

# THE ROLE OF THE WHITE PAPER ON DEFENCE IN THE SYSTEM OF DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Marko R. Golubović<sup>1</sup>

---

Достављен: 17.08.2024.

Језик рада: Српски

Кориговано: 29.08. и 20.09.2024.

Тип рада: прегледни рад

Прихваћен: 30.09.2024.

DOI број: 10.5937/vojdela2403059G

---

On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia presented the new White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia. Today, after more than a decade from the publication of the previous white paper, a question arises regarding its role in the system of defence. Primarily, this document familiarises the national and foreign public with processes, achievements, and projections for the development of the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia in a transparent and public manner. Changed conditions in which the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia functions that refer to the technological development and modern channels of communication impose a need to review the role of the white paper, which represents the primary problem of the research. In addition to the role of informing national and foreign public, these documents also have a political, and sometimes the role of a guidance. This paper will in greater detail analyse the novelties in the new White Paper on Defence, and compare the role with previous documents, and identify key differences by means of the method of content analysis and comparative analysis. Apart from identifying the roles and novelties in the new White Paper on Defence, the aim of the paper is to provide proposals for the enhancement of the production of new white papers on defence, having in mind their significance in the strengthening of the process of transparency in the field of security and defence. The basic hypothesis of the paper is that the practice of publishing the white paper on defence in the Republic of Serbia exclusively for the purpose of providing information is obsolete, and that it is necessary to redirect the role of future white papers on defence towards a more detailed and concrete definition of the defence policy of the Republic of Serbia.

Keywords: *White paper, defence policy, security and defence, system of defence, strategic planning.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, The Republic of Serbia, E-mail: marko.golubovic@mod.gov.rs, <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3629-6567>.

## Introduction

On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia presented the new White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia, thirteen years after the publishing of the previous document of such type. The first document was published in 2005 during the former State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, hereinafter referred to as "the State Union", while the first White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia, since it became an independent state, was published in 2010.

The usefulness and function of strategic, doctrinal, planning and other defence system documents are the topic of extensive discussions at expert and academic level, with a key question regarding the efficient and effective deployment of resources of the defence system, and consequently regarding the usefulness of such documents (Golubović & Saković, 2023: 2). With that regard, a question arises as to what is the key role of the white paper on defence, especially today, in the world where modern communication channels are used for the purpose of providing information, such as social networks and internet sites.

The title "White Paper" was derived from the colour of the front pages of such documents. Namely, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Parliament of the Great Britain published official reports bound in blue colour covers, while white covers were used to designate other topics of lower relevance in relation to blue-cover reports. Generally speaking, white papers are not inherent only in defence system, since these are documents that can be found in all spheres of social life, and they are used by companies, governmental bodies, associations, political parties and other, to inform the public about the state of affairs in certain area. Today, white papers imply documents published by various actors, by which they promote or emphasise certain properties or solutions, products, services offered (Investopedia, 2024). It can be observed that there are three aspects of the roles of white papers these being informative (informs about the situation in certain area), guiding (guides potential users in certain sphere, with a range of useful information and recommendations) and political (platform for a certain programme, political document).

The primary role of the white paper on defence, at least in the Republic of Serbia, was the informative one, i.e. to familiarise the national and foreign public with processes, achievements, and projections for the development of the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia in a transparent and public manner. As the system of defence is extremely complex, both in organisational and functional terms, it was necessary to adapt a militarily structured organisation for the public, which was done through the publication of such type of documents that presented to the public all necessary information in one document.

In the continuation of the paper, by applying the method of content analysis and comparative analysis, the author analyses the role of the white papers on defence published in the State Union and Republic of Serbia. The analysis will encompass the White Paper on Defence of the State Union Serbia and Montenegro (2005), White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2010) and the new White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2023). The key goal is to determine the roles of these documents and offer proposals for the enhancement of the production of new white

papers on defence. The basic hypothesis is that the exclusively informative role of the white paper on defence is obsolete, and that it is necessary to redirect the role of future white papers on defence towards a more detailed and concrete definition of the defence policy of the Republic of Serbia.

