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“This is a new Marshall Plan, with intellectual instead of material capital.”
— Gen. Charles Boyd of U.S. European Command

Program Teaches Democracy to Former East Bloc Officers

By Steve Vogel
Special to The Washington Post

GARMISCH, Germany—Inside a U.S. military barracks, up in the rarefied air of the Bavarian Alps, rows of officers had gathered, representing the military elite of every former Warsaw Pact nation and Soviet republic, from Armenia to Uzbekistan.

They listened intently as an American lecturer explained the miracle of how it is possible to buy roasted chicken in New York City in the middle of the night.

Frowning, their epaulets weighed down by medals of brass, they heard names invoked that ranged from Adam Smith to Wal-Mart’s Sam Walton, as well as the matter of the chicken, all addressing the topic of the day: the role of the free market in a democracy.

When it came time for questions, officers from Russia, Bulgaria and other countries paraded to the microphone to brush aside the lecturer’s theoretical explanations and demand practical information. How could they raise capital? Where could they find entrepreneurs?

“How can we improve our situation?” demanded a Romanian colonel, who noted he would be grateful to see his government back home for even a frozen chicken. “How can we overcome this unfortunate communist legacy?”

Over the next five months, as the inaugural class of students at the U.S. military’s new George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, they are to examine these and other questions as part of an ambitious project to assist the former Warsaw Pact’s armed forces in the transition to democracy.

“How does the military work in a democratic society? What are the rules? This is what we must learn,” said Lt. Col. Mihai Campan, a Romanian officer.

“That’s what we’re here for—to try to understand the rules and try to solve common problems,” said Col. Leonid Luzhkov, a Russian.

U.S. officials make no bones about their goal: to combat the rising danger that totalitarianism may reemerge among the unstable new democracies. The idea is to create a cadre among Eastern military leaders who understand the pitfalls of democracy, know the perils of a free market and above all, believe that the military must stay subordinate to civilian rule.

In lectures and seminars, Western military officers and experts will offer their Eastern counterparts pointers on such topics as how to reconcile intelligence gathering with societal demands for openness, dealing with curious legislators, and drawing up a defense budget.

Classes also will study issues that have arisen since World War II, including how the Cold War was fought and a comparison of the wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan.

The Marshall Center opened Monday with a convocation formally welcoming the first class of 78 senior Defense and Foreign Ministry officials from 21 countries.


Gen. George C. Marshall was Army chief of staff during World War II. As secretary of state in the Truman administration, he proposed the massive U.S. aid plan bearing his name that resulted in the reconstruction of Europe.

For over 40 years, the facility now also bearing Marshall’s name—set in this famous ski town at the foot of the Zugspitze, Germany’s highest peak—was known as the U.S. Army Russian Institute. Select officers, many with intelligence backgrounds, came for in-depth study of Russian and East European languages, history, culture and politics.

The failed 1991 coup attempt in Moscow, with its reminder that transition to democracy could be reversed, served as an impetus for transforming the institution into a facility which could influence the former Warsaw Pact military structure.

The school seeks rising stars, mostly at the colonel level, selected by their countries as among those expected to progress to positions of senior leadership. Courses are taught in English, German and Russian, with simultaneous translation provided via headsets.

Two days per week, students will hear lectures. On other days, they will break up into seminars of 13 students, all from different countries. Faculty members and U.S. officers will guide the discussions. Reading lists are weighty.

Concerned about offending the sensibilities of their students, organizers are taking pains to avoid charges that the school will be an American propaganda forum.

“The instructors at this institution are not charged with standing on a nationalist soap box to preach U.S. methodology as the only solution,” Boyd said. The faculty is a mix of military and civilian officials from several countries, including Russia and Eastern Europe.

The $15 million cost of the program is coming courtesy of the U.S. government, which, with countries such as Tajikistan nearly broke, is footing the bill for the students’ travel to and from Garmisch as well as providing them with room and board in military apartments, complete with TVs, coffee makers and mail service.

Negotiations are underway for a sizable German contribution, while other NATO nations may contribute in the future.

Field trips are planned to NATO headquarters in Brussels and to the United States in October to view Congress and the Pentagon, the United Nations and Wall Street.
Justice By The Dollar

If you were arrested on a homicide charge—as are more than 20,000 people a year—and had a choice of hiring a $600-an-hour defense lawyer or a $15-an-hour one, which would you take?

The question contains an assumption—that you have the wealth to buy the high-priced lawyer and the celebrated competence and legal shrewdness he or she is known for. For O. J. Simpson, a millionaire with pockets that go as deep as his knees, paying for quality counsel was never a question. He could hire an entire front line of lawyers, as if he were still a star fullback with the law’s Pro Bowl linesmen—Robert Shapiro, F. Lee Bailey, Alan Dershowitz, Johnny Cochran—running legal interference.

What lay people see as slick attorneys skilled in courtroom trumps and adept at playing to the media is no more than a fulfillment of Canon Seven of the bar’s Code of Professional Responsibility: “A lawyer should represent a client zealously within the bounds of the law.”

As the Simpson litigation unfolds, the professionalism of the defense attorneys is certain to magnify graphically what everyone in the legal system knows and, regrettably, more than a few contend: Justice is a commodity, with the rich able to buy the finest and the poor often stuck with the worst. For every exquisitely defended Simpson, thousands of accused or convicted murderers are laxly defended. Some have no representation. In Texas, out of 370 inmates on death row, about 60 have no lawyer.

An anthology of horror stories is available about men and women wrongly or sketchily represented by court-appointed lawyers who, if they were car mechanics, couldn’t fix flats or change the oil. In a 1992 Texas murder case, a defendant complained to the judge that his lawyer was sleeping during the trial.

The judge ruled: “The Constitution does not say that the lawyer has to be awake.” The defendant received the death penalty.

In one-fourth of Tennessee’s death penalty cases, court-appointed lawyers lacked the knowledge or experience to offer evidence in mitigation.

Alabama paid two defense lawyers at the rate of $4.05 and $5.32 an hour for their pretrial preparation. Another Alabama defense lawyer asked the judge for a time-out—to read the state’s death penalty statute.

A study of lawyers appointed by judges in Philadelphia homicide cases found incompetence so rampant that “even officials in charge of the [legal] system say they wouldn’t want to be represented in traffic court by some of the people appointed to defend poor people accused of murder.”

These examples and others were cited in the May 1994 Yale Law Journal by Stephen Bright of the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta. In many states, he writes, “the lawyers appointed may not want the cases, may receive little or no compensation for the time and expense of handling them, may lack any interest in criminal law, and may not have the skill to defend those accused of a crime. As a result, the poor are often represented by inexperienced lawyers who view their responsibilities as unwanted burdens, have no inclination to help their clients and have no incentives to develop criminal trial skills. Lawyers can make more money doing almost anything else.”

The media have had a hand in prolonging this imbalance. The reporting of non-celebrity homicide trials rarely reveals the quality of lawyering, the compensation, pretrial investigatory work or the skills of the judge toward ensuring a fair trial. Instead of that kind of reporting, many in the media focus on trivia. When Arkansas put to death three men on Aug. 3—a serial execution—USA Today devoted 20 lines in a 114-line story to what the men ate for their last meals.

Nothing in the pending federal crime bill deals with the breakdown of defense law in homicide cases for the poor. Legislatures, courts and bar associations have few qualms in sanctioning two legal systems: one for the moneyed, another for the poor.

If all those accused of capital homicide had the Shapiro-Bailey-Dershowitz-Cochran team defending them, America would have no death row.