

4. LESSONS LEARNED AND HISTORY OF CONFLICTS

SECURITY AND DEFENSE – PRIORITIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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ABSTRACT

The paper addresses various aspects of European security. First of all, the new security situation after the US elections, secondly, after the continuing refugee crisis, and thirdly it comments on the relations between Russia and the US. In conclusion, it discusses a possible contribution from Slovakia and points to possible solutions to increase security.

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Introduction

Safety and defense are priorities of the European Union as they are the priorities of all EU citizens. Since last year, we have strengthened our defense, because we need to improve effectiveness constantly, invest more resources, build cooperation between Member States and develop further close cooperation with NATO to ensure security within and beyond our borders. The world around us is changing rapidly and every day we have to address new challenges: as the European Union, we have taken responsibility for addressing these challenges. These are the words of the Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini, and the Commission President Juncker adds that Europe can no longer afford to rely on the military force of others. We need to innovate the European defense industry in order to have a strong European defense. And another member of the commission, Jirki Katainen, states "Strengthening European security and defense requires a more effective use of available defense budgets.

Investments in defense capabilities remain in the hands of individual Member States and the EU budget cannot replace the Member States defense budget. However, there is a big economic argument in favor of greater cooperation, for example in the area of defense research and procurement. As pressure on national budgets does not decrease, we need to ensure more effective defense funding and a better use of defense capabilities [Safety policy, 2017]".

Strong European defense needs a strong European defense industry. Member States are starting to increase their defense budgets and the EU can help them to use these funds more effectively. It is estimated that the lack of cooperation between EU countries in the field of defense and security costs us even up to 100 billion EUR a year. Up to 80% of procurement and over 90% of research and technology projects are implemented at country level. By aggregating procurement, up to 30% of defense spending could be saved annually. The European Commission has already worked out a Eu-

European defense action plan in 2016, but the plan is one thing and reality is another.

European security after American vote

The US president did not hide his antipathy for Brussels during his campaign. The status of the EU was still indifferent to him in January: "Look, the Union was founded in part to defeat the US in a trade, though? So I do not care if it is divided or unified, it does not matter to me for any role," he said.

The US presidential election has indicated that the European Union will have to rethink its defense policy. The unclear attitude of the new president have raised concern especially in Eastern European countries, fearing that they could be the subject of Russia intervention, and could not count on the US protection as they used to. For the first time since the Second World War, the president of the United States is the person who, according to Henry Kissinger (the former Foreign Affairs Minister and Nobel Peace Prize winner) cannot provide a coherent foreign and security policy, because he is unpredictable. However, it is worth noting that the concerns were premature and unjust.

Shortly after the election of the new US president, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini initiated a meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers. The main topic of foreign affairs debates, together with the EU defense ministers, was the effort for closer co-operation between the countries of the Union in the field of defense and the strengthening of co-operation with NATO. Ministers discussed the implementation of the defense-security initiatives set out in the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy as well as the development of the EU and NATO strategic cooperation. The creation of a new defense plan was

requested in particular by Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany. The action plan is to enable better defense cooperation within the Union and with partners, and a faster response to conflicts and crises. Defense Force Leaders agreed to send their troops out of the Union for the first time in the history of the EU. This is the activation of a 1500 troops of European rapid deployment unit that has not yet been activated. Many European politicians barely concealed disappointment that the candidate for Democrats, Hillary Clinton, failed the elections, and the reason is that they are worried about Trump's unwillingness for the recognition of the realistic Russian threat. Changes in bilateral relations are expected in particular by Moscow, which envisages a re-start and a transition to "productive cooperation". If there were compliance with Trump's pre-election statement, the US could recognize the annexation of Crimea, which would result in non-recognition of violations of the international law by Russia and also the violation of the Budapest Treaty of 1994, which should guarantee the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and its signatories were, apart from Russia, the UK and the US [Beskid, 2017, p. 1].

