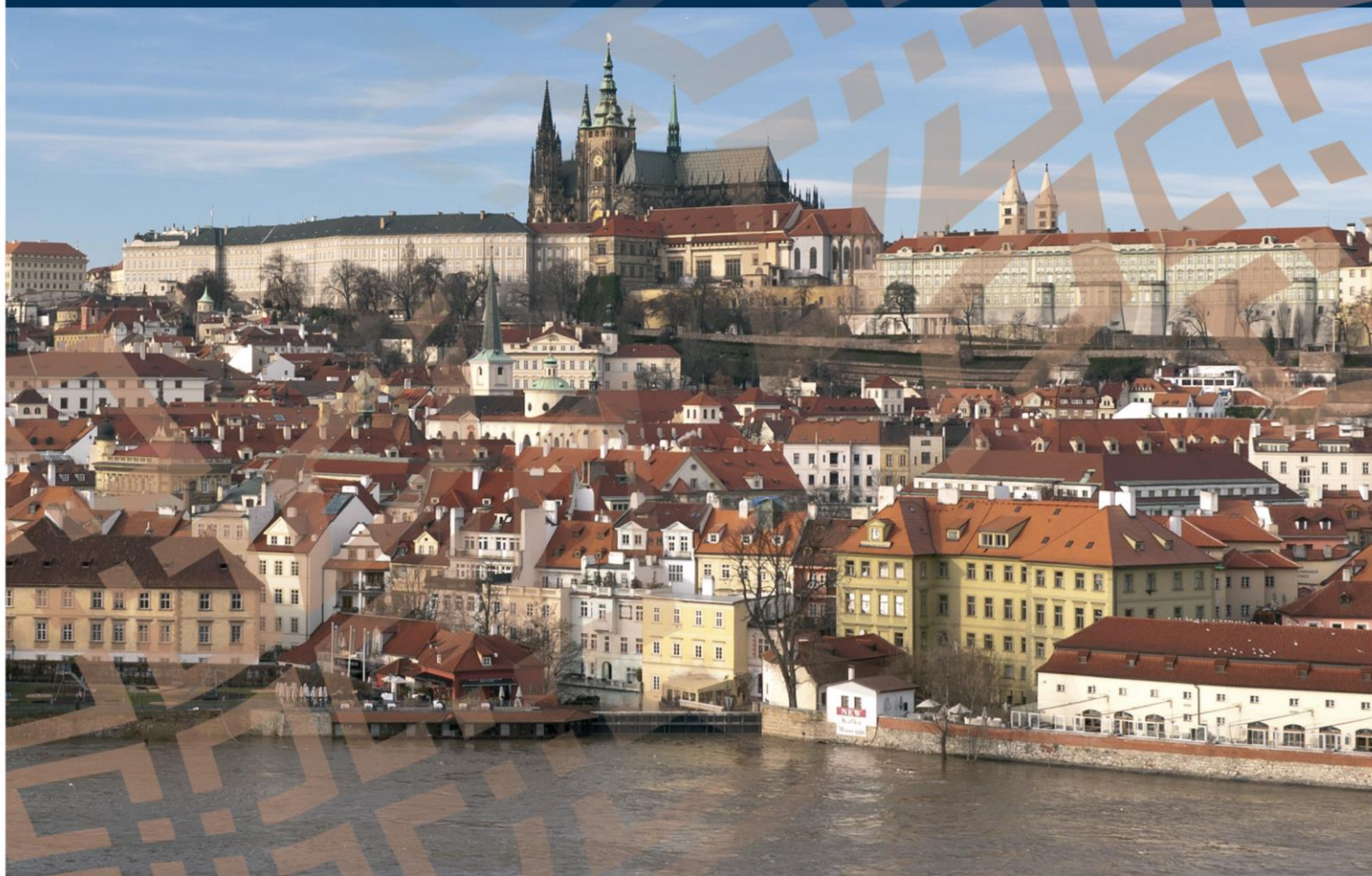




CENTRUM TRANSATLANTICKÝCH VZTAHŮ
Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations

PCTR Newsletter

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Message from the Director

Dear PCTR friends,

I would like to welcome you at our November issue of PCTR Newsletter. During last month, we have been through series of serious events that took place in Paris and which consequences can be still felt today. Increased threat is perceived by many of our allies who place greater emphasis on safety measures to prevent similar appalling crimes. Further monitoring focuses on many current events that affect the world affairs in the field of Euro-Atlantic relation.



