



JOINT STATEMENT

SEDM MINISTERS OF DEFENSE MEETING

Ohrid, 08 October 2008

Defense Ministers of NATO and PfP Countries participating in South Eastern Europe Defense Ministerial (SEDM) Process:

His Excellency, Selmo CIKOTIĆ, represented by Mr. Igor CRNADAK, Deputy Minister of Defense

His Excellency, Karl ERJAVEC, represented by Mr. Franci ŽNIDARŠIČ, State Secretary of Defense

His Excellency, Robert M. GATES,

His Excellency, Mehmet Vecdi GÖNÜL,

His Excellency, Zoran KONJANOVSKI,

His Excellency, On. Avv. Ignazio LA RUSSA, represented by On. HE Giuseppe COSSIGA, Undersecretary of State for Defense

His Excellency, Evangelos-Vassilios I. MEIMARAKIS,

His Excellency, Teodor V. MELEȘCANU, represented by Mrs. Georgeta Elisabeta IONESCU, State Secretary for Relation with Parliament and Public Information

His Excellency, Gazmend OKETA

His Excellency, Nickolay TSONEV, represented by Mrs. Kameliya NEYKOVA, Deputy Minister of Defense

His Excellency, Branko VUKELIĆ, represented by Mr. Gordan ČAČIĆ, M.S. State Secretary of Defense

His Excellency, Yurii YEKHANUROV,

together with the Ministers of Defense from the SEDM Observer Countries: Georgia, H.E. David KEZERASHVILI represented by Mr. Giorgi MUCHAIDZE, Deputy Minister of Defense, Moldova, H.E. Vitalie VRABIE, Montenegro, H.E. Boro VUČINIĆ, Serbia, H.E. Dragan ŠUTANOVAC represented by Mr. Dušan SPASOJEVIĆ, State Secretary of Defense met in Ohrid on 08 October, 2008 strongly

determined to promote enduring peace, stability and security in South Eastern Europe and its integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

SEDM Ministers welcomed Admiral Mark Fitzgerald, US Navy, NATO Commander of JFC Naples and his participation and contribution to this meeting.

The Chairperson of the SEDM Coordinating Committee (SEDM-CC) and the Politico Military Steering Committee (PMSC), Mrs. Radica A. GAREVA, PhD briefed SEDM Ministers on the main activities of the SEDM-CC and PMSC since their last meeting in Kyiv in 2007.

The Chairperson reported on the preparation of SEDM-CC and PMSC Documents that has been accomplished: the finalization and endorsement of the 5th Additional Protocol to the MPFSEE Agreement; Revised SEDM-CC Agreement; the Framework Document for SEDM membership procedures; the approval of the Guidance for SEDM Projects; the development of the PMSC Public Diplomacy Strategy; and the Document of the Procedures of Accession to the MPFSEE Agreement.

The Chairperson also highlighted the Chairmanship's 2007-2009 priorities: a SEEBRIG Deployment in Peace Support Operations (PSO); MPFSEE and SEDM-CC Agreement revisions; MPFSEE and SEDM Observer Nations full membership; SEDM project coordination enhancement; the strengthening and support to non-NATO SEDM nations for NATO integration; and the finalization of the SEEDRO concept.

The Chairperson then provided a summary of the Chairmanship's accomplishments and its priorities; presented a chronology of the major events conducted in 2008; and reviewed efforts to identify a new mission for SEEBRIG in 2009. The Chairperson informed the SEDM Ministers that the PMSC agreed at the 20th PMSC meeting that there is still a need for further evaluations of SEEBRIG possible engagement in NATO, UN, EU, or OSCE PSO, or crisis response/disaster relief operations.

Regarding the MPFSEE Agreement Revision Process, the Chairperson emphasized that the 5th Additional Protocol was finalized and endorsed by PMSC during the 20th PMSC Meeting and, as soon as the national procedures will be completed in all MPFSEE countries, the Final Draft of the 5th Additional Protocol will be submitted to the MPFSEE Nations Ministers of Defense for their signature.

