

GLOBSEC 2014 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Bratislava Global Security Forum, taking place in Slovakia from May 14–16, 2014, was dominated by the evolving crisis across the border with Ukraine. A select number of other topics also featured prominently on the agenda, such as the NATO summit in September, the future of Afghanistan, the prospects for Visegrad Group and Central European cooperation, security and privacy in the cyberworld, the rise of populism in European elections, and the future of the EU. In addition, GLOBSEC's smaller, informal fora brought insights and recommendations on a host of other themes, which can be found in the full report from the conference. Recommended actions are marked with a star (★).¹

1. UKRAINE (AND BEYOND)

Shedding light on **Russia's objectives** in Ukraine and beyond was GLOBSEC's single most vexing challenge, with some speakers, including at senior political level, expressing resignation on "reading Mr. Putin's mind" and focusing instead on "judging Moscow by its actions". By all accounts, however, there was more clarity about Moscow's objectives here in Central Europe, given the historical experience with Russia, than in Brussels or other European capitals. Opinions converged on the re-emergence of geopolitics in European and international relations. Russia seeks to recreate the Russian empire, with its old spheres of influence and enough strategic depth to protect itself from military attack. One essential aspect can be found on President Putin's home front; this is an effort to strengthen his grip over public opinion and the political system. With the idea of "Eurasia", buttressed as it were by a social conservative philosophy, a counter-vision to European integration has emerged, warned Timothy Snyder of the Institute for Human Sciences. Masked as a trade agreement, the Eurasian Union in fact represents a cultural, ideological and political challenge whose goal is to reduce the European Union into a politically fragmented economic bloc and to prevent, most importantly, the emergence of a common energy policy. An accompanying risk would be the decoupling of the transatlantic bond.

The crisis in Ukraine, once again, caught the West by surprise, which may point to yet another serious failure of our early warning capabilities. The issue is not merely technical; many have pointed to an all-out "illusion" entertained by the West not only about Russia's intentions, but about the world at large. A fundamental difference of worldview has existed between Russia and, most notably, the European Union, which has now come to the fore with full force.

- ★ Accelerate the understanding of the nature and magnitude of the challenge underlying Russia's current behavior. If in doubt, err on the side of geopolitics.
- ★ Keep the means of communications with Russia open and consider creating special channels to better understand Moscow's intentions and to reduce the risk of miscalculation.
- ★ Improve analytical and intelligence capabilities, including the sharing of information, in order to better understand fast-paced and complex situations.
- ★ Reinstate critical analysis as a basis for policy, instead of wishful thinking. Both NATO and the EU must enable frank discussion at the highest political level.
- ★ Maintain international pressure on Russia through diplomatic, political, and economic means (sanctions). Continue increasing NATO's military presence in the East of the Alliance's territory.

In Ukraine itself, Russia will voluntarily accept the country's closer association neither with NATO nor with the European Union. Military invasion into the East, followed by regional war, cannot be excluded. At the very

¹ Recommendations are those of the Central European Strategy Council, the conference organiser. They are largely based on opinions expressed at the GLOBSEC Bratislava Security Forum 2014.

least, Russia will continue trying to destabilise the country to prevent its drifting further West. However, there was consensus that Ukraine was likely to survive as a unified state, rather than splintering into the East and West.

- ★ Support the emergence of legitimate national institutions in Ukraine, particularly through parliamentary elections, including through assistance, advice, and monitoring. Let the people of Ukraine decide their country's constitutional arrangement independently.
- ★ The EU should step forward with a robust response by giving Ukraine a European perspective beyond the EU association agreement.
- ★ Substantiate the non-recognition policy towards Crimea, e.g. by discouraging European investment or by imposing visas on individuals from politics and business.
- ★ Assist Ukraine militarily, both bilaterally and through NATO and the EU. Individual Allies should consider providing packages of military assistance, defensive equipment, and intelligence assets.

