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Research Article

From Civil-Military Relations to Resilience: The Fifth Wave of Strengthening Democracy through Research and Education

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Abstract: The good governance of military and security forces is essential for the effective defense of a nation or alliance and for fostering their democratic evolution. This article explores NATO and partner countries' initiatives over the past three decades to enhance good governance, distinguishing five waves of focus: civil-military relations and democratic control of armed forces, defense institution building, security sector reform, building integrity and reducing corruption, and strengthening democratic resilience. The authors review the research and educational activities of the Partnership for Peace Consortium and other organizations in support of these initiatives, concluding with a proposal to establish a working group on democratic resilience within the Consortium.

Keywords: civilian control, democratic oversight, armed forces, defense institution building, security sector reform, integrity, governance, democratic resilience, PfP Consortium

Introduction

The end of the Cold War brought relative stability and dramatically reduced the risks of large-scale, possibly nuclear, war on the European continent. Soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union fell apart. Some

of the countries formerly in the Soviet space sought security guarantees by joining NATO, while others, such as newly independent states that emerged after the Soviet Union's collapse, saw benefits in maintaining closer ties with Russia. Despite these differing paths, all shared hopes for a prosperous future and greater individual freedoms achieved through democratization and transition to market economies.

Initially, NATO was hesitant to open its doors to new members, aiming to avoid reigniting confrontation with a heavily nuclear-armed Russia.[1] However, NATO and other European countries were willing to support the drive for democratization and ensure the process became irreversible.

People in the former Soviet space often viewed NATO exclusively as a military alliance. Yet, the preamble of the Washington Treaty, even before referring to efforts for collective defense and the preservation of peace and security, states that the members "are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law."[2] Thus, whether or not enlargement was a prospect, the Alliance readily supported democratization efforts, believing that democratic reforms and economic prosperity in Russia, the former Soviet republics, and the former Warsaw Pact states would make future conflicts unlikely.[3]

In 1994, NATO launched the Partnership for Peace program, founded on a "commitment to democratic principles" and aiming to increase stability, reduce threats to peace, and strengthen relations between NATO and willing countries in the Euro-Atlantic area.[4] NATO immediately opened its fellowship program to public officials, researchers, and representatives of emerging civil society organizations from partner countries.[5] A review of the fellowships awarded in the first four cycles offers insight into how the "commitment to democratic principles" translated into topics of particular interest.

The top four categories of the two-year "Democratic Institutions Fellowships," awarded to representatives of partner countries, were as follows:

- *Democratization*: A total of 95 fellowships were awarded over the four cycles. This category included subjects such as separation of powers, political pluralism, the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations, trends toward authoritarianism, the role of women, democratic

[1] Peter Apps, *Deterring Armageddon: A Biography of NATO* (London: Wildfire, 2024).

[2] The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington D.C., April 4, 1949, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm.

[3] Matthew Neumeyer, "Strategic Competition and U.S. National Strategies," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 23, no. 2 (2024), https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.23.2.07.

[4] "Partnership for Peace programme," *What We Do*, NATO, last updated June 28, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50349.htm.

[5] See "NATO Research Fellowships Programme. NATO Fellowships Winners," https://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/94-96/f94-96.htm and the links to the lists of fellowships awarded in the following three years.

institutions, public administration, the role of local governments, administrative reforms, belief systems, utopian societies, ethical requirements for officials, the role of elites, parliamentary control over the state budget, and more.

- *Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (*dcaf [6]): A total of 45 fellowships were awarded, with one-third focusing on related subjects such as institutional reforms, security and force planning, special/intelligence services, gender, ethnic and religious problems in the armed forces, education of civilians, and public perceptions.
- *Human Rights*, with 22 fellowships covering topics like freedoms, ethnic policies, minority rights, and ombuds institutions.
- *Market Economy*, with 27 fellowships addressing subjects like economic transition and privatization, banking, finance, foreign investments, trade unions, and property rights.

Figure 1 presents the distribution of Democratic Institutions Fellowships across these categories during the first four cycles. Fellowships for studying civil-military relations were awarded to researchers and officials from Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

This analysis strongly reaffirmed the authors' impressions that establishing democratic civil-military relations and placing the armed forces under democratic control were seen as central to the successful transition of partner countries in the 1990s. We define this focus in the 1990s as the first wave of efforts to promote democratic governance and dedicate the following section to the subject. The subsequent sections trace the process of deepening and expanding the knowledge and the field of application toward defense institution building, security sector governance, integrity building, and democratic resilience, as well as how the Partnership for Peace Consortium of the Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes (PfPC) and its network contributed to the attainment of this goal. The article concludes with a proposal to establish a working group within the PfP Consortium to address the importance of and ways to strengthen democratic resilience.

Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Control of the Armed Forces

The history of NATO includes examples of military coups in Turkey in 1960 and then again in 1980, Greece in 1967, and Portugal in 1974. Spain joined the Alliance in 1982, only after a failed coup attempt in 1981 and its firm commitment

[6] We use small letters for the subject of democratic control of the armed forces (dcaf) to distinguish it from the well-known abbreviation of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), retained even after the organization was renamed to Geneva Centre of Security Sector Governance.

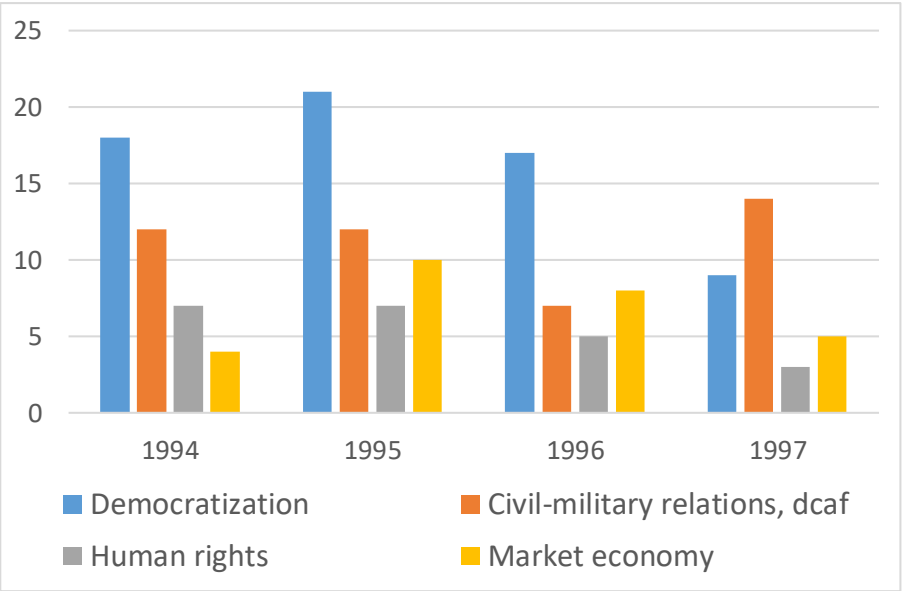

Figure 1: Democratic Institutions Fellowships awarded by NATO by main topic, 1994-1997.

to democratization. Instances of military coups can also be found in the histories of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania, with one successful and several unsuccessful attempts during the Cold War.[7] In August 1991, communist hardliners, supported by units of the Soviet army, attempted to seize control from Michail Gorbachev, the reformist Soviet president, but failed in the face of significant resistance.[8]

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that NATO placed civil-military relations and democratic control of armed forces at the forefront of its relations with former Warsaw Pact countries, who were faced with the perennial question: "Who will guard the guardians?" These nations needed to establish a model of civil-military relations that would guarantee that the military institution was strong enough to prevail in war and, at the same time, not use its coercive power to destroy the society that created it.[9]

[7] Wikipedia provides an extensive "List of Coups and Coup Attempts by Country," accessed December 2, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_coups_and_coup_attempts_by_country.

[8] Harley D.Balzer, "Ordinary Russians? Rethinking August 1991," *Demokratizatsiya* 13, no. 2 (2005): 193-218.

[9] See, for example, the review by Peter D. Feaver, "Civil-Military Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 211-241, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.211.

Democratic, and in particular parliamentary, control was the key to such a functional model.[10] Democratic control (or oversight)[11] of the armed forces is commonly defined as the military's deference to those democratically elected to oversee a nation's affairs in a democratic manner. In its broadest sense, it means that democratic leadership makes all decisions related to the nation's defense, including the organization, deployment, and use of the armed forces; the establishment of military priorities and requirements; and the allocation of the necessary resources. This process may be supported by competent civil society organizations that actively contribute to transparency-building, integrity-building, advocacy, capacity development, and policy support.

Legislative bodies then carefully examine these decisions to ensure public support and legitimacy, with the ultimate goal being to guarantee that the armed forces serve the societies they defend and that military capabilities and policies are aligned with political goals and financial resources. Democratic control of armed forces and civil-military relations were subjects of academic research[12] long before they became a topic of operational importance in NATO, and they continue to be a subject of study. In fact, it is a crucial component of the larger interaction between military forces and the communities they defend, serving as a reflection of that relationship.

During the Cold War, democratic control of armed forces was largely taken for granted, with an expectation that new democracies would quickly and comprehensively establish such control over their defense and, in fact, the entire security sector. However, as countries emerging from behind the Soviet Union-enforced Iron Curtain began developing democratic institutions and practices, it quickly became evident that the armed forces and other parts of the security forces would not necessarily adapt seamlessly to this transition. The issue gained urgency when NATO made it clear that democratic control of armed forces and civil-military relations would be treated as foundational requirements for any membership prospects.