## White paper on defence of the state union Serbia and Montenegro

The White Paper on Defence of the State Union Serbia and Montenegro, hereinafter referred to as "the White Paper of S&M", as one of pioneer projects of strategic planning in these parts, was published in 2005. To understand its role, it is necessary to know the context in which it was produced. It was produced in April 2005, a year before the disintegration of the State Union.

At that period, certain parts of the state made intensive efforts to preserve the State Union and save it from the disintegration through different policies for the promotion of unity. Particularly important segment of that policy was the issue of defence.

The role of this document can be observed at its very beginning having in mind that an entire chapter "The White Paper on Defence - Why?" was dedicated to that. It states that the State Union makes a reform step towards the openness and transparency, and that the content of the document does not prejudice solutions to security and defence issues, where their analysis has a declaratively political character, so the analysis of those issues is offered to professional public and citizens for information (Bela knjiga odbrane SCG, 2005: 5). Apart from the said, it stresses that it was "produced for the purpose of granting the right of every citizen to be informed about contemporary challenges, risks and threats to security, security and defence interests, politics and defence strategy (Bela knjiga odbrane SCG, 2005: 5). This part indicates that the White Paper on Defence of S&M has primarily informative role, and that the content is declarative and political in its character, which complements the role of this document, so that, apart from the informative role, and given the incomplete strategic framework of the state, it can also have a guiding, and political roles as well.

The first strategies in the area of security and defence of the Republic of Serbia as an independent state were passed in 2009. On the other hand, the highest strategic document in the field of security did not exist in the State Union, while the highest strategic document in the field of defence of that time was the Strategy of Defence of the State Union Serbia and Montenegro (2004).

The White Paper on Defence of S&M partially took over a guiding role of these strategic documents, which can be noticed in the declared orientation of the State Union towards joining European and Euro Atlantic integration (primarily the "Partnership for Peace") as well as determined vital interests. Hence, there was a clear difference between the roles of the strategy of defence and the white paper. Namely, the White Paper on Defence of S&M, as partially guiding document, "explained the fundamental orientation contained in the Strategy of Defence of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro" (Bela knjiga odbrane SCG, 2005: 97).

It can be deduced that the role of the White Paper of Defence of S&M was three-fold in its character (informative, political and guiding). Taking into account the context in which it was produced (the incomplete strategic framework and ever more evident disintegration of the State Union), the White Paper on Defence of S&M took over the role of a political and guiding document. A desire of a part of political leadership of that time to promote the reform of the defence system was one of major reasons to produce this document, apart from the desire to promote the survival of the State Union, and the need to create one document that would encompass all the issues significant for foreign and national public in order to make the defence system more transparent and open. Clearly stated defence policy, as well as interests, and declared goals of then political leadership in the field of defence additionally underline the political and guiding role of the document.

With that regard, it can be concluded that the White Paper on Defence of S&M was an exceptional achievement of the system of defence, and produced in line with contemporary trends and standards of that period.

## The White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia of 2010

The first White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia, as an independent state, was published in 2010, and it officially represents a period of the completion of reforms within the system of defence, which is stated in the very document (Bela knjiga odbrane Republike Srbije, 2010: 4).

The guiding role of this document was abandoned, having in mind the adoption of the first highest strategic documents of the Republic of Serbia as an independent state in the field of security (the Strategy of National Security of the Republic of Serbia) and defence (the Strategy of Defence of the Republic of Serbia) in 2009.

The document retained its dominantly informative role, which was visible in the statement that it was “a document that transparently familiarises the widest national and foreign public with processes, achievements and projections for the development of the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia” (Bela knjiga odbrane Republike Srbije, 2010: 4–5). Apart from the said, the right of citizens to be informed about the defence system are also stressed together with the importance of presenting the information to the world public.

It can be concluded that the White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia of 2010 had chiefly informative role, with mild outlines of the political role. While the political role is manifested in a detailed explanation of the goals of defence policy and reform, and defence system vision (the priorities of then leadership), the focus was placed on the informative role of this document.

This was the most extensive document of this type, with the greatest amount of content and information. It provides a detailed presentation of the organisational structure of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces, stating the role of each public unit within the system of defence. The content of the document shows

no significant difference in comparison to the White Paper of S&M, whereby it was partially changed and amended to suit the needs of that time.

