



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

TED STRICKLAND, GOVERNOR

MAJOR GENERAL GREGORY L. WAYT, ADJUTANT GENERAL

Dec. 03, 2009
Log 09-54

For Immediate Release

Serbian Minister of Defense visits Ohio National Guard bases

Story by Dr. Mark Wayda, Ohio National Guard vice chief of the joint staff

COLUMBUS, Ohio—In September 2006, Serbian President Boris Tadic arrived in Columbus to inaugurate a partnership between the Ohio National Guard and the Serbian Armed Forces. On Dec. 2, 2009, Serbian Minister of Defense Dragan Sutanovac led a delegation to Ohio as part of that ongoing partnership.

The Serbian delegation included Dusan Spasojevic, the state secretary in the ministry of defense, and the Serbian ambassador to the United States, Vladimir Petrovic.

The Ohio-Serbia relationship has developed under the National Guard's State Partnership Program. That program pairs military organizations from different countries with a state National Guards to familiarize, build relationships and learn from each other's strengths.

There are currently 62 state partnerships in the program. In addition to Serbia, the Ohio National Guard has been partnered with Hungary since 1993.

"The Ohio-Serbia partnership has been one of the most active since we began in 2006," said Maj. Gen. Gregory L. Wayt, Ohio's adjutant general. "We have had dozens of exchanges with our Soldiers and Airmen going to Serbia and members of the Serbian Armed Forces coming to Ohio."

Prior to arriving in Ohio, Sutanovac and his team spent several days in Washington, D.C., where they were met by Wayt and Air National Guard Maj. Steven Shilliday, the Ohio National Guard's new director of the State Partnership Program office.

"Maj. Gen. Wayt attended meetings between the minister, the state secretary, the ambassador and other members of the Serbian delegation and U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and with Gen. Craig McKinley, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau," Shilliday said.

While in Ohio, the Serbian delegation spent a day at the Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base in Columbus, where they experienced first hand many of the capabilities in

the Army and Air National Guard, then spent another half day at the Ohio Air National Guard's 178th Fighter Wing in Springfield.

"They saw many of the missions performed by the National Guard and they were able to discuss with our leadership where additional opportunities for cooperation might exist," Shilliday said.

This visit by the minister of defense is about next steps, Wayt said. "We are looking to grow the relationship and establish new and more involved exchanges that will provide increasing benefits to the Serbian Armed Forces and the Ohio National Guard."

-30-

For more information contact Maj. Steve Shilliday, PHONE: (614) 336-4120. Please visit the Ohio National Guard public website at <http://ong.ohio.gov>.

Photo captions:

091203-A-3614S-001—Serbian Minister of Defense Dragan Sutanovac (left) and Maj. Gen. Gregory L. Wayt, the Ohio adjutant general, arrive at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base Dec. 2 during a visit through the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership program. The Ohio National Guard and the Serbian armed forces have been partnered since September 2006. (Ohio National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Kim Snow, State Public Affairs Office)

091203-A-3614S-002—Maj. Gen. Gregory L. Wayt, the Ohio adjutant general, leads Serbian Minister of Defense Dragan Sutanovac (right) and Serbian Ambassador to the U.S. Vladimir Petrovic, through a demonstration of the decontamination capabilities of the Ohio National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high-yield explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP), a key component of the Ohio National Guard's homeland defense capability. (Ohio National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Kim Snow, State Public Affairs Office)

091203-A-3614S-003—Serbian Defense Minister Dragan Sutanovac (rear) and Brig. Gen. Nebojsa Djukanovic, deputy commander of the Serbian Air Force, get a first-hand look at one of the Ohio National Guard's Virtual Convoy Operations Trainers, a system used to train Soldiers in convoy operations using simulations of real-world, in-theater scenarios. (Ohio National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Kim Snow, State Public Affairs Office).