Over the last month we organized two exciting events. The first event was a public lecture with Dr. Michael Raska titled "[Is China a Threat to the World Order or Guarantor of Stability?: \(Geo\)Strategic Transformation and Military Modernization in East Asia](#)". However, during preparation of our next public event "[Mikes Place: Love, Blues and Terror in Tel Aviv 2003](#)", nobody from our team expected the subsequent events in the Paris Betaclan club. Terrorist attacks on civilians hit many sensitive spots and warned on the increasing threat of Islamic state, which threatens the concept of Western states. At the same time, the similarity between the two terrorist attacks added more topicality to the event.

I wish you pleasant reading and I hope that we will meet again during one of our future events. Moreover, on behalf of the entire team of PCTR, I would like to wish a Merry Christmas and an easy start in the year 2016.

Yours sincerely,

*Alexandr Vondra
Director*

PCTR Bulletin

On November 3, PCTR organized a public lecture with the title "Is China a Threat to the World order or Guarantor of Stability?: (Geo)Strategic Transformation and Military Modernization in East Asia". The lecture was opened and hosted by Tomas Pojar, the Vice president of the CEVRO Institute and the former Czech Ambassador in the State of Israel. The main speaker was Dr. Michael Raska, who is currently a Research Fellow in the Military Transformations Programme at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore.



The main speaker spoke extensively about East Asia's geostrategic transformations and described the development of military strategy in China. He also talked about future trajectories and strategic implications, and outlined the perspective on China's intentions and

goals. Moreover, he did not forget to comment on how China perceives the Czech Republic. The lecture was followed by a discussion, in which he answered questions, such as the Chinese investment in the mining industry or the cooperation of China with Russia.

We would like to thank our media partners: Civic Institute, CEVRO and the journal Defence and Strategy. We would also like to thank Česká zbrojovka, International Institute for Counter-

Terrorism (ICT) at IDC Herzliya University and Mr. Petr Mothejl for support.

Media output from this event can be found on ParlamentníListy.cz and for audio from the event, [click here](#).

On 26th of November, the Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations of the CEVRO Institute (PCTR) and Aligier Publishing organized a public event with the title "Mike's Place: Love, Blues and Terror in Tel Aviv 2003". The lecture was opened by Alexandr Vondra, PCTR Director and the former Minister of Defence and the Czech Foreign Minister, and hosted by Jiří Š. Cieslar from the CEVRO Institute. The main speaker of the event was Joshua Faudem, who is a documentary filmmaker, a co-author of the comic book Mike's Place and a witness of the terrorist act in Tel Aviv in 2003.



The main guest began his speech with brief information about the current events in Israel and the terror attack in Paris. Joshua was born in Detroit and when he was 6 years old, he moved to Jerusalem. Since his childhood, he wanted to be a filmmaker. After studying at FAMU in Prague, he returned to Israel, where he began to work as a bartender at Mike's Place owned by his old friend. This place was an extraordinary one in the region. People of many nationalities met there and nobody was concerned about religious faith of others. Everyone had fun every night.



