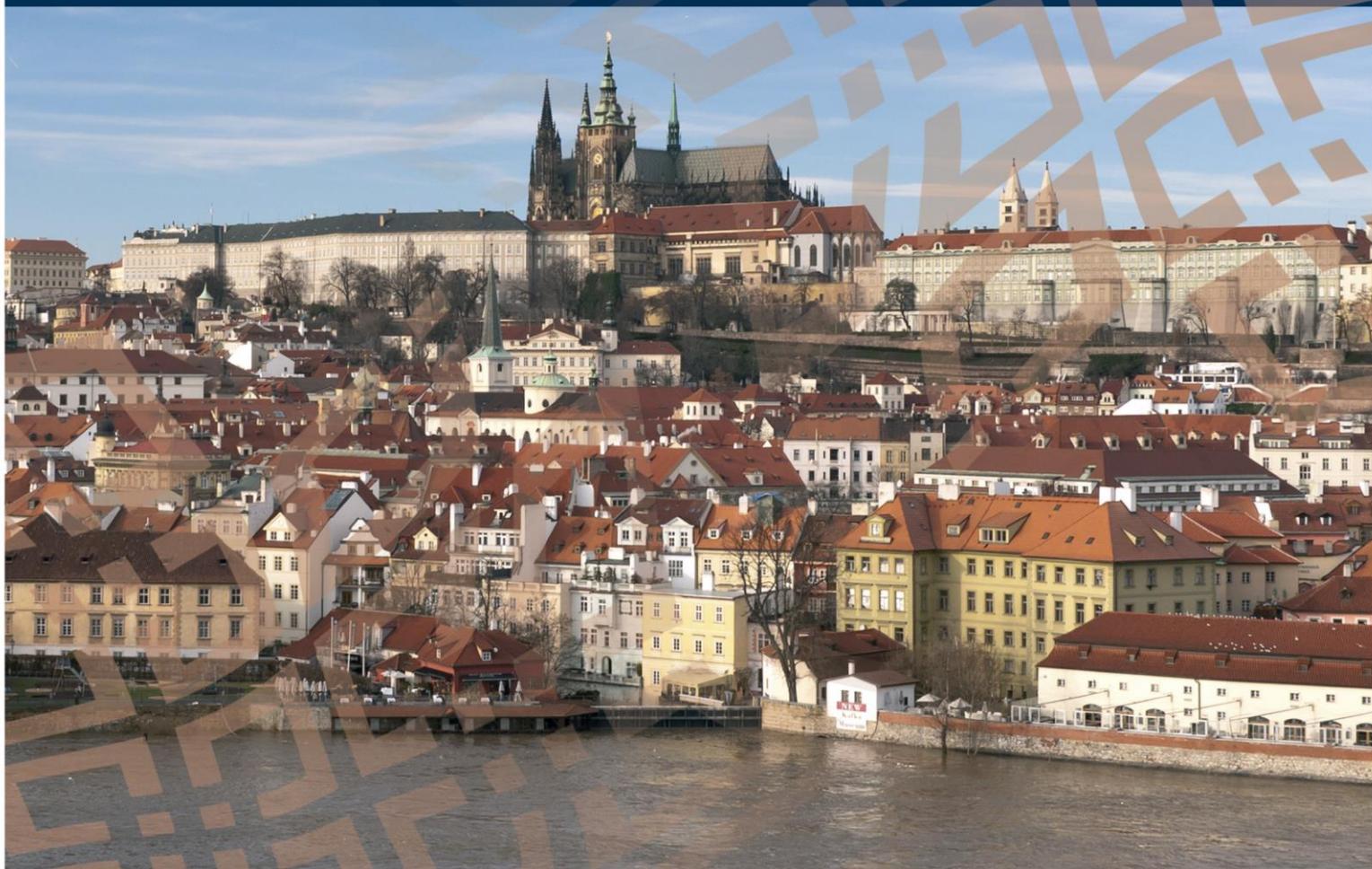




CENTRUM TRANSATLANTICKÝCH VZTAHŮ
Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations

PCTR Newsletter

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Message from the Director

Dear readers,

As usual, we have organized several interesting events for you during June - the last month of Academic Year. We have also established a [YouTube channel](#), where you have the opportunity to listen to all our public seminars, conferences and panel discussions. Right now, we are already working on new projects planned for the second half of 2014.

Traditionally, we have prepared a report about events for you, as well as a review of the most important news in the field of security and Euro-Atlantic relations in the past month.

