

GLOBSEC 2006 International Conference

*Five Years After 9/11: Are We Winning the Fight Against International Terrorism?***SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS***Compiled by Milan Solár, Gabriela Stupeňová and Michal Križan*

On December 14, 2006, the Euro-Atlantic Center, in cooperation with the Slovak Atlantic Commission, cosponsored by the NATO Public Diplomacy Division, United Nation Information Service Vienna and the US Embassy, convened an international conference in Bratislava on international terrorism and the fight against it. The event aimed to assess the security environment of today and tomorrow in terms of international terrorism; examine the contemporary and future role of NATO and other international organizations in the fight against terrorism; identify how real the threat of international terrorism is to Slovakia; ascertain the opinion of the Slovak security community on international terrorism and discuss ways to deal with it; and come up with recommendations on how the society can better prepare itself for a terrorist threat.

In his opening statement **Boris Ecker**, President of the Euro-Atlantic Center, presented the aim of the EAC to establish and to annually carry on in a tradition of an international conference that will focus on current and important issues of global security. The goal of such an annual event is to create space for a qualified discussion of Slovak and foreign security experts.

Nasra Hassan, Director of the United Nations Information Service Vienna, agreed in her opening remarks that facilitating and nurturing strong engagement with the civil society—in order to identify effective and sustainable strategies to threats such as international terrorism—must remain a strategic goal of the international community.

In his opening address, **Jaroslav Baška**, State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic, pointed out that although the Slovak territory has not been used directly by terrorists nor is the Slovak Republic a primary target for them, terrorism poses a strategic threat also to Slovakia. Furthermore, he highlighted the participation of the Slovak Armed Forces in the fight against international terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan and stated that the Slovak government will build further prerequisites to contribute to this global fight.

The first discussion panel, entitled **Mapping the Phenomenon: International Terrorism—Today and Tomorrow**, focused on analysing the nature of today's security environment in terms of international terrorism and identifying what is the current nature of the threat. Furthermore, the panel also aimed to assess how the next wave of terrorism will look like. Under the chair of **Jean-Pierre Berens**, Counter Terrorism Officer at the Action Against Terrorism Unit from the OSCE Secretariat, the panellists also discussed how could be terrorism best addressed as well as the effectiveness of international organisations' response—including the United Nations, the OSCE and the EU—to this threat. Berens spoke on the contribution of the OSCE to the fight against this phenomenon that resulted in creating the Action against Terrorism Unit to serve as the focal point for the Organization's

activities in this area. The ATU works notably on the ratification and implementation of the Universal Anti-Terrorism Instruments; supports the improvement of travel documents security and facilitates legal cooperation in criminal matters related to terrorism.

In his contribution, **Fernando Reinares**, Senior Analyst from the Elcano Royal Institute for International and Strategic Studies in Madrid provided several comments on the current nature of terrorism we face in Europe. Because the terrorist network—represented by Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda related groups and individuals—has goals seriously affecting the division of power in the whole world, we should use the term “global terrorism” rather than “international terrorism” when discussing this phenomena. Today, we are able to specify three basic sources the threat of terrorism to Europe emerges from. First, it is Al-Qaeda itself. Despite some opinions it is still an existing organisation and tries to perform major attacks. Besides Al-Qaeda, a real threat is also posed by the global network formally associated with it as well as by cells that have no organizational connections with either Al-Qaeda nor its network. In conclusion, Reinares pointed out the threat of jihadism in North African states and in Europe, where approximately ten percent of Muslims are radicals and potential supporters or donors of Al-Qaeda.

Walter Gehr, Head of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Project on Global Terrorism analyzed the role of the United Nation in the fight against international terrorism. In accordance with its responsibility for peace and security in the world, the UN has set international standards in this fight by adopting a collection of resolutions and universal conventions, including the Counter-Terrorism Code of the International Community—the first UN resolution that deals with an abstract problem without geographical or application limits. The challenge, the UN face nowadays, is to translate the international standards into the criminal justice system of national states. Gehr also spoke on the growing influence of the media “which act as a transmitter of terrorist’s propaganda and as means for terrorists recruitment via the Internet, particularly web blogs and chat rooms”. The appropriate answer to this tendency should be an intensified cooperation of intelligence agencies. Another shortcoming in the fight against international terrorism is the non-existence of a consensus on the root causes of terrorism. The international community has agreed only on legal means in order to fight terrorism. As Gehr pointed out: “We are fighting the methods of violence not the idea behind it”. Gehr concluded that we necessarily “need to win the battle of education, of the hearts and minds of the people who could be the supporters of extremism and intolerant ideas”.

