



NATO Studies Center newsletter

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The Second NATO Studies Center International Conference

Greater Middle East and Wider Black Sea Area: Security Connections and Cooperative Perspectives

Bucharest, 11-12 May 2004, "Cercul Militar National" Palace, The Marble Hall

The conference was opened by **Mr. Jean Fournet, Assistant Secretary General, Public Diplomacy Division, NATO HQ, Brussels.**

Mr. Fournet welcomed the choice of themes debated in the conference, underlining its contribution in introducing fresh ideas and pertinent observations. His excellency stressed the importance and value of partnerships and regional cooperation as one of the best ways to address the nowadays security problems.

Mr. Ioan Mircea Pascu, delivered the keynote speech of this panel. Mr. Pascu's speech highlighted a set of new trends in international relations, combining a theoretical approach with usage of case studies. The speaker argued that in the post-Cold War context, the very concept of geo-politics should be revisited, insisting on the importance of factors such as geo-economics and religion as key dimensions of geo-politics.

The relation between technology and politics and the new distribution of power in the international system were two other main directions explored in this presentation. The speaker also tackled the Black Sea region problematique, using a long-term historical perspective. Controlling the

region has been a priority for powers such as Byzantium, the Ottoman Empire and the Soviet Union, which used it as link to strategic areas like the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. Its more recent role as a passageway for Caspian oil and gas has further increased the importance of the region.

Acknowledging the post-Cold War instability in the areas formally belonging to the Soviet Union, Mr. Pascu argued that this region should be transformed from a source of to a barrier to traditional and non-traditional threats to the European continent. The main actors currently involved in the area, NATO, EU and Russia have the mission to find the optimal

ways of dealing with the region, aiming at minimizing its problems and maximizing its potential. The countries in the region should also do their part of the job, focusing on increased cooperation rather than destructive competition.

In his presentation "New Concepts, New Ideas", **Mr. Adrian Severin**, discussed the most recent trends in current international relations theory, and the ways in which they could be applied to the regions considered. Mr. Severin argued that globalization brought up two paradoxical phenomena: on the one hand the emergence of a significant number of universal topics

Panel One

Innovative Conceptual Approaches: Greater Middle East and Wider Black Sea Area

Chairperson: *Mr. Jean Fournet, Assistant Secretary General, Public Diplomacy Division, NATO HQ, Brussels*
Keynote speech: *by Mr. Ioan Mircea Pascu, Minister of Defense, Romania*

Viewpoints:

- "New Concepts, New Ideas", Mr. Adrian Severin, Honorary President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
- "A Single Strategic Space", Amb. Sergiu Celac, Alternate Director General, International Center for Black Sea Studies, Athens, Greece
- "A Year After: Problems to be Solved in the Greater Middle East", Dr. Valki Laszlo, Head, Department of International Law, NATO Information and Research Center, Eotvos University, Hungary
- "Crossroads in the Middle East: a Clash of Paradigms", Mr. Barukh Binah, Head, International Affairs Bureau, Centre for Policy Research, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel.



and approaches, and on the other hand an increased importance of regional integration in the real world. In spite of a wealth of new theoretical contributions, Mr. Severin argued, little progress was made in solving the actual problems, as more than often the models proposed appeared to be too rigid and thus unable to match realities.

One of the problems identified laid in the difficulties in implementing the democratic system, a model that is not always easy to adapt to local political and cultural traditions. The speaker also questioned the homogeneity of the Greater Middle East as a region and recommended prudence “when trying to put together too much diversity”. Mr. Severin argued that the debate on the nature of the current international system is counterproductive, and that current tensions are not caused by the emergence of a unipolar system, but rather by the existence of a weak multipolar one. In his opinion, recent disputes between the US and the EU are rooted in weakness on both sides. Consequently, in offering solutions, the main focus should be placed on strengthening these poles of world power.

Regarding the Black Sea area, the speaker mentioned the potential of Romania as an actor able to offer answers to problems in the region, and suggested the possibility of creating a “Commonwealth for Transcaucasus countries”. Mr. Severin also identified NATO and the EU as the actors that can play

key roles in stabilizing the region through cooperation and integration.

Amb. Sergiu Celac, delivered a presentation entitled “A Single Starategic Space”. The speaker analyzed the current developments in defining and shaping the Greater Middle East and argued that the need to intervene in the region followed the growing concern that it was falling behind world’s mega-trends. According to Amb. Celac, the intervention in Iraq was preemptive in the sense that it stopped developments leading to a clash of civilizations, thus preventing Huntington’s prediction from happening. The speaker argued that the Greater Middle East is becoming world’s most important geo-strategic area and that the Black Sea region appears as a security complex closely connected to developments in that area.

