

CONCLUSIONS OF THE 8TH ZAGREB SECURITY FORUM 2023

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NATO/EU Responsibility for a Future

1. Enhanced transatlantic cooperation between EU and USA in defense, innovation, R&D, and security is of key importance for the security and stability not only of the European area, but also at the global level in the processes of stabilization of existing and the prevention of new crises. Such cooperation should be extended to other non-European factors, who should contribute to these processes of stabilization and prevention.
2. NATO and the EU should jointly act preventively so that the crisis caused by the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 does not spread beyond this aggression, as we see it in the strengthening of the conflicts in the Caucasus, some countries of Africa and the Middle East. Appearances of new crisis are useful only to those, who want to influence the world's security and political architecture towards the direction of strengthening global instability and insecurity.
3. The numerous security challenges, that we are faced with daily, point to the need for a comprehensive development of

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the EU's abilities and capabilities in creating and strengthening preventive and deterrent defense and security capacities. They should be complementary to NATO abilities and capabilities. The EU should continue to develop its preventive, defensive and deterrent capacities, and abilities at the EU level, but also at the level of the member states, both in the real world and on the web. The EU needs to be able to defend itself at its borders and, in accordance with the interests of other democracies, to create and strengthen a different regional and global security architecture, able to operated outside the EU territory.

4. The Russian aggression against Ukraine, Hamas terrorist attack on Israel, the instrumentalization and weaponization of illegal migration and numerous other hybrid threats indicate the need to redefine the existing security patterns of institutional action both at the national and EU/NATO level. They should also be reflected and emphasized in future NATO and EU strategies as well as in strategic documents of the respective member states (such as “white books” and others).

5. The EU and NATO alliance should build new partnerships and alliances in the Euro-Asian area for the purpose of preserving peace, preventing the outbreak of conflicts and their de-escalation. We must be able to face strategies and policies, that are denying the right of individual states to exist and directly threaten stability and security at the global level.

6. NATO and EU should work together on an energy efficiency, green transition, green circle economy, accepting the fact, that nuclear power production is a green energy and also serves as a transitional energy and a backup, until the full potential of renewable energies is reached.

7. Budget defense allocations are not an expense, but an investment in security and safety of the population in future. Those allocations should be increased to at least 3% of BDP in upcoming years. Before that, Allies must, as quickly as possible, live up to the promise of spending at least 2% of their GDP in that area.

8. In the field of Emerging disruptive technologies (EDT), it is necessary to harmonize the opinion and definitions of priority areas between the EU and the NATO alliance to strengthen joint integrated activities.

Emerging Security Challenges

9. No one can win any future major, especially interstate, conflict on their own. Alliances, sustainable, effective, based on democratically expressed will and with developed cooperation capabilities at the institutional, organizational, community and personal level, are the *condicio sine qua non* of any success in the fight against modern and future hybrid risks and threats.

10. The security, stability and independence of Israel are of critical importance for the stability of the Transatlantic security architecture and especially for stability and security of the wider Mediterranean area and region. Although Israel can defend itself against the offensive actions of malign adversaries, it is necessary to provide Israel with assistance and cooperation and to discourage potential attackers in their intentions to attack the State of Israel.

11. The security, stability and independence of Taiwan is of critical importance for the stability of the Indo-Pacific region. In both cases, the security, stability and independence of Taiwan and Israel are key issues for maintaining security, stability on a global level.

12. Security is no longer a second- or third-rate issue. It is the primary question, which should be considered in planning future activities (social, economic, individual, group) by strengthening the regional defense capabilities and societal resilience. It isn't a question, if at all there will be a certain form of jeopardy of security procedures and activities. It is only a question of when, by whom, and with what consequences. Therefore, in these preventive and defense plans, emphasis should be placed

on prevention, defense, recovery, adaptation, and learning (resilience) of preventive-defense systems.

13. Europe should show solidarity with the persons in need, but it must not give in to the pressures organized and conducted by organized crime groups and the abuse of humanitarian law. Adaptations to the new security challenges of the EU and national legislation should go into this direction. Human trafficking and organizing illegal migrations should be treated as an unlawful activity. A humanitarian approach should be applied to those, who are under real threats.

14. It is necessary to develop systems for early warning of numerous possible risks and the occurrence of threats in accordance with modern scientific research to assist decision makers and the public, who may be exposed to such threats.

15. The cyberspace exists as a resource and, at the same time, area of/with numerous security risks and threats. It could help the evolution of violence and terrorism by spreading violent radical ideologies, recruiting sympathizers and members, collecting material resources, collecting intelligence, organizing education and training, promote radicalization, develop malign strategic communication, sharing disinformation and propaganda, organizing violence and terrorist attacks in various areas.