Mr. Putin's attack on Ukraine is but the first step in a much larger conflict. **In Russia's neighbourhood**, Moscow seems determined to solidify its control over, or at least destabilise, the former members of the Soviet Union, including the Baltic states, Georgia, Moldova, as well as Belarus and Kazakhstan, both of whom are now members of the Eurasian Union. Russia may reach even deeper into NATO and EU countries to attempt the same in its former Central European satellites.

- ★ Rethink and resource the EU's Eastern Partnership in order to make association with, and eventual membership in, the EU more attractive than the Russia-centered alternative, the Eurasian Union.
- ★ Enlarge NATO, both to continue its long-term Open Door policy based on the freedom of nations to choose their alliances, and to prevent these nations from Russian intimidation. On the earliest occasion, invite Montenegro to become a NATO member and give Georgia the Membership Action Plan. Press Greece (and Macedonia) to a final resolution of their dispute.

In the Western Balkans, noted Montenegro's Prime Minister Milo Đukanović, the Ukrainian crisis now risks to be opening room for the reemergence of the destabilising nationalist policies, based on misguided historical myths, that caused tragedy in ex-Yugoslavia. A reversal of the successful 1990s, when the nations in the region, for the first time in history, started to see their future in the same way, namely in Euroatlantic integration, is a distinct possibility, with the fruits of Western engagement squandered. Russia's close relations with some countries in the region should not be underestimated.

- ★ Provide a clear European and Atlantic perspective for all Western Balkan nations. EU and NATO members should intensify their support to local governments to help them pursue reforms, fulfill the accession criteria and become full-fledged members in the near future.

Globally, other major actors are watching attentively. What is truly at stake in Ukraine are the basic principles of the global order. There is considerable concern in other parts of the world about borders being changed by force, underlined US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland. If geopolitics prevails, decisions will be made in China and elsewhere that favour military solutions over a world order based on the freedom of choice for all states.

- ★ Seize on the opportunities for promoting a rules-based world order and create coalitions of pressure on Russia by actively reaching out to partners around the world.

The proper mindset. Security, prosperity and freedom must no longer be taken for granted. Striving for peace in no way implies weakness or pacifism. Russia understands the language of strength. Germany is key to the "awakening" of Europe. The possible unraveling of the European order should be enough to force a wake up on both sides of the Atlantic. A number of speakers exhorted the West to get real about the world; the amount

of defence spending and the accelerating pace of military modernisation outside Europe illustrates the dangerous change happening around us.

- ★ Forge a common transatlantic response to Russia's actions, based on commitments from both sides.
- ★ The US should resist temptation to retreat into isolationism, given the geopolitical challenge across Eurasia. In the wake of the "Asian pivot", US policy must be Europeanised.
- ★ Europe must get serious about the threat, and about defence in general. This is a moment for leadership; the political class needs to patiently explain to the skeptical publics that legitimate modernisation of the armed forces, based in legitimate institutions (EU and NATO), is overdue. Concrete commitments from Allies on the Eastern border are necessary.
- ★ A strong leading role of Germany in international affairs and its greater defence contribution to protecting international stability, particularly around Europe, as well as its more active political engagement in Central and Eastern Europe, are strongly desirable.
- ★ The Visegrad Four, being on the frontline, must hold together and drive the regional and transatlantic agenda.

A comprehensive EU toolbox. Difficult as it may be, the West must deal with all of the "five crises" related to Ukraine: the crisis of association with the EU; the crisis of revolutionary change against a failed political class; the problem of Russian aggression; the threat of gas cut-offs to Europe; and the problem of world order. This complexity requires a comprehensive approach; the instruments for dealing with the crisis will have to come from the political/military, but also the economic and social toolboxes. Consensus exists on the broad objectives, in terms of "upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity". However, serious differences have emerged on policy, including the sanctions and the eventual membership of Eastern neighbours in the EU.