In 1995, NATO stated that it might extend invitations for membership as "a further step towards the Alliance's basic goal of enhancing security and stability throughout the Euro-Atlantic area," with the understanding that the "benefits of common defence … are important to protecting the further democratic develop-

[10] Lunn Simon, "Ensuring Democratic Control of Armed Forces – The Enduring Challenges," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 22, no. 1 (2023): 29-52, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.22.1.14.

[11] Given the meaning and practice of "control" in early post-Soviet societies a growing number of institutions and individual authors chose to substitute "control" with the more accommodating "oversight."

[12] For example, by Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (New York: Belknap Press, 1957); and the academic discipline essentially established by Charles C. Moskos. An adapted and partially enlarged civil-military agenda has also been followed by the ERGOMAS (European Research Group on Military and Society) consortium, https://www.ergomas.ch.

ment of new members." The enlargement of the Alliance was expected to "contribute to enhanced stability and security for all countries in the Euro-Atlantic area by: Encouraging and supporting democratic reforms, including civilian and democratic control over the military, ..." [13]

As a consequence, candidate countries began seeking guidance from NATO. In addition to programs offered by NATO and policy guidance provided by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, it was with this demand for both policy support and capacity building in mind that the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)—now renamed and re-dedicated as the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance—was founded in late 1999. Its declared purpose was to serve as a platform and clearinghouse for such activities and documentation of best practices, involving all NATO member states as well as declared and potential candidate countries.[14]

During its early years, DCAF programs focused on assessments, capacity building, self-assessment documentation, developing a "textbook" on democratic control and civil-military relations, collections of articles, evaluations, and gap analyses conducted by international teams on the basis of existing legislation and policy documents. These activities also included translating materials into English, organizing on-the-job training and mentoring programs, and producing various other resources designed to support democratic reforms and governance.[15]

Also in 1999, at the Washington Summit, NATO heads of state and government endorsed the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes and launched the Membership Action Plan (MAP).[16] The MAP chapter on "Political and Economic Issues" explicitly stated that countries aspiring to join

[13] "Study on NATO Enlargement," *NATO Official Texts*, September 3, 1995, last updated November 5, 2008, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24733.htm.

[14] DCAF was originally set up as a Swiss contribution to the Partnership for Peace whose membership Switzerland attained in 1996, with responsibilities assumed for the documentation and sharing of expertise on democratic control and defense education. Switzerland has been cooperating with NATO since 1996 in a PfP format both through the Centers and in the framework of its Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP). For the latter see https://www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases.msg-id-97814.html and https://www.newsd.admin.ch/newsd/message/attachments/83299.pdf.

[15] For details see Philipp Fluri and Eden Cole "DCAF's Activities in Support of Effective and Democratically Transparent Defense Planning," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 5, no. 1 (2006): 5-14, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.05.1.02; and publications by the same authors on DCAF's website, https://www.dcaf.ch.

[16] "An Alliance for the 21st Century," Washington Summit Communiqué issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C. on 24th April 1999, https://www.nato.int/cps/bu/natohq/official_texts_27440.htm.

NATO are expected "to establish appropriate democratic and civilian control of their armed forces." [17]

NATO aspirants were quick to introduce laws on defense and armed forces, appointing civilians as defense ministers and providing opportunities for parliamentary scrutiny of defense budgets. These steps, however, were not sufficient. Already in 1997, Chris Donnelly, Special Advisor to the NATO Secretary-General for Central and Eastern Europe, stated that one cannot claim to have established effective civilian control if a civilian in a ministerial or oversight position does not know how much a battalion costs and cannot compare that to the cost of a hospital. He further elaborated that "no post-communist country has yet achieved a totally satisfactory degree of democratic control and good civil-military relations. In all cases, as societies transform, their armies lag behind." [18]

The MAP process accelerated the exchange at the working level between defense officials from NATO and partner countries. As a result, it became clearer and more widely understood that Donnelly's statement was correct: much deeper knowledge and enhanced capacity were needed to ensure effective democratic oversight. With this understanding, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council adopted the Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building (PAP-DIB) [19] in 2004, thereby launching the second wave of efforts to enhance good governance in defense.

Defense Institution Building

PAP-DIB was envisioned as an integral part of the Partnership for Peace. The initiative structured the efforts of committed allies and partners in exchanging and discussing experiences and practical cooperation in pursuit of ten objectives considered fundamental for developing effective and democratically responsible defense institutions [20]:

1. Develop legislative arrangements and coordination mechanisms for key legislative and executive institutions, enhancing the democratic control of defense activities
2. Establish effective and transparent procedures for civilian participation in formulating defense and security policies in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and ensure appropriate public access to related information

[17] Membership Action Plan (MAP), approved by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, *Press Release* NAC-S(99) 066, April 24, 1999, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_27444.htm.