I wish you a pleasant summer days, and I look forward to meet you at our other events.

Sincerely,

*Alexandr Vondra
Director*

PCTR Bulletin

The Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations of the CEVRO Institute organized a seminar focused on the fight against current terrorist threats. The event took place on 2nd June at 4pm in the atrium of the CEVRO Institute. The main speakers were experts from the Israeli International Institute for Counter - Terrorism at IDC College in Herzliya - Boaz Ganor, Amichai Magen, Col. (Res.) Eitan Azani and Director of the Office for Foreign Relations and Information (ÚZSI), Brigadier General Ivo Schwarz. Speakers talked about the current and future threats related to terrorism in the Middle East and Europe.



Former Interior Minister and current Chairman of the Board CEVRO Institute, Dr. Ivan Langer opened the seminar with his welcome speech. The Vice President for International Relations at CEVRO Institute, Tomas Pojar hosted the seminar. The event was attended by 140 participants, including members of the Czech Parliament, former ministers and the prime minister as well as top defense and security experts (former Chief of Staff and former heads of military intelligence among many others), members of the Czech-Israeli Chamber of Commerce, members of NGO community, representatives of the police, prison service and diplomatic corps, and civil servants including ministries of foreign affairs, interior, and defense, lecturers, students, journalists and general public.

As part of the program, Mr. Boaz Ganor gave interviews to Mr. Daniel Anýž from Hospodářské Noviny Daily, to Eliška Prchlíková from the NATO Information Center in Prague and IDNES news site, as well as a live interview for the Czech Television. Dr. Amichai Magen gave an interview to Petr Kamberský from Lidové Noviny. A detailed article covering the seminar was published on echo24.cz web site and the seminar was mentioned by the Czech Radio.

Before summer holidays, the PCTR also organized a panel discussion entitled „Putin´s Russia:



Where are its borders?" Four distinguished panelists shared their experience with Russia during discussion that took more than two hours – Libor Dvorak (Český rozhlas), Jefim Fištejn (RFEL), former Czech ambassador to Russia Petr Kolar and former chief of Military Intelligence Brigadier General Miroslav Krejcik. PCTR director Alexandr Vondra hosted the event.

Events in Euro-Atlantic relations in June 2014

NATO defense ministers gathered in Brussels on 3rd and 4th June. Military capabilities of the organization and spending on defense were the leading topics of the meeting. The future development in Afghanistan was discussed as well. Current ISAF operation should be replaced with the non-combat mission Resolute Support within two years (2015 -2016). The key objective of the new mission is to provide training and assistance to Afghan troops. Czech army is joining this mission. NATO defense ministers usually meet three times a year. Brussels' gathering has been the first since the annexation of Crimea and the last one before summit in Great Britain.

<http://www.mocr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/v-bruselu-jednali-ministri-obrany-nato-98636/>

The U.S. Air Force plans to temporarily deploy heavy bombers capable of delivering nuclear weapons to Europe. Two B-52 Stratofortresses bombers arrived at Royal Air Force Fairford, England, on 4th June. During the deployment, which will span approximately over two weeks, the multi-role heavy bombers will conduct training flights, providing opportunities for aircrews to sharpen skills in several key operational sets and become familiar with airbases and operations in the region. A B-52 will also take part in the 70th anniversary D-Day commemoration in Graignes, France.

<http://www.defensenews.com/article/20140604/DEFREG02/306040024/US-Deploying-B-52s-Europe>

NATO defense ministers have prolonged the anti-pirate mission Ocean Shield for two more years until 2016. The decision was made on 5th June. NATO war ships have been deployed in the area of Somali shore, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean for almost four years. In 2011 there were 129 pirate attacks recorded and 24 ships were kidnapped. Following year only 22 attacks were recorded and 7 ships were kidnapped. In 2013 there were only 6 attacks without any ship taken.

http://www.natoaktual.cz/nato-prodluzuje-misi-proti-piratum-db0-na-zpravy.aspx?c=A140605_125709_na_zpravy_m00

Czech Ministry of Defense has demented media reports that it is planning to restore compulsory military service. The Ministry announced on 13th June that it is preparing an amendment to the law, which regulates the conditions for recruiting citizens in case of national emergency. Current law allows recruiting citizens to support professional army only in case when the state of national emergency is officially declared. However, the whole procedure and military training requires more time. The amendment therefore empowers the army to recruit new members even before the declaration of the state of emergency if government approves so.

