

## TRANSATLANTIC DEFENSE FORUM

**What and why?** The world is not safer today than it was decades ago. The situation on the borders of NATO is turbulent – and not only in Ukraine, Georgia, Syria, or Iraq. We face a more assertive Russia and the challenge of rising China. The cohesion of NATO is tested from outside as well as from within. With all the improvement since the 2014 Wales Summit, we are still far from achieving the spending targets of 2 percent of GDP, 20 percent investment, and 2 percent R&D. Our capabilities are not adequate or sustainable; our deterrence is not guaranteed.

There are numerous conferences dealing with international affairs and security in Europe, as well as in Central Europe. Their focus, however, has increasingly become broader and broader, covering overarching global issues such as poverty, human rights, democracy, climate change, economics, health and the pandemic. While these are important topics relevant in the long term, it also means that a sharp focus on core defense and security issues has been neglected; traditional transatlantic defense, security, and foreign policy officials and experts have insufficient opportunity to meet and have an open, discreet, candid, and critical exchange of views. Those of us who remember Wehrkunde feel its absence; this “craft of defense” forum has fallen by the wayside.

**What is needed?** A focused, structured program and informal atmosphere, with Chatham House Rules. All participants shall stay through the whole program.

**Focus:** Key topics would include challenges to transatlantic defense cooperation, defense spending and capabilities; dynamics of U.S.-European relations both institutional and bilateral; Russia and Ukraine, the Black Sea, the Sahel, and other specific regional challenges; the functional tasks of integrating technological developments, new threat assessments, European “autonomy” and the transatlantic bond, and of course China. Underlying these very specific challenges to the common defense are the underlying domestic developments of illiberal democracy and autocracy, inside and outside the Alliance. The event will bring together representatives from both sides of the Atlantic. The hosting country will make sure that all regions and relevant approaches are adequately represented. This, in combination with the informal atmosphere will allow us to address even the most contentious, yet crucial issues.

**Timing:** The “craft of defense” gathering should take place annually in the Czech Republic or annually on a rotating basis between the Czech Republic and the United States. The first such meeting would take place Thursday May 26-Friday May 27, 2022. This marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination in Prague of Reinhard Heydrich, the highest-ranking Nazi killed in World War Two, by Czech and Slovak paratroopers trained in Britain, as well as the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Prague NATO Summit.

**Duration:** The event would last one-and-one-half days, Thursday May 26 evening through Saturday May 28 morning – with the potential for participants to stay in Prague over the weekend.

**Organizers:** The Prague Center for Transatlantic Relations of the CEVRO Institute and Jagello 2000 in coordination with the government of the Czech Republic in cooperation with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Atlantic Council, International Republican Institute and International Democratic Institute.

**Active Advisory Board/Co-chairs:** Elisabeth Braw (SE/AEI), *James Carrafano (US/Heritage) TBC*, Benjamin Haddad (US/AC – Europe Center), Jan Havranek (CZ/MoD), Benjamin Hodges (US/CEPA), Veronika Kuchynova (CZ/MFA), Julian Lindley French (UK/Alphen Group), *Zuzana Papazoski (SK/NDI) TBC*, Leah Scheunemann (US/AC – Scowcroft Center), *Jan Surotchak (US/IRI) TBC*, Kenneth Weinstein (US/Hudson Institute)

Most of the Advisory Board members are with a think tank background – speakers shall be active politicians from parliaments and administrations as well as active duty officers and from the ranks of business community.

**Budget:** 300,000 EUR (from Czech private partners CSG, CZ/Colt as well as potential international partners Lockheed Martin or Raytheon, along with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and others. Donors would commit for 3–5-year support).

**Program Structure:**

17:00-18:30 Warm Up Session  
19:00-20:30 Opening dinner with keynote speech and discussion  
21:00-23:00 Night Owl session  
09:00-10:30 Morning session  
11:00-12:30 Late morning session  
12:30-14:00 Lunch with keynote speech and discussion  
14:30-16:00 Afternoon session  
16:30-18:00 Late afternoon session  
18:00-20:00 Closing dinner  
20:00-23:00 Free networking...

**Participants:** 50 participants, with 15 from the U.S., 25 from Europe, 10 from the Czech Republic. They would be current, former, and future leaders, representatives of defense and foreign ministries, intelligence services, subject matter experts as well as politicians and member of parliaments dealing with relevant defense, security, and foreign affairs topics. They would represent NATO states as well as partner (such as Sweden, Finland, Australia, Japan, Israel, Ukraine, Georgia).

**Venue:** Zbiroh Castle, a historical site well suited to such events, 60 km west of Prague airport.