- ★ Europe needs both firmness and unity, rooted in values and interests, and translated into a consistent effort at bridging differences on policy and tools.
- ★ Revamp the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) based on the conclusions of the European Council on Defence in December 2013. Moreover, accelerate discussions on the revision of the EU Security Strategy and the reform of the EU Battlegroup Concept.
- ★ Step up the ongoing effort in tracking dirty money in Western banks.
- ★ Use EU law enforcement tools to counter human rights abuses.
- ★ The Visegrad Four should lead the push for bringing Ukraine, as well as other Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans countries, fully into Erasmus, Europe's program for student and teacher exchanges.

Sanctions are biting Russia on the economic front; the issue is whether and when this translates into policy, given that domestic political support for President Putin is exceptionally high. History has shown that sanctions are only likely to succeed if they are underpinned by a targeted strategy and accompanied by actions on other fronts, including the diplomatic and the military. Russian countersanctions are likely to bite as well, and would do so unevenly in different EU member states. The Visegrad Group may support more robust sanctions if the burden is spread more evenly.

- ★ Think through the objective of sanctions relative to the strategic objectives of Western policy against Russia, in particular to deter it from attempts to change borders by force, and tailor/target the measures accordingly.
- ★ Draw a red line for triggering sectoral sanctions against Russia, and do not flinch.
- ★ Introduce more solidarity and mutual support between EU Member States to overcome negative effects of sanctions.

Energy. Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas has clearly restricted its political options in the current crisis. Moscow has a track record of using oil and gas supplies to intimidate and control its neighbors, some of

whom have learned their lessons. The gas cut-offs of 2009 have already led to significant improvements in Central Europe's energy security. Proposals such as Poland's idea of an energy union would boost domestic growth, reduce prices, and provide an important instrument of foreign policy. Given its overreliance on energy exports to sustain the national budget, including the modernisation of its military and security apparatus, Russia is sensitive to the prices of energy on world markets; it would be weakened if global supply could be increased, leading to a reduction in the price of oil. Increased US exports would also boost Europe's energy security.

- ★ Build on Polish Prime Minister Tusk's proposal for an EU energy union in order to advance towards a common energy market across the European Union.
- ★ Complete the outstanding interconnectors between the energy infrastructure of Central and Eastern Europe and in the EU's North-South dimension to enable reverse flow and imports of energy from outside the EU.
- ★ The US should further explore the option of depressing oil prices through increased production, and keep it on the table as a bargaining chip with Russia.
- ★ Further promote energy supply diversification, both in geographic terms and in terms of the energy mix, including renewables and nuclear power.

Cultural and social issues, propaganda. Thanks to an effort unseen since the end of the Cold War, Russia has scored some important victories on the front of information war with its social conservative agenda and its own depiction of events in Ukraine. These successes included the fact that the European populist right ran for European Parliament on a "pro-Russia platform" and that European public opinion, most importantly in Germany, was deeply divided on how to deal with Moscow, with many Europeans supporting the Kremlin rather than their own governments. Efforts by Russian propagandists and their proxies in EU member states to reopen the issue of the nature of the European Union have been helped in no small part by the UK's criticism of European integration. Russia will continue trying to undermine unity in the EU and NATO. The people-to-people underpinnings of the transatlantic bond would benefit from a fresh boost. However, too few young Europeans study in the US and vice versa; Erasmus only supports intra-European exchanges.

- ★ Show greater self-confidence in our values; they are our strongest way to shape the world.
- ★ The West must find better ways of getting its message across, including to Russians in the EU and inside Russia itself.
- ★ Experts in the security community have a distinct contribution to make in convincing the politicians and the publics.
- ★ While staying independent in their reporting, Western journalists must join ranks with governments and civil society activists in countering the contorted imagery and simplistic solutions produced by populist and Russian propaganda, including on Russia's home turf.
- ★ A new generation of Atlanticists should be empowered to become a major agent of the necessary large-scale transatlantic policy change.
- ★ Strengthen cultural, student and teacher interchanges across the Atlantic, including by creating a transatlantic student and teacher exchange program, inspired by Erasmus.

