

The project was conceived in the course of the implementation of the Democratic Civil-Military Relations Programme (DCMRP), launched in 1997 by the Canadian Department of Defence (DND) with the help of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. The goal of the Programme is to acquaint defence officials from post-communist countries with the Canadian experience of civil-military relations in a democracy. Each year since 1997, groups of those officials representing dozens of East European countries, including Russia, have made visits to Canada to spend several weeks attending lectures and visiting defence installations and academic research centers specializing in international and security problems. The DCMRP concept is evolving in light of the lessons being learned and the critical comments from participants. In particular, the DND decided in 1998 to commission an academic study of the problems of civil-military relations in Eastern Europe.

The competitive bid for the study was won by a joint team of researchers from Carleton and York Universities, led by Prof. Harald von Riekhoff of Carleton. From the very beginning, both the government and the universities involved regarded this project as a completely open, legitimate academic endeavour. None of those involved saw anything illegal or morally wrong in the idea that a group of Canadian academics would explore problems of civil-military relations in post-communist societies. Indeed, in the years since the end of the Cold War, this problematique has been the subject of a number of joint studies by Western and East European academics – and this interest is fully justified, given the importance of these issues both for international peace and for successful development of democracy in Eastern Europe.

The work on the study began in the fall of 1998. One of its elements involved conducting interviews with officials and academic experts in the countries studied. Two researchers were commissioned to conduct the interviews in Russia – Mr. David Betz, a Canadian Ph.D. candidate currently studying at the University of Glasgow, and Dr. Sutyagin. The interviews were focused on such issues as the role of civilian officials in the control and management of Russia's armed forces, relations between the army and society, and the role of the parliament, the media, and the academic community in the making of defence policies.

As far as I know, at no point during the implementation of the project did any of the people involved, including the interviewees, question the legitimacy of the study or suspect any hidden motives behind it. Mr. Betz made a trip to Moscow in November 1998 and interviewed several officials of the Russian Ministry of Defence. In December 1998 – January 1999 Dr. Sutyagin interviewed about 20 people for the DCMRP project – mostly academic experts. The work he did was of the highest quality: he conducted his interviews in an earnest and professional manner and contributed his own opinions on the subject matter.