



GENEVA CENTRE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF  
ARMED FORCES (DCAF)

CONFERENCE PAPER

**REFORMING THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES IN  
BULGARIA.  
THE EXPERIENCE FROM THE LAST DECADE**

*Nikolai Bozhilov*

*Managing Director  
The Centre for South East European Studies  
Sofia, Bulgaria*

*bozhilov@csees.net*

*Paper presented at the Workshop on "Democratic and Parliamentary Oversight of Intelligence Services", held in Geneva 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> October 2002, organised by the Working Group on the Parliamentary Control of Armed Forces (PCAF) and the Working Group On Democratic Control Of Internal Security Services (DCOIS) of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.*

### **DCAF Conference Papers**

*DCAF Conference Papers* constitute studies designed to promote reflection and discussion on civil-military relations and issues of democratic control over defence and security sector. The publication of these documents is **unedited** and **unreviewed**.

The views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

*DCAF Conference Papers* are **not for quotation** without permission from the author(s) and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

# **REFORMING THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES IN BULGARIA. THE EXPERIENCE FROM THE LAST DECADE**

*Nikolai Bozhilov*

## **1. Introduction**

The last 10 years have been crucial ones for the Bulgarian intelligence community. New political realities have brought about a profound psychological transformation in intelligence thinking. This in turn has led directly to a complete revision of the professional perceptions of new allies; new enemies; new threats and new priorities. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that this revision process is not yet complete. However, the protracted political struggles and constant attempts, by all political parties, to gain control, which took place during the long transition period to democracy and a market-based economy, have marked the intelligence professionals with 'transition fatigue'. The notorious KGB-like image from communist times has been the cause of considerable mistrust among the general public and has undermined the efforts of the intelligence agencies to deal with vital problems of national security.

Nevertheless, Bulgarian intelligence played an important part in the Kosovo crisis, siding with NATO and providing first-class support. An irreversible process of change and reformation was thus begun. Just how efficient this process will be remains to be seen. It will, to a very large extent, depend on the political will of the party political establishment to re-build the intelligence infrastructure in accordance with the threat assessment strategies both of NATO and of the EU. Membership of both these organisations is, of course, part of Bulgaria's strategic foreign policy goals.

What I would like to do in my presentation is explain how we have arrived at the present situation. I'll set the scene, with a review of the historical background; this is necessary in order to understand better some Bulgarian perceptions, practices and prejudices. Secondly, I'll come right up to date and address the accountability and oversight situation, as it currently exists. And then finally I'll turn to what can, or could be done, in terms of people, processes and the use of technology.

The three-tier approach to developing Bulgaria's intelligence capabilities, based on people, process and technology, is a landmark for the country's intelligence organisations. However, this approach often clashes with ignorance, limited finance, and the lack of modern-thinking human resource management and the lack of political support. This is hardly surprising, given that there has been, until fairly recently that is, an almost nationwide mistrust of Bulgarian politicians. This is matched by an equal mistrust by the Bulgarian people, of their intelligence services.

Despite some positive results, deriving from the maturing democratic society developing in Bulgaria, the notion 'intelligence community' is more descriptive than organic. The existing national intelligence system is not sufficiently used and managed as a national resource. There is a clear need for a professional watchdog, the role of which would be to oversee inter-service arrangements and implement the concept of intelligence as a manageable community. Low intelligence culture,

competing interests, rivalry and protection of ‘turf’ are still part of the daily life of the intelligence agencies. Evidently, strong political involvement is necessary with clear guidelines of accountability for all existing powers.

The 9.11 attack against America both fragmented and activated the Bulgarian intelligence community. Priority now is placed on the adjustment to the post-9.11 environment and on involvement in efforts to combat drug trafficking, proliferation of WMD and international terrorism. Growing concern about transnational threats are leading to increasingly closer cooperation between intelligence and law enforcement agencies and to consideration of organisational changes in the intelligence community. For ordinary intelligence officers the past year has been marred more by political sleaze and creeping bureaucracy than real reform. For the intelligence leadership it has been a balancing act between political survival and resource appropriation to responding to national security threats.