During the pre-election campaign Trump indicated that he would evaluate the Allied financial contributions prior to any military assistance. One of the demands of the new US president is likely to make NATO member countries more involved in financing their own armies and to increase their military budgets to an agreed level. The United States contributes more than 70 percent to the Alliance budget. That is why many US politicians argued strongly that most other states did not fulfill their commitments. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) last year, US military spending was 3.3 percent, while Germany spent 1.2 percent and Belgium

even less than Slovakia, only 0.9 percent. President Trump will strive for change both at home and on the international scene. To what extent it is still unknown. Despite many catastrophic scenarios of the possible development of the US-NATO-EU relations, it is obvious that many of its pre-election statements will not come true, and many will be corrected. His decisions will be corrected by Congress even though its members are mostly Republicans. In foreign policy, he will also be limited by agreements that were approved before he was elected. Well, what foreign policy is going to be presented by a new US president depends on the new US Foreign Secretary. The question of how European security will be ensured will certainly also depend on European leaders who, instead of populist expressions and the search for conflicts in the EU, should increasingly focus on the unification and strengthening of existing security institutions. Possible weakening of relations within the European Union and also between Europe and the United States would benefit Russia and China in particular. On the other hand, it is true that if the military conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Ukraine were to be gradually and jointly settled, Europe will not only improve the security situation (a decrease in migration) but also the economic situation (the abolition of economic sanctions against Russia). And that, of course, would have an immediate positive impact on Poland and Slovakia as well [Beskid, 2017, p. 7].

In recent days, there has been an interesting development in the European Union and US relations, which our media almost did not notice. An important milestone was the way in which Mogherini (Figure 1), High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, met with Rex Tillerson, head of US diplomacy on February 10. At the press conference, they both smiled, and Mogherini

said that the United States had assured her of a possible nuclear agreement with Iran, which was the official goal of the talks.

Figure 1. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini



More important, however, was a bold remark when the head of European diplomacy said that Trump's Cabinet had not yet selected a new US Ambassador to the EU. For a long time, we had heard that Donald Trump wanted to see Ted Malloch on this post. He spoke several times that he wished for the breakup of the European Union, and in an interview with the German weekly, *Der Spiegel*, he even said that the US would prefer to cooperate with European states on a bilateral level, because the United States has the advantage. This put the EU heads of state and chiefs of the most important factions in the European Parliament in a single line against Ted Malloch. According to indirect information, the head of European diplomacy has very strongly told his American partner that the EU does not care about the US and would be happy if it were vice versa. They have been the most sincere words of European diplomacy so far. The announcement by the White House that the new ambassador to the EU has not yet been decided on is about the maximum that could be achieved in this tense situation. It has never happened that Brussels has not granted its *agrément* to the US ambassador, but it can do so.

The real purpose of Mogherini's trip to the US was to avert this possibility.

Last year, however, European-US relations became even more heated. At NATO Defense Ministers meeting in Brussels, New Defense Secretary James Mattis openly denounced allies by saying that if European states do not increase military spending to 2% of GDP, the United States "will abolish its commitments to NATO" [Chmelár, 2017, p. 10].

The reactions of European politicians to this unheard of ultimatum fully depict their shameful subordinate position towards the United States. Most of them behaved not like a statesman, but as a fully loyal person and servile officials prepared to fulfill obediently the will of their boss. Czech Defense Minister Martin Stropnický, who said that Mattis's speech was "a huge US inclination to alliance values," was particularly disgusting. And so European politicians have to be reminded about their identity, the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker responded urgently to the threats of the US Secretary of Defense, saying he was fundamentally against having to do something like that. Juncker said that modern policy cannot be about raising defense spending and stressing that the US and European view on security is broadening. To give an example, he said that the European cost of development and humanitarian aid is the highest in the world, and it has to be taken into account in security spending.