The speaker argued that actors such as NATO and the EU should become interested in exploring the connections existing between the Black Sea area and the Greater Middle East, and that a number of countries in the Black Sea area could be involved in bringing democratic stability in the Middle East. According to the speaker, working together on solving the problems of these two areas could provide an additional platform for cooperation between the EU and US. The EU, US and NATO should get more actively involved in stabilizing problematic areas such as Transnistria, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh. NATO’s capacity for out of area operations as well as an increased willingness of Russia to cooperate with the West are elements that could play a key role in stabilizing these regions, while prolonging a situation in which whole countries live on subsidies from Moscow is a recipe for disaster. Amb. Celac also emphasized the importance of

encouraging existent institutions such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization, whose activities can lead to a better integration of this region.

In his presentation “A Year After: Problems to be solved in the Greater Middle East”, **Mr. Valki Laszlo**, focused on the tensions that currently divide the transatlantic space. Although immediately after 11 September 2001 the international community appeared to be united behind the United States, the war in Iraq produced divisions among NATO members, as well as among members of the Security Council. In a context in which the unity of the transatlantic area diminished significantly, the author called for the necessity to “come back to the honey moon” to the atmosphere of the period when Hungary joined NATO. According to its new Strategic Concept, Hungary wishes to be part of a united alliance, in which new members do not have to take sides.

Mr. Barukh Binah, talked about “Crossroads in the Middle East: a clash of Paradigms”. Mr. Binah’s presentation made an analysis of the main paradigms used to describe the problems of the Middle East, identifying “the poles” of this theoretical debate in the works of Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington. The speaker talked about the image of the Greater Middle East as a place of “tectonic collision of ideological plates”. As far as solutions are concerned, the speaker identified three types of reactions: the Arab one focused on projects of local reform as an alternative to the Western plans, the American attitude having at its core an ideological approach focused on principles such as “freedom”, and the European one which tries to combine the first two approaches.

(Bogdan Barbu, rapporteur)

Chairperson: *H.E. Amb. Waffaa Bassim, Ambassador of Egypt to Bucharest*

Keynote speech: *by Dr. Hari Bucur Marcu, Academic Coordinator, NATO Studies Center, Romania*

Points of view:

“Organized Crime: Bosnia”, Mr. Milos Solaja, Center for International Relations, President, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

“The Relevancy of the Lesson Learned in SEE for Greater Middle East”, Mr. Iulian Fota, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Defence, Romania

“Albania: About Human trafficking”, Dr Mehmet Elezi, Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Director, Albania

“Fighting Terrorism in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean”, Mr. Raufal Dentas, Embassy of Turkey to Bucharest, third secretary, Desk officer for NATO operations

Pursuing a characterization of the Balkans area, **Dr. Hari Bucur Marcu** emphasized in his exposé the relevance of Romania&Bulgaria roles in identifying and preventing the spillover the Alliance's borders of the new risks and asymmetrical threats. Moreover the EAPC/PfP framework of cooperation promoted by NATO is not only beneficial for the countries of this

Panel Two

Commonalities in Risks and Threats

troubled region, but also has to be followed up by real steps in regarding the enlargement process which should continue.

In approaching a domestic issue of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), the next contributor **Mr. Milos Solaja** outlined the widespread trends of the organized crime. Thus, revealing that among the main causes of organized crime endurance is the one of non-functional, but mafia-connected state structures, Mr. Solaja urged the importance of the international organizations involvement in dealing with this security challenges. In this context, the human trafficking represents a major concern, BiH being not only the last destination for the women from Eastern Europe (countries like Moldova, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania), but also a favorite connection for the

Islamists in their way towards West. Alongside, Bosnian organized crime has many other facets including the proliferation of weapons (financed by drugs trade), racketeering, black money laundering, and tax paying evasion. One of the solutions envisaged by the author is the efficient control and securization of the borders by applying EU models.

Mr. Iulian Fota's lesson learned in South-Eastern Europe (SEE) for Greater Middle East (GME) covered not only the patterns for conflict in those areas but also the solutions ahead on Western big actors agendas for this kind of hotspots. In this line of argumentation, stabilization and reconstruction process in SEE benefited from the joint actions done by EU and NATO, double-heated formula that is lacking in Iraq.

Also, the American leadership proved to be stronger in the Balkans than in GME region. An efficient solution for the Balkans was the one of horizontal integration (e.g. the membership incentives), but the Islamic fundamentalism instead of pan-Arabism is the unifying liaison between the GME actors that are showing hyper-strong attitude against USA.