## **2. Historical background**

At the end of Cold War the Bulgarian intelligence model, a replica of the Soviet Union intelligence model, included a state security apparatus (a division of the Ministry of the Interior) comprising of six directorates. The six were:

- foreign intelligence
- domestic counterintelligence
- military counterintelligence
- technical intelligence
- VIP protection and
- political counterintelligence.

The MoD controlled the military intelligence of the General Staff.

The post-communist history of the Bulgarian intelligence services can be divided into three periods. The first was from 1989 to 1997, when the Bulgarian political establishment was dominated by the structures of the former communist party, renamed the Bulgarian Socialist Party, with one exception only, namely the right-wing government of Philip Dimitrov (1992-1993). The second period was from 1997, when the Union of Democratic Forces with Ivan Kostov as Prime Minister took over government, until the tragic events of September the 11<sup>th</sup>. And the third period is the post 9.11 transformation, where the war against terror has drastically changed the risk perception, even amongst the most conservative elements of the intelligence community.

It was during the period - between 10.11.89 – 10.04.1997 – that the first significant changes took place. What happened was that the Soviet triumvirate model (Communist party – Ministry of the Interior – Ministry of Defence) was transformed into an information bi-polar model (President – Prime Minister). This led to the almost inevitable duplication of activities, which resulted in a marked and rather dramatic loss of professional effectiveness. What followed was an orchestrated reorganisation, ‘depoliticisation’ and a renaming programme of all of the various services. This was designed to ‘modernise and restructure’ the intelligence community, though, actually this was never publicly admitted. It turned out to be a

game of smoke and mirrors for in truth little really changed; the power remained where it had always been.

Foreign intelligence (the National Intelligence Service) and VIP protection (the National Protection Service) were subordinated to the President - both of them forced to penetrate domestic structures, which, in a way, was aimed to compensate the lack of Presidential power over those domestic issues. The Ministry of the Interior retained control over counter intelligence, which was then renamed the National Service for Defence of the Constitution and later National Security Service, while part of the operatives of the political counter-intelligence were transferred to the newly created Central Bureau for Fighting Organised Crime. These transformations not only led to disruption of the communist party unity in the intelligence services, but also to a lack of co-ordination and professional tasking. Corporate and vested interests began to cripple operations. During this period operational work was severely disrupted by strong political interference. The services themselves were used as an instrument to cater for the economic interests of the political establishment inside the country. Whilst outside the country, this political interference damaged the effectiveness of some of the most straightforward and almost routine-type operations

During the Kostov government (1997 – 2001) Bulgaria finally became publicly orientated towards the West and NATO membership became a prime goal, backed by political consensus. The Kosovo Crisis was a milestone for the Bulgarian foreign policy in general and for the intelligence community in particular. There was a great deal of practical co-operation with the major NATO Allies and an unusual amount of information and intelligence sharing. I say ‘unusual’ because one has to consider this in the light of the recent past, where old habits and practices were still quite fresh in some peoples’ minds. There had been an almost automatic reluctance to admit, share or even, in some cases, to discuss anything of real value. To do so would diminish one’s own position. After all, there were no formal contracts in place and nothing actually had to be done together. But I hardly need tell this audience that the intelligence world is nothing if not practical and pragmatic. So a sense of realism really did penetrate into the whole of the Bulgarian intelligence community. During this first effective post-communist government the Military Intelligence was taken away from the General Staff and renamed the Defence Information Service. And more significantly it was subordinated directly to the Minister of Defence. The General Staff of the Bulgarian Armed Forces retained only the tactical army intelligence. A new Financial Intelligence Bureau Directorate was established as a structure of the Ministry of Finance. And a Security Council, subordinated to the Prime Minister, was created with the aim of co-ordinating the efforts of the whole of the intelligence community.

The second major turning point, or test if you prefer, came on the fateful day of 9.11. Contacts with western intelligence services were intensified, both in terms of increased frequency and in terms of subject matter. At the same time, some very basic work ethics and organisational structures were revisited.