Originally, Joshua wanted to make a film about Russian emigrants, however, when he got an offer from an American director Jack Baxter to film and direct a documentary about Mike's Place, he couldn't refuse. "We filmed staff and visitors of the club. We asked them why they chose Mike's Place. Every day there was live music." he said. "We sat with Jack in the garden in front of the bar and discussed further plans related to the film. I went inside for a drink. And that is when it happened. Suddenly I saw many of my friends being killed and injured. I was in shock but I was able to run for a camera and I tried to capture the situation." His presentation was supplemented not only with a trailer from the document Blues by the Beach, but also with a comic book trailer of which he is the author: "Mike's Place: A True Story of Love, Blues, and Terror in Tel Aviv". After the stirring story, there was time for questions. The meeting was rounded off with autograph signing of the book "Mike's Place" (new Czech edition), which was available for discounted price.



We would like to thank our media partners: Civic Institute, ParlamentniListy.cz, CEVRO, Eretz.cz, Czech-Israeli Chamber of Commerce and journal Defence and Strategy. **Audio from the event can be found [here](#).**

Events in Euro-Atlantic relations (November 2015)

On November 2, 2015 the Czech Government approved an increase in troops and equipment for the NATO Response Force (NRF). Strengthening of NATO forces is a part of the Readiness Action Plan adopted at NATO summit in Wales as an answer to Russian activities in Eastern Europe.

<http://www.mocr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/vlada-schvalila-navyseni-poctu-vojaku-a-techniky-pro-sily-rychle-reakce-nato-116294/>

The new NATO southern strategy – that is going to be discussed in early December – will react to both Russian reinforcement in the region and increasing instability of the Middle East. Free movement in the Mediterranean is of crucial importance for the Alliance and therefore this region must not undergo a reduction in NATO forces due to current reinforcement in the Eastern Europe. According to the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, General Adrian Bradshaw, the strengthening of allied forces could ensure an effective deterrence of possible enemy, and thus keep the peace.

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/6b511b82-82fa-11e5-8e80-1574112844fd.html#axzz3t4fC9JzX>

The NATO summit of member countries from Eastern Europe was held on November 4, 2015 in Bucharest to discuss the worries of Russian aggressive policy in Eastern Europe. In final joint statement, all participating countries agreed that they will urge permanent NATO presence in the region. All countries were represented by their presidents, only the Czech President, Miloš Zeman, missed this mini summit because he was visiting Czech regions.

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/svet/1613294-vychodni-zeme-nato-chteji-stalou-pritomnost-aliancnich-vojaku>

Czech helicopter crashed at NATO training on November 5, 2015 in Spain. The Mi-171S type helicopter was severely damaged and 5 soldiers were lightly wounded in the accident. NATO military exercise called Trident Juncture 2015 was finished according to the plan on the following day. It was the largest NATO military training in the decade. Besides land operations, it featured also maritime maneuvers. Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, General Petr Pavel, emphasized the importance of this exercise especially for improvement in interoperability between member and partner countries. General Pavel also highlighted the crucial importance of maritime force for maintaining collective defense and global security.

<http://www.acr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/nehoda-ceskeho-vrtulniku-ve-spanelsku-116435/>, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_124430.htm?selectedLocale=en

Turkey asked for support in securing its airspace due to recent violation of Turkish airspace by Russian aircrafts that was mentioned in our latest Newsletter. The United States reacted with deployment of six F-15C fighters to Ircirlik Airbase. According to American commanders, the aim is to support the fight against the Islamic State while NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg expressed concerns about the growing Russian presence in the region. The tensions escalated on November 24, 2015 when Turkey shot down Russian bomber. Ankara stated that the aircraft violated Turkish airspace and that pilots were warned several times which the Russians dispute. In reaction to this incident, Russian President, Vladimir Putin, imposed sanctions on Turkey and declared that the visa-free regime between both countries will be abolished in early 2016.

<http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2015/11/06/us-deploys-6-f-15-jets-to-turkish-air-base>,
<http://www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/evropa/ zprava/putin-vyhlasil-sankce-proti-turecku-postihnou-obchod-a-dopravu--1558983>,
<http://echo24.cz/a/wKUpQ/rusky-pilot-popira-tureckou-verzi-zadne-varovani-zadne-naruseni>

President of the United States Barack Obama hosted Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu on November 9, 2015. They discussed, among others, the renewal of American military aid package, which is about to expire in 2017. The amount of American aid may increase from 3 billion dollars per year up to 5 billion dollars per year.

