



GLOBSEC 2010
5th BRATISLAVA SECURITY CONFERENCE

LEADING SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY CONFERENCE IN CENTRAL EUROPE

PAPER SERIES

SUMMARY

Exactly the Visegrad countries, thanks to their lessons learned, can offer to countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe their experience. If Visegrad countries wish to have the Western Balkans or its Eastern border stable, then first of all the themselves have to be strong and stable and thereby naturally inspiring and prestigious for this region. Our homework therefore is to do our best so that our countries - V4 countries – would be the most useful NATO and EU members. Being a member is much more demanding than becoming a member. This has to be extended by strengthening our own capabilities in the largest sense of meaning – starting with economy via civic society up to defence capabilities. Earning membership does not mean it is all over, on the contrary, it is the beginning. However, nongovernmental as well as governmental partners in these areas are frequently focusing only on the goal of becoming a member, and they focus much less on being a member.

VISEGRAD COUNTRIES HAVE TO STRENGTHEN THEIR OWN CAPABILITIES

ZBYNĚK PAVLAČÍK

CHAIRMAN

JAGELLO 2000 - ASSOCIATION FOR EURO-ATLANTIC COOPERATION, OSTRAVA

Visegrad countries have a unique position from several points of view – they have identical historical experience with totalitarian regimes in the past century, similar experience with the accession to NATO and the European Union, and, of course, all countries have common experience with their membership in both organisations. Visegrad countries have one geographical specialty as well; in the West, this block is neighbouring with countries that form the core of the European Union as well as NATO; and, at the same time, to the East and Southeast, they are neighbouring with countries that have, at minimum, a great interest in close economic cooperation or, right away, a great interest in being invited to the European Union club.

At the same time, it is necessary to say that in the course of last year the situation at the Visegrad's eastern boarder has changed a lot – specifically in Ukraine. The outcome of the "Orange Revolution" which we all had supported is that the politician against whom was the whole Orange Revolution actually driven, so this politician became the president. And that is not only somehow a paradox but the outcome of the Ukrainian elections may simultaneously have a significant impact on future

developments in other countries of the former Soviet Union, in which we have been very strongly engaged, especially in Georgia. What I want to say is that the geopolitics in our surroundings has been changing. I can recall very well the self-confident words of the former minister of foreign affairs of Ukraine when he said "now Ukraine must help its Belorussian brothers to have their own 'Orange Revolution'". Today, five years later, everyone can have her or his opinion on how the situation in both countries matches the promises of minister Tarasyuk.

Now, let's have a look at the Visegrad's other border – the Western Balkans. This region has profoundly changed during the last two years as well. A new state, Kosovo, emerged and last week we celebrated the first anniversary of Croatia and Albania as NATO members; Macedonia, on the contrary, has not received an invitation to NATO. Great expectations of the citizens of Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia materialised in the pre-Christmas time since when the citizens of these countries do not need visa for trips to European Union countries. During that time Belgrade has changed a lot as well. I remember my first trip in the autumn of 2004 – Belgrade was a sad and dark city. Old cars were



SLOVAK ATLANTIC COMMISSION
SLOVENSKÁ ATLANTICKÁ KOMISIA
Klariská 14, 811 03 Bratislava,
Slovak Republic
Phone/fax: 00421/2.544.106.09
e-mail: conference@globsec.org
www.globsec.org

driving on the streets and very few houses were being repaired and even less of them were being built. Today, Belgrade is totally different; you can feel its dynamism and even more you can feel the ambitions to become once again a natural metropolis of the whole region, for which Belgrade has all the qualifications. It is definitely an excellent thing that the Serbian Parliament has condemned the Srebrenica massacre, and that at the Belgrade airport we could see government leaflets being distributed, offering a financial remuneration for help in apprehending General Radko Mladić. The renewal of Belgrade-Zagreb airline connection was also very good news, which used to be so much a matter of course, but which in recent years was not so obvious at all.

In Serbia, unlike in Ukraine, the civic society is much more developed, which is very important. The civic sector there is very strong, professional and influential, and in the Euro-Atlantic integration area the civic society has definitely made a greater progress than the Serbian establishment. If the Ukrainian "Orange Revolution" did make a mistake somewhere, then it was its failure to create systemic conditions for supporting civic associations, namely of those active in the area of public diplomacy. It is naturally in the interest of the whole Europe, and especially of our Visegrad countries, to have the entire Balkan region as a stable and prospering part of the Euro-Atlantic community. I would like to share with you three proposals on how to achieve this goal.

Because we have gained most of experience from Serbia and, at the same time, we consider Serbia to be a key country of the whole region, thus we will focus primarily on Serbia. Serbia is a key to the stability of the Western Balkans, especially if we take a look at the developments in Bosnia. Without a stable and democratic Serbia there would not be a stable and democratic Bosnia and this could result in the instability of the whole region.