The period after 9.11 brought personnel changes in the leadership of two intelligence agencies – the National Security Service and the Defence Information Service. These changes were not a result of the post-9.11 increased requirements for efficient leadership but of a political reshuffle after the government change and Presidential elections in 2001 as well as the natural process of the replacement of retired high-ranking officers.

Now let me turn to:

### **3. Democratic accountability and intelligence oversight in Bulgaria**

The structure of the democratic accountability and intelligence oversight in Bulgaria is as follows:

Subordinate to the President are the National Intelligence Service (NIS) and the National Protection Service (NPS). The President also chairs the National Security Advisory Council, the status of which is defined by National Law.

Subordinate to the Prime Minister are the Security Council at the Council of Ministers, the National Security Service (NSS) and the Central Bureau for Fighting Organised Crime (CBFOC) within the Ministry of the Interior, and the Defence Information Service (DIS) and Defence Counterintelligence and the Military Police within the Ministry of Defence.

For the sake of clarity, I will limit this report to the activities of the main intelligence organisations – that is the National Intelligence Service (NIS), the Defence Information Service (DIS) and the National Security Service (NSS).

#### **Legal framework**

The basic legal framework consists of the Constitution, the National Security Concept, the Law on Defence and the Armed Forces, the Military Doctrine, the Law of the Ministry of the Interior and the new Classified Information Act. The intelligence agencies are governed in their work by secret statutory rules and regulations, approved by the President and the Prime Minister. Despite the preparation of several drafts for an Intelligence Act that is to regulate Bulgarian foreign intelligence, there has not been any progress so far and none is expected in the near future due to lack of political will.

In compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria the President, the Parliament (National Assembly) and the Council of Ministers have responsibilities for the national security.

The President chairs the National Security Advisory Council (NSAC). The NSAC includes the President himself, the Prime Minister, The Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Minister of Defence, the Minister of the Interior, the Parliamentary leaders of the political parties, represented in Parliament and the Heads of the intelligence and security services.

The National Assembly carries out the legislative building of the national security system. Through its Permanent Commission for Foreign Policy, Defence and Security it controls the executive power and the special security organs as far as the compliance with the law and effectiveness of the actions are concerned as well as the efficient use of the resources. It also makes an assessment of the political risks.

I would like to elaborate a bit on the most recent controversial legislative act that is related to intelligence vetting activities – The Classified Information Act. It was passed by the Parliament on 24<sup>th</sup> April this year. The new law regulates the questions of what constitutes classified information and who should have access to it. But the

law also deals with the former files of the notorious communist-era State Security secret service. According to the Bulgarian government the NATO reaction to the law has been "more than good -- very positive indeed"... The law is really flawless; what remains to be done is to apply it... In many ways, this law even surpasses NATO standards because it incorporates the experience of countries such as NATO's new members Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, which have faced problems similar to those experienced by Bulgaria."

However, as you might imagine, the reality is actually not so simple or straightforward. Under the provisions of the new law it will be impossible for researchers to establish a clear picture of the State Security's work because it gives the government authorities the right to reclassify documents that otherwise would be open to the public. The new law provides for four different levels of secrecy, ranging from 'top secret' to 'for internal use only'. The 'top secret' documents are barred from publication for 30 years. The main flaw of this law is the lack of any effective control mechanism. The law provides for the formation of a State Commission on Classified Information, whose five members are to be appointed by the Prime Minister. The opposition party, SDS, demanded that at least two of the five members be nominated by the parliament to ensure a minimum of public control over the commission. Some experts argued that the authors of the new law had advisers, who are interested that not only the archives of the State Security remain out of reach of the society, but also the future actions of the authorities. "The sad truth is that whoever comes to power will decide that the law is good for the government and bad for the opposition and hence will decide to leave it as it is," says one of the experts.

### **Parliamentary Oversight**

According to the Constitution the Parliament is responsible for the approval of the government budget, which includes the budget for defence and security. The oversight of the intelligence agencies comes under the parliamentary Commission for Foreign Policy, Defence and Security – CFPDS (Komisia po vanskha politika, otbrana i sigurnost). In practice parliamentary oversight is almost nullified by the lack of proper parliamentary organisation, staff and expertise. Out of 28 members of the CFPDS only one member – the former chief of foreign intelligence - has the necessary expertise. The Commission is entitled to ask for the presence of the Directors of the intelligence agencies, if required. In general parliamentarians have been reluctant to scrutinise intelligence agencies, except in cases of public scandals and emergency, or to share responsibility with the government.

