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## **INTERNATIONAL SECURITY CONFERENCE: “GLOBSEC 2016 BRATISLAVA GLOBAL SECURITY FORUM”**

**Ivana Slobodníková - Lucia Martišková\***

The 11<sup>th</sup> Bratislava Global Security Forum, taking place in Slovakia on 15-17 April 2016 contributed to shaping of regional, European and wider transatlantic policy agenda. A number of topics were scrutinised, such as NATO's adaption ahead of the 2016 Warsaw Summit; rising concerns about eroding political cohesion in Europe with the upcoming UK referendum and recent refugee crisis. Furthermore, discussions included strategies to stabilise the Middle East while fighting radicalism, as well as expectations of the Central European region regarding foreign and security policy of the new US Administration. The Forum's highlights included speeches by **Ursula von der Leyen**, Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany and **Madeleine Albright**, former U.S. Secretary of State, Senator **Christopher S. Murphy**, Presidents **Andrej Kiska** and President **Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović**. Over the past few years, GLOBSEC has risen to the premier foreign policy and security forum where hundreds of most influential experts from leading European and transatlantic think-tanks, academia, business leaders and politicians gather to look for responses to the most pressing security challenges.

GLOBSEC 2016 brought together more than 1000 stakeholders from around 70 countries including European countries, United States, as well as Middle East and Asia. In addition to the main GLOBSEC sessions, the conference provides space also for more specific fora such as GLOBSEC Young Leaders' Forum, public-private fora, GLOBSEC City Talks and roundtables on different initiatives and projects. Ambassador Rastislav Káčer, GLOBSEC's Chairman and two honorary co-chairs - H.E. Miroslav Lajčák, Minister of Foreign and

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European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, and H. E. **Lubomír Zaorálek**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic - officially welcomed distinguished guests. President of the Slovak Republic **Andrej Kiska** joined them in the opening speech in expressing the need for collective responsibility to protect democratic values throughout Europe. H.E. **Ursula von der Leyen**, Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany during her keynote speech on European Security expressed her concerns that Europe itself is facing two huge challenges at the same time - challenges to security and values - and there is a strong need for unity both in the European Union and NATO.

The first day of the Forum was devoted to topics of defeating Daesh, re-thinking NATO strategy before the Warsaw Summit, Ukrainian crisis, and energy security. The turmoil in the Middle East and the rise of Daesh are threatening not only regional, but also global security. General **John Allen**, former Special Presidential Envoy for Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, pointed out that the most difficult task in defeating Daesh is to counter the ability to spread message via social media. To be successful in the fight against radical Islamist propaganda, common strategy needs to promote literacy and provide alternative narratives to the geopolitics in the region.

As the NATO summit in Warsaw is approaching, crucial decisions on transatlantic security need to be made. The session on the future of NATO with introductory remarks made by H. E. **Martin Stropnický**, Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic, and with distinguished guests such as H. E. **Witold Waszczykowski**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, H. E. **Lazăr Comănescu**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, General **Petr Pavel**, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, and **James Townsend**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for European and NATO Policy at U. S. Department of Defence, debated the Readiness Action Plan, discrepancies in threat perceptions of eastern and southern allies and key expectations from the upcoming summit. However, the single most important outcome of the Warsaw Summit must be increase of NATO's collective defence capabilities and boosting its deterrence capabilities.

The official programme of the first day of GLOBSEC 2016 concluded by several parallel dinner sessions, which serve as a generator for new ideas, partnerships and solutions to issues of key concern to the GLOBSEC community. The discussions focused on a variety of topics, including strategic uncertainties in the Pacific region, Iran's geopolitical position, cybersecurity challenges and the position of Western Balkans in the European future. These

discussions featured a number of renowned speakers, including H. E. **Linas Linkevičius**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, **Yoji Muto**, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, **Mohamad Elorabi**, Chairman of Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament of Egypt, and **Mustava Nayyem**, Member of the Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada.

The second conference day started with a keynote speech by H.E. **Nasser Judeh**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, followed by a session on comprehensive approach in order to gain stability and security in Syria. **Yaşar Yakiş**, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Ambassador **Alexander Vershbow**, Deputy Secretary General, NATO, **George Friedman**, Founder and Chairman of the Geopolitical Features and Sir **John Jenkins**, Executive Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, advocated for considerably greater effort in order to defeat Daesh. Comprehensive aid package developed by international institutions is crucial in order to establish post-conflict security and stability in the region.

One of the highlights of GLOBSEC 2016 was chat hosting **Madeleine Albright**, former U.S. Secretary of State. She suggested that the US should significantly increase their share of humanitarian assistance to refugees from the Middle East and provide assistance that is more visible to regional actors most affected by the civil war in Libya, Syria and Yemen. Madeleine Albright, along with Micheal Žantovský, was awarded the Czech and Slovak Transatlantic Award at GLOBSEC 2016 Gala Dinner. The organisers presented the award for their contribution to freedom and democracy in Central Europe, to strengthening of the transatlantic relations and integration of Central Europe to Euro-Atlantic structures.

Sunday GLOBSEC agenda featured debates on the future of the US foreign policy after presidential elections with Senator **Christopher S. Murphy** and on the possible reform of European intelligence work with **Michael Chertoff**, Executive Chairman and Co-Founder of the Chertoff Group, **August Hanning**, former President of German Federal Intelligence Agency and General **Ephram Lapid**, lecturer from Bar-Ilan University. They supported a need to strengthen all pillars of European intelligence system: i.e. enhance technical capabilities, increase personal resources and devote more financial resources for operations. Debate on European intelligence will continue under Micheal Chertoff and GLIBSEC leadership, in order to formulate concrete recommendation in this field. The last session was devoted to the current influx

of refugees, which stretched European resources and radicalised politics in several countries. Nevertheless, political elites in Europe should engage their electorate in an honest discussion about the nexus of European humanitarian values, shared responsibility over the current level of regional disorder and also their obligation to keep Europe secure, politically stable and economically prosperous.

GLOBSEC 2016 Bratislava Global Security Forum concluded with remarks of **Róbert Vass**, President of GLOBSEC and founder of the GLOBSEC Forum. He expressed his sincere thanks to all distinguished speakers, participants, guests and organisers for their contribution to making GLOBSEC one of the top five conferences of its kind in the world. GLOBSEC 2016 meant a milestone also for the organisers, as Central European Strategic Council is now GLOBSEC, a global brand.