" Our strategy must be clear in that regard that we have serious interest in cooperating with you but only if you are interested in this cooperation as well. This may seem a matter of course, but it is not always so self-evident. "

The first proposal reads as follows: Let's cooperate but do not intrude upon anyone. This holds primarily for cooperation with the Serbian Armed Forces which enjoy a very important status within the Serbian society. The Serbian MoD and the General Staff receive every month a lot of various offers to

implement various projects from many countries. Defence Attaches of these countries at their embassies in Belgrade are often very nervous in awaiting the response from the Serbian side whether it would or would not accept these very useful and respectable offers. Sometimes one cannot resist the impression that some Serbian officers as well as ministerial servants have the feeling that by cooperating in those projects it is them who are forthcoming and that the implementation thereof is more important for us than for them. Which is, of course, not true and it is not right. If we built our relations on these distorted foundations, it would backfire for both sides in the future. Our strategy must be clear in that regard that we have serious interest in cooperating with you but only if you are interested in this cooperation as well. This may seem a matter of course, but, unfortunately, it is not always so self-evident.

The second point reads as follows: If we wish to be successful at the Western Balkans or anywhere else in the post Soviet area, then NATO and the European Union have to be primarily strong, successful, prestigious and, above all, prospective organisations. Our road to success in these regions leads only through successes at home. And in my opinion it is our biggest homework. If we wish to have the Western Balkans stable, then first of all we ourselves have to be strong and stable and thereby naturally inspiring and prestigious for this region. Motivation arising from the cancellation of visa regime is not enough. Both NATO and the European Union have to be perceived even beyond their borders as prestigious and strong organisations. Our homework therefore is to do our best so that our countries - V4 countries - would be the most useful NATO and EU members. And we, the civic associations, have their fair potential for accomplishing this goal.

Third - a final proposal: We share our experience not only on how we became members of NATO and EU, but also on the fact what it actually means to be a member of these organisations. In other words, being a member is much more demanding than becoming a member. That earning membership does not mean it is all over, on the contrary, it is the beginning. This point seems to me to be the most important of all and based on many years of experience I have a feeling that non-governmental as well as governmental partners in these areas are frequently focusing only on the goal of becoming a member, and they focus much less on being a member.

Exactly the Visegrad countries, thanks to their lessons learned, can offer to countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe their experience, naturally, focused not only on the theme: how to become a member but also what does it mean to be a member, that the work does not end by the entry, on the contrary, it is just the beginning. Potential instability of the Western Balkans and Ukraine will always have an impact on Central Europe. We, the NGOs, can do a lot in terms of strengthening our countries to be strong NATO and EU members and thereby contribute to the strengthening of both organisations and, at the same time, make both NATO and EU naturally even more attractive to all.

It is no secret that the Czech Republic completed most of its reforming tasks in the period preceding its entry to both organisations. With the eleven years of membership in NATO and six years of membership in EU behind us, we may frankly say that we are now in a period when we exhausted our foreign and security policy. We need new impulses, new themes and new challenges. If we find them and if we are able to implement them, then we shall be very prosperous to our countries and NATO and EU, and in the end to countries of the Western Balkans and of the former Soviet Union.

In the Czech Republic we very much miss a new, strong and topical security theme, like the one in the period prior to the entry to NATO and the missile defence issue in recent years. Our association, Jagello 2000, is getting ready for the autumn seminar the goal of which will be to identify a new security theme which would benefit our country and strengthen NATO and, at the same time, it would fit our economic strength and be politically viable. I personally perceive this as our most important goal. And may be, if all Visegrad countries would be interested also in identifying their own new security theme, and simultaneously be willing to have discussions with their partners the issue of mutual cooperation, then they would thereby directly strengthen their security capabilities, and furthermore strengthen the overall NATO and EU capabilities and, we would become more attractive for other countries.

“ Visegrad countries have quite a fair potential for influencing European policies – due to both the historical experience and the geographical position. ”

Visegrad countries have quite a fair potential for influencing European policies – due to both the historical experience mentioned in the introduction and, thanks to, the geographical position there is a unique opportunity to make use of the understanding for “western way of thinking” in cooperation with countries located in the east and southeast of our block.

Assumptions shown above however need to be extended by strengthening our own capabilities in the largest sense of meaning – starting with economy via civic society up to defence capabilities. If we succeed in this, then the prestige and importance not only of Visegrad but also of both most important clubs, which we are members of, can more actively influence the internal and external policy of both clubs.

ABOUT GLOBSEC PAPER SERIES

Globsec Paper Series provides Slovak and broader security community with policy recommendations by decision and opinion-makers throughout Euro-Atlantic. Their aim is to foster the discussion on current international security issues and transatlantic agenda bringing upon critical assessment the topic.

ABOUT GLOBSEC

GLOBSEC is the annual high-level leading international foreign policy and security conference in Central Europe. Since 2005, this forum has been gathering the most influential governmental, nongovernmental, corporate leaders and opinion builders, including journalists and security experts. GLOBSEC annually creates an unparalleled venue for international and domestic security community to discuss solutions to key transatlantic and global security challenges in Central Europe.

ABOUT SAC

The Slovak Atlantic Commission (SAC) is an independent, non-partisan, non-governmental organization which deals with national and international security issues. Aim of the Slovak Atlantic Commission is to support constructive and active involvement of the Slovak Republic in international affairs with emphasis on cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic community, support of transatlantic cooperation and effective implementation of foreign and security policy of SR through building a net of individuals and institutions (state, non-governmental and private), unified in strong security community. The Slovak Atlantic Commission represents a net of leaders who bring ideas to power and give power to ideas.