SHAPING THE NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM IN REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

ОБЛИКУВАЊЕ НА СИСТЕМОТ ЗА КРИЗЕН МЕНАЏМЕНТ
ВО РЕПУБЛИКА СЛОВЕНИЈА

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a case study of how Slovenia as a member state of EU and NATO adapted to the complex security environment. During its war for independence an effective and comprehensive crisis management system was established, however many key lessons were later forgotten due to the fierce interministerial competition (1991-1994). The 9-11 created conditions for a second wave of reforms directed to improve horizontal interagency cooperation in crisis management. This paper explains some of the reforms and activities that could potentially be a role model for other similar states. However, the paper concludes that Slovenia is still far from the optimal horizontal and interagency crisis management system.

Keywords: crisis, crisis management, Slovenia, system

АПСТРАКТ

Трудот претставува студија на случај за тоа како Саловенија како членка на ЕУ и НАТО се прилагодуваше на комплексното безбедносно опкружување. Во текот на сопствената војна за независност воспоставен е ефикасен и сеопфатен систем за справување со кризи, а многу клучни лекции подоцна беа заборавени заради силната меѓуминистерска конкуренција (1991-1994). 9-11 создаде услови за вториот бран реформи насочени кон подобрување на хоризонталната меѓуагенциска соработка во менаџирањето на кризите. Трудот ги објаснува дел од реформите и активностите кои можат потенцијално да бидат пример на модел за други слични држави. Како и да е, трудот заклучува дека Словенија е сè уште далеку од оптимален хоризонтален и меѓуагенциски систем за менаџирање со кризи.

Клучни зборови: криза, менаџирање со кризи, Словенија, систем.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary security environment is generating many crises related to the politico-military conflicts, terrorism, natural disasters, infectious diseases, information disruptions, ethnic or religious violence and others. Many of these crises have a strong effect to the security and safety of people. Accordingly, the states with their national security systems represent the most critical and decisive element in responding to the current crises. This is why, all European states struggle with complexities and problems of shaping a responsive, robust and flexible national crisis management framework.

The existing experience by the NATO and EU countries in the field of national crisis management is quite heterogeneous; however some common denominators can be identified. The analysis of Defence Research Centre from the University of Ljubljana (see Prezelj, 2005) has shown that 9-11 experience gave a strong incentive to many states to develop a more crisis-oriented instead of a war-oriented national security system. These reforms have been implemented relatively simultaneously at the national and international levels (NATO, EU). Common finding of many developed European countries was that the existing security mechanisms and institutions did not reflect the changed requirements from the security environment. We can say that these reforms predominantly focused on the following activities:

- introducing a formal definition of crisis and crisis management in strategic documents or even laws,
- shaping mechanisms for comprehensive threat assessments,
- rethinking the mechanisms for declaration of national crises or emergencies,
- shaping comprehensive multidisciplinary and multiagency crisis planning mechanisms,
- carrying out multiagency crisis management exercises,
- reshaping and improving the structure of national interagency crisis decision-making bodies (such as National Security Councils and other governmental or interministerial bodies),
- developing efficient information support mechanisms for integral crisis management, etc.

Slovenia, as an EU and NATO member state, has been a part of the above described reform trend. The goal of this paper is to present and assess the Slovenian approach to shaping national crisis management mechanisms since its independence. The text will focus on some of the above mentioned reform activities aiming to show what approach was undertaken to increase its capacity of managing complex crises. The author argues (based on his study of national security documents and participation in some interagency bodies) that while the Slovenian case of shaping integral crisis mechanisms can be a positive guidance for other similarly small states, the remaining interagency difficulties reflect a lack of will to create a truly functional integral crisis management system.

INTEGRAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT MECHANISM IN THE WAR
FOR INDEPENDENCE IN 1991

Slovenian declaration of independence was a result of a long-lasting political and economic crisis in Yugoslavia. The resulting military intervention by the Yugoslav Federal Army was perceived as a major threat to the existence of the newly created Slovenian state. It was very important for the success of the whole Slovenian endeavour that the comprehensive crisis management system was created. This system was actually a hierarchical and horizontal structure for integral planning and decision-making in response to the constantly changing threats. It embraced all relevant national, regional and local military and non-military institutions that could play a role in national crisis management. Its structure is shown in the next figure.