Ala Hair Saleh, President of the Atlantic Club of Iraq in Baghdad, examined the specific characteristics and the broader context of terrorism in Iraq. Terrorism “does not distinguish between children, men and women and it does not recognise national borders”. During the era of Saddam Hussein, terrorism was not known in Iraq but today we can see it all around the country. When we are trying to find out where this terrorism comes from, we learn that extremism originates in the efforts to oppose the USA. The allied troops underestimated the protection of the former Iraqi army’s arsenal that has been stolen and is now used in suicide attacks by various extremist groups. In addition to terrorist groups, consisting of foreign fighters that aim to expel the Americans from Iraq, also militias—carrying out attacks among Sunni and Shiites based on sectarian divisions—give rise to the chaos in Iraq. Saleh also expressed his opinion on the future of democracy in Iraq. It depends on the solution of economic problems and the preparedness of the Iraqi people for the “transformation of their society from dictatorship to democracy”.

Mark Burgess, Director of the World Security Institute in Brussels, presented his view on the relationship between the policies of the European Union and the spread of terrorism in Europe. The problem of terrorism is subsumed under the III. and partly under the II. pillar of the EU. After 9/11, in



accordance with the ordinary process “something bad happens, leaders meet and they adopt an action plan”, the EU member states adopted EU’s Action Plan that includes 150 measures aimed to tackle the threat of international terrorism. The plan established uniformity in the perception of terrorism in the EU and proposed a list of steps to be done in order to speed up the adoption of necessary legislature. However, some member states do have difficulties with the implementation of the Action Plan because they consider it as a threat for their sovereignty and unwanted deepening of EU’s jurisdiction. Burgess concluded, “everybody wants coordination but nobody wants to be coordinated”.

Michael Smith, Associated Editor of the London Sunday Times, claimed that the terrorists of the 1970s were relatively easy to understand and even easy to identify with. These terrorists were unhappy with specific aspects of the society in which they lived and were using violence to force the changes they required. Their aim was not to kill per se, but to gain the maximum publicity and to wear down resistance to their demands. In contrary to them, new types of radical Islamists are characterized by the lack of any identification with the Western civilization. As the result, Al-Qaeda infiltrates Muslim countries inciting differences between the Islam society and the West. The most effective means of dealing with terrorists remains removing the conditions, which provide them with support bases—whether that is on the ground in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan or among Europe’s Muslims. Undoubtedly, it was necessary to change some laws and regulations, for example in air transportation. However, terrorists are not super-humans, and despite the obscene contortions some within our society will perform to defend their actions, we do not need to create special laws to imprison them. They are already culpable under the existing laws dealing with murder and conspiracy to murder. The more we react improvidently to their atrocities, the more we fall into the trap they set for us and the more we radicalize other Muslims. A significant role in the “war on terrorism” play also the media, which can help “the public to be aware” but on the other hand sometimes act as a “very blunt instrument”. In conclusion, Smith appealed for not radicalising any more Muslims “who should be on our side”.

