



“Creating a Sphere of Security in the Wider Central Europe: Non-military aspects of security in V4 countries - prospects for co-operation”

Date and Place: 30th March 2011, Mirror Hall of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague

By Sam Wilhelm-Ross

-Background and Purpose of Conference

Cooperation over the project “**Creating a Sphere of Security in the Wider Central Europe**” began in 2007 as a collaboration of four policy institutions in the Visegrad Region: The Institute of International Relations, the Polish Institute of International Affairs, The Hungarian Institute of International Affairs, and The Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association. This is the third in a series of four scheduled conferences. The previous two concerned the evaluation of the results of security cooperation in the Visegrad Region vis-à-vis the V4 papers, and Visegrad cooperation with NATO and the ESDP respectively. This third conference continued the established dialogue among V4 countries focusing specifically on the non-military aspects of security; the selected topics being, radical Islam, organized crime, and illicit migration and human trafficking. All of the aforementioned issues are of critical importance to the security and livelihood of the Visegrad countries.

Among one of the most recurring topics discussed was the subregional cooperation of the V4 countries and the regional preferences in tackling these transnational threats. Another one of the underlying issues was the possible of enhancement of the cooperation between the national

and local law-enforcement agencies from the V4 countries and their neighbors in Eastern and Southern Europe on the aforementioned issues.

Opening remarks

Michal Kořan, *Head of Research, IIR, Prague.*

Mr. Kořan opened the conference by summing the achievements of the project to date. He briefly spoke of the previous conferences in Poland and Hungary, and the upcoming one in Slovakia. He then outlined the aims of the project as being chiefly to support the continued cooperation of academic centers focused on the security policy of Visegrad countries. The specific topic of interest of today's conference was introduced as the different aspects of non-military security. According to Mr. Kořan all of the ideas discussed today should be done so with the goal in mind of improving internal communication and cooperation within the V4.

Keynote Speech

August Pradetto, *Professor, Helmut Schmidt University - University of the Federal Armed Forces Hamburg*

-V4 Identity

Professor Pradetto opened his keynote speech with a brief explanation of the identity of the Visegrad countries calling it both a post-Communist development and Central European identity. He noted that the Visegrad countries have a specific history and experiences that can be very useful for shaping European foreign policy. He also stressed that international terrorism is not a major problem for Visegrad countries. He attributed this to the success of this group in efficiently responding to threats especially over the last ten years in areas concerning prevention.

-Terrorism's Causes

He then went on to discuss the three major motives of international terrorism and where they are most prevalent. These three factors are: the perception of humiliation and inferiority and of being seen and treated by the West as a second-class race, socioeconomic conditions, and the absence of democracy.

-EU's Strategy

How the EU handles its peripheral regions, especially the Middle East will play a critical part in its counter-terrorism strategy going forward. Because this is an area outside of the jurisdiction of the EU this presents a more complex problem to combat than illicit migration, human trafficking, or organized crime. These are taking place inside the continent and the EU has the institutions in place to tackle these issues.

Session 1: Global Terrorism and the Visegrad Cooperation in the Context of the EU Counter-terrorism Strategy

The task of the first panel was to focus on the possible contribution of the Visegrad countries towards counter-terrorism strategy in a European and international context. Among the topics covered in this panel were: increased cooperation among V4 countries, the absence of homegrown Muslim communities in the V4, and preventing the potential for future threats.

Chair: Oldřich Bureš, Director, Department of International Relations and European Studies, Metropolitan University Prague

Czech Republic – Jan Eichler, Research Fellow, Institute of International Relations (IIR), Prague

Slovakia – Ivo Samson, Senior Researcher, Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA), Bratislava

Poland – Kacper Rekawek, Research Fellow, Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), Warsaw

Hungary – Péter Marton, Research Fellow, Institute of International Studies, Corvinus University of Budapest

Jan Eichler

-International Terrorism

Mr. Eichler's presentation was framed around issues in international terrorism. He briefly classified acts of terrorism into three different periods, the first being national terrorism, then international terrorism, and finally 9/11. Critically, each phase of terrorism was characterized by greater lethality and increase in scale of the conflict. He then discussed the European 'homegrown' terrorism and concluded that the V4 countries are not posed with as great a risk as some western European nations. This is because none of the V4 countries host a significant Muslim population with a strong identity and they do not have direct dealings with the Arab world as does France for example. Upon reflecting on the threat of terrorism in Cold War times, he concluded that the world is not actually more dangerous than in the Cold War, but only more complex.

