

**May 7, 2019**

**Event Report- NATO@70: The Road Ahead**

**On May 7, 2019 the CEU Center for European Neighborhood Studies (CENS), and the Budapest office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) jointly hosted an international conference entitled “NATO@70: The Road Ahead”.**

The Conference was opened by the director of CENS, **Péter Balázs**, and the researcher and policy officer of FES, **János Molnár**. NATO has been focused on combating new threats while balancing perspective enlargement through the existing wish for new states to join. NATO is one of the most important global institutions and is in the process of looking for new global strategy and its new role in our “current reality”.

**Karsten D. Voigt** (Former Coordinator of German-North American Cooperation at the Foreign Office of Germany) began his speech by reflecting upon the process of Germany joining NATO in 1955. At the time, the country was required to meet pre-conditions of membership which were only applied Germany. Voigt claimed that this is an example of how NATO does not only serve as a defense function, but as a function of collective security as seen during Germany’s entrance into the organization. Voigt also gave the example of how NATO has intermediated conflict between Greece and Turkey. He argued that integration into NATO has prevented conflict that would have otherwise existed between European Nations. Voigt continued by claiming that the Russian threat was not the motivation for any western country during the first round of NATO enlargement (with the exception of Poland). Russia, in turn, has only began to see NATO as a threat during the conflict in Kosovo, when then state had no power within the organization’s decisions. Voigt argued that NATO is no longer about collective security function. Russia has become a risk factor due to its desire to improve their status and gain equal footing, rather than maintain the status quo. He stated, if they seek to improve their influence by interfering in neighboring countries, they then become a security threat. Voigt closed his speech by first, stating that NATO still serves a collective security function. Second, a collective defense function is re-emerging and can be exemplified by the deployment of troops to the Baltic states. And third, there is a question of parity with Russia to eliminate asymmetries.

**Reinhard Krumm** (Head of the FFS Regional Office for Cooperation and Peace in Europe) gave a presentation on the research study “Security Radar 2019 – Wake-Up Call for Europe”. It was a study conducted in 2019 through a public opinion poll of security in Germany, France, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and Serbia. The some of the conclusions are as follows: 69% fear that war and other conflict will impact their country, 50% say the USA is a threat to security in Europe, 43% say Russia is a threat to security in Europe, all countries included in the study say they should pursue a more active foreign policy, and many European states are dissatisfied with their status.

At the roundtable, the speakers elaborated on the topic “What is NATO in 2019?”. Chair **Krisztina Bombera** (journalist and international correspondent) sparked the discussion by asking the panelists the questions: How do we deal with insecurity of the countries situated between the EU and Russia? How is NATO envisioning the cooperation with the rising powers, such as China? How can stability and prosperity be ensured through the role of NATO? How do we make sure that the larger powers are satisfied with multilateral security, which is the principal of NATO?

**Péter Balázs** (director of CENS) stated that NATO needs to address the real threats such as clean water, energy, and migration. He claims that the perpetuation of fake news and the perception of it needs to be viewed as a threat. Balázs said United States President Donald Trump is one of the key actors in international security with limited results.

**Barbora Maronkova** (Director at NATO information and documentation Centre, Kyiv) stated that NATO needs to expand the linear notion of being a military security alliance. She explained how the organization provides a unique to bring issues to an international table and how it provides consultative benefits. She discussed how we are currently facing the most unpredictable security environment in a generation. Maronkova also stated that Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova have a strong relationships with NATO, but how they will have no shortcut to membership and must undergo the necessary reforms required of them.

**Rastislav Káčer** (Chairman of GLOBSEC) states that there is a growing pressure is growing on Germany to take a larger role within the region. He also said that in order for a state to join, there must be an improvement of security for not only the new member, but also for all existing members as well. Káčer also was heavily involved in the discussion about the prospects of a European Union military force. He argued that the EU must undergo more integration before this can occur.

**Reinhard Krumm** (Head of the FFS Regional Office for Cooperation and Peace in Europe) contributed by proposing the original set of questions to prompt discussion. He stated that NATO needs to focus on the impact of polarization, the rise of china, and the reemergence of geostrategy. He also clearly stated the Russia and NATO are competitors.

At the panel, the speakers elaborated on the topic “NATO’s Eastern Expansion: Lessons learned and the way ahead”. Chair **András Szalai** (Research Fellow at CENS) sparked the discussion by asking the panelists the questions: Is the increase in spending for NATO a response to Trump and what is it for? Would the invasion of the Baltic states be a hard security threat and would this be deterred by the US troops serving as a tripwire?

**Dovile Jakniunaite** (Professor at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University) first began by reaffirming that due to events in 2008 in Georgia, NATO has taken a collective defense function when dealing with Russia due to the alarm of the Baltic states.

She said that due to this, there was an increase in defense spending. She stated that before 2014, the largest parts of the defense budget was funding trainings. She said that this increase in funding has been a response to lack of spending in the last ten years and is therefore, making it up.

**Matúš Halás** (Senior Researcher at the Institute of International Relations) began by discussing the recent precedent of the modernization of armed forces, particularly in Slovakia. He attributed the main cause of this to the events in Ukraine in 2014. He claimed that the nation-state is the main defense to hybrid threats and that cooperation between the EU and NATO is key to combat hybrid threats. Halás also stated that NATO lacks the proper defense systems to defend the Baltic states, and is relying on a reinforcement strategy. Russia has troops stationed 20 miles from the Estonia border that outnumber the total number of Estonian troops. He also argued that Georgia and Ukraine will never gain membership in NATO because they are dangerous.