National Security Councils carry out three key functions:

- Strategic forecasting, planning and policy coordination;
- The link between Government bureaucrats, the military and the police on one side and the Head of State and political forces general on the other;
- An emergency control body, that is, the institution that is supposed to ensure the necessary level of state management under emergency or special conditions.

By carrying out these basic functions, NSC could become that political center where the most important strategic decisions are developed and approved, where representatives of all branches of government can meet and determine the strategic direction of the country's development. Today, the strategic directions have become rather clear. In foreign policy, they are:

- Moving towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration and developing partnerships with EU countries and the US;
- Developing a regional policy and regional security; expanding and institutionalizing GUAM; settling unresolved conflicts, especially the Transnistria situation for which Ukraine has already submitted a plan;
- Developing neighborly relations with Russia and other CIS countries and moving ahead with the CEA based on Ukraine's national interests.

In domestic policy, they are:

- Consolidating civil democratic values in Ukrainian society, mitigating the consequences of the political "split" that occurred during the last presidential election, and formulating an effective regional policy;
- Radically reforming the policy-making process used by government institutions in Ukraine;
- Supporting the energy—i.e., economic—security of the country by diversifying resource markets;
- Combating corruption and legitimizing the economy;

- Reforming the judiciary;
- Reforming the Army and the Military-Industrial Complex;
- Reforming the police system and establishing a pre-trial investigative agency.

### The Council should work with independent analysts

In recognition of the complexity of the task of ensuring national security in the midst of global and regional crises and external challenges, serious attention must be paid to strengthening the intellectual component of the public administration system. Within its own structure, the NSC has so far established an extensive network for providing analytical and predictive support for domestic and external security policy, but it is clear that this system works quite ineffectively. For the most part, this concerns R&D institutions and analytical centers that are run by the Council.

There is no doubt that the NSC would benefit from using the analytical potential of independent NGOs. The Council and especially its administrative departments could then serve as a communicative link, a channel for intellectual and even personnel exchange between the government and the professional and academic communities, and ensure that government decisions are thoroughly scrutinized. ■

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