[18] Chris Donnelly, "Defence Transformation in the New Democracies: A Framework for Tackling the Problem," *NATO Review* 45, no. 1 (1997): 15-19.

[19] Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, "Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building (PAP-DIB)," *NATO Basic Texts*, June 7, 2004, available at www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/b040607e.htm.

[20] Ibid., abridged and rephrased by the authors.

3. Enhance legislative and judicial oversight of the defense sector
4. Increase the capacity for assessing security risks and national defense requirements and translate these requirements into affordable defense capabilities and force structure
5. Optimize the management of defense and force structures, as well as the procedures for interagency cooperation
6. Ensure compliance with internationally accepted norms for the defense sector, including export controls on military equipment and technologies
7. Enhance personnel management, training, and education, covering international humanitarian law, civil rights, and the freedoms of armed forces members
8. Establish effective and transparent defense planning, financial and resource allocation procedures
9. Develop transparent and economically viable management of defense expenditures, with account for macro-economic affordability and socio-economic consequences
10. Ensure effective international cooperation on defense and security matters and good neighborly relations.

This second wave of promoting defense governance included numerous dedicated stock-taking events [21] and studies, bringing together experts from NATO and partner countries to exchange and discuss experiences and identify ways to build defense institutions tailored to specific contexts.[22] A particularly influential resource for partner countries was a volume published by DCAF, which introduced readers to principles and good practices in defense management. Originally published in English, it was later translated into Armenian, Azerbaijani, French, Georgian, Russian, Spanish, and Ukrainian.[23]

The PfP Consortium also dedicated two special issues of its academic journal, *Connections*, to defense institution building, with articles addressing the PAP-DIB objectives, covering topics such as:

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[21] Wim van Eekelen and Philipp H. Fluri, eds., *Sourcebook on Defense Institution Building* (Geneva/Vienna: DCAF and Austrian Landesverteidigungsakademie, 2006).

[22] See, for example, Jan A. Trapans and Philipp Fluri, eds., *Defence and Security Sector Governance and Reform in South East Europe: Insights and Perspectives* (Geneva/ Belgrade, DCAF and Center for Civil-Military Relations – Belgrade, 2003), in two volumes; and Philipp Fluri and Velizar Shalamanov, eds., *Security Sector Reform: Does It Work? Problems of Civil-Military and Inter-Agency Cooperation in the Security Sector* (Sofia: DCAF and George C. Marshall – Bulgaria, June 2003).

[23] Hari Bucur-Marcu, Philipp Fluri, and Todor Tagarev, eds., *Defence Management: An Introduction* (Geneva: DCAF, 2009), www.dcaf.ch/index.php/defence-management.

- Defense policy-making [24]
- Capabilities-based planning [25]
- Program-based defense resource management [26]
- Advanced management models for military organizations [27]
- The role of civilians in defense ministries and armed forces [28] and
- Institutionalization of security risk assessment.[29]

Additionally, the articles explored the role of organizational culture, operations research support, measuring progress, and assessing the status of PAP-DIB implementation, multinational initiatives, and nation-specific studies.

The Consortium further contributed by developing a PAP-DIB reference curriculum [30] in collaboration with NATO and the Canadian Defence Academy. Structured in three sections—Public Administration and Governance, Defence Management and Economics, and Ethics and Leadership—the curriculum provided an opportunity for course developers in interested partner countries to understand better what NATO considers essential topics and the type of education these countries could offer to both civilians and uniformed defense and security professionals. The NATO DEEP program,[31] implemented in coordination with the PfP Consortium, served as a vehicle for follow-on practical cooperation with interested partner countries.

While PAP-DIB aimed to deepen the knowledge of the practice in defense institutions, another—a third—wave expanded the application field to other security sector organizations in need of reform.

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[24] Todor Tagarev, "The Art of Shaping Defense Policy: Scope, Components, Relationships (but no Algorithms)," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 5, no. 1 (2006): 15-34, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.05.1.03. An updated version was published in 2024 under the title "Formulating Defense Policy: Main Considerations and Evaluation Criteria," https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.23.1.12.

[25] Thomas-Durell Young, "Capabilities-Based Defense Planning: Techniques Applicable to NATO and Partnership for Peace Countries," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 5, no. 1 (2006): 35-54, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.05.1.04.

[26] Todor Tagarev, "Introduction to Program-based Defense Resource Management," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 5, no. 1 (2006): 55-69, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.05.1.05.

[27] Francois Melese, "Applying a New Management Model in the Joint Staff: An Executive Summary," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 7, no. 2 (2008): 92-101, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.07.2.08.

[28] Todor Tagarev, "Civilians in Defense Ministries," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 7, no. 2 (2008): 110-117, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.07.2.10.