European security and refugee crisis

The Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Austria will maintain their policy of refusing migrants and the center of security and stability in Europe will soon move to these countries. Such a view was expressed by a Polish expert on geopolitical politics, historian and a former MEP Andrzej Zapalowski [Zapalowski, 2017].

A part of the European elite advocates political correctness towards migrants and basically opens the door of the EU for those coming from other countries. What will it result in? The elites we are talking about are unable to respond to the new challenges of the times and the demands of EU citizens. The majority of such politicians are completely irresponsible people who cannot look further into the future. And what can happen in the future, a few years or a decade later? When the radical Islamic milieu penetration into the EU will continue to be as wide as now, and the European Union security services cannot adequately monitor and control all those coming to European countries at some point. These services cannot face threats of Islamic terrorism. There is nothing good waiting for Europeans...

There are already many terrorist bases in Europe that have not yet been fully exploited. And why? We know that last year, over a million illegal immigrants arrived in Western Europe, of which 75 percent are young people. Over the next two or three years, their families will be able to join them, according to the EU decisions. And then, as part of this action, in Europe there will be 4-5 times more migrants than before and they will be legal.

And here, among other things, we can talk about where the most stable and safe situation will be, in which part of the European Union? The dividing line will be drawn between Western Europe and its Central-West Territory. If Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Austria can manage to hold the line of illegal immigrants in their countries, which is supported by our social forces, I think the imposed limit will not be a problem anymore.

By the way, we have heard of plans to create “two-speed” Europe, and somebody even tried to intimidate us. And then we are going to talk about Europe of two security systems: an unstable Western Europe and a safe area in the center and east of Europe, but without Ukraine alone, which is itself an example of instability.

Europe security begins with the stability of Africa, Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjarto said at a meeting with Sudanese diplomacy chief Ibráhim Ghandur in Budapest. Africa does not alleviate the migratory pressure on Southeast Europe, and the best way of protecting Europe would be if Africa were to secure its stability, peace and economic growth. According to his words, Sudan, thanks to its location in the middle of the continent, has gained rich experience in the fight against terrorism. The security authorities in the country have capabilities that can be useful in combating organized crime and tackling illegal migration [Szijjártó, 2017].

USA and Russia

Although Trump's pre-election statements suggested that significant warming of relations with Russia would be possible, which might take place after the election, it did not turn out to be true. Recently, we have heard many more tough words from Moscow and Washington. From the EU perspective, the relationship between the US and Russia will be the key factor that will influence the entire European bloc. Trump has allegedly thought to offer Russia an abolition of sanctions in exchange for an agreement, leading, among other things, to a reduction in the number of nuclear weapons. In his own words, he wished the nuclear arsenals of the two largest nuclear powers “to be substantially reduced” [<https://euractiv.sk/clanky/zahranicie-a-bezpecnost>, 2017].

Obviously, the US-Russia relations are the most important not only for European but also for world security. Foreign policy must be seen in the context of geopolitical balance, where every country and primarily, the great powers protect their interests and security. Geopolitics does not work as a fairy tale in which we all have good intentions, and it is only about the good of human beings and human rights. Some Western states still perceive Russia through the prism of the Cold War and see the enemy in it. But America and the Western Powers really threatened Russia as a power, when the agreed lands had to remain neutral and NATO could not operate there. Who wants to have nuclear warheads or numerous army at their borders? Let us take the US: if the Russian army were standing on the American-Mexican border, there would be a huge geopolitical conflict within two minutes. However, at the Russian border, there is NATO.

More and more Western politicians are already reacting to this fact. The German Zeit Online portal states that FDP chairman Christian Lindner has received support from left-wing Die Linke for his efforts to change and mitigate his policy towards Russia. Many of his opponents consider his proposal to be controversial but left-wing, Die Linke, on the other hand, considers him to be absolutely fair, as he has been saying this for a long time. German-leftist political party chairman of Die Linke, Sahra Wagenknecht, in a conversation for Deutschlandfunk underlined that peace and security in Europe depended on a quick return to the traditional friendship and understanding policy towards Russia. She stressed that it was necessary to talk with Moscow and not to change the marionette of the “boss” of the ocean [Wagenknecht, 2017].

