



# SPECIAL REPORT

## Dayton Implementation: The Train and Equip Program

### ABOUT THE REPORT

On June 6, 1997, the United States Institute of Peace convened the first session of its Dayton Implementation Working Group to discuss the NATO mandate in Bosnia and the administration's recent policy review of the Bosnian peace process. The Dayton Implementation Working Group project envisions meetings on the Train and Equip program, the apprehension of war criminals, the return of refugees, and Brcko as a model for peace implementation. The purpose of this working group is to encourage dialogue among representatives from the administration and Capitol Hill and policy analysts on how best to implement these critical elements of the Dayton peace agreement. John Menzies, former ambassador to Bosnia-Herzegovina and currently a senior fellow at the Institute, chairs the working group sessions. Participants include officials from the Department of State, Department of Defense and other federal agencies, as well as representatives of non governmental organizations (NGOs) and scholars. The Institute's objective is not to reach a consensus within the group on how best to manage Dayton implementation, but to explore the issues and options. This report, written by program officer Lauren Van Metre with the assistance of research assistant Burcu Akan, summarizes points made by working group participants attending the session on Train and Equip—that component of the overall Dayton settlement which calls for the arming and training of a Bosnian army to defend against and deter aggressors.

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect views of the United States Institute of Peace, which does not advocate particular policies.

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### Key Points

#### *About the Working Group*

- At a time when the U.S. government is reaffirming its commitment to the Bosnian peace process, the United States Institute of Peace is conducting an intensive review of four critical aspects of Dayton—the Train and Equip program, the apprehension and prosecution of war criminals, Brcko as a model for peace implementation, and refugee returns—to discuss ways to support and further the implementation process.

This report focuses on the Train and Equip program, which is the source of considerable debate regarding the program's impact on Dayton implementation.

#### *What is the Train and Equip Program?*

- Train and Equip is that component of the Dayton process which calls for the establishment of professional unified (Croat-Bosniac) Federation armed forces in order to defend against and deter aggressors.
- Train and Equip is a U.S.-managed program that provides to the Federation \$400 million in military equipment and training pledged by the U.S. and other countries, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Malaysia, Brunei, Turkey, Germany, and others.

#### *Why Are We Implementing the Train and Equip Program?*

- The purpose of Train and Equip is to support fundamental military and security aspects of Dayton. Supporters of the policy regard it as vital to accomplishing broader political objectives such as joint institution building within the Federation, the elimination of destabilizing external influences such as Iran in Bosnia, compliance with arms control aspects of Dayton, and general leverage in support of peace implementation.

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## ***How Is Train and Equip Affecting Peace Implementation?***

- Assessments of Train and Equip's impact on the military balance of power between the Federation and the Republika Srpska (RS) differ greatly and are based on varying perceptions of the military situation pre- and post-Dayton and future political scenarios for the Federation, the RS, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).
- Participants disagreed on whether Train and Equip was critical to preventing future conflict by ensuring a military balance of power between the Federation and the RS, or whether Train and Equip would encourage the resort to arms.
- There was consensus that Train and Equip should also be assessed in terms of institution building, including the establishment of both a ministry of defense and a joint military command, and arms control compliance by the Federation.

## ***What is The Impact of Train and Equip on Bosnian Social and Economic Development?***

- The long-term social, economic, and political consequences of the Train and Equip program need to be incorporated into a comprehensive evaluation of the program. Train and Equip presents budgetary challenges to the growth of a market economy by emphasizing expenditures on defense. Furthermore, Train and Equip may encourage a militaristic posture that may exclude the Federation from European regional security programs. Conversely, Train and Equip fosters a Western defense orientation that could bring Sarajevo closer to Western institutional models.
- Further, Train and Equip may provide a security environment conducive to the development of a sustainable economy and a stable social structure. Train and Equip also offers much-needed opportunities for employment in small, local factories, producing basic equipment such as helmets and ammunition. This support by Train and Equip for community-level economic development does not reach levels that could lead to the re-militarization of the economy in general.