[29] Hari Bucur-Marcu, "The Institutionalization of Security Risk Assessment," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 7, no. 2 (2008): 118-124, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.07.2.11.

[30] *Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building: Reference Curriculum* (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy, 2008).

[31] Defence Education Enhancement Program.

Security Sector Reform and Security Sector Governance

Even in the first wave, dedicated studies extended beyond the oversight of armed forces *per se* and addressed other relevant issues, such as adherence to international humanitarian law, oversight of the arms trade, enforcement of non-proliferation regimes, and gender perspectives.[32] However, given NATO's defense focus, the democratic control of armed forces and civil-military relations were primarily viewed in the narrow sense of "guarding the [military] guardians." The potential issue of state capture by state security and intelligence services—arguably "forces, armed" in their own right—was not yet recognized as the perilous issue it would later become. In a 2002 article in *Connections*, Simon Lunn, then Secretary General of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, emphasized that, obviously, all defense and security forces, regardless of subordination, should be subject to democratic oversight and guidance.

With democratic control of armed forces added to the membership requirements agenda, and given the diversity of democratic approaches among NATO's established member and candidate countries, the essential features of democratic control of armed forces and civil-military relations had to be reconsidered and redefined. As many NATO candidate countries were also seeking EU membership, an additional dimension of democratic practices encompassing the entire security sector emerged. This development acknowledged and clarified the "difference"—the unique governance requirements—of the defense sector within the larger security sector framework.

(Good) *Security Sector Governance* (SSG), in its transitional form – *Security Sector Reform* (SSR), refers to the structures, processes, values, and attitudes that shape decisions about a country's defense and security, ensuring they are implemented effectively and democratically. It involves making the security sector—comprising the military, police, intelligence services, and other security forces—more transparent, accountable, and inclusive, in alignment with human rights principles and the rule of law. SSG aims to create a secure and stable environment for people and the state, enabling economic development and enhancing public trust in security institutions. This governance approach is crucial for preventing conflicts and ensuring that security forces protect citizens rather than contribute to violence or develop appetites to capture the state and its institutions.

While closely related, Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Security Sector Governance (SSG) are distinct concepts. SSR is a political and technical process aimed at improving the effectiveness, accountability, and inclusiveness of a country's security sector. It involves transforming the institutions responsible for security

[32] See, for example, Hans Born, Philipp Fluri, and Anders B. Johnsson, eds., *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Principles, Mechanisms and Practices* (Geneva: DCAF and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2003); Plamen Pantev, Valeri Ratchev, Todor Tagarev, and Viara Zaprianova, *Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Control of the Security Sector: A Handbook* (Sofia: Rakovsky Defense and Staff College, 2005). Both publications are available at DCAF's website, respectively in 41 and five languages.

and justice to ensure they operate under democratic control and respect human rights. The primary objectives of SSR are to enhance the provision of security and justice, prevent conflicts, and support sustainable development. This process can include restructuring military and police forces, reforming legal frameworks, and improving oversight mechanisms.

SSG refers to the principles and processes that guide how security decisions are made and implemented. It emphasizes the importance of transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in the management and oversight of the security sector. The goal is to ensure that security institutions are governed in a way that is consistent with democratic norms and the rule of law, thereby fostering public trust and stability. SSG involves establishing frameworks for civilian oversight, promoting human rights within security institutions, and ensuring that security policies are developed through inclusive and participatory processes. In summary, while SSR focuses on the reform and improvement of security institutions, SSG is concerned with the governance and oversight of these institutions to ensure they function effectively and democratically. Although the SSG/SSR comprehensive approach originated in the development sphere, some proponents of development theory have expressed criticism of what they describe as its excessively Northern/Western approach.

Security Sector Reform (SSR) within NATO involves a comprehensive approach to improving partner countries' security and defense capabilities. This initiative is part of NATO's broader Defense and related security Capacity Building (DCB) Initiative, launched at the 2014 Wales Summit. The main objectives of SSR in NATO include:

- *Enhancing National Security Architecture*: Providing strategic advice on developing effective and resilient national security structures, policies, and defense planning;
- *Institution Building*: Assisting in the creation and strengthening of defense institutions that are transparent, accountable, and responsive to civilian authority;
- *Training and Education*: Offering practical training and education to improve defense capabilities and develop local forces;
- *Operational Support*: Delivering specific projects and operational support tailored to the needs of partner countries.

