



CENTRE for SECURITY COOPERATION

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Address by Ambassador Nedžad Hadžimusić, outgoing Director of RACVIAC at the Handover-Takeover Ceremony, held in RACVIAC-Centre for Security Cooperation on 15th October 2009

Ladies and Gentleman,
Excellencies,
Dear Friends

It is my distinct pleasure and absolute honour to address such a distinguish audience gathered here in RACVIAC for today's hand-over-take-over ceremony.

At this very moment, I can not help but recall the occasion of the so-called *Quo Vadis* RACVIAC agenda item of the topical meeting where distinguished representatives of member countries consisted of three echelons (Core, Associate, and Observers, together with representatives of the former Stability Pact for SEE). I took part in that meeting in my then capacity as Assistant Minister for Multilateral Affairs in the BiH MFE when together we were rehearsing the best possible new concept aiming at transforming the former R A C V I A C (Regional Arms Control Verification Implementation Assistance Centre) into the Centre for Security Cooperation. In the mean time I happened to become the very first civilian director of the Centre, which per se was the beginning of the said transformation of RACVIAC.

The lion's share of the credit for new concept - accepted *urbi at orbi* throughout the region and beyond- goes naturally - to the then Assistant Minister in FMAEI, and today Secretary of State, Mr Pjer Simunovic. Though it was only natural by definition of the host country's specific responsibilities, I can't but feel justifiably pleased that Pjer, accepted my proposal to take the most delicate role of MAG Chair (Steering Board of the Centre) at this critical period. It goes without saying that this was the right choice at the right time. This is the moment also to congratulate his successor in the position of MAG Chair, Mr. Draško Jovanović, who honoured us with his presence today.

Now allow me here to briefly offer you a small confession linked to the *Die-Hard drama* at the second last MAG Meeting followed by *Silence Procedure, which in the end precipitated today's event*. Actually, after having second thoughts, I decided not to blame anybody and to be just happy that the *cavalry* from Sarajevo arrived comfortably late, thus cutting short my

unfortunate, most absurd and extravagant personal as well as material status, from day one of this most prominent position.

This having been said, a piece of good and delightful news is that this position is to be taken over today by my long time friend (we like to say from our previous life when were working together in the MFA of ex-Yugoslavia), Ambassador Todorcevski, a career diplomat, travelled and devoted professional to whom I - most sincerely - wish all the luck. Actually, he's been already quite lucky to take the helm while entering in somewhat less troubled waters than was the case two years ago. He's also mega lucky to have a massively but successfully reshuffled, re-energized international team to assist him on the road ahead.

I should add here the locally employed sextet of most serious people who represent at the same time the incarnation of the institutional memory of RACVIAC. Unlike seconded *passengers*, which we all are, they are true guardians of RACVIAC's legendary logistics efficiency, thus being the indispensable ingredient in maintaining and further enhancing the prestige of our Centre.

Nevertheless, there are few serious issues to be tackled without delay in the light of the last MAG Chair Conclusion. In my humble opinion the first, vital one is the timely completion of the RACVIAC Legal Status procedure unfinished business. For the time being there is - I strongly believe - only one, temporary No against six formally expressed Yes in terms of accepting RACVIAC's new LEGAL STATUS DOCUMENT. The next urgent issue is a notorious problem of volatile contributions by SEECP countries to the Centre's Budget, which would be best and most efficiently dealt with - by fixing once for all - precisely stipulated obligations of the member countries in the new Legal Status Agreement.

Indeed, years 2008/9 have been The Years of tremendous significance for the future of RACVIAC - reshaped and adjusted to the ever-changing security landscape of the region in the aftermath of still recent conflicts.

To make a long story short, let me remind you of the results of hard, tireless work of two working groups - Legal Status and New Organization - that were presented to the representatives of RACVIAC MAG during the 21st MAG Meeting in Spring 2009 and were met with approval from this forum. Following that important step RACVIAC started immediately with the implementation of these decisions in order to be best prepared for the upcoming challenging period.

In my second, the year 2009 RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation has started to implement a new organizational structure.

Some old practices were eventually abandoned or replaced with new ones, including a somewhat different style of organizing and executing our activities as well as reporting, to mention just a few of the steps towards a new working ethos for the Centre.