Western and American media, however, continue to spread reports on Russia interference in the US elections, but other information is also emerging. The US intelligence services, including the FBI, attempted to intervene in the US president's election in 2016. This was expressed by a former CIA analyst Raymond McGovern. According to him, in the summer of 2017, Peter Strzok's correspondence showed the "evidence" that the FBI as a special service attempted to undermine the democratic process. According to the former CIA officer, the FBI, had been campaigning against presidential candidate Donald Trump for 18 months, using electronic devices to create a legal doubt and problems.

McGovern also writes that at the same time special service officials used ambiguous practices to protect US Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton and her surroundings from accusing her of revealing the state secrets. McGovern also recalls that the National Security Agency, despite its technical capabilities, has never provided convincing evidence of Moscow interference with the US elections [Mc Govern, 2018].

What guarantees the European security now?

For decades, the defense and security of the whole of Europe have had two fundamental principles. The first one are the NATO guaranties where the United States plays a key role. The other is the growing cooperation of European countries within the European Communities and with the European Union later on. Communities were created to prevent further military strikes among off-shore rivals on the continent. In 2016, however, the stability of two pillars mentioned above was threatened. The first threat was a referendum on Brexit and the second one was the US election as well as the president

of the United States and his pre-election and post-election statements. Fortunately, Brexit does not end the NATO duty to come to the aid of an attacked member [Zahranicie a bezpečnosť, <https://euractiv.sk/clanky/zahranicie-a-bezpecnost>, 2017]. Europe ability to deal with security threats suddenly does not seem to be so explicit. And the threat is not very low.

In the East, our defensive situation is also complicated by the situation in our southern and south-eastern neighborhood. In North Africa and the Middle East, „the regions and states as we know them are de facto non-existent“. The threats and challenges from the east as well as from the south have caught us unprepared. We always „react ad hoc“. We should therefore be united in the EU and prepared to face new challenges more effectively in the future, not just trying to respond to them when they happen.

Slovak solution

The attitude of Slovakia seems to remain unchanged – the security of Slovakia is and remains in the North Atlantic Alliance. In the European alternative to it, Slovak politicians do not seem to believe. Even radical Slovak solutions, such as the re-establishment of compulsory military service, have no support. For a similar step, they see no political will but expert reasons, despite the fact and the measures taken in this respect by many European states. For example, Sweden has recently adopted the measures recommended in the report in September last year and around 100,000 men and women born in 1999 and 2000 should be invited to fill out recruitment questionnaires. Of these, around 13,000 are to be called for military service, of which about 4,000 will be selected for basic military training in 2018 and 2019. So the country responds to the deteriorating security environment in Europe:

Sweden is not a member of NATO, but has entered into a Partnership for Peace Program, which began in 1994 to develop military cooperation between NATO and third countries. It would become the second country in Europe, where military duty and military service are compulsory for women as well as for men.

Compulsory military service has been abolished in several European countries, particularly in the west. However, it remained in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, for example in Denmark, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. In southern Europe, such countries as: Cyprus, Greece and Turkey still have a duty to serve in the army. Austria and Switzerland also require citizens to serve in the army for 6 months (Switzerland 262 days). Germany abolished the duty to serve in the army in July 2011, but last year it took measures to resume military service in case of emergency.

Conclusion

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs are currently preparing a new Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic. It will also include the Defense Strategy, which is being prepared by the Defense Ministry. The new strategy will be "less international" than the last one from 2005. It was created at another time during the ongoing integration of Slovakia. On the contrary, we have neglected internal security issues over the last decade. Whether these new threats and challenges will be reflected in the new Security and Defense Strategy of the Slovak Republic, we will learn soon.

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