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Opening remarks of Mr. Vlado Buchkovski Minister of Defence (FY) Republic of Macedonia

Paper prepared for presentation at the Conference

Military and the Media

Confidence Building between Armed Forces and the Civil Society

Co-organised by

the Geneva Centre for the **Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)**

and **medienhilfe**

Skopje, January 24/25, 2003

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Geneva Center for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces-DCAF and the Faculty of Philosophy are organizing this Conference about military and the media relations at the right moment, thus contributing to the strengthening of the democracy in the country.

“Let the people know the facts, and the country will be safe”. These words which were uttered in 1864 are speaking about the functioning of the democracy.

In order to carry out its authority, the citizens should be able to make choices based on good information and independent assessment. This could be achieved only if the citizens have reliable information based on facts. They get this from the free press.

The flow of ideas, the possibility to make choices based on valid information, the possibility to criticize, all those assumptions on which the democracy lies largely depend on communication.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to greet you and wish you a successful work on the MILITARY AND MEDIA Conference, which, I am convinced, would generate suggestions for confidence building measurements between the armed forces and the civic society.

Today, the Macedonian defence is already in the phase of transformation and is approaching towards modern security and defence systems. The analogy of the need from this transformation presumes transformation of the so far planning, organizing and functioning of the informing in a general domain of Public Relations as an integral part of the defence system.

This gathering is a place where the Ministry of Defence confirms its decisiveness for complete transparency towards the public, practiced by the new leadership in the Ministry of Defence.

The functioning of the Public Relations in the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff would undergo through quality changes, for which projects and plans are prepared by the spokespersons for the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff, and the Public Relations Department and Public Relations Office as well.

According to the conceptual lining and the striving for development in compliance with our needs, but also, the determination for compatibility with such systems in the NATO structures, Public Relations in the defence are considered a very important segment not only because of the providing of information for everything which is happening in the Ministry of Defence and the ARM, but as well because they represent an important condition for engaged and quality participation in the bringing and conducting of decisions for all the relevant issues in this segment of the social living in Republic of Macedonia. Therefore, the projecting, planning and organization of the Public Relations in the field of defence have been initiated as an constitutional segment of the managing-directing function in the Ministry of Defence, i.e. the commanding and control in the Army structures.

I am convinced that the exchange of ideas and thoughts on this Conference would contribute in improving of the interaction between the armed forces and the media and would increase the democratic control over the security sector on the part of the entire society through professional media reporting.

The Ministry of Defence would have a serious approach to all your ideas and I do hope that we would contribute jointly in the strengthening of the democratic environment and the exceptional confidence between the military and the citizens in the country.

Thank you.