The most significant part of the document represents the focus on the reform of the defence system, as well as the emphasis on the requirement to professionalise the Serbian Armed Forces. That points to the political role of the document, where then leadership represented the current state of the system of defence, as well as their plans for the future, having in mind the political discourse that was then oriented towards transparency, reforms and democratisation, in the framework of which informing national and foreign public was one of key elements.

## The White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia of 2023

The current White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia was presented on 30th October 2023 (Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije, 2023), thirteen years after the publication of the previous white paper. The key goal of the publication was an attempt at inventiveness, which is a characteristic of such documents, and stepping out from the formal “informative” role.

The structure and content of the new White Paper remained similar in relation to the old one, while the content was significantly reduced. The text of the document sends clearer and more concrete messages, without a detailed description of the current state (detailed organisation, responsibilities, and similar), about which the public can find information via internet, which points to a partial change of approach to the production of such documents. The aim is to present the system of defence and bring it closer, primarily to national and foreign public in a transparent and innovative manner.

Before the description of defence policy, there is a separate chapter dedicated to the strategic context. This segment, among other, underlines the leading role of the European Union in terms of the progress made in the harmonisation or relations and interests of European states. Furthermore, it states the greatest politico-security challenge in the Republic of Serbia, that being the current security situation in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija.

The assumption of the authors of the latest White Paper that it cannot have solely the informative role is noticed in the key change made in a separate chapter titled “Total Defence Concept” where, in a publicly available document, the orientation of the country to apply the total defence is explained in detail for the first time. It is important to note that at the time the Summary of the Total Defence Concept (2024) had not been published yet, since it was published no sooner than in January 2024, which formally presents one segment of the total defence of the Republic of Serbia, as well as innovations that it entails. Therefore, the White Paper of 2023 was the first public document in which the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia presented the segment of total defence which attracted the greatest attention.

For the first time in a document of this type, the importance of gender equality is emphasised (which was not mentioned in previous white papers), and some specific chapters were introduced - “Military Education” and “Military Healthcare System”

which were only briefly touched upon in the previous document. It can be concluded that the role of the said document was informative and political in character, having in mind that the official goal was the transparent presentation of the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia to national and foreign public.

However, through a thorough content analysis one can notice that the document was tailored to the Total defence concept, with a noticeable need to clearly define that part of defence policy of the Republic of Serbia, the total defence being its integral part. The example of the significance of the total defence in the document can be observed even in the part that refers to the system of defence, in the end of which the authors do not present only its current state but the future state as well that will be based on the implementation of the Total defence concept (Bela knjiga odbrane Republike Srbije, 2023: 36).

## The White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia of 2023

As regards the role of the white paper on defence, the content analysis of those documents showed that, at least when the State Union and the Republic of Serbia are in question, it is dominantly informative (information of national and foreign public), but in certain cases we come across the political role as well (defining defence policy or the promotion of the orientation of political leadership), and guiding role too (defining a vision, goals, interests). The overview of the roles of white papers on defence of the State Union and the Republic of Serbia is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – *The overview of the roles of white papers on defence of the State Union and the Republic of Serbia*

Document	Role		
	Информативна	Политичка	Усмеравајућа
White Paper on Defence of S&M (2005)	✓	✓	✓
<i>White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2010)</i>	✓	✓	X
<i>White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2023)</i>	✓	✓	X

Source: Author

As one can notice from the Table 1, the White Paper on Defence of S&M of 2005 had all three roles, where the guiding role was very significant, taking into consideration the partial existence of the strategic framework of then State Union. The guiding role of the white paper is not such a rare occurrence, given that certain states use this type of document to round off the strategic framework within the system of defence (Đurkech & Švarný, 2016: 164).

On the other hand, following the adoption of the strategies in 2009, the strategic framework was rounded off when the Republic of Serbia got the highest strategic documents in the field of security and defence for the first time after becoming an independent state. As these documents naturally take over the guiding role at the strategic level, the White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia of 2010 keeps primarily informative and political role (the reform and democratisation of the Serbian Armed Forces).