NATO's SSR efforts are customized to the specific needs of each partner country and implemented through a collaborative process involving regular updates and adjustments based on current conditions.[33]

To better address the expanded needs of research, consultancy, education, and training aimed at increasing the SSG capacity of partner countries, in 2019, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces was renamed

[33] See "Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative," *What We Do*, NATO, last updated: May 29, 2024, www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132756.htm.

the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (while retaining the popular abbreviation DCAF). Even earlier, in 2001, the PfP Consortium renamed its Civil-Military Relations Working Group (WG) to Security Sector Reform WG, which has since conducted joint research, outreach, and expert training initiatives in support of SSR in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Western Balkans. The SSG WG's activities cover a wide range of issues, including combating terrorism, defense institution building, public security management in post-conflict societies, and, more recently, human security and gender perspectives.[34]

The SSR/SSG themes have been regularly reflected in general issues of the PfPC journal *Connections* and in a special issue on "Transforming Intelligence Services." [35]

Building Integrity

As PAP-DIB and security sector governance activities progressed, it became clear that traditional normative, capacity-building, and oversight measures were insufficient to prevent corruption in the defense establishment, undermining institution-building efforts.

The challenges of corruption in defense and potential solutions—such as adding an ethical dimension to defense institution building—were discussed in workshops held in Shrivenham, UK, and Geneva, with the active participation from NATO PfP staff, DCAF, and Transparency International UK. Consequently, in 2007, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council launched the Building Integrity (BI) initiative. At the 2008 Bucharest summit, NATO heads of state and government gave "priority to several new practical initiatives, which include building integrity in defence institutions …" [36]

The BI initiative aims to promote good governance, transparency, and accountability in the defense and related security sectors, focusing on enhancing the integrity and effectiveness of defense institutions through improved governance practices. It includes training programs and educational resources designed to build the capacity of defense personnel to manage integrity and transparency. The initiative also offers tailored support to nations based on specific needs, including through self-assessment questionnaires and peer review processes, and serves as a clearinghouse and center of expertise on defense integrity building. NATO BI works closely with international organizations, including the United Nations, the European Union, and the World Bank, to promote good governance

[34] "Security Sector Reform," SSG WG Factsheet, accessed December 2, 2024, www.pfp-consortium.org/working-groups/security-sector-reform.

[35] *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 20, no.1 (Winter 2021), https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.20.1.

[36] "Bucharest Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008," *Press Release* (2008) 049, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm.

globally. The BI initiative is integral to NATO's efforts to ensure that defense institutions are resilient, transparent, and accountable, thereby contributing to overall stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond. It complements the long-standing and productive cooperation aimed at promoting democratic civilian control and oversight of the security sector through parliamentary training programs such as the Rose Roth Seminars and the NATO orientation program, policy support, and joint research and publications.

The first phase of BI delivered a training course, a self-assessment toolkit with a questionnaire and peer-review process, and a compendium of best practices for BI and reducing corruption in defense.[37] The BI initiative was later transformed into a "program" and subsequently a BI Policy, endorsed at the 2016 NATO Warsaw summit.[38]

This institutionalization allowed for the expansion of the BI community of practice, incorporating representatives from both civilian and military authorities, and led to the establishment of a NATO Building Integrity Education and Training Discipline. Additionally, the publication of the BI reference curriculum [39] facilitated education and training activities in both NATO member and partner countries.

The PfP Consortium contributed to the fourth wave of promoting good governance also by prioritizing integrity building among the themes of interest in its academic journal and publishing high-impact articles.[40]

Democratic Resilience

Russia's five-day war against Georgia in 2008 and the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, followed by the large-scale aggression in February 2022, have considerably altered the threat landscape for allies and partners. Even in the ab-

[37] Todor Tagarev, ed., *Building Integrity and Reducing Corruption in Defence: A Compendium of Best Practices* (Geneva/Brussels: DCAF and NATO, 2010), available in 14 languages at https://www.dcaf.ch/index.php/building-integrity-and-reducing-corruption-defence.

[38] "NATO Building Integrity Policy, endorsed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016," *Official Texts*, last updated: October 5, 2016, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_135626.htm.

[39] Neil Best, et al., *Good Governance and Building Integrity in the Defence and Related Security Sector: Building Integrity Reference Curriculum* (Brussles: NATO, December 2016).

[40] See, for example, Mark Pyman, Dominic Scott, Alan Waldron, and Inese Voika, "Building Integrity and Reducing Corruption Risk in Defense Establishments," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 7, no. 2 (2008): 21-44, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.07.2.03; and Todor Tagarev, "Enabling Factors and Effects of Corruption in the Defense Sector," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 9, no. 3 (2010): 77-88, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.09.3.06.

sence of kinetic activities, the Kremlin persistently applies a variety of instruments from its hybrid influence/ hybrid warfare toolbox.[41] It uses energy dependencies, political engineering, election interference, cyberattacks, corruption, massive disinformation campaigns, and propaganda, along with other available tools, such as cognitive attacks,[42] to influence perceptions, manipulate decision-making,[43] or directly coerce leaders of democratic countries into selecting courses of action in its interest. And, it has been partially successful in a number of allied and partner countries.

