

ICPS newsletter[®]

Methodological barriers to a national security policy

The “Ukraine in the regional security system: Methodological barriers to forming national security policy” project being jointly carried out by ICPS and the Razumkov Center is continuing its series of methodological seminars. On 23 October, the second in the series on “A methodological basis for forming a rational national security system” took place. Participants came to the conclusion that national security has to begin at the stage of drafting state programs and plans, while the developers have to include measures to prevent the impact of negative factors

Participants at these workshops included specialists from security-related departments at central executive bodies, educational institutions and research centers in Ukraine. Under review and discussion was the key term “national interests,” which ICPS and the Razumkov Center consider the combination of a number of components: the promoters of national interests (those who present or represent them), the focus of national interests (strategic goals), and the process or means of enacting national interests. During the discussion, participants not only debated but also proposed their own views of what “national interests” means.

How to successfully defend national interests

The conditions for success in determining and promoting national interests were defined by participants as:

- political will, initiative and a high degree of responsibility among the higher ranks of government;
- the transformation of strategic development goals into a proper national idea that is espoused not only by the majority of the population but also by potential drivers of the development process—representatives of big and medium business;
- oversight and accountability;
- ongoing analytical activity in order to reveal problem areas in time;
- timely adjustment of existing development programs and the drawing up of new ones;

- underpinning political commitments with the necessary funding;
- a public awareness campaign in support of the formation of strategic goals and programs for reaching them.

After exchanging ideas, participants in the event noted that, although the methodology proposed by the organizers was holistic in approach, they felt that other approaches, especially those suggested during the expert discussions, could also be applied in the details.

National security begins with the drafting of programs

Participating experts concluded that the defense of national security has to start at the stage of developing state programs and plans. It is at this point that program developers, that is the relevant ministries and agencies, need to anticipate measures to stave off the impact of negative factors. In this sense, the proposed cycle of seminars and workshops is a convenient way to institute a consolidated approaches and their support by participants can function as a kind of guarantee that these will be upheld.

Representatives of ministries and agencies also noted that Ukraine lacks institutional capacity at the government level because there are neither traditions nor contemporary methods for public strategic management. To a considerable extent, this holds back the pace and effectiveness of reforms in Ukraine’s security sector and complicates the work of various agencies in this area.

Needed: A common approach to analyzing security

The discussants also agreed that carrying out security sector reform using a trial-and-error approach takes too much time and money and, when these resources are lacking, only leads to an accumulation of problems. Given the pace of technological revolutions today, the process of transforming the security sector in other countries, and changes in the approach to establishing regional and global security as a whole, this kind of attitude on the part of the state to its security system is completely unacceptable. Indeed, it demands the fastest possible institution of the methodology of making policy in this area that is well-grounded from a variety of aspects.

During the discussions, the experts also came to the conclusion that developing a process of security policy formation that is based on common methodological rules will foster the establishment of a sustainable system of state planning and management, the formation of a clear chain-of-command in the decision-making process with the necessary two-way and horizontal links and with clearly defined duties and powers, and the accountable engagement of all of the participants in the political process. ■

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