The latest White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia of 2023 attempts to provide a modern approach modelled on the most developed states of Europe. Though the dual role of the document was retained, its political dimension was changed and it is primarily reflected in the promotion of certain parts of defence policy of the Republic of Serbia like total defence. At that, special consideration is given to the significance of transparency in the system of national security of defence, where this document provides for the first time detailed information about the total defence of the Republic of Serbia, even before the publishing of the very Summary of the Total Defence Concept in 2024.

## The challenges and future of the White Paper on Defence in the System of Defence of the Republic of Serbia

The shared role of each of the analysed documents was informative and political one. However, a question arises as to the obsolescence of the informative role of such documents. Namely, having in mind the assumption that all information that national and foreign public need are already provided in a systematised and clearly laid out manner on the site of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces, puts such type of documents in an unenviable position. On one hand, it questions their usefulness, where a dilemma emerges as to the need for such documents to exist in 21<sup>st</sup> century, while, on the other hand, defence systems of other states do not abandon them (Germany - 2016, the Netherlands - 2022, Slovenia - 2020) but change their role instead.

It should be noted that there is no normative and legal framework in the Republic of Serbia that regulates documents such as the white paper on defence. That can lead to the bureaucratisation of such document, so the process of production, defining roles and similar are left to *ad hoc* interpretation by the political leadership of the time of the document's production. The reason for the omission can potentially be assigned to the lack of understanding of the role of the white paper on defence, whose clarification would enable their inclusion into the normative and legal framework of the Republic of Serbia.

Hence, to avoid the bureaucratisation of documents of such type, which can jeopardise the provision of the public good (Dahlström & Lapuente, 2022:53), it is necessary to reconsider their role, and prevent the repetition of the content, especially



in strategic and doctrinal documents, which is where from the content is usually taken. The most common way that leads to the bureaucratisation is the use of bureaucratic analytics, which is the result of a bureaucratic policy that is the consequence of functional specialisation within governmental organisations (Bach, 2021: 2). It is important to note that the bureaucratisation by itself does not bring exclusively negative results (Monteiro & Adler, 2022: 41), but bureaucratic analytics is one of many possible negative consequences of the bureaucratisation, and yet a rational bureaucratisation in every body of state administration, particularly in a military system, is necessary (Mukherjee & Pion-Berlin, 2022: 787).

Bureaucratic analytics, principally common in defence and national security systems, implies the bureaucratisation of the analytical process and development planning process by imposing complex administrative procedures and the need for mass production of documents without previously defined or not clearly defined role of the documents. As a result, the bureaucratic analytics leads to passing and adopting a large number of official documents with no practical value, which were adopted only to fulfil quota established (usually by a plan). This practice produces documents of rather similar content, while the conditioning of analytical process, which demands and innovative and methodologically flexible approach, makes their production more difficult by complex procedures (such as strictly stipulated obsolete methodology based of guides and rulebooks that are hard to change).

The bureaucratic analytics is especially undesirable in strategic planning where it is necessary to adapt to contemporary innovations (Araya & King, 2022: 16), such as artificial intelligence, which can facilitate strategic planning (Zirojević, 2024: 75). Duplication of content in documents of such type can contribute to the bureaucratisation of planning, which can adversely affect the security of the Republic of Serbia, having in mind that the development of defence system, in such conditions, can be potentially guided on the basis of assessments, strategic, doctrinal and other documents that are similar in content and obsolete. It is also important when it comes to external, and internal communication, which implies a continuous process where there cannot be room for "idling", given destructive potential of the lack of efficient communication in military-organisational systems (Kljajić, 2022: 69). Taking all that into consideration, if the content of a white paper on defence is identical to the content of other documents and information available on the site of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces, what is the role of the white paper on defence, and is that a document which still has its use value?

The white paper on defence is not a strategic, or doctrinal document, but its bureaucratisation can undermine the primary informative function, having in mind that national and foreign public, in case of content repetition in documents, will use unofficial alternative sources of information, which usually do not present the system of defence, or defined defence policy in a clear and accurate manner.