Figure 1: Crisis management system in the war of independence 1991 (Prezelj, 2005: 271).
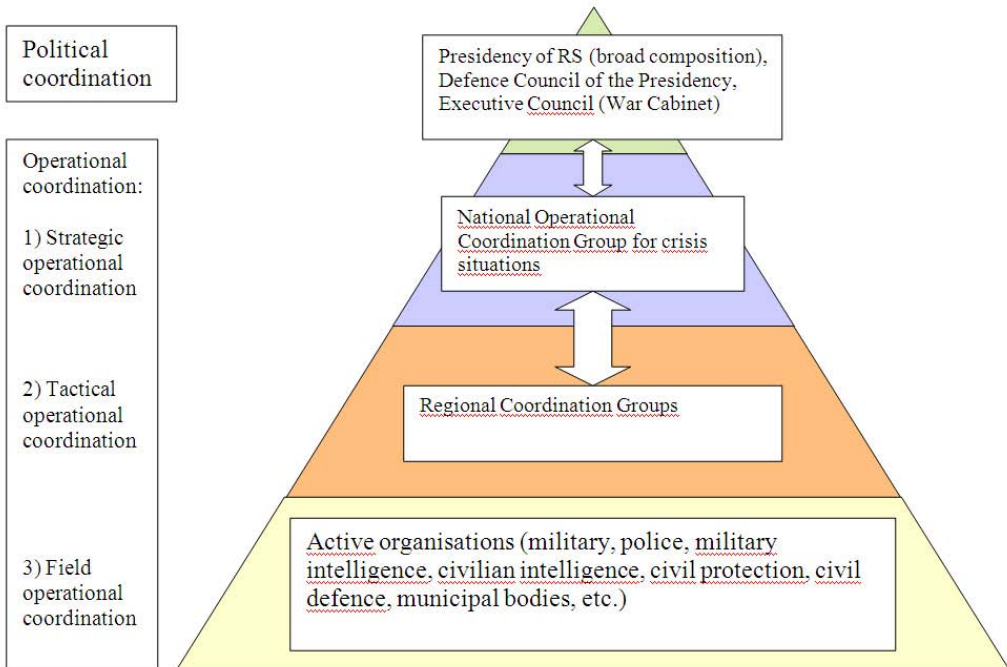
Defence Council of the Presidency (War Cabinet) was responsible for political coordination of the whole crisis management process. Extremely important was the establishment of National Operational Coordination Group for crisis situations several months before the declaration of independence. This coordination group was led jointly by the ministers of interior and defence. It consisted of military (TO), police, civil defence, intelligence services, etc. This was key coordination body for operational planning and management.

Seven Regional Coordination groups were subordinated to the national coordination group they also consisted of representatives of different regional non-military and military bodies. At the field level, the coordination was carried out on an ad hoc basis, depending to a large extent to the personal cooperation among the commanders and heads of active units and bodies. Our analysis of the war has shown many positive examples of integral crisis management, such as joint planning, joint guarding of strategic objects, joint barricades, joint protection of border crossings, joint decision-making, mutual help in training, help in equipment, joint negotiating, joint monitoring of movements by the Yugoslav military, joint guarding, joint defence and attack, etc.

One of the key elements for success of Slovenia in this war should be attributed to the existence of the above mentioned coordination mechanisms. Then the war ended, the country was recognised by the international community and started to face a challenge of shaping national security system.