One way to counter hybrid influence is by strengthening democratic and societal resilience. *Democratic Resilience* refers to the mobilization and maintenance of a society's democratic "immune system" during times of adversity – now. It generally involves:

- *Maintaining Accountability*: Ensuring that government officials remain accountable to the public and that checks and balances are upheld;
- *Protecting Institutions*: Safeguarding the independence and integrity of institutions like the judiciary, media, and electoral bodies;
- *Promoting Civic Engagement*: Encouraging active participation from citizens in the democratic process; and
- *Adapting to and Managing Change*: Being flexible and responsive to new challenges such as economic crises, pandemics, or political unrest.

In 2019, in his report on NATO's 70th anniversary, Gerald E. Connolly (United States), the General Rapporteur of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's Political Committee at the time, recommended the establishment of a center within NATO to coordinate allied efforts to enhance democratic resilience.[44] The entire Assembly approved this recommendation in its Resolution 457. In April 2021, the Assembly formed a Working Group tasked with refining the center's proposed concept. The center's plan called for creating a modest unit within NATO Headquarters, designed to connect with a wide range of governmental and non-governmental experts, with the potential for expansion if necessary. In addition to monitoring and identifying threats to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law among member nations, it might also be entrusted with providing assistance to member states in areas of democracy and governance when they request aid.

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41 For the terminological dedbate, the reader may refer to James K. Wither, "Hybrid Warfare Revisited: A Battle of 'Buzzwords'," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 22, no. 1 (2023): 7-28, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.22.1.02.

42 Georgii Pocheptsov, "Cognitive Attacks in Russian Hybrid Warfare," *Information & Security: An International Journal* 41 (2018): 37-43, https://doi.org/10.11610/isij.4103.

43 Boyan Mitrakiev and Noncho Dimitrov, "Russian Reflexive Control Campaigns Targeting Political Realignment of Ukraine's Democratic Allies: Critical Review and Conceptualization," *Information & Security: An International Journal* 55, no. 3 (2024): 299-330, https://doi.org/10.11610/isij.5519.

44 "The Case for a Centre for Democratic Resilience in NATO," https://www.nato-pa.int/content/democratic-resilience.

This proposal must be understood as a reaction to the increasing internal and external threats to democracies. NATO is an alliance of democracies committed to defending "the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law," as stated in its founding treaty. Contrary to the frequently expressed but uninformed opinion that "NATO is not about democracy," the 1949 Washington Treaty clearly defines NATO as a political-military alliance of democracies. This further confirms that the commitment to democratic foundational values is "what distinguishes NATO from other military alliances."[45] In response to Russia's renewed invasion of Ukraine, NATO heads of state and government recognized the centrality of NATO's shared values in the new Strategic Concept (2022), placing the Alliance's shared democratic values at the core of NATO's response to threats and challenges.[46]

However, there is currently no specific NATO institution entirely focused on democratic resilience. During its 2021 Plenary Sitting to close the 67th Annual Session, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly urged NATO Allies to establish a *Center for Democratic Resilience* within NATO. The purpose of this center would be to protect shared democratic values and place them at the heart of NATO's response to fast-evolving security challenges.[47]

The initiators of the 2021 Center for Democratic Resilience project, keeping the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept in mind, argued that such a center would not infringe on state sovereignty. Similar concerns had previously been raised against the NATO Building Integrity Initiative. However, the proposed center would operate on a voluntary, request-based mechanism, also available to aspirant nations, and its primary aim would be to serve as a clearinghouse for best practices. This important mission could not be credibly delegated to already existing organizations dealing with democracy, nor outsourced from them, as defending democracy and democracies is the very essence of the Washington Treaty. Furthermore, a Centre of Excellence, like many such centers, could not fulfill this task, as the intended set of activities should be a core function represented and active at NATO Headquarters.

For various reasons, the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept does not foresee the creation of such a center within NATO HQ. In the unlikely case that such a center will be created within NATO[48] in the future, it would undoubtedly require the

[45] "Allied Legislators Discuss Outcomes of NATO Summit," NATO Parliamentary Assembly, June 25, 2021, www.nato-pa.int/news/allied-legislators-discuss-outcomes-nato-summit.

[46] *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept*, adopted at the Madrid Summit, 29-30 June 2022, https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept.

[47] "Legislators Urge NATO to Put Democratic Values at Heart of the Alliance," NATO Parliamentary Assembly, October 11, 2021, https://www.nato-pa.int/news/legislators-urge-nato-put-democratic-values-heart-alliance.

[48] In his May 27, 2024 address to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Sofia, Bulgaria, then NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg reconfirmed that the necessary consensus of all NATO member countries for the creation and proposed activities of such

competent support of a civilian-led entity, such as a PfPC Working Group on Democratic Resilience.