The content analysis of the said documents showed a high degree of repetition in terms of the documents' structure and content (Table 2). The category titled content encompassed both structure, and content of the very text, and the analysis included indirect or direct mentioning of a specific grouped subject matter. Hence, one can observe that out of 22 grouped subject matters of the content, even 15 record 100%



repetition frequency, four of them record 67% repetition frequency, while only three record 33% repetition frequency (gender equality, military and religion, building Integrity) - all three being in the White Paper of 2023.

The said analysis showed that all three analysed documents record a high degree of repetition of document structure and content, which is somewhat expected, mindful of the dominantly informative role of these documents where the said categories are simply updated.

Table 2 – *The content of white papers on defence of the State Union and the Republic of Serbia*

DOCUMENT/CONTENT	White Paper on Defence of S&M	White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2010)	White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2023)	Repetition frequency in %
Introduction/ Preface/ Foreword by Minister of Defence	X	x	x	100%
Security environment/ Strategic context/ Challenges, risks and threats	X	x	x	100%
Defence policy/ Goals and orientation	X	x	x	100%
Strategic concept of defence	X	x	x	100%
Total defence		x	x	67%
Defence interests	X	x	x	100%
International cooperation	X	x	x	100%
(bilateral, multilateral, regional, international missions and operations)	X	x	x	100%
Defence resources	X	x	x	100%
(human, material and financial)	X		x	67%
Education/ Scientific and research work/ Training/ Education and advancement	X	x	x	100%
Defence capabilities	X	x	x	100%
Structure of defence system/ Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces	X	x	x	100%
Democratic and civil control/ Civil-military cooperation	X	x		67%
Defence planning/ Development of defence system	X	x	x	100%
Reform of defence system			x	33%
Strategic/ Doctrinal documents	x	x		67%
Gender equality	x	x	x	100%

DOCUMENT/CONTENT	White Paper on Defence of S&M	White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2010)	White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2023)	Repetition frequency in %
Arms control	x	x	x	100%
Institutions of cultural and historical importance/ Tradition/ Culture			x	33%
Military healthcare system			x	33%
Military and religion	x	x	x	100%
Building integrity				
Conclusion/ Closing remarks				

Source: Author

However, the said information is updated on the site of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces as well, and new information is placed by means of other modern communication channels. It is noteworthy that all information on the site of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces (and other channels as well) is also well structured and organised, which was usually the reason behind the necessity to publish documents such as the white paper in the past, since the underdevelopment of communication channels of that time required grouping all information within one document. In addition, the Strategy of Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2019), as the highest strategic document in the field of defence, took over the guiding role elaborating on numerous mentioned grouped subject matters of the content.

In line with the said, a question naturally emerges as to the number of grouped subject matters of the content from the latest white paper that coincide with the strategy of defence from 2019, and with information available on the site of the Ministry of Defence (<https://mod.gov.rs/>) and Serbian Armed Forces (<https://vs.rs/>). It is an important question having in mind that, in case of the repetition of the said grouped subject matters of the content and structure, the future role and usefulness of the white paper as a document is brought to question.

The sites of other units and bodies were not analysed, taking into consideration the need for a systemic and grouped information, which is not possible it is necessary to access many sites to obtain required information

*Table 3 – Presentation of available information from the White Paper on Defence (2023) in the Strategy of Defence (2019) and on sites of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces*

DOCUMENT/CONTENT	White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2023)	Defence strategy of the Republic of Serbia (2019)	the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces ( <a href="https://mod.gov.rs/">https://mod.gov.rs/</a> / <a href="https://vs.rs/">https://vs.rs/</a> )
Security environment/ Strategic context/ Challenges, risks and threats	x	x	Indirectly
Defence policy/ Goals and orientation	x	x	Indirectly
Strategic concept of defence	x	x	Indirectly
Total defence	x	x	Indirectly
Defence interests	x	x	Indirectly
International cooperation (bilateral, multilateral, regional, international missions and operations)	x	x	x
Defence resources (human, material and financial)	x		x
Education/ Scientific and research work/ Training/ Education and advancement	x	x	x
Defence capabilities	x	x	Indirectly
Structure of defence system/ Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces	x	x	x
Democratic and civil control/ Civil-military cooperation	x	x	Indirectly
Defence planning/ Development of defence system	x	x	Indirectly
Strategic/ Doctrinal documents	x		Indirectly
Gender equality	x		Indirectly
Institutions of cultural and historical importance/ Tradition/ Culture	x	x	x
Military healthcare system	x		x
Military and religion	x		Indirectly
Building integrity	x		x
The total available information/ grouped subject matters of the content	18	12	18
Percentage of the availability of information/ grouped subject matters of the content compared to the white paper	/	67%	100%