## ***Conclusion***

- The questions central to the debate on Train and Equip are: How much security does the Federation need? What are and what will be the intentions of the parties? As the working group discussion shows, there are no easy answers to these questions, suggesting the need to continuously evaluate the military security situation and adjust policies if and when necessary.
- Train and Equip must also be evaluated according to its ability to support other elements of the Dayton Accords and its long-term impact on Bosnian social and economic development. It is, therefore, important to monitor Train and Equip to ensure that it does not have serious unintended side effects and to understand the many ways in which the program upholds the Dayton peace process and U.S. interests in the region.

## **Introduction: What is The Train and Equip Program?**

The purpose of Train and Equip is to help the Federation establish a professional unified Croatian-Bosniac military under the civilian control of the recently established joint Federation government. Under the terms of Dayton, this force should have sufficient strength to deter aggression and to defend the Federation in the event of aggression. To that effect, the United States and other international donors—Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, UAE, Malaysia, Turkey, Germany (training only), and Brunei—have together pledged over \$400 million in equipment and training to the Federation. Train and Equip is part of a comprehensive approach to military stabilization, which includes an arms control agreement on equipment ceilings.

Formally initiated in July 1996, the U.S.-managed Train and Equip program has disbursed the bulk of the U.S. contribution—approximately \$100 million in defense equipment, including rifles, machine guns, radios and tactical telephones, tanks, heavy artillery, armored personnel carriers, light anti-tank weapons, and utility helicopters.

Training for Federation forces is provided by international donors, whose \$147 million in pledged funding support also goes toward additional military equipment. Other donors are providing free equipment and training for the Federation. Federation soldiers receive their training from a U.S. commercial contractor, Military Professional Resources, Incorporated (MPRI), which has already conducted programs in Sarajevo and throughout the Federation. A recently established Federation military training facility run by MPRI is fully integrated—Bosniac and Croat instructors and soldiers live, work, and train together. A training center for local units in the Livno valley is scheduled to open in September, and a tank range for maneuver training has a November start date.

While progress to date has been significant, more remains to be done. In the ten months since its inception, its supporters believe Train and Equip has not yet established for the Federation a European-class army or one that is capable of providing security in this precarious area of the world. The Federation military's primary weaknesses include: (1) a weak officer corps, (2) a tenuous logistics support structure, and (3) little expertise in strategic and operational planning. The administration estimates that by June 1998, with planned levels of support, the Federation Army will be in a better position to accomplish the goals laid out for it at Dayton.

## **Train and Equip: The Debate**

### *Why Are We Implementing The Train and Equip Program?*

While the nature of the Train and Equip program is military—deterrence, and defense if deterrence fails—supporters believe that its implementation reinforces fundamental political tenets of the Dayton Accord. Train and Equip has encouraged much-needed institution building among the Croats and Bosniacs by mandating the establishment of a single Federation defense ministry and joint command. Cooperation has not been easy, but it grows incrementally. Parallel defense organizations in Mostar (Croat) and Sarajevo (Bosniac) have been united, although the operations of the joint Ministry of Defense have been characterized as “sputtering.” Passage of the common defense law was extremely difficult, but, in the end, was accomplished. A joint command has been established, but is in need of support

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from NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR) before it can begin work. Administration officials working with the leadership of the Federation forces note that "slow" progress is nonetheless real progress—the working environment today among military leaders is fundamentally better than it was one year ago. At the lowest levels of the military, among the Croat and Bosniac troops, there is a noticeable absence of tension. While the Federation Army will not be integrated below the corps level for at least three years, soldiers do currently train together. To date there have been no incidents between Croat and Bosnian personnel involved in this program.