Adam Kobieracki, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Operations, began his keynote speech with expressing his opinion on NATO’s contribution to the fight against international terrorism that gained importance after 9/11 and required the Alliance to adapt to the new security environment. The fight against terrorism is not a task for NATO alone, it requires a comprehensive multinational approach. Kobieracki continued with presenting NATO’s efforts in this struggle that are most visible in the ISAF operation in Afghanistan. The involvement of non-NATO members in this operation is an important sign that the Alliance has partners to work with when facing global terrorism. Recently, as a respond to insurgent activities, NATO extended the ISAF operation to the south where its forces are involved in a real combat on the ground. According to Kobieracki, NATO “will be ready to leave Afghanistan when there is a government that will be able to control the country.” In the past, there has never been a central government with the support of an elected parliament and because of this, building everything from the beginning is the most difficult problem. However, there has been a significant political progress. To accomplish not only military but also political and economic goals, “it is obvious, that today more than ever, NATO must remain cooperating with the Afghan government because the Alliance cannot solve all the problems by means of military power.” Because of the development and investments coming into the country, the Afghan people will see the benefits of international system and will not accept the isolationistic ideas and goals of the Taliban. However, these goals are not achievable without close cooperation with the Pakistani government. Regarding the opium production and its direct impact on the security situation in Afghanistan, Kobieracki stated that ISAF “will continue to provide support to the combat of the drug production but it is on the Afghan government to move the process forward”. In conclusion, he asserted that the ISAF operation provides very much learning for the Alliance and helps to find out how “we can eliminate the threat of terrorism before it comes to our home countries”.



Under the chair of **Barbora Marónková**, NATO Public Diplomacy Division Information Officer, the second discussion panel **NATO and the fight against international terrorism: a changing alliance** examined NATO's role in the struggle against terrorism. Through describing the Alliance's deficits and strengths, this panel tried to answer the question what should be done to improve the performance of NATO's counter-terrorism tasks and deepen the cooperation with other international organisations, NGOs and local population.

Jean-Paul Raffenne, Director of the Senior Executive Seminar from the George C. Marshall Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, began his presentation by refusing to describe the fight against terrorism as a global war. After 9/11, the Alliance agreed on a certain number of concrete measures as an answer to the threat of terrorism, including establishing the NATO Response Force, ready to intervene where and when the political authorities decide. However, Raffenne questioned if "it is enough" and warned, "If we do not do more and better, NATO may loose in Afghanistan". The defence against terrorism represents one of the highest priorities of NATO. Nevertheless, the organisation is now suffering from the number of difficulties in the political area, which weakens it in a more effective activity. This includes the question if NATO's duty is to become a worldwide organisation despite its creation as a defence alliance in the North-Atlantic part of the globe. NATO nowadays suffers also from its relatively negative image in the world because "the Alliance is perceived as a Christian, white and rich club". Raffenne concluded, "we need to address the root causes of terrorism, which are not military". Despite the still existing trans-Atlantic and intra-European tension, NATO needs changes, including refocusing its interest.

Rodolphe Vallee, Ambassador of the USA to the Slovak Republic, agreed with Jean-Paul Raffenne that NATO has to recognize new challenges, but on the other hand he argued, "NATO must think and act globally". All nations have to contribute to the transformation of the Alliance, which is inevitable if NATO wants to fulfil all its goals. Vallee emphasized that the mission in Afghanistan is NATO's most important operation. The commitments of all states to this operation must be flexible and sustainable without putting limits on deploying and using troops. Alliance's commanders "must have the resources to do their job and to act with the troops". The countries supporting the mission in Afghanistan "have to stand up and take action". Vallee concluded that 9/11 was "an attack on our common values, our common way of life and our solidarity should not be selfish".

Sergey Markedonov from the Institute for Political and Military Analysis in Moscow focused his contribution on the NATO—Russia mutual cooperation in the anti-terrorist struggle. However, several issues in general do limit the relations between the Alliance and Russia. First, it is the issue of NATO's enlargement perspective. The efforts of some East European and Caucasian states to join the Alliance creates fears and phobias in Russia, which are supported by the risk that the influence of Russia may become marginalized in its closest neighbourhood. Second, it is the European security from the European point of view. The interest of NATO member countries on NATO—Russia relations is determined by Russia's attempts to control the post soviet space and to develop its own vision of its neighbourhood. However, at the same time the majority of NATO members sufficiently understands that Russia—without its "energy imperialism"—would be an essential partner for the Alliance in such fields as nuclear security, counterterrorism, peacekeeping and regional security and stability in Central Asia and the Caucasus region, as well as in facing the North Korean and Iranian challenges. Markedonov continued speaking on the non-existence of a real common anti-terrorist strategy and perception of terrorism by NATO and Russia that appears to be an obstacle of effective cooperation in this field. This partnership should become oriented not on propaganda clichés but on real interests. The anti-terrorist "struggle should be transformed from a PR-project to a real cooperation".