Source: Author

The analysis of the site of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces (Table 3) showed that numerous information is available but it is more challenging to find them. Such subject matters of the content were designated by the term "INDIRECTLY". The said designation implies that a piece of information can be found on the site but through the search of documents that are on the very site (for example, strategies, concepts and alike) or by typing key in the search bar. The indirect availability goes in favour of the need for a systemised and organised structure of the site where not all information should be given on the home page, but grouped instead.

Through the analysis of the available grouped subject matters of the content, it was determined that all grouped subject matters of the content of the new White Paper on Defence are available directly or indirectly on the sites of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces, while the majority (67%) of grouped subject matters of the content are indirectly available in the Strategy of Defence of 2019. The difference between the content of the Strategy of Defence and new White Paper on Defence is justified, having in mind that the role of the strategy is not dominantly informative, but strategic, and it cannot be expected to contain available and elaborated all information that can be found on the analysed sites.

A high degree of overlap between the information provided in the White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia of 2023 and information that is, directly or indirectly, possible to find on the sites of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces, and in strategic documents leads to a conclusion that exclusively informing role of the white paper on defence has become obsolete.

On the other hand, acknowledging the role that white papers on defence play in the strengthening of the transparency in the field of security and defence, simply giving up from the production of such documents would adversely impact the process of transparency of the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia. In that regard, based on previously conducted analysis several recommendations can be provided to enhance the future production of white papers on defence:

- The key role of white papers on defence should be redirected to dominantly political role.
- The key goal of the white paper should be detailed defining and detailed elaboration of the defence policy of the Republic of Serbia, in the framework of which the decision-makers would clearly express their policies that are significant for the defence system (such as the military neutrality, total defence, career management and similar). Accordingly, the term of validity of this document would be limited and it would depend on the length of the tenure of decision-makers.
- It is necessary to normatively organise and concretise the white paper on defence in the Republic of Serbia, given the current lack of a normative and legal framework when it comes to these documents (for example in the Law on Defence).
- The content of the white paper should be adapted in such way that repetitions are reduced in other documents, such as strategic ones, and in relation to the sites of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces.
- During possible production of new strategic documents in the field of security and defence, special attention should be paid to the future relation between

strategies and white papers on defence so that the difference between them would be clearly defined (for example, detailed defining and development of defence policy should be shifted to white papers on defence, while strategic framework of defence policy should be briefly stated in strategies).

## *Conclusion*

In this paper, an analysis was conducted regarding the role of the White paper on defence in the system of defence of the State Union and the Republic of Serbia, White Paper on Defence of S&M of 2005, White paper on defence of the Republic of Serbia of 2010, and White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia of 2023.

Through content analysis, it was concluded that their role varied depending on the context, and political leadership of the said periods, where the White Paper on Defence of S&M was informative, political and guiding in its character, while the role of white papers on defence from 2010 and 2013 was primarily informative as well as political.

However, in the latest White Paper on Defence of 2023 one can notice planers' efforts to change the role of that document, which is chiefly produced to promote the Total Defence Concept of the Republic of Serbia, as an inseparable part of the defence policy of the Republic of Serbia. That points to the awareness of the challenges that exist in identifying the role of such complex document, where an attempt was made at making a compromise between the white paper as an informative and political document.

Regardless of the said, the role of the white paper remains ambiguous. All information in it can be found in other documents and sites of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces, which have become a one of a kind "white paper", in the framework of which it is possible to familiarise national and foreign public with the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia in a much more modern and innovative ways (interactive parts of sites, video, sound). The same information is systemically presented and grouped which enables finding it in a quick and modern way.