The Train and Equip program has also been used as a lever with the Bosnian government to remove foreign mujahideen fighters and to terminate the military and intelligence relationship with Iran. The arms flow from Iran to Bosnia has stopped. Hundreds of Iranian Revolutionary Guards were deployed to Bosnia; they are no longer there, nor are the mujahideen. A high-level Bosnian official in the Ministry of Defense with direct links to Iran was removed from his post as a result of pressure from the United States and the promise of Train and Equip resources once he resigned. Furthermore, a number of working group participants noted that the training and equipping of Bosniac forces would occur regardless. Advocates of the policy argue that it is appropriate for the United States to manage this process, rather than countries that do not necessarily support the interests of the West. Train and Equip ensures that the Federation Army adopts civilian control, military professionalism, and Western-oriented defense institutions.

Train and Equip, according to some participants, is also the only way to encourage Bosniac compliance with the arms control agreement, as long as the government of the RS continues to violate the arms control provisions of Dayton. The Federation is currently in full compliance with the reporting and destruction requirements of Dayton. In Phase 1, which ended in December 1996, the Federation destroyed the requisite 776 weapons. It has also begun to reduce troop levels to 45,000, as required by Federation and international agreements. The Serbs, on the other hand, have not adhered to all arms control requirements, destroying only 45 weapons in Phase I and thereby preserving their offensive capabilities. Finally, Train and Equip not only promotes compliance with the arms control component of Dayton but also rewards Federation support for all aspects of the agreement.

#### *How Is Train and Equip Affecting Peace Implementation?*

Working group discussion on Train and Equip yielded very different views regarding the program's impact on the military balance between the Federation and the RS. Some participants felt strongly that Train and Equip was radically altering the balance of power and increasing the likelihood of a Federation-directed offensive. Others were certain that the program ensures Federation parity with the RS, deterring aggressive acts by Pale. The disparity in views stemmed in part from differing assessments of pre-Dayton military capabilities and future war-fighting scenarios.

Working group perceptions of the military situation in the former Yugoslavia prior to the Dayton agreement were varied. Some believed that the Bosniacs were winning a World War I-style war of attrition based on superiority in manpower, which over time would overwhelm the Serb advantage in equipment and supplies. Others did not believe that Bosnian manpower alone would offset Bosnian Serb heavy weapons, and they also made the point that the 1992-95 war in Bosnia was a war of terror and intimidation of the civilian population. They believe that the Bosnian Serbs retain the capability to shell cities, to seize territory such as a wider corridor in

the north, to isolate Gorazde, or to harass commercial flow to Sarajevo. Participants agreed that battlefield superiority was clearly achieved when Croat artillery and units based in the Krajina reinforced the Bosniac offensive against the Serbs in a continuation of the Croatian war in the summer of 1995.

These differing assessments are critical to the debate on the Train and Equip program. If parity between Bosniac and Serb forces existed before Dayton, then the resources and training provided by Train and Equip create a power imbalance in favor of the Federation. Some estimate a 1 to 2 disadvantage for the Serbs in artillery, and a growing advantage for the Bosniacs in war fighting capabilities as a result of superior training. Some believe that by mid-1998 the Bosniacs are likely to have a clear advantage, and by mid-1999 they will have the ability to inflict a decisive defeat over the Serbs. According to this assessment, parity will simply cease to exist. If, however, the Bosniacs achieved the pre-Dayton stalemate due primarily to Croat support, and if their continued alliance is not certain, then Train and Equip is simply ensuring an equitable RS-Federation military balance of power. Proponents of this view believe that the RS has a current documented advantage of 2 to 1 over the Bosniacs in tanks, a 5 to 1 advantage in artillery, and minimal compliance with the arms control agreement at this time.

Further working group discussion revealed the difficulty in calculating the balance of power, which is open to various interpretations of the current data and the future political situation in Bosnia. Some participants felt that military assessments based on Bosniac superiority in numbers versus Serb advantages in heavy weapons was a false and rather dangerous correlation—manpower simply cannot equal tanks. Subscribing to this analysis implicitly accepts an inhumane attrition of Bosniac soldiers. For its supporters, Train and Equip, in conjunction with Dayton arms control requirements, offers the best prospects for military balance based on (1) a reduction in Bosniac troops to 45,000, (2) equipping the Federation with defensive (anti-tank and anti-aircraft) weapons, and (3) reducing Serb superiority in heavy weapons. This would achieve equivalent defensive forces for both sides, and it is part of what was agreed to at Dayton and in the subsequent arms control agreement.