<http://www.mocr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/novela-branneho-zakona-je-pouze-pojistkou-pro-pripad-hroziciho-nebezpeci--v-beznm-mirovem-stavu-se-nic-nezmeni-99157/>

On June 15, more than three Israel Defense Forces (IDF) brigades, Shin Bet security teams and elite units started operation "Return Our Sons" aimed at recovering three teens abducted while hitchhiking on June 12. Armed forces were operating primarily in the area south of Hebron,

where officials suspect operatives associated with Hamas may be holding the captives. The operation marks the largest West Bank incursion since Israel's 2002 Defensive Shield campaign.

<http://www.defensenews.com/article/20140615/DEFREG04/306150019/Israel-Beefs-Up-Boots-Ground-Search-Kidnapped-Teens>

Russians Gazprom company temporarily cut gas supplies for Ukraine on 16th June because Kyiv failed to pay its debts for delivered gas. Gazprom assured European customers that the dispute with would not affect supplies to Europe. The Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka said that in case of some troubles Czech Republic has its own supplies of gas for at least three months.

<http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/cr-prepared-for-halt-in-russian-gas-supplies-pm-sobotka/1092051>

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said in interview for El País newspaper on 15th June that Alliance was ready to provide help for Ukraine. NATO would assist with training Ukrainian soldiers and focus on modernization of Ukrainian army. Rasmussen has not ruled out that some of NATO countries might take part in military exercise in Ukraine.

http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2014/06/14/actualidad/1402758297_580273.html

On 18th June the Czech Chamber of the Deputies agreed to prolong participation of the Czech soldiers in EU mission in Mali. Czech soldiers can stay in Mali until the end of this year and continue with training Mali forces and help to keep area secure.

<http://www.mocr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/poslanci-podporili-prodlouzeni-mise-v-mali-99357/>

The Iraqi government asked the United States to launch air strikes against the Islamists from the organization Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) on 18th June. U.S. President Barack Obama has considered the help and said the conditions for the deployment would be "restoration of national unity" in Iraq. However, Obama has ruled out sending any troops with the exception of 275 men whose job is to guard the U.S. embassy. In the meantime, Iraqi President Nouri al-Maliki has announced a counterattack against Islamists. AFP reported that the Islamists captured several villages in the northern province Salahaddin.

On 21st June, Sunni militants from the organization ISIS took control of important border crossings of Iraq with Syria, Iraq and Jordan. The Islamists also seized two towns on the banks of the Euphrates River Rawa and Ana. Islamists were probably moving towards the Hadisa dam. If the militants succeed in destroying the dam, they might cause major blackouts and floods. The Iraqi army therefore sent 200 soldiers to protect the strategic step. Meanwhile in the streets of Baghdad, thousands members of the Shia militias have demonstrated their commitment to fight against the Sunnis. According to the official statement of the UN, 1700 people died in Iraq in the period between 5th and 22nd June – mainly civilians. Some of the victims were also police officers or soldiers.

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/svet/277193-irak-pozadal-usa-o-nalety-na-pozice-sunnitskych-radikalu/>, <http://www.sme.sk/c/7245682/sunnitski-militanti-dobyjaju-v-iraku-jedno-mesto-za-druhym.html#ixzz35aTD8L9k>, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraq-crisis-un-alarmed-by-mass-execution-claims-9536779.html>

British and Italian euro skeptical parties have announced creating of the new political group in the European Parliament on 18th June. Newly formed group named Europe of Democracy and Freedom (EDF) consists of 48 members from Italian Five stars movement and British UKIP.

<http://www.sme.sk/c/7242191/v-europarlamente-vznikla-frakcia-euroskeptickyh-stran.html>

Israeli army conducted a revenge attack on Syria on 22nd June. Attacks on several military targets were response to the killing of the young Israeli boy on the previous day. According to The New York Times the boy had been the first Israeli victim of Syrian civil war.

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/23/world/middleeast/israel-syria-border-attack.html?_r=0

On 20th June, Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Roivas asked NATO to secure long-lasting presence of its international troops on the Estonian land. The Alliance has already tripled the number of jet fighters in the area and had made some short term reallocations of the armed forces that should last until the end of 2014. NATO military chief Philip Breedlove has mentioned the possibility of longer presence of NATO troops in Eastern Europe in May. However, some of the member countries oppose the idea arguing that it's too expensive and too provocative.