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/11/09/us-security-aid-to-israel-may-increase-to-5-billion-a-year.html>

Nordic and Baltic defense Ministers met on November 9 and 10, 2015 in Stockholm. The aim of this meeting was to discuss the strengthening of Nordic cooperation within NATO and with the non-member states in the region. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg welcomed both the growing cooperation and increasing NATO military presence in the region. Stoltenberg also added that NATO objective is not confronting Russia but a dialogue and mutual cooperation based on predictability and strength. Enhanced NATO cooperation with Finland and Sweden started when the Russian Federation annexed Crimea in 2014.

<http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/warfare/2015/11/12/nato-deepen-nordic-presence-through-sweden-finland/75642104/>,
<http://www.ibtimes.com/amid-russian-hostility-nato-agrees-war-pact-sweden-finland-baltic-regions-2181804>

Arrcade Fusion 2015 military exercise of Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) was held at the Latvian Lielvarde Airbase from November 9 to November 19, 2015. About 1700 troops from twenty NATO member states, including the Czech Republic, and Sweden participated in this training focusing on coordination of different elements of command during a fictional land operation in the Baltic.

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_124842.htm?selectedLocale=en

Czech soldiers participated in the Iron Sword 2015 military exercise that was held from November 9 to 20, 2015 in Lithuania. Troops from nine NATO member countries and Georgia were involved. The of the exercise was to train interaction, coordination and readiness of NATO forces.

<http://www.acr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/strakonicti-vojaci-se-v-litve-zapojili-do-mezinarodniho-cviceni-iron-sword-2015-116529/>

Helmut Schmidt who was a West Germany Chancellor from 1974 – 1982 died at age 96 on November 10, 2015. As a Chancellor he succeeded in emancipating West Germany as an independent and assertive country. During his tenure, Schmidt had to deal with several difficult tasks including economic crisis and terrorist attacks of left extremists. After Soviet Union rejected the disarmament proposals, Schmidt approved the American missiles deployment to West Germany despite the objections of the majority of Germans and being a strong disarmament supporter himself. After he finished his career in politics, Schmidt joined Die Zeit journal.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/10/helmut-schmidt-former-west-german-chancellor-dies-aged-96>

Another round of presidential debates of both major parties was held in the United States in November. Fourth Republican debate took place on November 4, 2015 focusing on foreign policy among others, especially the fight against the Islamic State and the relation with Russia. While Donald Trump and Rand Paul opposed current American interventionism, other candidates proposed more aggressive foreign and defense policy. According to Trump, the fight against ISIS should be led by countries in the region including Russia, not by the US. Based on the latest IPSOS poll for Reuters, Donald Trump still leads the polls with 30 %. Ben Carson (14.7 %) is second, however, his support significantly decreased since the end of October while numbers for third Marco Rubio (9.2 %) and fourth Ted Cruz (8.3 %) increased. Democrats' debate from November 14, 2015 was influenced by the Paris terrorist attacks from the previous day. Senator Bernie Sanders criticized American invasion in Iraq which he thinks initiated the growth of instability in the Middle East and the subsequent rise of the Islamic State. Former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton identified support to moderate Syrian opposition as the important element of solution for Syria. Clinton still leads the polls considerably.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/15/us-usa-election-democrats-idUSKCN0T401B20151115#SJKes0DpYbYbh7qu.97>, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/fourth-gop-debate-tonight-will-be-key-test-for-bush/2015/11/10/f6c52a96-87be-11e5-be8b-1ae2e4f50f76_story.html

On November 12, 2015 National Council of Slovakia approved the establishment of NATO Force integration Unit (NFIU) in Slovakia. As was mentioned in our latest Newsletter, NATO member countries agreed on the creation of Slovakian NFIU in October. About 40 people will serve for the new NFIU with about half of them being from Slovakia and the other half from other Alliance members. The NFIU will start to operate in 2016.