In that regard, the application of the method of content analysis and comparative analysis proved the set hypothesis that exclusively informative character of the white paper on defence in the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia is obsolete, which points to the need to review its role or abandon further production of the white paper on defence in the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia altogether.

On the other hand, acknowledging the role that white papers on defence play in the strengthening of the transparency in the field of security and defence, simply giving up from the production of such documents would adversely impact the process of transparency of the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia. Accordingly, the author's key recommendation is to redirect the role of future white papers on defence towards political role, more concretely, towards further definition and development of defence policy of the Republic of Serbia.

## Literature

- [1] Araya, D., & King, M. (2022). *The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Military Defence and Security*. Waterloo: Centre for International Governance Innovation.
- [2] Bach, T. (2021). *Bureaucratic Politics*. *Reproduction*.
- [3] Dahlström, C., & Lapuente, V. (2022). Comparative Bureaucratic Politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 25(22), 43-63. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051120-102543>.
- [4] Ďurkech, B., & Švarný, Jozef. (2016). The Significance of the White Book On Defence Of The Slovak Republic To Ensure National Security And Defense. *Kultura Bezpieczeństwa. Nauka – Praktyka – Refleksje*, 22(16), 147-166. YADDA: Bwmeta1.element.ceon.element-96ecc853-f331-3b85-a5a7-fdd872ba134e.
- [5] Golubović, M. R., & Saković, R. V. (2023). The comparative analysis of the state strategic documents in the field of security. *Vojno delo*, 75(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.5937/vojdela2301001G>.
- [6] Investopedia. (2024). Bela knjiga: Vrste, namena i kako je napisati. Preuzeto 28. Septembra, 2024., sa <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/w/whitepaper.asp>.
- [7] Kljajić, N. (2022). Funkcije interne komunikacije u vojnoorganizacionim sistemima. *Vojno delo*, 1(22), 60-71. <https://doi.org/10.5937/vojdela2201060K>.
- [8] Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije. (2009). Strategija nacionalne bezbednosti Republike Srbije. Preuzeto 15. avgusta, 2024., sa <https://pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SIGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/odluka/2009/88/1/reg>.
- [9] Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije. (2009). Strategija odbrane Republike Srbije. Preuzeto 15. avgusta, 2024., sa <https://pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/odluka/2009/88/2>.
- [10] Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije. (2010). Bela knjiga odbrane Republike Srbije. Preuzeto 15. avgusta, 2024., sa <https://www.vs.rs/document/document/files/A08933E0F53E11E7A3510050568F6690/1/Bela-knjiga-odbrane.pdf>.
- [11] Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije. (2019). Strategija nacionalne bezbednosti Republike Srbije. Preuzeto 15. avgusta, 2024., sa [https://www.mod.gov.rs/multimedia/file/staticki\\_sadrzaj/dokumenta/strategije/2021/Prilog1-StrategijaNacionalneBezbednostiRS-SRP.pdf](https://www.mod.gov.rs/multimedia/file/staticki_sadrzaj/dokumenta/strategije/2021/Prilog1-StrategijaNacionalneBezbednostiRS-SRP.pdf).
- [12] Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije. (2019). Strategija odbrane Republike Srbije. Preuzeto 15. avgusta, 2024., sa [https://www.mod.gov.rs/multimedia/file/staticki\\_sadrzaj/dokumenta/strategije/2021/Prilog3-StrategijaOdraneRS-SRP.pdf](https://www.mod.gov.rs/multimedia/file/staticki_sadrzaj/dokumenta/strategije/2021/Prilog3-StrategijaOdraneRS-SRP.pdf).
- [13] Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije. (2023). „Ministar Vučević prisustvovao predstavljanju Bele knjige odbrane Republike Srbije”. Preuzeto 15. avgusta, 2024., sa <https://www.mod.gov.rs/lat/20621/ministar-vucevic-prisustvovao-predstavljanju-bele-knjige-odbrane-republike-srbije20621>.
- [14] Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije. (2023). Bela knjiga odbrane Republike Srbije. Preuzeto 15. avgusta, 2024., sa [https://www.mod.gov.rs/multimedia/file/staticki\\_sadrzaj/dokumenta/strategije/2023/Bela\\_knjiga\\_odbrane\\_Republike\\_Srbije\\_2023.pdf](https://www.mod.gov.rs/multimedia/file/staticki_sadrzaj/dokumenta/strategije/2023/Bela_knjiga_odbrane_Republike_Srbije_2023.pdf).