THE RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO CREATE A PEACE-TIME COMPREHENSIVE CRISIS MANAGEMENT APPROACH

After gaining independence, an unfortunate struggle for power among some ministers and related political elites begun. The war unity has disappeared and the place for merciless competition for power among the ministries has begun (e.g. the Ministry of Defence versus the Ministry of Interior). In this period, the state was focusing on building the basic pillars (institutions) of national security system. Horizontal crisis coordination was neglected and set aside. The first Slovenian National Security Strategy (1993) was adopted to define the basic elements of national security system. National security system was defined as a totality of mechanisms that provide national security by preventing and responding to threats. The strategy defined basic three-pillar structure of Slovenian national security system, consisting of defence subsystem, security subsystem and protection and rescue subsystem. National intelligence system was also defined in early nineties, which is also relevant from the crisis management perspective (see Predstavitveno gradivo komisije za nadzor nad delom varnostnih in obveščevalnih služb, 2002: 4). The term

crisis was not mentioned in the strategic and doctrinal documents. Also the term crisis management was not extensively or systematically used.

In 2001, the analysis of Slovenian crisis management system showed that Slovenia has not developed a comprehensive national security system at all relevant levels. It had relatively well developed crisis management mechanisms in specific sub-systems of the national security system. The report also stressed that the national security system was too war- and disaster-oriented (Krizno upravljanje v RS, 2001). The existing division of crisis-management responsibilities among ministries indirectly stemmed from the Law on Organisation of Ministries (Zakon o organizaciji in delovnem področju ministrstev, 1994) and sectoral legislation. Accordingly, the MOD was responsible for providing military and civilian defence, including protection and rescue in case of disasters, Ministry for Work, Family and Social Affairs responsible for employment policy and social security, Ministry of Economy responsible for development and condition of economy, trade and basic supplies, Ministry of Culture for protection of cultural heritage and values, Ministry of Interior for protection of national borders, prevention and sanctioning all forms of crime, protection and maintenance of public order, Ministry of Environment responsible for safeguarding the environment and nature, including nuclear safety, Ministry of Health for health safety, especially in the field of infectious diseases, etc. This division of work was suitable for the so-called vertical approach to crisis management, but not sufficient for achieving a strong horizontal and interagency approach. The assessment by Napotnik (2003) and Najzer (2003) has showed the following key problems with crisis management in Slovenia:

- crisis management was not adapted to the contemporary security environment,

- insufficient interministerial organisation in complex crisis management (which was confirmed at all crisis management exercises at the beginning of new millennium), and

- slow adaptation of legislation in the field of crisis management, etc.

They recommended the following solutions:

- shaping more comprehensive assessments in relevant crisis areas (e.g. health, economy, agriculture, transport, communications, information technology, internal security, military defence, protection and rescue, etc.),

- strengthening the interministerial cooperation and exchange of information,

- shaping a comprehensive crisis management system as demanded by the National Security Strategy,

- shaping adequate military and civilian mechanisms for crisis management of national and international crises,

- start with permanent and comprehensive threat assessment in Slovenia,

- intensifying the research in the field of crisis management and

- introducing the digital radio communication system TETRA in the crisis management community.

Due to the lessons of 9-11, some relevant conclusions by some Slovenian authors in the field of crisis management (see Prezelj 2005, 2007; 2008; 2009; Brandstrom and Malesic, 2004) and conclusions by the special Interministerial working group on shaping a comprehensive crisis management system, some relevant changes were finally implemented. Especially the issue of interagency coordination has become more relevant as almost all ministries have identified interest for strong horizontal coordination. Also their reform processes were streamlined into direction of better horizontal cooperation.

SLOVENIAN DEFINITION OF CRISIS AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The comparison of two national security strategies (1993; 2001) shows that Slovenia perceived an increasing number of threats. This strongly influenced the Slovenian understanding of crisis and crisis management. It was in 2001 when the National Security Strategy (Strategija nacionalne varnosti, 2001: 5742) defined crises as situations in which the fundamental social values are threatened and where an uncertainty and relatively short time for response exist. The document contains also understanding that crises transfer state borders and produce intersectoral effects. Transnationality of crises contributes to better coordination of preparations with neighbouring countries and international organisations (especially with NATO and EU). Also other national security documents adopted after 9-11 mentioned crisis and crisis management as relevant elements of the national security (e.g. Defence Strategy, Doctrine of Civil Defence, Military Doctrine, etc.). The Sector for Civil Defence at the Ministry of Defence had also developed a relevant definition of crisis. According to their definition, the crisis refers to timely limited, undesired and critical situation, event or process in regional or broad strategic environment that might seriously threaten national security. Crisis can not be handled by the ordinary means of states and societies; one has to activate national security or crisis management mechanisms (Najzer, 2003; Napotnik, 2003).