16. Virtual radicalization has become a serious security challenge, risk and threat for many societies and states and should be addressed as such.

17. Therefore, it is necessary to not only develop strategies to counter the aforementioned risks. It is equally important to educate the population and especially the youth to sensitively use the WWW in order to be able to differentiate between valid information and lies, between right and wrong (digital literacy and critical thinking).

Russian Malign Activities

18. The entire spectrum of Russian malign and offensive actions has its origins in the Grand Strategy of Putin's Russia. This Grand Strategy is aimed to be partially realized in various forms of aggression against Ukraine. Therefore, to win an overall victory over the Russian aggressor, it is necessary to recognize and face the Grand Strategy. If everybody involved is not able to overcome the components of that Grand Strategy, as well as defeat it in its entirety, we are exposed to the risk of repeating numerous negative scenarios soon. The survival of that Grand Strategy of Putin's Russia will appear again in its negative form and lead to new crises, new conflicts, and wars.

19. If the defense of Ukraine is not successfully accomplished, this Russian Grand strategy will launch various forms of offensive actions against countries of Central Europe and Baltic region. Therefore, it is our duty and obligation to help Ukraine not only to defend Ukraine, but also to prevent the repetition of such scenarios of Russian aggression (kinetic and/or non-kinetic) against other countries in Europe. And outside of Europe as well. At the same time, the victory of Ukraine, as well as the way, in which it will be achieved, is a clear indicator to other potential aggressors, of how they could be countered and defeated in the event of offensive operations.

20. The Russian intelligence community continues its destructive and malign activities in areas, that Russia understands as their spheres of interest in accordance with the policies and activities of the former Soviet Union seen during the Cold War. New terminology, new names, new organizational structures are on the surface. But the old communist mentality and modus operandi are still in charge. It shows that there was no democratic transition of the intelligence community to become a democratic one.

21. The EU and NATO should be aware of this fact just like our partners. We have to develop partnerships and alliances in

this direction in order to suppress the malignant activity of the Russian intelligence community on a regional and global level.

Hybrid Threats

22. The development of STRATCOM capabilities and abilities is vital for fighting against hybrid threats, which are tending to influence decision-making process.

23. The communication of experts and scientists from different fields of science, who have different perspectives, with the aim of exchange of information, experience, and knowledge, are vital to develop successful and realistic abilities and capabilities of societies and states to be resilient against emerging security challenges.

24. The protection of the public information environment against malicious activities is of crucial importance for societal resilience.

25. The resilience of societies is directly endangered by internal divisions, that hybrid attackers want to create or to deepen existing ones. Ukraine has gained enormous experience in ensuring national resilience and resistance. This experience should be used in the Lessons Identified - Lessons Learned (LI-LL) process between NATO/EU member states.

26. Strengthening awareness, improving literacy, and education of the population is of particular importance. Population must make decisions in political processes on the basis of accurate, true and complete information received from credible sources and not on the basis of rumors and disinformation that threaten the very foundations of modern democracy, human rights and freedoms.

EU Enlargement and Crisis Areas

27. The accession processes of countries to the EU (candidates and the ones, who are supposed to become so) should not be stopped because of security challenges. Connecting candidate countries with their EU neighbors should help them to accept EU standards, values, principles and beliefs, on which the EU is based. They must accept these principles primarily for a better future of their citizens and of Europe as a whole.

28. The Euro-Atlantic path of all countries from Europe, that are not yet in these frameworks, should be supported. They should accept and adopt all criteria set during the negotiation process.

29. Russia's activities of destabilization and causing conflicts, unrest, and crises in the WB6 area are not abating, but intensifying as their military, information, and political position in the aggression against Ukraine and in Eastern Europe weakens.

30. Russian influence operations, supported by Serbian attack vectors from the spectrum of hybrid threats, lead to serious malign consequences for the internal security and stability of Montenegro as a NATO allies. Increased influence and even participation in the immediate executive and legislative power in Montenegro of Serbian, Russian, pro-Serbian and pro-Russian political organizations, non-governmental organizations, media, and the Serbian Orthodox Church can have a negative effect on the cohesion of the NATO alliance. It would enable access to sensitive data of the NATO alliance to Russia and Serbia.

31. Special attention should be paid to independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty, physical security, political stability, energy and economic self-sustainability, protection of the population from radicalization processes and the introduction of divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Moldova.