<http://www.sme.sk/c/7245183/estonsky-premier-vyzval-na-trvalu-pritomnost-vojsk-nato.html#ixzz35aX6FaHt>

Prime ministers of the left-oriented European governments have promised their support for candidacy of Jean-Claude Juncker as the chief of the European Commission. In exchange for this, they expect more seats for the political left in the Commission and having the President of the European Parliament. The decision was made on 21st June in Paris. European Prime ministers were invited by the French President François Hollande.

<http://www.euractiv.cz/evropske-volby-2009/clanek/evropska-levice-podpori-junckera-vymenou-za-vyznamne-posty-011944>

Syria handed over the last of its declared chemical weapons for removal and destruction on 23rd June. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) took control of the "last consignment" of Syrian 1300- ton stockpile of deadly chemicals, which were loaded onto a ship at the Syrian port of Latakia. Meanwhile International inspectors together with UN continue with an investigation of the alleged usage of chemical weapons against civilians during the Syrian civil war.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/agency-last-of-syrias-chemical-weapons-handed-over-for-destruction/2014/06/23/4eb9a138-fad9-11e3-8176-f2c941cf35f1_story.html

EU foreign ministers announced on 24th June they granted Albania an official candidate country status. Tirana has applied for the status four times. This time, EU has appreciated improvement in tackling issues like organized crime and corruption made by the Edi Rama's government. Although Albania has just made great step towards its full membership in the EU, there are still some problems that needs to be solved. According to some predictions the country will not join EU earlier than in 2020.

<http://www.sme.sk/c/7250531/polepsene-albansko-mieri-do-unie-rozohnalo-aj-mesto-marihuany.html#ixzz35aJqkB3C>

European euro skeptical populists have failed to form united political group in the European parliament. Originally, the group should have been formed by seven parties including Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV). PVV leader Geert Wilders announced on 24th June that he would never cooperate with Polish Kongres (KNP). KNP's rhetoric is openly against gender equality and strongly racist in some statements. Apart from both mentioned, France's National Front, Austria's Freedom party, Italy's Lega Nord, Belgium's Vlaams Belang and Lithuania's Law and Justice should have been members of the European Alliance for Freedom (EAF). In case these parties do not form their group they would lose extra money EP pays to secure functioning of the groups.

<http://euobserver.com/eu-elections/124719>

Hundreds of pro-Russian rebels attacked 2nd June Ukrainian border guards near Luhansk. Interfax agency have reported that Ukrainian army deployed aircraft, but failed to deter attackers. Combat operations in the east intensified immediately after the presidential elections on 25th May – especially when insurgents attempted to dominate the Donetsk airport. Newly elected president Petro Poroshenko made it clear that he intends to defeat the pro-Russian radicals quickly.

The main pipeline transferring Russian natural gas to the rest of Europe suffered an attack on 17th June. The explosion occurred in the Poltava region in the central part of Ukraine. Police confirmed that the main supply route to the European Union had been hit. The flow of gas to Europe was not affected.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko declared unilateral ceasefire in the east of the country on 20th June. A cease-fire should last until June 27. The measure was one of 15 points of Poroshenko's peace plan. Some other points were: granting security for the participants of the peace negotiations; release of the hostages; amnesty for those who lay down their arms; creating a corridor to allow mercenaries to leave; renew functioning of local government; restore national television broadcast in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions; decentralization and local elections. Ukrainian army also attempted to take control over the eastern border with Russia to increase pressure on the rebels and cut their supplying routes.

U.S. President Barack Obama called on Russia to take steps to reduce tensions in the East of Ukraine. Otherwise, Obama has threatened further sanctions against Moscow.

Russian President Vladimir Putin asked the Federation Council (the upper house of the Russian parliament) to cancel the resolution allowing the deployment of the Russian army in Ukraine. The Council approved a decree on the possible deployment of troops at Putin's request on March 1. In March, President Putin had justified this measure as necessary to protect Russian citizens in Ukraine. There are still more than 40 000 Russian soldiers reported on the border with Ukraine.

Separatists shot down Ukrainian military helicopter Mi-8 in the area of Slavjansk on 24th June despite the ceasefire. Nine people died. It was the most serious breach of mutually negotiated ceasefire.