### **Executive Branch Oversight**

The civilian oversight of the Defence Information Service (DIS) and the National Security Service (NSS) is provided through the Minister of Defence and the Minister of the Interior respectively, who report to the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers. Both ministers participate in the Security Council at the Council of Ministers. The Security Council is comprised of: the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of the Interior, their deputies, the chief of General Staff of the Bulgarian Armed Forces and the chiefs of the intelligence and counter-intelligence organs. The President personally, or through his representatives, can always participate in the work of the Council and can request information from it at any time.

As per Article 55 of the National Security Concept, the Security Council has the following responsibilities:

- It summarises, analyses and draws conclusions from all current information about risks to national security and makes a professional assessment of, and prognosis for the dynamics of the threats;
- It plans concrete measures for the neutralisation of the threats and proposes solutions in times of crisis;
- It coordinates the plans of the special organs for the acquisition of information resources.
- It develops and proposes to the Council of Ministers an annual report on national security. The President, the Chairman of the National Assembly and the Prime Minister can request information in the Security Council.

The curious thing is that the Security Council is supported by a small number of so-called 'experts' who are not on the payroll of that Council but who occupy positions in the Council of Ministers. This practice needs to be re-examined for two reasons at least. Firstly, the Council does not provide independent intelligence assessments; and second, it has no practical coordination functions. One of the possibilities is to upgrade the existing Security Council to that of a statutory organisation or to follow another possibility - the practice in the Anglo-Saxon world where a Joint Intelligence Committee (UK) or Intelligence Advisory Board (USA) is appointed to coordinate intelligence activities. It is common practice there to hear also evidence from a range of experts, instead of purely from agency officials.

Another major problem is the lack of a statutory mandate for the directors of the intelligence agencies. They can be appointed and dismissed any time during a political reshuffle. The old argument of whether the national intelligence services are a party political matter or whether they are above such squabbles is still unresolved. This situation does not mobilise or motivate heads to implement institutional changes and modernise their services. There have been intensive discussions over the last few months among all powers in Bulgaria to correct this situation as soon as possible.

## **Judiciary Oversight**

Bulgarian intelligence agencies work within the limits of the law. As per the Bill covering the use of special technical means, the intelligence agencies are not legally allowed to covertly collect data and evidence against a citizen without permission from the judiciary.

#### **4. The Bulgarian Intelligence system – the post-Cold war changes**

Taking into account the contemporary methodology to assess intelligence capabilities on the basis of the three-tier approach: people, process and technology, let me offer an independent assessment of what has changed in the work of the intelligence organisations during the last 10 years and especially after 1997, when the real changes began.

##### **People:**

Human resources in the intelligence community are of paramount importance, and relate directly to the effectiveness of the intelligence system. During the Cold War, recruitment and career management were totally controlled by communist party interests and through the subordination of the intelligence services to the totalitarian regime doctrines. It was a common practice for intelligence officers to be recruited from high-ranking party and intelligence officials' families. This practice continued for some time during the transition period but has, over time, gradually decreased, because of diminishing public influence of the services, political uncertainty, low pay and lack of career prospects.

Little change can be seen in the recruitment process during the last decade; old, traditional methods still prevail – recruits from specialised classes in military schools, personal recommendation from serving officers, a few talent spotters in universities, defence colleges and the Army. Recruitment and training are still largely based on the old Warsaw Pact thinking concerning threats to security.

The efficiency of the recruitment process is hampered by very serious constraints, linked to the following problems.

Because of the 'brain drain' from the country and a quickly growing private sector it is becoming more difficult to find bright, intelligent young people, who are ready to commit themselves to the intelligence world, especially without open, public recruitment. The intelligence profession is no longer considered attractive, prestigious or well paid - facts, which coincide to great extent with the negative public opinion about intelligence services. There is lack of legislative guarantees for the profession. There isn't a clear, fair and motivating career perspective for ambitious young people. Currently available recruitment sources are limited. For a while, restructuring of military education brought about a dramatic fall in recruitment standards, particularly in the defence intelligence.