In the process of amending the Law on Police in 2003 (see Zakon o policiji, 1998), the proposal of introducing the term crisis was debated. The idea was that the article 17 (that defines conditions for the use of police in changed circumstances, that is in emergency situations and wars) would be supplemented by a more general notion of crisis. The police would then have a legal basis for strengthened operational activities in all crises, in all situations declared as emergency and in war. The proposal was rejected. Some of the arguments against contained also the idea that crisis should be made a constitutional

category (together with existing constitutional categories – war and emergency situation) and only then this law could be supplemented in such a way (see Gaber & Anžič, 2003).

National Security strategy (2001: 5738, 5742) as fundamental security document set the goal of connecting the elements of national security system into efficient crisis management system that would be capable of contributing to endeavours of Slovenia and international community to solve contemporary complex crises. The document also stated that Slovenia will strive for developing such national security concept that will, in consistency with constitutional limitations, stress the role of national crisis management as the hub of virtually separated fields of security planning and preparations. Crisis prevention, preparation, reaction and post-crisis restoration were defined as common activities of all national security fields, which require coordination of efforts and also overcoming the traditional divisions between civilian and military spheres. In the Slovenian currently valid National Security Strategy (2010), the term "national crisis management system" was withdrawn. This document only states that Slovenia will apply the valid crisis management solutions in the EU and NATO. The intention to upgrade the existing national security system to better cope with complex crises exceeding the competences of individual agencies and ministries is expressed only at the end of this document. The strategy concluded with the expression of an intention to form a special body for coordination of various dimensions of crisis management. This is quite surprising intention as this task actually already belongs to the National Security Council.

GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AS SUPREME NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT BODIES

Government of Slovenia is responsible for managing, directing and coordinating the executive power in all circumstances: peace, crisis and war. It is the supreme coordinating body responsible also for coordination of all relevant executive bodies in times of crisis. It also defines national security policy and is responsible for protection of population and critical infrastructure. Because the ministers are extremely busy in conducting their daily work, the government has established the National Security Council in 1998. The council plays a role of a consultative and coordination body for the field of defence, internal security, protection and rescue sub-system and all other national security questions (Odlok o ustanovitvi in nalogah SNAV, 1998). In other words, coordination of national security policy is its key task. Other specific tasks of National Security Council (NSC) are:

- advising the government in the field of national security,
- advising the ministers in implementation of national security interests and goals,
- coordination of opinions and measures of ministries and other state bodies in implementation of national security tasks,

- coordination of opinions of ministries and other state bodies before the meeting of the government on the national security topic,
- threat assessment and defining the counter-measures, etc.

Members of NSC are: the President of Government as the president of the Council, ministers for defence, internal affairs, external affairs, justice, finances, environment and Director of civil intelligence service (SOVA), who is also the secretary of the NSC. For operational and coordinated implementation of measures, the Secretariat of NSC was formed. The secretariat is composed of Director of civilian intelligence service (head), Director General of Police, Chief of General Staff, State Secretary at Ministry of External Affairs, State Secretary at MOD, Director of Defence Intelligence service, Chief of Civil Protection Staff, Adviser for National Security of the Prime Minister, etc.

Crisis management mechanism of the NSC works on the demand basis, meaning that each minister can demand its meeting if the problem at hand is too complex for one ministry. Government and NSC can organise a meeting immediately after the demand. Various communication technologies can be used in support of prompt decision-making. All relevant members of NSC and its secretariat are reachable 24 hours per day (Prezelj, 2005). Also various governmental interministerial groups were established with general goal to coordinate or help superior bodies to coordinate also in times of crisis.

It turned out that the NSC has one deficiency, namely the lack of decision-making powers in comparison with the government itself. Additionally, some Slovenian governments did not understand the coordination potential of this body, so they did not use it up to its capacities.

NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT CENTER

Government of Slovenia decided to form the National Crisis Management Center (NCKU) at its session in September 2000. The goal behind establishing such center was to provide communication and information support for operation of the state leadership in case of crisis and emergency situations. NCKU became operational in January 2004. Legal basis for its operation is the Law on Defence (art. 72 and 84). Basic structure and tasks were determined by the governmental decree (Uredba o organizaciji in delovanju NCKU, 2006).

NCKU is operating at the Ministry of Defence on a 24-hour basis. Its main task is to provide facility, technical and telecommunication support for the work of government in times of national or international crisis and also war. NCKU has the following specific tasks:
- providing the information and communication connection for exchange of information with the Office of the President, General Secretariat of the Parliament, General Secretariat of the

Government, National Security Council, ministries, governmental services, Operational and Communication Center of the Police, Civil Protection Information Center, Force Command of the Slovenian Armed Forces and operational centers of other relevant bodies.

- Providing communication and information support for international exchange of information, etc.

Relevant national operational centers report to the NCKU in predefined format. The relationship of NCKU with other national bodies is shown in the following two figures.

Figure 3: Horizontal connections of NCKU with other crisis-management actors.
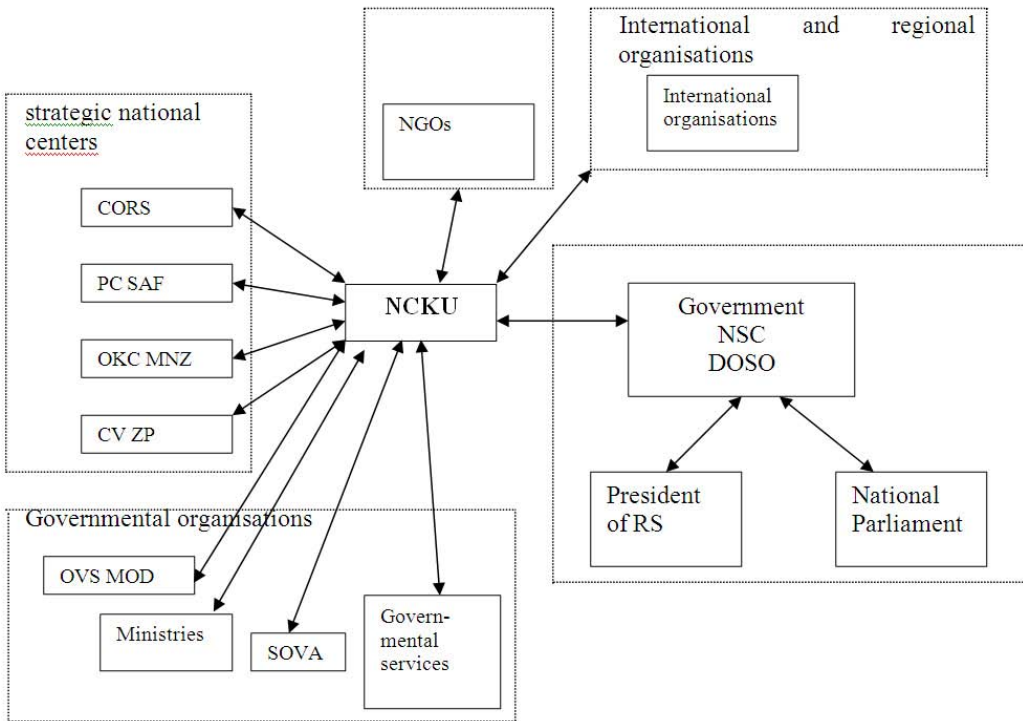
The centre consists of operational and analytical group. Operational group consists of operators who are responsible for technical support, while analytical group consists of representatives of various ministries, acting as liaison officers and analytical capacity. This group is responsible for assessing the security situation, preparing joint assessments, if needed, coordinating implementation of adopted decisions, preparing harmonised and coordinated proposals of decisions, etc. (Uredba o organizaciji in delovanju NCKU, 2006: art. 8). Analytical group is activated based on the need for crisis management.