2. NATO'S ADAPTATION

Defence spending, capabilities, and posture. With Russia's moves in its neighbourhood, NATO's core function, collective defence, has arrived center stage. The Alliance's credibility, however, has been undercut by continued reductions in defence spending, furthering the gap between the US and its European allies and diminishing the value of NATO for its strongest member. The heavy operational tempo in both Iraq and Afghanistan has hindered investment in future capabilities and slowed defence reform. On the other hand, ISAF in particular has brought the Western armies to unprecedented levels of prowess and interoperability, which, if sustained, will serve NATO well in the future. As ISAF winds down and Russia emerges as a potential

challenger, NATO must tackle the issue of defence spending, kick-start the modernisation of its capabilities, and determine a new defence and deterrence posture. More nations, including here in Central Europe, have committed to holding the line and eventually increasing their defence budgets, which was well received. However, Slovakia in particular still seems hesitant to draw the necessary conclusions. Poland appears determined to lead a strategy shift in the region and in NATO. NATO must prepare for the future now; there are challenges beyond Russia.

Cyber defence. Would a “cyber 9/11” be necessary, specialists asked, to uproot the prevalent international complacency? In the NATO context, there is no Article 5 threshold for cyber attack, no planning for post-attack recovery, still very little money earmarked for cyber defence, and no obligation for NATO allies to even share information on cyber threats. After a short period, when cyber appeared as a key question, traditional security threats regained prominence in the public discourse.

- ★ The US and the rest of NATO should jointly reassure Allies on the Eastern border of the Alliance. Any doubt that Allies are prepared to go to war against anyone who attacks NATO territory under Article 5 must be erased.
- ★ NATO allies must stop defence cuts and gradually increase military spending to reach the NATO target of 2% of GDP. Spending should be directed less on personnel and more on equipment, skills and training to produce credible military capabilities. If anything is immoral in this context, as NATO Secretary General Rasmussen stated, it is free-riding on others; defence investment, too, is a measure of solidarity among allies.
- ★ NATO should use its summit in Wales to review its contingency plans and determine whether they are sufficiently resourced to remain relevant. Other key issues include the sensitiveness of NATO’s intelligence system, the relevance of command and control for producing quick decisions, and the preparedness of forces for rapid deployment.
- ★ Nations should accelerate the development of military and civilian capabilities to deal with hybrid warfare, including intelligence and early warning, special forces, police forces, psychological/information ops, and cyber.
- ★ Advance and resource NATO’s agenda on cyber defence, including the provision of collective assistance to Allies.
- ★ NATO nations should invest in the exercises, training and technologies offered by the Connected Forces Initiative to preserve the impressive achievements in the interoperability between their forces. Central and Eastern Europe should join Poland in providing substantial contributions to NATO exercises.
- ★ Establish a NATO military presence for Poland, Romania and the Baltic states that would include a significant contribution from Central and Eastern Europe.
- ★ Pursue defence collaboration to make effective use of resources, using the EU’s pooling and sharing and NATO’s smart defence projects, and regional fora such as the Visegrad Four. The Visegrad Group must start delivering on defence cooperation with concrete projects in joint training and exercises, the common battlegroup, joint defence planning and acquisitions, in order to provide new military means to NATO and the EU.
- ★ In the run-up to the V4 battlegroup’s standby period in 2016, the contributing nations should adopt a mindset, and provide the resources, that would allow the real use of the joint force if needed, across the full spectrum of scenarios, even if this means stretching the current Battlegroup Concept. Meanwhile, conditions should be created for a more permanent arrangement between the four armed forces.

3. AFGHANISTAN BEYOND 2014

While the country’s future remains challenging, the true success in Afghanistan lies in its impressive economic and social progress, which has only been achieved through the sacrifices of NATO nations and the Afghan

people. It is emblematic of what NATO can achieve when it has a common vision and a set of values that it applies on the battlefield, said General John Allen, former Commander of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan. This narrative is completely missing in the current discourse, as ISAF's mandate winds down by the end of 2014. The story needs to be told not just by NATO officials, but most importantly, by the leaders of NATO nations and of their allies in ISAF.