The PfP Consortium is well positioned to support allied and partner nations in building resilience due to its *modus operandi* and proven capacity. The Consortium has played a significant role in promoting well-governed, democratic, and resilient societies and security and defense institutions in this fifth wave:

1. A PfPC team summarized the discussions and formulated recommendations from the 2020 Transatlantic Security Jam – an online event held at the height of the COVID pandemic, which engaged 2,750 participants in 50 hours of interactive brainstorming. The summary outlines the challenges and promising courses of action to address, *inter alia*, foreign malign interference, the information battleground, uncertainty and ambiguity, and the need for an expanded understanding of resilience and defense.[49]
2. PfPC has already published two special issues of *Connections* on resilience, edited by the authors of this article. These issues addressed the concept of resilience, its security implications, and implementation challenges.[50]
3. The Consortium, jointly with NATO, developed a reference curriculum on hybrid threats and hybrid warfare;[51]
4. Dr. Sae Schatz, Executive Director of the PfP Consortium, organized a signature PfPC event on "Integrated Defense Against Cognitive Warfare" at the 2024 Interservice/ Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference (I/ITSEC) in Orlando, Florida.
5. Finally, PfPC, in collaboration with NATO, is finalizing a Resilience Reference Curriculum.

This track record underscores the PfPC capacity to effectively support NATO, member states, and partners in addressing contemporary and future challenges related to hybrid threats and in strengthening democratic resilience.

a center was presently not available. See https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_225645.htm.

[49] Todor Tagarev, Raphael Perl, and Valeri Ratchev, "Recommendations and Courses of Action: How to Secure the Post-Covid Future," in *Transatlantic Security: Securing the Post Covid Future*, ed. IBM (Wien: Federal Ministry of Defense, 2020), 18-41.

[50] See the Summer 2020, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.19.3, and Fall 2020, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.19.4 issues of *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*.

[51] Sean S. Costigan and Michael A. Hennessy, eds., *Hybrid Threats and Hybrid Warfare Reference Curriculum* (Brussels: NATO and PfP Consortium, June 2024).

Conclusion

During the preparation of this article, South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law. The National Assembly was sealed off, with army helicopters hovering over it, and General Park An-su, Chief of Staff of the Army, assumed command, issuing a decree banning "all political activities." [52] Troops from the 1st Airborne Special Forces Brigade and a special missions group tasked with anti-terrorism and top-secret operations blocked opposition members from entering the Assembly. Nevertheless, lawmakers managed to gain entry, and approximately three and a half hours after the declaration, they passed a motion requesting the lifting of martial law.[53]

On the morning of December 4, citizens began gathering in front of the National Assembly to protest, and the president lifted the martial law. Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun, who had allegedly recommended the imposition of martial law, resigned and was taken into custody. While in detention, he attempted to take his own life, and the police raided the presidential office.[54] On December 14, 2024, amid ongoing protests, South Korea's parliament voted to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol.[55]

This recent example, along with the failed coup attempt in the Republic of Türkiye in 2016, underscores the continuing need to establish sound civil-military relations and to place armed forces under rigorous democratic oversight. We do not claim that this necessity has diminished. The "five waves" concept signifies only a shift in the primary focus of governance-related interactions between NATO and its partners. These waves overlap in time and run in parallel, broadening the scope of engagement and deepening knowledge and educational requirements in this field.

What is more important is leveraging and building upon the cohesion of activities within the five waves to create and sustain effective, resilient security and defense institutions that best serve democratic societies. The PfP Consortium

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[52] Agence France-Presse and Kang Jin-kyu, "South Korea President Declares Emergency Martial Law," *ABC-CBN*, December 3, 2024, https://www.abs-cbn.com/news/world/2024/12/3/south-korea-president-declares-emergency-martial-law-2202.

[53] Adolfo Arranz et al., "South Korea's Short-lived Martial Law: How It Unfolded and What's Next," *Reuters*, December 4, 2024, https://www.reuters.com/graphics/SOUTH KOREA-POLITICS/GRAPHICS/lgpdjajkbpo/.

[54] Gawon Bae and Helen Regan, "South Korea's ex-Defense Minister Attempts to Take His Own Life as Presidential Office Raided in Martial Law Fallout," *CNN*, December 11, 2024, https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/10/asia/south-korea-defense-minister-suicide-attempt-intl-hnk.

[55] Jessie Yeung, Gawon Bae, and Yoonjung Seo, "South Korea's Parliament Votes to Impeach President over Martial Law Debacle," *CNN*, December 14, 2024, https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/14/asia/south-korea-yoon-second-impeachment-hnk-intl.

has a proven track record of supporting NATO and its partners' efforts in promoting good governance in security and defense through research and education.

In the more likely scenario that a center for democratic governance is not established within NATO, creating a PfPC Working Group would be both timely and strategically positioned within the multi-competence international cooperative framework of the PfP Consortium. Therefore, *the authors propose establishing a Working Group for Democratic Resilience within the Consortium*.

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Disclaimer

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