A considerable number of activities have been co-organized between RACVIAC and other Organizations/Institutions with which RACVIAC maintains contacts that are not based on MOUs, such as "Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons"(OPCW), "South East Europe Security Cooperation Steering Group"(SEEGROUP), "Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre" (EADRCC), "Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs" (OCHA), "Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe" (OSCE), and

similar. Contacts with these organizations are reasonably close and turn out to be mutually beneficial to both sides.

RACVIAC's aim to further intensify relations with NATO was illustrated by a visit of a delegation headed by Director of RACVIAC, to the NATO School in OBERAMMERGAU, GE, as well as by a visit by the Director to NATO Headquarters in Brussels. Both visits helped to further improve good relations between the organizations as well as to promote a possible expansion of mutual cooperation.

In its quest to establish new fields of co-operation RACVIAC was pleased to receive a delegation of the recently established OSCE Border Management Staff College from DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN for an informative first meeting. I met my second last predecessor in Vienna three days ago together with our Liaison Officer, LC Keller, our conferencier today. We were not only warmly dined, and wined by former RACVIAC Director BG Pucher, but also had very interesting discussions on a number of issues. I was greatly encouraged by the General's honestly expressed opinion of RACVIAC's ever-increasing visibility and first steps made in exporting its best practice in security cooperation to other regions, thus marking just the beginning of the embodiment of one of the Centre's wildest aspirations that I dared to talk about just two years ago.

As a highlight in the month of September 2009 RACVIAC had the pleasure to welcome the Belgian Minister of Defence. With a view to enlarging the group of countries actively supporting RACVIAC, this visit will be of particular importance for RACVIAC.

RACVIAC activities continuously attract an encouraging level of attendance from participants from eligible countries that provide our funding, however the audience from other SEE countries is rather lower than we would wish. This deficiency should be addressed in a more comprehensive manner, starting with an open dialogue on the issue. This exchange of views should encompass consideration of fresh political incentives, rehearsing funding eligibility, and enhancing the attractiveness of the RACVIAC Programme.

With the Centre's new organization towards a more academic structure the allocation of the appropriate staff is indispensable. Seeking co-operation with other organizations, RACVIAC in turn has to bring something to the table in order to make these co-operations work both ways. What RACVIAC can offer is superb infrastructure for the conduct of all kinds of events. However to date our ability to offer experts on specific topics out of our own rows is limited. MAG is well aware of the limitations in RACVIAC expertise and is kindly requested to carefully consider providing RACVIAC with experts in the respective fields.

In our drive for greater media attention the establishment of our new web page has shown the positive effects we had hoped for. With the recent arrival of the second Public Affairs Officer, RACVIAC plans to further increase its media activities.

Transformation itself is an ongoing and dynamic process and that implies that RACVIAC will have to continuously monitor the respective areas of interest for new partners and additional, new fields of co-operation.

The last 22 MAG Meeting held here a week ago, on 6th October, was the best indication of the new spirit and vibrant working style. Novelties in reporting introduced were more than welcomed. Unlike previous routine, a part from the introductory *business as usual* part, this time we had a multilayered presentation by three Programme Managers that offered tangible and comprehensive insight to distinguished MAG members on activities realised and those projected for the year 2010.

At the end I'd rather not bore you with that self-inflicted, silly rivalry that arose between specific parts of the RCC and the new RACVIAC for mostly trivial reasons. Instead, I would use this opportunity to pass a message across time and repeat that the mainstream strategy and philosophy of our Centre is in the never-ending quest for synergy in regional security cooperation.

While so doing we expect the RCC to capitalise on the prestige of RACVIAC in order better to make itself visible and impose itself as a provider to this and other well established regional centres and initiatives, by obtaining additional incentives through EU funding of feasible projects in the regional cooperation context.

Finally let me remind you, ladies and gentlemen, that RACVIAC will celebrate its 10th anniversary in October next year. It is supposed to be if not a Ben-Hurish event, then at least one to be marked appropriately. May I thank in anticipation the distinguished authorities of the host country for sending me an invitation in due course? I don't know about other fellow directors, but speaking for myself without false modesty, I won't have any violent objection if some surprise decorations were to be considered.

Director of RACVIAC
Ambassador Nedžad S. Hadžimusić