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INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE: “16th INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE SECURITY FORUM 2023”

Dávid Kollár*

The international scientific conference Security Forum, as one of the most important projects of the Department of Security Studies, Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, took place again this year on February 8th-9th, 2023, after the end of the unfavourable epidemiological situation, again in a standard face-to-face format over two days.

In 2007, the Department of Security Studies initiated regular contacts between researchers – theoreticians and university teachers, members of non-profit organisations though establishing the platform called Security Forum. Based on the conclusions of the meeting, the need to increase and expand knowledge in the field of security, increase public awareness of security and coordinate the activities of state and non-state organisations and institutions, universities, research institutes, domestic and foreign experts in the field of security issues was declared. In order to create a functional and creative security community, which, in addition to the academic discourse on the formation of the scientific field of security, could mediate partnerships for state authorities in the issue of creating strategic materials. Based on this, 16 international scientific conferences were held under the name Security Forum, which is currently functioning as an independent and at the same time professional platform for discussing current issues of security and security policy not only in the Slovak Republic.

In addition to the theoretical aspects of security research, this year it focused on regional security in the context of current security challenges, cyberspace and

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its trends, environmental and energy security, and topics related to transatlantic security, the impact of COVID-19 on international stability, disinformation, hoaxes, and hybrid threats.

The conference was officially opened by the dean of the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations MBU doc. PhDr. **Branislav Kováčik**, PhD., EMBA, and the head of the Department of Security Studies doc. PhDr. **Rastislav Kazanský**, PhD., EMBA.

After the introductory speeches and the ceremonial opening of the conference, the first panel of the conference, moderated by dr. h. c. prof. Ing. **Pavel Nečas**, PhD., MBA, took place. In the panel discussion, six speakers were given space to talk about their topics - Dr. **Antonín Novotný** from the University of Defense in Brno in his presentation focused on EU-NATO cooperation in ensuring European defence. The second speaker was Dr. **Ladislav Pásztor** from the National University of Public Services, Doctoral School of Military Sciences in Budapest with the topic of reactions of selected NATO countries to the current security situation in Europe. The third in order was the contribution of doc. **Ivan Majchút** from the Academy of Armed Forces in Liptovský Mikuláš, who in his speech dealt with the topic of the EU's military involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The penultimate speaker was doc. **Eva Jančíková** from the Faculty of International Relations of the University of Economics in Bratislava. She addressed the issue of the EU's response to hybrid threats. The last contribution of this panel was presented by Dr. **Martin Solík** and Mgr. **Jan Graf** from the University of Ostrava on the topic of hybrid threats from the Russian Federation in its near and far abroad: a comparison of Moldova and Romania. The entire panel discussion was thus focused on various aspects of security in European countries.

After a short break, the moderator PhDr. **Dagmar Nováková**, PhD. opened the second discussion panel. In this part of the conference, four contributions were discussed. The first speech *Population as one of the current ecological problems* was given by prof. **Ľudmila Lipková** from Trenčín University. Subsequently, the speaker from the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Dr. **Anna Mravcová** continued with the topic of the necessary connection between environmental safety and environmental responsibility. The third place in the order was held by Dr. **Margaréta De La Infanta** from the University of Madrid, who in her presentation dealt with the issue of shifting the position from the regional energy security community to the energy security complex: constructivist

research on Nord Stream 2 in the V4 countries. The fourth in this section made a presentation on the change in the regional balance of power in the South Caucasus, Dr. **Richard Stojar** from the University of Defense in Brno.

The second day of the conference, moderated by Dr. **Tomáš Beňuška** from the Department of Security Studies, was thematically focused on various aspects of security, and was conducted in English. Dr. **Eugeniusz Nowak** from the Apeiron University in Krakow in his presentation focused on the way of teaching students in the field of security studies. The discussion was joined by Mgr. **Razhden Chikhorja** from Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce with Georgia's perspective on Russian aggression against Ukraine. Mgr. **Jana Zabunov**, who works in the private sector in Serbia but is also a PhD. student at the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations dealt with the role of women in international peacekeeping processes. Doc. **Juliusz Piwowarski** and Dr. **Leszek Woszczeł**, both from the Apeiron University in Krakow, discussed the psychological dimension of human security in his speech, and the last speaker of this panel and also of the entire conference was Dr. **Bogdan Stojanović** from the Institute of International Politics and Economics in Belgrade.

Today, security research is developing in several directions and ways. The phenomenon of security is part of military sciences, political science, international relations, and international law. However, research is moving from partial levels to the level of a separate scientific discipline, although this discipline has many interdisciplinary features. New stimuli for security research are related to the change in the international environment, the end of the Cold War and the onset of the so-called post-bipolar period. The military aspects of security, which were examined by security studies, strategic studies, and specific military studies, ceased to be the central topic of analysis. The research is primarily focused on the so-called non-military aspects of security, i.e., extremism, radicalism, humanitarian issues, environmental issues, but also terrorism and national conflicts, and failure of states. Since the subject of research is relatively broad, it is not only about opinion, but also theoretical and terminological diversity. In this sense, the Department of Security Studies of the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations of UMB wants to contribute to security research by exchanging information and knowledge of researchers, practitioners from domestic and foreign universities and state institutions, which also takes place through this international scientific conference and by publishing a peer-reviewed scientific collection from this event in English, which will be submitted for indexing in the Web of Science database.

The Department of Security Studies of the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations of the UMB in Banská Bystrica has traditionally organized this year's international conference Security Forum 2023 in cooperation with long-standing important partners from Slovakia: the Crisis Management Center of the Matej Bel University, the Academy of the Armed Forces of Gen. M.R. Štefánik in Liptovský Mikuláš and the University of Security Management in Košice; from the Czech Republic: the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, the Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague and the Metropolitan University in Prague; Serbia: Institute of National and International Security in Belgrade; and Poland: Apeiron University of Public and Individual Security in Krakow, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, and Faculty of National Security of the National Defense Academy in Warsaw.