Figure 2: The vertical role of NCKU.
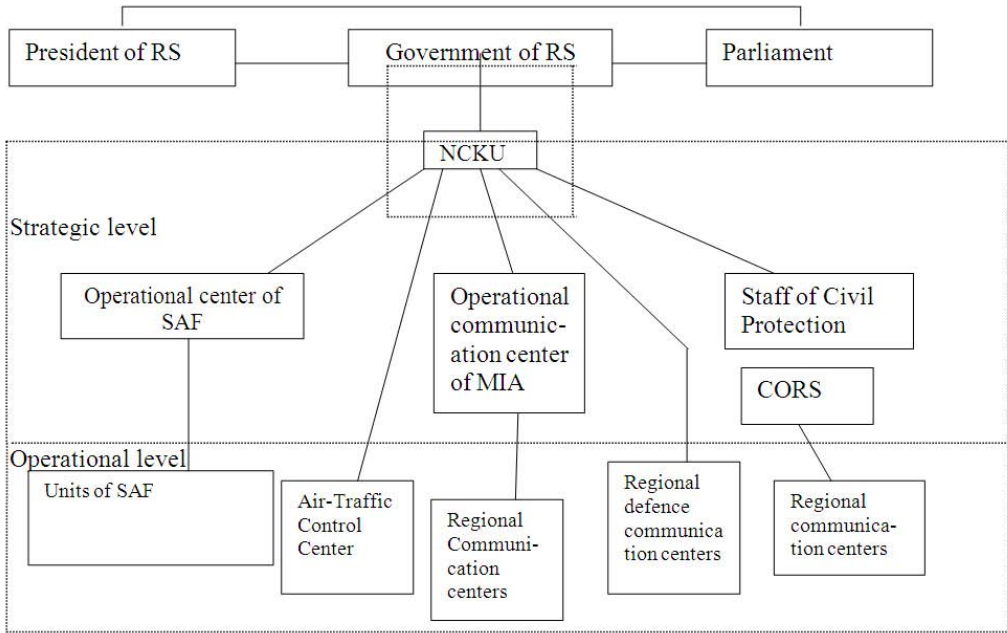
CRISIS MANAGEMENT EXERCISES

The frequency of crisis management exercises in Slovenia has increased since 9-11. Increasing focus has also been on the interministerial exercises that combine many relevant national security actors that interact or learn how to interact and coordinate better. The first large crisis management exercise in Slovenia since its independence was CMX/CRISEX 2000. This was the first joint NATO/WEU exercise, which tested the operation of crisis management mechanisms between both organisations and national support crisis mechanisms. For the purpose of the exercise, the national coordination analytical group was established and composed of representatives of various ministries. The exercise showed that a communication center is needed for integrating and preparing the national solutions to be sent to Brussels. Additionally, other CMX and CME[1] crisis management exercises were carried out. Perhaps, we should mention the IZZIV 2003 (Challenge 2003). This was one of the biggest national crisis management exercises that tested coordination of measures among key institutions in the national security system. Links with international organisations were tested, NCKU was tested. Around 300 participants were involved,

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[1] CME excercises are conducted in the framework of EU and CMX excercises are conducted in the framework of NATO.

coming from the government, ministries, Mission of RS to NATO, nongovernmental sector, etc. Also military participated, which reflects that also civil-military cooperation was evaluated. The exercise took place on various locations, yet the central location was in the technically very equipped simulation centre (ORIS).

Since then, Slovenia conducted many similar crisis management exercises where the coordination mechanisms were tested. The common features of these CMX and CME exercises have been their long preparation time, one macro international crisis scenario with many national sub scenarios, multiagency national and international participation. Special attention has been devoted to the communication systems linking all the relevant crisis actors in an effective and protected network. Many exercises have tested the national multiagency response, bilateral and multilateral response to a broad spectrum of civil and military scenarios. It should be also stressed that some of these exercises have partially involved also the national governments themselves in order to test the political decision-making response.