On paper, the criteria for recruiting people into the services have been changed in such a way that joining standards have been raised unnecessarily and unrealistically high. Practice has proven to be different.

Vetting and probation procedures have changed very little too. Each service has its own procedures for recruitment and probation. Department heads of services sets

the requirements usually one year in advance. After a pre-selection of suitable candidates the screening period may take up to 12 months, during which time the selected candidates may undergo several interviews with the special recruitment commission or its representatives. Once again due to the number of vacancies and high demand, the probation period is sometimes all too easily passed.

No recruitment consultants have been used so far in the initial selection process. Moreover, the recruitment procedures seem to be far from being open, fair and transparent thus not leaving candidates with any satisfaction from the recruitment process.

Another problem area is the education and training of new recruits. After joining an intelligence organisation some are sent to internal education and training facilities, where they spend between 6 and 24 months, depending on their previous experience and educational background. The problems of the modern intelligence education and training arise from the fact that teaching personnel is either from the Cold War era or lacks international experience and training exchange with foreign intelligence agencies. As a result there is limited teaching of modern intelligence techniques. Very often no distinction is made between security and defence – thus intelligence training is adapted to defence challenges rather than security challenges. In addition, new intelligence priorities require experts in the new security challenges such as anti-terrorism, organised crime, Islamic extremism, non-proliferation of WMD, cyber warfare and so on – subjects that are difficult to teach without practical experience.

The lack of motivation and career development programmes seem to be the greatest constraint on identifying qualified recruits. It is often forgotten that one of the strongest drivers of motivation is not only money but also good career prospects. Therefore, the need for coherent personnel policies, based on clear criteria: highly competent, politically impartial, with high standards of integrity will make a substantial difference in the recruitment and advancements of intelligence officers, whose most commonly held wish is to be given a position on individual merit, not on patronage, cronyism or nepotism. In contrast to the military, very few intelligence experts are sent to training courses in the West but those that are – like the military – are then excluded from advancement in their career. The repercussions of this are obvious. Those who do go, find themselves, on returning to Bulgaria, professionally cold-shouldered and soon become very disillusioned. This is not always easy to hide and is frequently witnessed by others. The effect is contagious. There is then a marked reluctance among other potential travellers to go to western colleges and institutions – for they have seen the negative effects, both professionally and personally, that this has on one's career. The serious question therefore, is 'how does one break this self-perpetuating cycle'?

### **Processes:**

The Bulgarian intelligence community is committed to providing the most useful, highest-quality analysis to Bulgarian policymakers, lawmakers, the Military, law enforcement officers, economic negotiators, and other officials responsible for protecting Bulgarian national interests. The analysis should draw from a wide range of open and covert sources--from newspapers to technical collection systems.

The mission of the intelligence services has changed dramatically in the post-Cold War era. Intelligence analysts are challenged as never before to be creative and

proactive in meeting intelligence needs. Lengthy analytic papers largely focused on the Warsaw Pact perception about the NATO threat that were the norm 10 years ago have to give way to a combination of briefings and short, but insightful, intelligence products covering a broad range of national, regional and global issues.

Now more than ever, new products must be tailored to the individual intelligence consumer's concerns. And the analysts have to put the highest premium on knowing what their consumers need.

The revolution in information technologies has improved access to a whole range of sources and has increased the ability to deliver intelligence quickly. But it has also made intelligence work more challenging as analysts are bombarded with information of varying quality, relevance, and depth.

To meet the challenge of political change and technological advances and take advantage of the opportunities they present, the Bulgarian intelligence agencies are in the process of re-examining their core analytic 'tradecraft' skills and updating them to reflect how they do their business

The pursuit of expertise in analytic tradecraft is a central element of this action plan. The tradecraft enables analysts to provide 'added value' to consumers of intelligence by ensuring dedication to objectivity, which enhances credibility with consumers dealing with complex and sensitive policy issues. The timely delivery of intelligence products to the policy makers is paramount. And the feedback and tasking from them to further drive the collection of the basic intelligence for analysis production is a two-way process that needs a high intelligence culture.