<http://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/308109/na-slovensku-bude-posobit-tim-vojenskych-planovacov-z-nato/>

According to US Department of Defense, the United States carried out an attack near Syrian Raqqa on November 12, 2015 which targeted a man known as Jihadi John. He was killed in the attack. The man was identified as British Mohammed Emwazi who became famous by appearing in the Islamic State's propaganda videos in which he was killing hostages.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/jihadi-john-killed-us-officials-confirm-mohammed-emwazi-is-dead-after-raqqa-drone-strike-a6732741.html>

Final joint training of Visegrad Battlegroup (V4 EU BG) named Common Challenge 2015 took place from November 13 to November 20, 2015 in Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area and in Krakow, Poland. Troops from the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary participated in this exercise. The V4 EU BG will be on standby in the first half of 2016 and it is going to consist of more than a 3700 men.

http://www.natoaktual.cz/battlegroup-visigradu-dokoncuje-pripravu-fjb-na-zpravu.aspx?c=A151112_114640_na_zpravu_m00

Six terrorist attacks resulting in 130 deaths were carried out simultaneously in Paris on Friday, November 13, 2015. French President Hollande denoted the attacks as an act of war that was planned by the Islamic State in Syria and organized in Belgium. In response, a state of emergency was declared in France and the French Air Force intensified strikes against the ISIS positions in Syria. The highest degree of threat was announced in Brussels, where a counter-terrorist operation took

place. According to the Director of CIA, fight against the ISIS requires unprecedented level of intelligence cooperation and information sharing on global level. Cooperation with Russia is of crucial importance in this respect. Hacktivist network Anonymous also proclaimed support to France and declared cyber war on the ISIS. Article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty was activated for the first time – this Article commits EU member states to provide all the possible help and support to attacked member state. On November 20, 2015 the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a Resolution urging all states capable of fighting against the ISIS to participate and coordinate their efforts.

<http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/2015/11/14/hollande-paris-attacks-were-act-war-islamic-state/75771572/>, <http://echo24.cz/a/wxt2N/on-line-hon-na-teroristy-pokracuje-abdeslam-prcha>, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/17/france-invokes-eu-article-427-what-does-it-mean>, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/breaking-news/2015/11/16/deeper-us-russia-intel-relationship-developing/75873908/>

Main issues such as security questions and fight against terrorism were discussed at the G20 summit, which was held from November 15 to November 16, 2015 in Turkey. The US President said that it is essential to eliminate the threat of the Islamic State and ensure peaceful transformation of Syria. Obama agreed with the Russian president that the negotiation should be carried out by the UN and the peaceful process should be led by Syrians. Meanwhile, another round of Syria peace talks was held in Vienna. Although Russians and Americans disagree on the issue of the future of Bashar al-Asaad, the timetable of peace process was approved during the talks according to which transitional Syrian government should be established in 6 months and new election should be held in 18 months.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/16/g20-barack-obama-and-vladimir-putin-agree-to-syrian-led-transition>, <http://zahranicni.ihned.cz/evropa-slovensko/c1-64865760-ve-vidni-se-znovu-jednalo-o-syrii-rezim-se-ma-jeste-letos-setkat-s-opozici>

Our November newsletter reported that the US president Obama announced deployment of US Special Forces to Syria. During the G20 Summit Obama recommended Turkey and France to do a similar move. Americans also urged their allies to increase mutual cooperation and intelligence information sharing. In late November, German government announced the plan to deploy about 1200 troops and equipment to Syria which would stand for the largest German mission abroad. The United Kingdom may become another country to join the air campaign against the ISIS. Despite Labour leaders' opposition to this decision, David Cameron is looking for support among the Labour MPs. According to British press, the proposal is highly likely to be approved.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/u-s-will-urge-france-and-turkey-to-put-special-forces-in-syria/>, <http://www.dw.com/en/german-army-could-deploy-1200-soldiers-to-syria-report/a-18882599>, <http://www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/evropa/ zprava/1558945>

Cyber Coalition 2015 NATO exercise focused on cyber security and took place from November 16 to November 20, 2015. The exercise was commanded from Estonia and it was held in many places. The aim was to examine and train NATO members' and partners' readiness to counter the still-evolving cyber threats.