Unfortunately, the uncertain political situation in Bosnia also makes it difficult to calculate balance of power accurately. For example, the RS appears on the verge of economic collapse, which would make the maintenance of military parity impossible to monitor in the future. And in the past the Pale leadership has relied on support from Belgrade—support which is no longer certain. Some participants felt that RS vulnerabilities combined with the confidence instilled by Train and Equip might encourage a Federation offensive against the RS for territorial gain.

Yet similar uncertainties also exist for the Bosniacs, who may not ultimately depend politically or militarily on either the Bosnian Croats or the international community. In fact, participants felt that a Bosniac-inspired attack on the RS is somewhat improbable, given the possibility of Bosnian Croat defection from the Federation and the likely isolation by the international community. Others also doubted that the Federation would launch a high-risk operation, given Serbia's geographic advantage and the uncertainty of external support to Sarajevo. Despite FRY claims that support to Pale has ended, supply lines might be quickly reconstituted in the event of a conflict with the Federation, even if the FRY is economically "on its knees." The Bosniacs do not and would not enjoy the same advantages in ready external logistics support. The Federation must also incorporate into calculations of national security the possibility of RS noncompliance with Dayton arms control provisions,

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leaving the RS with significant offensive arms even as the Federation draws down its military manpower.

As noted above, Train and Equip is an integral part of Dayton and, therefore, must also be judged by its ability to further the agreement's broader political objectives. How successful has the program been in achieving the policy goals described above? There was general agreement by the working group that Train and Equip has done much to encourage Federation institution building. Although progress in this area has been difficult, there is no doubt that the promise of military training and equipment helps keep the Bosnian Croats in the Federation. In terms of unwanted external influences, participants agreed that Iran was no longer playing a role in Bosnian defense and intelligence, although it was noted that Iranian influence has not been eliminated but simply shifted to culture and religion. Opinions regarding Train and Equip's ability to leverage compliance with Dayton were mixed. The view was expressed that the program causes Serb obstruction on issues of freedom of movement, refugee returns, and arms control, and ensures that Pale hardliners rather than the Banja Luka "moderates" dominate the political process. Others felt that the RS's lack of compliance with Dayton was neither directly nor entirely caused by Train and Equip; other, more important factors were involved. Furthermore, the Serbs have been invited to visit the Federation training center and participate in Train and Equip in order to offset Dayton-required disarmament and ensure military parity with the Federation. Their participation, however, is highly unlikely, given that it hinges on complete compliance with Dayton and participation in a joint command structure.

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#### *The Consequences of Train and Equip for the Social and Economic Development of the Federation*

When evaluated from a more comprehensive point of view, it is evident that the implications of the Train and Equip program are not limited to deterrence, arms control compliance, and the military balance of power between the Federation and the RS. Since it consolidates federal structures and prevents external influences, the long-term consequences of the Train and Equip program in the economic, political, and social spheres require closer scrutiny.

The main areas of concern associated with Train and Equip are (1) its direct budgetary implications and (2) its long-term consequences for the social and economic development of the Federation. Participants cautioned that Train and Equip might have the unintended consequence of reproducing a defense-oriented economy similar to the largely discredited "socialist unemployment" system that contributed to the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. Programs like Train and Equip might emphasize defense over economic development, reconstructing the Yugoslav "iron triangle," where ties between military, government, and economic leaders at the highest levels of the state dominated the system. From a monetary perspective, Train and Equip might create long-term budgetary burdens on the Federation in order to maintain defense forces established by the program. Such an emphasis on defense might undermine the economic reconstruction plan envisioned by Dayton. Dayton supports the creation of a market economy in Bosnia, with a specialization in light manufacturing and raw materials for domestic consumption and export to Europe, rather than a defense-based economy. Furthermore, budgetary strains might prevent the emergence of a stable Bosniac economy and perpetuate the Federation's current economic dependence on Croatia.