Abdul Jalil Ghafoory, Journalist from the Afghan PEN Club International, presented his view on the conflict in Afghanistan that is considered as a part of the fight against international terrorism. Drawing attention on the fact that Afghan people once optimistic over the toppling of Taliban are becoming now pessimistic again, Ghafoory posed a question, “what did go wrong with all these experiences, why are we loosing in Afghanistan?” Afghanistan is a traditional tribal county what makes Afghan people sensitive on foreign forces, moreover, the ethnic and social factors have not been considered properly. Regarding the security situation in Afghanistan, there are now enormous future challenges for NATO to face: establishing a secure state with an Afghan Policy; the policies and decisions should be well balanced in order to avoid catastrophes in the future; teams consisting of NATO personnel, Afghan experts and local Afghans should be trained to develop cultural stability and understanding. As a possible solution to some of the Alliance’s difficulties in Afghanistan, Ghafoory suggested to establish contacts with warlords and—because of the influence they have on everything in their tribal area—to use them like a link to reach out to the local population. Afghanistan nowadays presents a chance for the international community. If this opportunity is not fully taken, it can cause a great risk for global security.

Martin Fedor, Member of Parliament, Defence and Security Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, introduced and chaired the third discussion panel entitled **Slovakia and Terrorism: Towards a Balance Between Panic and preparedness**, which aimed to examine how dangerous and present is the threat of international terrorism to Slovakia and to identify the ways how to achieve a better coordination of anti-terrorism activities within the frame of various governmental authorities. The panel intended to come up with recommendations how to integrate the society and the individual into anti-terrorism activities in order to minimize the consequences of a terrorist attack.

The view of the Slovak Muslim community on the problem of international terrorism and the fight against it was presented by **Abdulwahab Al-Sbenaty**, Director of the Institute for Middle East Studies. He suggested analyzing the ways in which terrorism managed to set up such a broad social base. The characteristic attribute of Muslims living abroad is their division into several different groups and communities. It is important to unite these groups into one Muslim community because if there exist more isolated societies, the threat that one of them will be negatively influenced will grow. State authorities can contribute to this by providing financial resources for cultural activities of the community in order to help integrating the individuals or groups into the society. In this way, the majority of the society can eliminate the threat. However, still many non-Muslims in Slovakia consider Muslims to be a strange element. Regarding the education of religions that seems to be a serious problem, Al-Sbenaty suggested establishing Islamic universities in the European Union that could be able to prevent the rise of extremism in Europe`s Muslim Diasporas. In conclusion, he assured that in the years to come, Slovakia does`t need to be afraid of the Muslim community.

Oskar Krejčí, Director of the International Affairs Department of the Faculty of Political Science and International Affairs in Banská Bystrica started his contribution with analyzing the National Security Strategy of the USA. The failure to build and promote confidence and the incorrect definition of the United States’ role in the world were identified by Krejčí as the main weak points of the US strategy. The danger and threat to the USA is “exaggerated because none of the world powers tries to threaten the USA. Therefore they should feel safe.” The policy of George Bush’s administration destabilizes America’s position and authority more than the so-called “rogue countries”. Krejčí expressed his conviction that terrorists often respond by their acts to the atmosphere created by the United States in the Middle East.



Mário Nicolini, Advisor to the State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic, pointed out that the intention of terrorism is to create psychological effect with the ultimate aim to achieve political change. Terrorism is a complex social phenomenon that has political, social and cultural roots. To eliminate the “roots” of the threat “we need to implement complex strategies”, which now include such non-traditional dimensions of security as minority and immigration policies. Although the state remains the key actor in the fight against terrorism, it cannot succeed without other international and domestic actors who have a stake in the elimination of terrorism, including private businesses, multinational corporations, NGOs and the individual contribution of all citizens. Educating citizens in their new role in security should be a priority in governmental outreach strategies. Slovakia is not immune to both international and domestic terrorism for the fact that it now institutionally belongs to the West and it deploys armed forces in crisis regions around the world—including Afghanistan and Iraq—as part of the international coalition against terrorism. Although victory over terrorism by military means alone is not possible, the military has a defined role in defending against terror at home and abroad. The Slovak armed forces are absorbing lessons from overseas deployments. Asymmetric warfare is an emerging reality in most crisis theatres, as adversaries seek to offset the military dominance of Western powers. Nicolini appealed for a deeper international cooperation, because “without information and support from our allies, Slovakia cannot hear and see”. He also pointed out the need for better coordinating responses at the national level.