- ★ Rather than eyeing the exits, the Alliance must lock in the successes achieved in Afghanistan through a continued presence, focusing on training and the fight against al-Qaida.
- ★ Afghanistan should become NATO's long-term partner, and a partner and possible model for other states emerging from dictatorship in Central Asia.

4. WHAT EUROPEAN UNION AFTER THE 2014 VOTE?

A functioning, unified and strong EU is a precondition for the survival of its member states in the next decades, given the impending decline of their demographic and economic power in global terms. During the Eurozone crisis, the EU produced decisions without proper political explanation that, unfortunately, contributed to the rise of populism and extreme nationalism. The emergence of populism represents a fundamental shift in European politics that is bound to become permanent. The big challenge is the erosion of trust in political institutions, both nationally and at the EU level. This poses a particular problem for foreign policy, which relies on citizens trusting the capacity of their leaders to deal with crises.

- ★ National politicians should stop nationalising successes and brusselising failures, which has undermined the attractiveness of the European project to the citizens.
- ★ Europe's leaders must spend more time addressing political matters. The primary challenge is to build a new, fundamentally political, narrative for Europe, taking into account the issue of what it would mean to have no Europe at all.
- ★ Europe's leaders have the responsibility to address the legitimate concerns of European citizens that are now expressed in illegitimate ways by populists.
- ★ The new European Commission must reengage with nations in a more political fashion to explain its initiatives and gain local ownership.
- ★ Globalisation should be taken as an opportunity, not threat: "You either shape the world around you, or you are shaped by it."
- ★ EU institutions must bring their weight to bear on substantial, strategic matters rather than dealing with too many small things.
- ★ Central Europe's vision is a Europe led by effective communitarian institutions rather than a directorate of big countries; is able to select strong personalities to lead its institutions; prevents a drift between the Eurozone and the rest; promotes more democratic accountability by involving national parliaments and civil society; and remains open to new members.

5. SECURITY AND PRIVACY IN A HYPER-CONNECTED WORLD

"Cyber politics will be for the 21st century what geopolitics was for the 19th century," Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt said to the GLOBSEC audience. The rapid increase in broadband coverage correlates with economic and social development, creating enormous opportunity. On the other hand, major challenges lie ahead, to include the reliability of electronic systems, security, privacy, and governance. The role of the private sector is major; it is in fact private business, not the state, who collects, stores and analyzes the largest volume of data. A legal vacuum exists, internationally and nationally, which, however complex, has to be addressed because technologies are evolving rapidly, argued Marietje Schaake, Member of the European Parliament. The key challenge for a global order in cyberspace is cultural: the West should not assume that the right to communicate freely, which underpins our conception of the internet, is universally shared; other values may trump freedom of speech in other parts of the world. In the wake of the Snowden revelations, the rising public

mistrust about security measures as such, but also about the US as Europe's preferred partner, begs for political answers.

- ★ Government action in cyberspace, while legitimate and necessary, has to be strictly regulated in ways that conform to the values of the respective society.
- ★ New international laws and principles must be developed for the digital world. While seeking agreement on global norms, it is important to advance pragmatically; rules will emerge on the go in order to cover problematic areas.
- ★ While recognising their cultural differences affecting the use of the internet, democracies and dictatorships should start building common ground by pragmatically agreeing on two areas: on preventing the abuse of physical control systems and on limiting cyber warfare, as suggested by former US Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff.
- ★ Maintain and refine the current system of internet governance. The internet must be protected from big states or big business or other interests in order to remain an open, multi-stakeholder system for the use of future generations.
- ★ Devise new and democratic ways of controlling the collection of information in order to prevent its abuse.
- ★ Governments need to systematically look at the impact of proposed security measures on freedom, and on the credibility of open societies in the eyes of the world.
- ★ Strong leadership in a transatlantic framework is needed to fortify democratic principles and the resilience of our systems and democratic societies.