Unfortunately, in recent years the Bulgarian political and administrative establishments have been flooded with exotic political appointments that are lacking any intelligence culture to use, process and file classified materials of sensitive national character. Moreover, it is widely assumed that intelligence should be provided to cater for the corporate interests of political parties and factions, which have an insatiable appetite to control the intelligence agencies.

Traditionally, from totalitarian times Bulgarian intelligence has been quite efficient in the collection and processing of human intelligence (HUMINT). Being the staunchest ally of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Bulgarian intelligence agencies possess intimate knowledge of the Soviet-era mentality and the Soviet-style operations that continue to prevail in today's Russian intelligence and in the other FSU republics. Another area of competence is the Near and Middle East, where work with some Arab special services has been done in the past. And, of course, the inside knowledge of the relatively insecure and troublesome Balkans and other countries in Southeast Europe represent a particular asset in present and future intelligence-sharing with friendly services from NATO, the EU and others.

I hope that I have shown you that the modus operandi of the Bulgarian intelligence system is gradually starting to change. Perhaps the most significant change comes from the new political realities that have brought to the fore new allies and new enemies. The Cold War priorities have been largely replaced by the challenging priorities to fight against international terrorism, the proliferation of the WMD, drug trafficking, illicit arms trading and other serious organised crime. This seems to be a daunting task for the senior officers in the intelligence agencies, whose entire careers

have been dedicated to researching and monitoring the defence capabilities of the NATO countries.

Recent years have brought a substantial increase in the use of all-source information for intelligence products. It has been recognised that analysis needs a fresh approach and that more human resources are directed to this requirement. A much greater proportion of information has been obtained without the use of human agents or sophisticated collection platforms. At the same time requirements for translation, systematic analysis and dissemination have further increased.

In their restructuring the intelligence organisations are facing very serious challenges. Methodology from the Cold War times is part of the daily work. Corruption is a serious problem in some agencies. Senior officers outnumber junior officers. Indeed, the whole career 'triangle' is wrong. It is inverted! Due to lack of a career managements system and scant financial resources, motivation is often missing. There is an urgent requirement for a new system of documentation of the intelligence personal files. Operational work needs to be tailored towards better informational security and diminishing corporate and vested interest penetration. It is important to have a modern legal base for strictly need-to-know information access. The psychological barrier for private-partnership and collaboration with NGOs and academia is very high indeed. There is not enough debate and dialogue with outside experts about intelligence and the multitude of threats the modern world faces today. Unlike the military, contacts with western intelligence organisations have still not resulted in the training of intelligence personnel to work in joint intelligence quarters or in joint intelligence operations. Another important factor in the training of qualified intelligence personnel is the ability for officers to rotate between the different services in order to gain additional valuable experience.

Let me now elaborate a little more about something I feel is important, namely communication and secrecy in the intelligence work.

Communication with the society has always been a problem for the Bulgarian intelligence agencies. This problem comes out not only because of the secretive nature of work but also from the reluctance of the leadership to allow public closer and make its work more accountable. The concept of winning 'hearts and minds' of society albeit with limited and balanced reporting is an essential tool in modern communications. But this has never been part of the intelligence chiefs' toolbox. Nevertheless, the media have always shown a strong interest in intelligence matters. At the same time the media have been somewhat irresponsible in writing about intelligence services. A typical example will serve to illustrate my point. At the beginning of this year there was a report in one of the Bulgarian newspapers about 'information' of a secret al-Qaeda meeting in Sofia. You can imagine the administrative burden that fell on the intelligence services to explain that information was groundless and a simple attempt by the journalist in question to become noticed. Such cases make intelligence agencies very cautious in their contacts with the media

Secrecy is a vital element in the work of the intelligence agencies for a number of obvious reasons. The advance knowledge of the enemy's plan may open up a possibility for a successful operation. Another reason may stem from doubts over the Collector's legality and propriety. And probably the most important reason is the collection vulnerability to countermeasures and source protection. In peacetime, however, it is sometimes advantageous to create public impression of being well

informed as this has normally deterring and preventive effect. It is especially valuable in achieving foreign policy objectives. It can play strongly against you when it is used in a clumsy and inappropriate way.