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/svet/275264-pohranicnici-u-luhanska-odrazeji-utoky-stovek-separatistu/>,

<http://www.webnoviny.sk/ekonomika/clanok/835611-vybuch-plynovodu-na-ukrajine-neohrozil-tok-plynu-do-europy/>, <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/svet/277575-porosenko-vyhlasil-primerie-rebelove-zbrane-neskladaji/>,

<http://www.teraz.sk/zahranicie/porosenko-primerie-ukrajina-podpora/88900-clanok.html>,

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/svet/278035-ukrajinsky-klid-zbrani-separatiste-sestrelili-vrtulnik->

devet-mrtvych/, <http://hn.hnonline.sk/svet-120/putin-zmenil-nazor-chce-zrusit-pravo-vojensky-zasiahnut-na-ukrajine-621901>

U.S. government had violated constitutional rights of people who were banned from traveling by planes. The ban aimed at people who were suspected for contacts with terrorists. However, District Judge Anna Brown ruled on 24th June that ability to travel internationally by airplane is a constitutionally protected right.

<http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/svet/zpravy/zakaz-letu-kvuli-podezreni-z-terorismu-porusuje-pravo-rekl-soud/1095437>

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen criticized Russia for constant breaking its international commitments. Rasmussen was speaking after meeting of NATO foreign ministers on 25th June.

<http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/svet/zpravy/rusko-dal-nerespektuje-mezinarodni-zavazky-mini-nato/1095409>

Upper chamber of the Russian Parliament canceled President's right to deploy the Armed Forces of Ukraine to protect local Russians on the 25th June. The Federal Council did so after Vladimir Putin's request. There was only one among 154 legislators, who voted against cancelling the bill.

On 27th June, the ceasefire the Ukrainian army and pro-Russian Ukrainian insurgents officially ended. However, it was immediately extended for 72 hours. Despite that, separatist shortly afterwards attacked the Ukrainian base in Donetsk region, namely at the airport in Kramatorsk. On the same day, association agreement on free trade between the EU and Ukraine has been signed in Brussels. EU has signed the same type agreement also with Georgia and Moldova. Russia has been strongly against this development. Meanwhile, separatists have set free another four observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Presidents of Russia and Ukraine agreed on 30th June to introduce a new ceasefire agreement in order to establish effective border control.

<http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/svet/zpravy/rusky-parlament-zrusil-putinovo-pravo-nasadit-armadu-na-ukrajine/1095374>

<http://zpravy.ihned.cz/svet/c1-62437450-primeri-na-ukrajine-skoncilo-prodlouzeni-klidu-zbrani-zatim-porosenko-neoznamil>

<http://zpravy.ihned.cz/svet/c1-62427760-v-noci-se-opet-strilelo-na-letisti-v-donecke-oblasti-tridenni-klid-zbrani-se-nedodrzuje>

<http://zpravy.ihned.cz/svet/c1-62422190-ukrajina-patek-konec-primeri-porosenko-boje-eu-dohoda>

http://zpravy.idnes.cz/povstalci-na-ukrajine-propustili-dalsi-ctyri-pozorovatele-obse-pxe-/zahranicni.aspx?c=A140628_202702_zahranicni_zt

<http://www.euractiv.cz/evropa-dnes0/clanek/co-prinesou-asociacni-dohody-eu-s-ukrajinou-gruzii-a-moldavskem-011960>

<http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/svet/zpravy/rusko-a-ukrajina-dohodly-na-priprave-primeri-a-na-kontrolu-hranic/1097156>

Leaders of the EU states held summit on the 26th June in Ypres, Belgium. Before the summit started, politicians gathered to commemorate the beginning of First World War one hundred years ago.

http://zpravy.idnes.cz/pietni-akt-evropskych-lidru-v-ypres-d7d-/zahranicni.aspx?c=A140626_195743_zahranicni_mlb

On 27th June, former Prime Minister of Luxemburg Jean-Claude Juncker was officially nominated as new President of the European Commission. The nomination has to be approved by the European Parliament.

http://zpravy.idnes.cz/jean-claude-juncker-predsedou-evropske-komise-f45-/zahranicni.aspx?c=A140627_164523_zahranicni_mlb

Bodies of three missing Israeli students, who had been kidnapped by Palestinian movement Hamas, were found on 30th June. Two men are suspected of committing that crime - Marvan Kavasma and Ama Abu Isa. On the same day the Israeli National Security Council met on the Prime Minister's request.

<http://zpravy.ihned.cz/svet/c1-62437970-izrael-truchli-nad-zavrazdenymi-studenty-hamas-za-jejich-smrt-zaplati-rika-netanjahu>

<http://zpravy.ihned.cz/svet/c1-62437970-izrael-truchli-nad-zavrazdenymi-studenty-hamas-za-jejich-smrt-zaplati-rika-netanjahu>