The Chairperson also reported on the status of the finalization of the SEDM-CC Agreement Revision, the aim of which is to improve the clarity of its objectives

and applicability of its procedures. The Chairperson underlined that the SEDM-CC endorsed the Consolidated Draft of the Agreement on the Coordination Committee in the framework of Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial Process, which will be signed as soon as national procedures are completed. It was also noted that the SEDM-CC had endorsed the Framework Document for SEDM membership procedures and had approved the Guidance for SEDM Projects.

The Chairperson briefed that an initial planning meeting for an ad-hoc Working Group (experts level) on the Future Direction of SEDM had been held in conjunction with the 19th SEDM-CC meeting. It was agreed that the Working Group was necessary to review SEDM's future roles and missions in order to focus SEDM and SEEBRIG activities that best support interoperability and Euro-Atlantic integration of current and future SEDM Nations.

The Chairperson provided an update on the status of the current SEDM Projects.

COMSEEBRIG, Brigadier General Virgil BALACEANU reported on significant SEEBRIG 2008 achievements and future activities.

SEDM Ministers welcomed the PMSC proposed way ahead for the possible SEEBRIG engagement in a PSO in the future.

The MPFSEE Ministers of Defense commended the MPFSEE Nations, HQ SEEBRIG, and PMSC Secretariat for their work in finalizing and endorsing the 5th Additional Protocol to the MPFSEE Agreement. They encouraged the MPFSEE nations to ratify the protocol as soon as possible.

The SEDM Ministers expressed their appreciation for the excellent work and synergy among all of the SEDM nations and the SEDM-CC & PMSC Secretariat on finalizing the procedures necessary for the endorsement of the Agreement on the Coordination Committee in the framework of Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial Process and the Framework document for SEDM Accession procedures. The SEDM Ministers agreed that the Agreement on the Coordination Committee in the framework of Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial Process and the Framework document should be ready for signature after all SEDM nations have completed their national procedures.

The MPFSEE Ministers reiterated their welcome to Ukraine's decision to accede to the MPFSEE Agreement, expressing their hope to see Ukraine as a full-fledged member in MPFSEE in 2009. MPFSEE Ministers highly praised the cooperation between HQ SEEBRIG and the Ukrainian General Staff. MPFSEE Ministers also took note of the Ukrainian offer to provide an engineer unit up to

company level, an NBC protection unit up to platoon level, staff officers and medical personnel.

SEDM Ministers emphasized the “open door” policy, expressing their willingness to see the aspirant nations of Montenegro and Serbia as full-fledged SEDM members in the near future.

SEDM Ministers expressed their continuous support for ongoing NATO and EU-led operations in the region and beyond, and reiterated their commitment to contribute to NATO and EU efforts to strengthen security, stability and durable peace in South Eastern Europe. In this regard, Ministers thanked the Commander of JFC Naples for his contribution to this meeting and his briefing.

The SEDM Ministers agreed that the enlargement of NATO has been an unambiguous success in bringing new contributing nations in to the Alliance. Their efforts and NATO’s efforts as a whole have been key in projecting security and stability throughout the Euro-Atlantic area. They reiterated their belief that the continuation of regionally balanced enlargement is an essential element of NATO’s ongoing transformation. In this regard, they encouraged Alliance Heads of State and Government to reaffirm the continuance of the “open door” policy in line with Riga and Bucharest Summit Declarations.

The SEDM Ministers then welcomed the new chairing nations for SEESIM 2010 and CBSC project. They fully supported and encouraged other nations to consider volunteering and hosting the SEEDIRET project.

MPFSEE Ministers of Defense approved the HQ SEEBRIG Annual Exercise, the Training and Travel Plan for 2009 and SEEBRIG’s Budget for the Fiscal Year 2009. The MPFSEE Ministers of Defense also approved the PMSC Public Diplomacy Strategy.

SEDM Ministers thanked the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Bulgaria for hosting the next Ministerial meeting in Sofia, in 2009.

Finally, the SEDM Ministers expressed their gratitude to the Host Nation’s Minister of Defense, H.E. Zoran KONJANOVSKI, for his warm hospitality in hosting this meeting. They also expressed appreciation for the efforts of his staff and SEDM-CC and PMSC Secretariat in preparing and organizing all the details connected with the Ministerial event.