THE SPECIFIC ROLE OF SLOVENIAN ARMED FORCES IN CIVILIAN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Strategic concept of defence is based on the premise that major armed conflict is no longer key aspect of defence preparations (Obrambna strategija RS, 2001: 6). Military tasks from the Law on Defence were operationalized as tasks in peace, crisis and war. Tasks in peace are providing preparedness, prevention of threats and protection of military infrastructure, equipment and staff, participation in peace-keeping missions and humanitarian operations, creating the confidence with international partner cooperation, etc. Tasks in crises are preventive deployment of forces, readiness for intervention, mobilisation and support of activated forces, participation in crisis management operations, etc. War tasks are the same as is the case with all other armed forces (see Obrambna strategija RS, 2001: 10). Accordingly, Slovenian armed forces have three types of organisation: peace, crisis and war organisation. Staff process is more or less the same in all three circumstances.

Slovenian military participates in civilian crisis management at international level (in crisis management operations) and national level (in support of protection and rescue activities in disasters). Military activation in support for civilian disaster management depends on the invitation or call by the competent civilian authorities (Government, Minister of Defence or Chief of General Staff). Legal basis for such activation is represented by the Law on Defence (Zakon o obrambi, 1994: art. 37) and Law on Protection against Natural and Other Disasters (Zakon o varstvu pred naravnimi in drugimi nesrečami, 1994: art. 83). Use of military units must be strictly under civilian command or supervision in the

stated cases. Direct leadership is performed by the military commanders, who are coordinated by the competent civilian authority or individual (e.g. head of intervention).

Slovenian Armed Forces participate in disaster management in accordance with national plans. These are plans that defined potential tasks of military in case of floods, earthquakes, fires, accidents in mountains, high snow and sleet, airplane accidents, train accidents, accidents on the sea, infectious diseases, etc. Based on this plans, several exercises are conducted every year. Naturally, protection and rescue of own people, own equipment and infrastructure is even more important crisis management task of the armed forces. The following tasks represent an example of military activities in case of disaster (e.g. flood):

- evacuation of the military equipment and personnel,
- evacuation of threatened population and goods,
- transport of humanitarian help and rescue equipment,
- protection of threatened areas and objects,
- preventive measures around objects,
- cleaning of area (e.g. outflows),
- help in building barriers,
- providing clean water for the authorities,
- temporary accommodation of threatened and homeless people, etc.

CONCLUSION ON THE PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES OF SHAPING THE COMPREHENSIVE CRISIS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

We can say that Slovenia sensed at the right time the impulse on the need for reorienting its national security system from the war-oriented to the more general crisis management system. Scientific studies were initiated, interagency working groups formed to think how to introduce and implement these changes. Also some books were written suggesting some further system changes. Especially vital was the formation of complex multilevel interministerial crisis management structure in the war of independence. This war could not be won without such horizontal interaction. However, the horizontal lessons from this war were soon forgotten due to the high pressure for establishing the vertically operating structures and strong competition among some ministries for jurisdiction and power. The lessons from 9-11 had some impact on integral crisis management as many horizontal processes were initiated. However, we can also say that general understanding of the complex demands from the security environment is disappointingly low at the political level and top ministerial level. In principle many people agree with proposed changes, however very soon the typical interagency competitive thinking becomes the key thinking framework. Thinking outside the box is the luxury of only some high officials, who naturally

cannot change the entire system. Many times the existing legal structure was mentioned as the reason to block changes. Complex crisis management is today not a real political priority. Without real political interest and initiation, the tempo of changes will be slow.

Perhaps the main reason is that Slovenia as a small country of 2 million people does not face many crises, especially big ones. This means that Slovenia has a unique opportunity to learn from experiences from other more developed states on how to react and how not to react to complex crises. However, many examples of crises worldwide showed that the only real impulse for learning comes from the direct experience. Only direct experiences create the will and intention for profound system changes.

Accordingly, Slovenia has achieved much in relation to shaping integral crisis management system, however this is likely not enough for dealing with truly complex crises. From one perspective, these achievements can be a positive guidance for other similarly small states, but on the other hand, there is much to be done in the future.

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