Ivo Samson, Senior Research Fellow of the Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association emphasized the need for a balance between panic and preparedness to possible terrorist attacks in Slovakia. Although Slovakia has no experiences with terrorism so far, it needs to respond to a new kind of threat. The Slovak Information Service permanently points out the indications of possible terrorist activities in Slovakia. Furthermore, it has re-evaluated and extended antiterrorist precautions including the monitoring of communities that could be a source of a possible terrorist threat; the evaluation of relations with crisis regions and their links with the Slovak territory; the anticipation of potential attacks against buildings in Slovakia owned by other states; the protection of selected strategically important buildings and also the fight against illegal migration. According to a military source, Slovakia is endangered by various kinds and versions of terrorism, especially by international narco-terrorism, criminal terrorism, ethnic terrorism, religious terrorism and information-terrorism. Samson pointed out that the appropriate approach to this new threat must be based on international experiences and must take into consideration the fact that neither Central Europe nor Slovakia is save from international terrorism. Because Slovakia belongs to the Western civilization, follows its cultural values and it is a NATO member, it must recognise the risk of being confronted with “anti-western” animosities. In conclusion, Samson pointed out, that “Slovakia is not adequately prepared for the consequences of an possible terrorist attack” and should implement further precautions.



FINDINGS OF THE OPINION POLL

Summarized by Milan Šuplata

One of the aims of GLOBSEC 2006 was to ascertain the opinion of the Slovak security community on international terrorism and the fight against it. The participants of the conference were asked to respond to some basic questions regarding the perceptions of international terrorism in Slovakia and the Slovak anti-terrorism policy. The survey aimed to find out and formulate widely accepted opinions and point out the controversial areas.

1. What are the root-causes of spreading international terrorism?

- Historical
 - Soviet-Afghan war
 - Iranian revolution
 - Break-down of the Soviet block
 - Immigration and the negatives of multiculturalism
- Foreign policy of world powers
 - Economic interests
 - Military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq
 - Forced democratization in Muslim countries
- Social & economic premises in the world
 - Economic gap between developing and wealthy countries
 - Poverty
 - Lower standard of education
- Ideological & cultural premises
 - Religious fundamentalism
 - Cultural differences
 - Ethnic tensions
 - Inability of the „West“ to face ideology
- Globalization
 - Fast spread of information
 - Negative economic impacts on poor regions
 - International cooperation of the terrorist organization

2. Is the struggle of democratic countries for removing the prerequisites of terrorism sufficient?

- No 76%
- Yes 24%

3. Is international terrorism a real security threat for the Slovak Republic?

- No 7%
- Partly 31%
- Yes 62%



4. Why should Slovakia become an interesting target for terrorists?

- Geographic position
 - Transit country
 - Neighbourhood of „interesting“ countries
- Character of the state and foreign policy
 - Liberal democracy
 - Constituent of the „western world“
 - EU & NATO membership
 - Involvement in military operations abroad
- Security situation
 - Accessibility of the strategic assets
 - Absence of experiences
 - Estimated degree of protection

5. Is the issue of international terrorism in Slovakia being underestimated?

- No 57%
- Yes 42%

6. Is the Slovak Republic protected good enough against terrorist attacks?

- No 69%
- Yes 31%

7. Does immigration from Muslim countries to the European Union increase the risk of a terrorist attack in Slovakia?

- No 23%
- Yes 77%

8. How should the EU & Slovak immigration policy reflect the threat of terrorism carried-out by Islamic radicals?

- Emphasis on the intelligence
- Strict terms for obtaining a permanent address & citizenship
- Better protection of borders
- Strict visa policy
- Support for „Skill immigration“

9. Do you think that NATO is an effective protection against international terrorism?

- No 46%
- Partly 12%
- Yes 42%





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