During the presidential elections last year the incumbent President Stoyanov, who had a huge electoral support and could have easily won in the presidential contest took the liberty to show to the public, in a TV debate, a secret report of one of the intelligence agencies, which alleged that the other Candidate was involved in corruption and connected with certain economic vested interests. This act was interpreted by the general public as a serious abuse of the presidential authority. As a consequence of this, and other mistakes, the most popular President in the post-communist history lost the elections. On other occasions, the short briefs and Q&A exchanges by the director of the National Intelligence Service with media have had a very positive effect. That's why the matter of secrecy should not be a good reason to keep the society uninformed for the trends and the general achievements of the services.

And last, but not least, I would like to emphasise on the international cooperation of the intelligence agencies, which I consider the strongest driver of change.

Intelligence has its enemies but it also has its friends. The international system of intelligence cooperation is not new in principle, but is relatively new for the Bulgarian agencies in the post-Cold war period. Allies have always shared some intelligence in war and information exchanges have always been part of diplomacy. As I said before, the intelligence sharing with NATO began during the Kosovo crisis later on evolved into one of the most important components of the eventual future integration of Bulgaria in the Euro-Atlantic Alliance. The cooperation with USA, UK, Germany, and other NATO allies, became part of the routine intelligence work and boosted the reformation process. This process also brought new knowledge about modern threats and the methods to counteract them efficiently. The cooperation is expected to become very intensive, once Bulgaria is invited to join NATO. Integration and liaison will be powerful elements for the refashioning of the Bulgarian intelligence system in the years to come.

There are however several snags to this process at the moment. The accession of Bulgaria to NATO poses a security risk as Russian penetration and vested interests in the government and the intelligence services cannot be ruled out. Yet, there is no clear positive vetting programme that can satisfy the NATO needs. These problems are definitely surmountable as: firstly, NATO information sharing is strictly on need-to-know basis; secondly, for Bulgarian nationals who will receive the highest NATO security clearance, vetting is likely to be carried out by a major western counterintelligence service.

### **Technology:**

Technology is the weakest link in Bulgarian intelligence due to insufficient funds for re-equipment and modernisation. Despite this, recent years have brought new modern SIGINT and IT facilities although these are on a small scale. The terrorist threat and organised crime epitomised by September the 11<sup>th</sup> will need substantial government investment in monitoring and surveillance technology as well as in infrastructure to ensure better efficiency of the intelligence services.

## **5. Conclusion**

The intelligence work in the post -9.11 era is an arduous task and requires a close look at management, process and technological developments. It also requires a determined long-sighted vision and a strong political will to bring the Bulgarian intelligence to much-needed higher standards of professionalism than currently exist. This in turn requires a clear and objective analysis of the new trends and the new threats. This process can only be achieved by public-private partnership and constant dialogue between the intelligence providers and the intelligence consumers. Bulgaria really does have a moment of opportunity here. It must be seized and embraced by serious politicians so that the whole of the Bulgarian society will feel the benefit.

Thank you for your kind attention. I will be very happy to take your questions.



Established in 2000 on the initiative of the Swiss government, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), encourages and supports States and non-State governed institutions in their efforts to strengthen democratic and civilian control of armed and security forces, and promotes international cooperation within this field, initially targeting the Euro-Atlantic regions.

The Centre collects information, undertakes research and engages in networking activities in order to identify problems, to establish lessons learned and to propose the best practices in the field of democratic control of armed forces and civil-military relations. The Centre provides its expertise and support to all interested parties, in particular governments, parliaments, military authorities, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, academic circles.

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF):  
rue de Chantepoulet 11, P.O.Box 1360, CH-1211 Geneva 1, Switzerland  
Tel: ++41 22 741 77 00; Fax: ++41 22 741 77 05  
E-mail: [info@dcaf.ch](mailto:info@dcaf.ch)  
Website: <http://www.dcaf.ch>