[15] Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije. (2024). Internet sajt Ministarstva odbrane Republike Srbije. 15. avgusta, 2024., sa <https://mod.gov.rs/>.

[16] Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije. (2024). Sažetak Koncepta totalne odbrane. Preuzeto 15. avgusta, 2024., sa [https://www.mod.gov.rs/multimedia/file/staticki\\_sadržaj/dokumenta/strategije/2024/koncept\\_totalne\\_odbrane\\_sr/index\\_sr.html](https://www.mod.gov.rs/multimedia/file/staticki_sadržaj/dokumenta/strategije/2024/koncept_totalne_odbrane_sr/index_sr.html).

[17] Ministarstvo odbrane Srbije i Crne Gore. (2005). *Bela knjiga odbrane Državne zajednice Srbija i Crna Gora*. Beograd: Novinsko – izdavački centar VOJSKA.

[18] Monteiro, P., & Adler, P.S. (2022). Bureaucracy for the 21st Century: Clarifying and Expanding Our View of Bureaucratic Organization. *Academy of Management Annals*, Forthcoming. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4008916>.

[19] Mukherjee, A., & Pion-Berlin, D. (2022). The fulcrum of democratic civilian control: Re-imagining the role of defence ministries. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 45(6-7), 783-797. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2022.2127094>.

[20] Vojska Srbije. (2024). Internet sajt Vojske Srbije. 15. avgusta, 2024., sa <https://vs.rs/>.

[21] Zirojević, I. (2024). Upotreba veštačke inteligencije u savremenim oružanim sukobima. *Vojno delo*, 1(24), 73-90. <https://doi.org/10.5937/vojdela2401073z>.

## Summary

On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia presented the new White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia. Today, after more than a decade from the publication of the previous white book, a question arises regarding its role in the system of defence. Primarily, this document familiarises the national and foreign public with processes, achievements, and projections for the development of the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia in a transparent and public manner. Changed conditions in which the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia functions that refer to the technological development and modern channels of communication impose a need to review the role of the white paper.

In the paper, by applying the method of content analysis and comparative analysis, the author analyses the role of the white papers on defence published in the State Union and Republic of Serbia: White Paper on Defence of the State Union Serbia and Montenegro (2005), White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2010) and the new White Paper on Defence of the Republic of Serbia (2023).

Through content analysis of the said documents, it was concluded that their role varied depending on the context, and political leadership of the said periods, where the White Paper on Defence of S&M was informative, political and guiding in its character, while the role of white papers on defence from 2010 and 2013 was primarily informative as well as political.

Furthermore, the paper concluded that the role of the white paper on defence in the defence system of the Republic of Serbia remains ambiguous. All information in it can be found in other documents and sites of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian



Armed Forces, which have become a one of a kind “white paper”, in the framework of which it is possible to familiarise national and foreign public with the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia in a much more modern and innovative ways (interactive parts of sites, video, sound). Particular attention was paid to the phenomenon of the so-called bureaucratic analytics, given that the defence system development, in such circumstances can potentially be directed on the basis of assessments, strategic, doctrinal and other documents that are similar in content and obsolete.

In that regard, the application of the method of content analysis and comparative analysis proved the set hypothesis that exclusively informative character of the white paper on defence in the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia is obsolete, which points to the need to review its role or abandon further production of the white paper on defence in the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia altogether.

On the other hand, acknowledging the role that white papers on defence play in the strengthening of the transparency in the field of security and defence, simply giving up from the production of such documents would adversely impact the process of transparency of the system of defence of the Republic of Serbia. Accordingly, the author's key recommendation is to redirect the role of future white papers on defence towards political role, more concretely, towards further definition and development of defence policy of the Republic of Serbia.

**Keywords:** *White paper, defence policy, security and defence, system of defence, strategic planning.*

© 2024 The Author. Published by Vojno delo (<http://www.vojnodelo.mod.gov.rs>). This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