Dr. Mehmet Elezi offered his Albanian perspective on the recurrent topic of human trafficking. Young women mostly Albanians and originating in rural areas are exported to the West for prostitution, while many children's destination will be the one of beggars in the big EU cities or providers for the organ banks. Another sensitive aspect comes out due to the clandestine refugees from Albania and

Kosovo to Italy (for instance) helped by corrupt policemen, or Kurd, Pakistani, Chinese people "in transit". Dr. Elezi's final remarks concluded the necessity for regional cooperation in order to strengthen the border bodies and to promote a flexible approach on visas problems.

GME region and Turkey represented the core issue tackled by the Turkish diplomat **Raufal Dentas** in his intervention. Mr. Dentas argued about the imperative for GME states to be in the driven positions to promote and decide their own policies, otherwise key problems like democratic rule, economic development and terrorism could not be dealt with effectively only by military corrective might.

The final intervention brought in the

attention the South Caucasus region, **Dina Ananyan** offering a comparative analysis of the overall Armenian, Azeri and Georgian relations with Russia and the West.

Commenting the session, Dr. Cornel Codita insisted on the changing pattern of solving Balkans or GME-like problems from outside solution to an internal, self-assumed one, otherwise the popular stance being unpredictable.

(George Anglitoiu, rapporteur)

Panel Three Cooperative Perspectives

Mr. Vasile Secares, pointed out in his speech the geopolitical changes that took place in the last few years and the importance of these changes for South East Europe.

There are six interests of the West in the region of SEE. The first one is the lack of tradition in cooperation in the Balkans and especially in South Caucasus. The second one is the difficulty of our political, intellectual and professional community to think of SE as a region, or in terms of its new political geography. The third one is the necessity of new coherent institutionalised measures of the West for this area. The fourth one is connected with the combined and coherent approach of NATO and European Union towards SEE. The fifth one is the Russian factor, we can't talk about the regional cooperation without taking into consideration the Russian factor. The final dimension is the necessity of a change in the perspective.

In her presentation of the activity of the SECI Center located in Bucharest, **Mrs. Snejana Nenova** made a short presentation of the history and main goals of the SECI Center. In this context, she highlighted some of the objectives at which SECI Center is aiming in combating transborder crime such as encouraging law enforcement cooperation among the countries of the region and facilitate the access of Southeast Europe to European integration; establishing itself as a forum in which representatives of the participating States meet to discuss common regional problems calling for concerted action; developing and enhancing the analysis and dissemination of actionable information and intelligence through increased cooperation among member States, etc.

In his presentation, **Dr. Andrej Karkoszka** stated that as far as security issues are concerned, NATO will engage more and more in out of area operations, an area which could be taking as staging

places for political, economic and military influence coming from NATO, EU. In this regard, he addressed four issues regarding the staging of influence in connecting the core of NATO and EU with SEE and Greater Middle East. The first one is that new strategic paradigms for this connection staging of influence. The second is regarding the new threats and challenges that emanate from the periphery to the core of the EU. The third one refers to the growing asymmetry in the economic, social development and demographic development and areas like SEE and South Caucasus and a very important player that is Russia. Finally, the fourth one arguing whether PfP, as such, due to the character of the region, is or is not the best proposal.

In his presentation, **Dr. Blagovest Tashev** took into consideration the framework created by the previous speakers and engaged in a discussion based on more specific issues. He acknowledged that one of the most important issues regarding PfP is the question "of ownership in contrast with the negotiations with the European Union". PfP was able to promote change and reform for the countries in the region, but also represented a substitute for political consensus. In this context, he pointed out that some of the PfP member countries have no interest of becoming members of the Alliance. The third idea would be that PfP doesn't ensure the readiness of the country to participate in the full range of missions.