Ivo Samson

-EU Counter-Terrorism

Mr. Samson focused his presentation on the EU counter-terrorism strategy. He asserted that the EU has relatively limited capabilities and thus their contributions to the global war on terrorism are restricted between prevention and response. He illustrated this by briefly describing EU's historical preference for a soft power approach in combating terrorism. He was also keen to point out that the V4 region is not as susceptible to risk as Russia or parts of Western Europe due that same lack of a homegrown community. He illustrated this point by offering the example of his native Slovakia where 5,000 Muslims live and yet there is not one single mosque in the country. Overall, Mr. Samson reached a similar conclusion to Mr. Eichler that being that the situation in the V4 is relatively safe and the homegrown brand of terrorism is potentially the most problematic for Europe.

Kacper Rekawek

-V4 as a Target of Terrorism

Mr. Rekawek offered a more pessimistic view and took the position that the V4 is indeed a target of international terrorism because of its continued support of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In asserting this, Mr. Rekawek's point was that the V4 should not allow itself to become complacent, and fall under the illusion that it is immune from attack. In order to prevent potential attacks, Mr. Rekawek outlined the measures that should continue to be taken including an increased buildup in police force with specialized capabilities. Instead of homegrown terrorism and the absence of a Muslim community, Mr. Rekawek views the issue of proliferation as the most imminent threat. He called for greater cooperation between police forces of the V4 countries in terms of information and tactics. Prevention can only come through greater levels of cooperation, and this conference for example, was a step in the right direction.

Péter Marton

-Hungarian Anti-Terrorism

Mr. Marton illustrated the differences between internal and external issues a country faces in combating terrorism by looking at the historical institutional response from a Hungarian perspective. He defined loosely used terms such as anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism. He then cited specific examples of cases that occurred within the Hungarian borders and abroad, and the subsequent response of the government in those situations. The increasing number of Hungarian emigrants was likened to an unstoppable force and recognizing its potential, he called it an issue which requires careful security policy planning. Top-down decision making is not always the most effective, and these specific situations would be better served if they were taken with a more bottom-up approach. He concluded by saying that the response needs to fit the situation, and through sharing experiences everyone will benefit.

-Statistical Anecdote

Before the fielding of questions, Mr. Bures pointed out just how much perception can differ from reality by offering a statistic on terrorism. Despite the focus of the presentations

mostly being centered around radical Islam, 90 percent of all terrorist attacks are due to separatist regimes, not Islamic terrorism.

Floor Opened for Questions

Question 1

In light of the events in Tahir Square and across the Arab World, where does this leave Islamic radicalism?

Answer

There was mention of a potential backlash to these non-violent uprisings in the short term, and Libya was given as evidence that radical Islam, under an authoritarian regime, is still a very dangerous force. Professor Pradetto went on to suggest that history does not support the theory that Europe will intervene in Libya, citing historic examples in Central Asia and North Africa.

Question 2

Some of terrorism inside the EU is rooted in the economic situation and as the V4 countries' standard of living increases, does this not increase the risk of an attack?

Answer

The panel generally concurred that with the rise of wealth and prosperity the potential for attack does inevitably increase.

Session II: Organized Crime in the Visegrad Group Countries

This panel focused on the criminal underworld that operates inside the V4 region. There has been a significant increase in activity since the fall of communism, and thus an increased analysis of these developments is required. Among the topics covered were: organizational structure of criminal groups, demography of the organizations, and the sharing of information among V4 members.

Chair: Jacek Durkalec, Research Fellow, PISM, Warsaw

Czech Republic – Miroslav Nožina, Research Fellow, IIR, Prague

Slovakia – Miroslav Lisoň, Director of the Department of Criminal Police, Police Academy, Bratislava

Poland – Emil W. Plywaczewski, Professor of Criminal Law and Criminology, Faculty of Law, University of Bialystok

Hungary – Szilveszter Póczik, Senior Researcher, National Institute of Criminology, Budapest

Miroslav Nožina

-Organized Crime in the Czech Republic

Mr. Nožina spoke of crime structures that move freely around the world and have become a serious international concern. He believes that these structures have penetrated Central Europe and Eastern Europe to the extent that they must be evaluated. He then gave a detailed account of organized crime and the particular experience of the Czech Republic. The presentation mostly focused on developments from 1990 forward. He subsequently identified the different groups that participate in organized crime in the Czech Republic ranging from the unsurprising Russian Mafia to the more exotic Vietnamese and Chinese groups. He stressed that despite the perception, sophisticated economic crimes are also being committed by these groups from tax evasion to their direct involvement with privatization. This does not exclude their involvement in more traditional petty crime activities like drug trafficking and other forms of illegal trade which is still occurring in the Czech Republic today.

Miroslav Lisoň

-The Slovakian Police's Approach to Organized Crime

Mr. Lisoň was in the unique position to give a firsthand account of a policeman's approach in Slovakia. He mentioned the issue of a civilian's trust in their police force and said it cannot be taken for granted. He outlined some of the particular strategies the police use in surveilling, analyzing, and tracking a criminal group. Which activities are highly correlated with illegal activity, what is the target of a crime, and several other factors are all taken into consideration when monitoring illegal activity. Like the Czech Republic, real estate fraud is a serious problem also faced in Slovakia. He also spoke of the difficulties involved in joint

investigations involving multiple V4 countries due to language barriers, red tape, and sometimes the case being that officers are not aware of all the resources that are available to them.