Some participants noted, however, that Train and Equip has and could continue to have a positive impact on the Bosnian economy, which has been greatly hurt by the demobilization of military forces and the high level of unemployment, primarily among the young. Small, local defense industries, supplying equipment such as helmets and ammunition in support of Train and Equip, are an important and viable means of employment for the Federation. These industries' size and output, however, does not represent a fundamental reorientation of the economy toward remilitarization but only provision for the most basic requirements of a strictly defensive force. Others pointed out that security for citizens is a fundamental function of the government. As long as security in Bosnia remains a matter of national survival, resource allocation will inevitably favor the defense establishment, but defense will certainly be less favored in peace. Economic priorities can and should shift away from defense and military security when and if the crisis in Bosnia is resolved. Proponents of Train and Equip also noted that economic recovery in general is impossible in an unstable or insecure environment. Therefore, the security provided by programs such as Train and Equip directly supports economic development, which will only take place when citizens and foreign investors feel that the environment is conducive to long-term investment.

Also of concern was the political impact of Train and Equip on domestic alliances between elites, as well as the social and economic consequences for the parties of emphasizing defense expenditures. Some participants argued that Train and Equip might justify the position of the hard-liners concerning threats to Serbian security, hindering whatever political sway the moderates might have. The emphasis on defense could lead to a fundamental shift among the Muslim Bosniac elite towards a militaristic, defense-based social and economic development program. Such a shift in priorities arguably might reinforce the rural base of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) at the expense of an urban, cosmopolitan, and multiethnic Bosniac community. Yet some participants pointed out that, regardless of Train and Equip, when the very survival of the country is at stake, the political situation is conducive to the rise of a military elite.

Some participants raised concerns that the principles of Train and Equip reinforced a country-based, military-dominated security system that was at odds with the current trends in Europe toward arms control, regionally based defense programs, and a more complex view of security that includes economic, political, and military components. Others argued, however, that it is other factors that seriously inhibit Bosnian integration into Europe, such as the general exclusion of Balkan countries from regional security arrangements and the ongoing European arms embargo of the region, despite the UN decision to lift it. Europeans should recognize the legitimate security interests of the Federation and help bring Bosnia toward the West. Furthermore, the general trend in Europe is not away from nationally based defense forces but towards the incorporation of national militaries into regional defense arrangements based on principles of civilian control, defense transparency, and respect for neighbors' rights and territory. Therefore, a Federation army based on these principles might not be an impediment to regional and European integration but instead serve as an important bridge to these communities.

## **Conclusion**

Participants acknowledged in the end that the question central to the debate on Train and Equip is, How much security does the Federation need? The working group's

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discussion on the military balance of power demonstrates the difficulty of answering such a question when one person's definition of "security" may constitute a "threat" for others. The same difficulties apply when it comes to understanding the intentions of the parties. Would the Bosniacs misuse Train and Equip to pursue territorial gain, even if it meant risking international isolation and the possible collapse of the Federation? Are the leaders of the Republika Srpska likely, given the current economic and political situation, to resume shelling cities and harassing commercial flows in order to prevent Dayton implementation, intimidate local populations, and possibly gain small swaths of strategic land? The situation suggests continuous evaluation of the military and security situations in the region, dialogue with the parties on these issues, and the modification of international programs if and when necessary.

It is evident, however, that the effects of Train and Equip are not limited to issues of defense and security. The program is central to the peace process and, therefore, must also be judged by its ability to build stable institutions within the Federation, ensure arms control compliance, eliminate de-stabilizing external influences, and encourage participation in the Federation. The long-term effects on Bosnian social and economic development must also be considered. Participants agreed that there will be efforts to train and equip the Federation, and most thought that these efforts are best led by the United States. At the same time, it is important to monitor Train and Equip to ensure that it does not have unanticipated side effects, as well as to understand the many ways in which the program upholds the Dayton peace process and U.S. strategic interests in the region.

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