Ms. Lusine Yeremyan in her presentation "Regional Cooperation in the Framework of the PfP: Realities and Expectations" gave a framework of the NATO perception in the area of the South Caucasus. NATO focuses on the South Caucasus as it relates to European interests. Objectives include fostering regional security and stability through peacetime military engagement; ensuring access to Caspian basin

Chairperson: H.E. Amb. Rodica Radian Gordon, Ambassador of Israel to Bucharest

Keynote speeches:

- *Mr. Vasile Secares, President of the NATO Studies Center, Bucharest*
- *Ms. Snejana Nenova, Head, Legal Internal Department, SECI Center*

Viewpoints on "The PfP experience: lessons learned and opportunities for future expansion:

- *Dr. Andrej Karkoszka, Senior Political Adviser, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Poland*
- *"The PfP Experience: Responding to Different Security Needs", Dr. Blagovest Tashev, Director, Security Studies Program, George C. Marshall Association, Bulgaria*
- *"Regional Cooperation in the Framework of the PfP: Realities and Expectations", Ms. Lusine Yeremyan, Expert in Democracy and Security Related Issues, Armenian Atlantic Association, Armenia*
- *"Regional Stability: the Western Balkans Between Statehood and Euro Atlantic Integration", Dr Mehmet Elezi, Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Director, Albania*
- *"The Azerbaijani Perspective", Mr. Elkan Mehtyev, Peace and Conflict Resolution Center, Director, Azerbaijan*
- *"The Mediterranean Dialogue: Ideas for a Blueprint", Major Gen. (ret) Mihail Ionescu, PhD, Institute for Political Studies of Defense and Military History, Director, Romania.*

energy resources; combating non-traditional threats such as international terrorism, etc.

She stated that NATO is turning into a system of protection of a zone of common values. Building on its achievements and tackling future challenges will be the key to the further success of Partnership.

In his presentation "Regional Stability: the Western Balkans Between Statehood and Euro Atlantic Integration", **Dr Mehmet Elezi** presented in the framework of a long-term historical perspective, the situation of the Kosovo Province. He stated that the situation in the region remains fragile and the

division of Kosovo would be like "opening Pandora's box". He also said that in the attempt to find a suitable resolution of this conflict, the support of the international community plays an essential role.

Considering the general situation of the area, Mr. Elezi also approached the issue of Macedonia, which has unsolved religious, political, economic problems with all the neighbors, problems that need to be solved. Mr. Elezi concluded that a multiethnic Macedonian society is today the only way for a regional stability and there is a great need for a cultural and religious compromise.

Mr. Elkan Mehtyev presented "The Pfp experience: lessons learned and opportunities for future expansion" from the Azerbaijani perspective. The 9/11 events and Iraqi crisis have changed the security relations of all Caucasus nations with the United States. Azerbaijan sided with US on war against terror offering security cooperation and allowing its air space and airports for use of US military and transport planes waging the war on terror in Afghanistan. Recent developments indicate that US intends to shift some of its forces from Europe to Caucasus and the Caspian basin driven by the increasing importance of the Caspian oil reserves as well as geopolitical considerations. Mr. Mehtyev argued that the reality from security policy point of view is that Azerbaijan is now in a security vacuum since it is no longer member of CSTO and NATO membership is not in an agenda and Azerbaijan does not have any security treaty with any country either with Russia or Turkey. Azerbaijani officials argue that geographically the country is surrounded with

both unfriendly and rival nations to NATO and its aspiration for closer security relationship with the NATO would face ill-will reactions by the forces from the south and north Baku.

In the end of the third panel, with a presentation on "The Mediterranean Dialogue: Ideas for a Blueprint", **Major Gen. (ret) Mihail Ionescu** offered a large perspective of the limitations imposed to the Mediterranean Dialogue at the institutional level. Mr. Ionescu argued that more countries should be a part of this initiative. However, as he explained, there are also limitations for cooperation. The first one is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the fact that we do not have a solution yet. The second limitation is the Arab perceptions of the Western concerns that are guided to support using the interference paradigm. The third limitation is that of strengthening security cooperation within the Mediterranean Dialogue, there are imperative incentives, for example the NATO membership similar to the case of Pfp. In Mr. Ionescu's opinion, "these kind of limits should be considered when we are discussing about a blueprint for cooperation".

Mr. Ionescu pointed out that NATO is becoming a global organization, so Mediterranean Dialogue should have the perspective of the NATO membership. On the other hand, there are too many initiatives today promoting cooperation. It is absolutely necessary and complementary the approach of NATO and EU in order to reach the target of enhancing cooperation in the region. Mediterranean Dialogue and Barcelona Process should complement each other.

(Delia Pocan, rapporteur)



Mr. Cornel Codita, Dean of Academics, NATO Studies Center, closed the conference, drawing a few concluding remarks. Mr. Codita noticed that the majority of speakers placed their analyses under the sign of "change" in analysing contemporary events. He underlined that the two regions referred to during the conference, Greater Middle East and Wider Black Sea Area, have experienced a lot of turbulence over the last years, a lot of changes, and that evolutions in these areas is hardly predictable. He also stressed the importance of an integrated, regional approach as a prerequisite for generating feasible solutions for peace.



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