Emil W. Plywaczewski

-The Changing Nature of Organized Crime

Mr. Plywaczewski spoke of the increased scope of organized crime in the V4 region, especially in the 1990s. He gave several examples as to how criminals are more organized, have higher ambitions, and they have been assisted by corrupt officials willing to take bribes. He called for transnational police action and special police cooperation to combat the international nature of organized crime in the 21st century. He cited existing examples of cooperation and reemphasized its necessity in order to adapt to the increasing threat that is organized crime. Lastly, he mentioned the actions that the Polish government has taken towards prevention including their collaboration with Hungary. The goal should be to collect the best policies and use them together in order to fight crime more efficiently.

Szilveszter Póczik

-The Dangers of Organized Crime

Mr. Póczik pointed out that organized crime is a highly sensitive topic and that one of the biggest problems scholars face in studying it is the lack of empirical data. He then went on to detail the specific Hungarian experience with organized crime, dating all the way back to 1956. Tracing the history of crime to the present, he identified periods of organized crime in Hungary with different characteristics. Like the previous speakers in this panel, he mentioned the more prevalent actors in his country and defined what their preferred criminal activities are. He also spoke of corrupt officials and how they can provide a tremendous assistance to the operation of these organizations.

Session III: Illicit migration and human trafficking in the V4 countries and the wider Central Europe

This third and final panel focused on migration flows across the V4 region. A link was established with the second panel in that most of the organized crime organizations are the ones controlling the trafficking of humans across the region as well.

Chair: Michal Kořan, Head of Research, IIR, Prague

Czech Republic – Tomáš Raděj, former Deputy Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Iraq

Slovakia – Martina Bolečková, Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations, Matej Bel University Banská Bystrica

Poland – Magdalena Lesińska, Assistant Professor and Deputy Director, Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw

Hungary – Erzsébet Rózsa, Executive Director and Senior Researcher, Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (HIIA), Budapest

Tomáš Raděj

-Iraqi Refugees Migration to Europe

Mr. Raděj focused specifically on the influx of Iraqi refugees to the world as a result of the Iraq war. He analyzed the burden taken on by western countries and illustrated that different countries were taking on a different number of refugees and thus not sharing the burden equally. He spoke of his personal experience in investigating fraudulent claims, and cited several instances of desperation which had seen several attempts to forge passports, visas and other requisite travel documents for safe entry into Europe. In the Czech Republic there is black-market activity surrounding this immigration and he demonstrated how people were willing to profit off these Iraqi's desire to immigrate and cited specific cases and names of offenders.

Martina Bolečeková

-Human Trafficking in Slovakia

Ms. Bolečeková's presentation was on human trafficking in Slovakia. She attributed the rise in human trafficking to the opening of Slovakian borders after 1990. The lack of opportunities combined with a demand for cheap labor is fueling the human trafficking industry in Slovakia. Slovakia has taken the measures that fall in line with UN, and OECD protocol in order to respond to this issue. She also outlined the government's strategy for prevention of human trafficking within a framework of EU cooperation and also via national instruments such as counseling and recovery centers. She expressed her country's desire for a greater cooperation within the V4 to share their good and bad experiences in the hopes of prevention and reduction in the future.

Magdalena Lesińska

-Migration into Europe and the V4

Ms. Lesińska themed her presentation around irregular migration movements in Poland and the rest of Europe. She spoke of the difficulties associated in studying illegal migration due to the problems of physically measuring of these movements. She called the southern gate Europe's most vulnerable point, and listed it as where they are seeing the most entries currently. The increase of migration via sea also presents a growing problem in that there are approximately 80,000km of sea borders. She also mentioned how geopolitical factors can influence a country's experience with migration as is the case with Greece's islands. In discussing prevention strategies, she also suggested that further cooperation with European neighbors is a necessity and will only enhance the situation in Poland and the rest of Europe.

Erzsébet Rózsa

-Migration from the Arab World

Ms. Rózsa focused on migration from the Mediterranean and the Arab world to Central Europe. She cited statistics to show a steady trend of migrants from the Mediterranean to Europe and suggested that this trend does not figure to change in the short term. She echoed the

sentiments of the first panel and believes that the new generation of Arab immigrants that are living in Hungary do not have a very strong Muslim identity. She identified factors that assist the migrants' assimilation, like having contacts in their new homes make a significant impact for a successful assimilation. She cited the experience of western countries and believes that V4 countries could face a similar experience now that they are becoming a more desirable destination. Lastly, she said that statistics do not suggest that there will be any decrease in migrant flows in the near future and that Hungary and the V4 should take the appropriate measures to ensure that their livelihoods are protected.