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_124868.htm?selectedLocale=en

On November 17, 2015 the Russian security service confirmed that the crash of Russian airplane from the end of October was caused by explosives. Previously, the Islamic State already declared responsibility for the attack and the possible presence of explosives on board was confirmed by British

and American sources. In response, Russia intensified air strikes against Syria. However, according to American sources, most of the Russian activity is focused not on the Islamic State but on the moderate opposition against Bashar al-Assad.

<http://echo24.cz/a/wmn72/ruske-letadlo-spadlo-po-vybuchu-bomby-potvrdila-moskva>,
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34882503>, <http://echo24.cz/a/wdhtT/rusove-islamsky-stat-setri-90--naletu-miri-jinam-tvrdi-usa>

In the mid November 2015, the Government of Germany approved an extension of German training mission in Afghanistan until the end of 2016. The reason for this decision is an increasing strength of Taliban radicals in the country. Germans do not participate in direct combat and the German mission is focused on training and support of Afghan security forces. This German decision follows the American extension of the Afghan mission that was mentioned in our latest Newsletter.

https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2015/11_en/2015-11-18-mandat-afghanistan_en.html

On November 19, 2015 Czech Army sent several tons of ammunition as a gift to assist Iraq and Kurds in fight against the ISIS. Similar aid was already sent to Kurds last year and it is expected that another consignment will follow.

<http://www.mocr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/do-iraku-odletela-munice-pro-boj-s-islamskym-statem-116999/>

At the Halifax International Security Forum, Chairman of NATO Military Committee General Petr Pavel stressed out the importance of fighting the root causes of terrorism and not just its symptoms. Based on the NATO experience from mission in Afghanistan, complex crisis like the one in Syria have to be resolved by many different tools, not only by military means.

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_124984.htm?selectedLocale=en

British Government introduced its new Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 on November 23, 2015. The review reverses the policy of decreasing defense budgets and on contrary allows extensive investments to the military. According to the British Prime Minister David Cameron, this review confirms that the United Kingdom is willing to be engaged in global affairs to fight against growing security threats.

<http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/11/25/britains-new-strategic-defense-and-security-review-draws-praise-caution/76377902/>

American military experts started training the Ukrainian soldiers and special operation forces on November 23, 2015. Americans participated already in Ukrainian national guards training. The US and their allies are trying to avoid armed confrontation with Russia; however, they clearly support the Ukrainian side in the conflict against rebels in Eastern Ukraine.

<http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/2015/11/23/us-troops-begin-training-ukrainian-regular-forces/76288938/>

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg talked with representatives of Georgia on November 24 in the meeting of NATO-Georgia Commission. NATO welcomed Georgian progress in implementing rule of law and democratization of the country considering future strengthening of NATO-Georgia cooperation. A day later, Jens Stoltenberg talked with the representatives of Montenegro. Whether

Montenegro will be invited to join the Alliance will be decided in December. While the member states do not agree whether Georgia should join the NATO, Montenegro is expected to receive the invitation.

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_125182.htm?selectedLocale=en,

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_125149.htm?selectedLocale=en

The United Nations Climate Change Conference began on November 30, 2015 in Paris. The aim is to introduce new international deal reducing production of greenhouse gasses. The conference was started by a moment of silence for victims of the latest terrorist attack in Paris and all around the world. The French President identified the fight against terrorism and the fight against climate change as the two greatest global challenges. Possible agreement among the nations is complicated not only by the developing countries' attitude towards restrictions, but also by the United States refusal to accept mandatory agreement.

<http://echo24.cz/a/iQuUG/v-parizi-zacala-konference-o-klimatu-o-snizovani-emisi-bude-boj>