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# Naval Postgraduate School - Engaging Women's Leadership in Security and Defense Institution Building (SDIB)

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**Engaging Women’s Leadership in Security and Defense Institution Building (SDIB)**

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*Article by Maggie Spivey*

The program, “Engaging Women’s Leadership in Security and Defense Institution Building (SDIB)” was held 24 -26 March at the Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) Hall in downtown Sarajevo. Organized and hosted by the Naval Postgraduate School, in its role as the US Partnership for Peace Training and Education Center (PTC), and the BiH Peace Support Operations Training Centre (PSOTC), designated PTC for BiH, the program was the first event of a proposed three-year collaboration between the two PTCs. The event started the process that will result in the development of gender-related curriculum in support of Defense Institution Building that will be taught at the PSOTC and contribute to security and stability in BiH and the region.

After an Icebreaker Reception the evening of 24 March, the conference convened on 25 March and drew attention to gender issues in a variety of different contexts including global; regional; military, police, and peacekeeping; and security and defense institution building. Dr. Maria-Dubravka Pineda, Visiting Professor in NPS’ Global Public Policy Academic Group, facilitated the event which was attended by over 70 distinguished local, regional, and international participants including the Deputy Commander of the Joint Command Armed Forces of BiH, Major General Rizvo Pleh, and the Commandant of the PSOTC, Colonel Kenan Dautovic.

The assembled speakers and panelists included recognized policymakers, practitioners, academics, and others eager to share their gender-related perspectives and experiences. They included representatives from the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives, University of Sarajevo, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces, Croatian Parliament, Serbian Ministry of Defense, Macedonian Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Woman-Helsinki Citizen’s Assembly in Banja Luka (BiH), BiH Ministry of Security, BiH Police Department, BiH Council of Journalism, and the BiH Agency for Gender Equality.

During the conference, the speakers and panelists addressed the following issues: “How gender inclusion and mainstreaming contributes to effective Security and Defense Institution Building.” “How gender informs actions plans, directives and operations in the military, police and peacekeeping context.” “What is being done and what is missing for implementation and education regarding the NATO and BiH Action Plans?” “What is the role of the media in Perception and Reality?”

The event also consisted of a workshop on 26 March where the participants split into two groups and addressed the obstacles to implementation of the Bosnian Action Plan and the issued related to sending women on Peace Support Missions. After a lively debate in syndicate, the two groups presented their findings to the plenary and determined the way ahead in preparation for the next event organized by NPS and the PSOTC--a Curriculum Development Workshop to be held in September in Sarajevo.

*Posted April 1, 2010*



Audience members listen during the Conference opening remarks.



Lt. Jasmina Omerbegovic of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Armed Forces presents during the panel, “Role of Media in Perception and Reality.”

Photo credit: Mr. Nermin Dedic