



Zagreb, 23 September 2021

Conclusions of the 6th Zagreb Security Forum (2021)

GRAND STRATEGY, FORESIGHT AND HYBRID THREATS IN 21ST CENTURY

MAKING SOCIETY AND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENT

Strengthening Democracy, Protecting Freedom and Society

During the two days of the 6th Zagreb Security Forum, in more than 30 presentations by lecturers and commentators, the modern and emerging security challenges that are trying to influence today's societies and countries, were discussed. Theoretical discussions are complemented and supported by practical examples with significant details that allow design and organization of a systems that can and should deal with such threats. The Program and Scientific Committee of the 6th ZSF, after the lectures and after several rounds of talks, adopted the following conclusions:

1. Hybrid threats are increasing. They appear in different forms in almost every region that we discussed during the Forum. Hybrid threats arise not just in quantitative measures, but also in qualitative matter. Hybrid attacks are very different by means that hybrid attacker is using and in same time very structural by their phenomenon and very dangerous by consequences. On short- and long—term. As it can be, for example, clearly seen in WB6 states.
2. Strategic foresight is from crucial importance to effectively face with hybrid threats that are going to cause different form of crisis (one or more of them). Strategic foresight is essential part of the effective planning and training process for those who will manage future crisis on strategic, operational, and tactical level. It is also extremely important for effective and proper education of actors within whole-of-society approach that will tackle the threats in their different phasis. Proper and correct strategic foresight can significantly decrease level of



surprise that can have important negative influence to the crisis management process (reducing its abilities to effective reaction up to 50%). And surprise is, we need to repeat that, result or by lack of knowledge or by not understanding and analytical dysfunctionality of the information that are in possession.

3. Almost every hybrid crisis has something new in it. There is no absolutely identical crisis and there is no absolutely identical answer to the crisis caused by hybrid threats. Crisis management, supported by strategic communication abilities, needs to be developed and tailored according to the threats.
4. Most governments do not have sufficient strategic foresight mechanisms. It is very hard to find proper and correct answer on the questions who is responsible within government/state institutions and organizations for strategic foresight; who is going to take and use the tools and methodologies that are available in context of national, regional, and multinational organizations level and demands? Therefore, those abilities need to be clearly developed and dedicated to institutions that primary deals with information and have ability to predict: strategic analytical organizational units of intelligence and security agencies.
5. Corona crisis, in Croatia intensified with several strong and devastating earthquakes, showed us that we paid less attention to other crisis that appeared between two ZSF. Corona crisis overshadowed them. Corona crisis needs to become, with the help of science, something that we will continue to live with. Corona crisis showed us how are societies are extremely vulnerable and sensitive to the influence of disinformation that were deliberately spread throughout the almost entire population. Especially those that use social networks and mobile communication platforms as a primary source of (dis)information.
6. Russian Federation just as Peoples Republic of China remains countries of concern for the actors all over the world due to their activities and intentions.
7. Over the years we saw significant progress in understanding hybrid warfare/threats within academic, experts, professionals, and population. Important developments are in areas of identification of them, analytical abilities,



and security and intelligence studies, as a part of security studies, that become primary area for research of those emerging security challenges. Education on a level of individuals, social and group level is very important.

8. Concepts of smart economy, smart cities, smart technology are the vehicles of present and future positive development of economy. Smart industry organizations build resilience through agility, which has to become part of their daily operations. They use adequate management tools to increase their agility, which increases revenue stream and quality of their products, while at the same time prepares them for unexpected events and increases resilience. Therefore, since the critical infrastructure is very vulnerable to the modern and emerging hybrid threats, we need to further develop and apply concepts of the critical infrastructure smart resilience (CISR). Developing data and digital sovereignty at EU level, so clearly and unequivocally stated in the Berlin Declaration (December 2020), should be complementary to the process and a range of activities, efforts and ideas coming from NATO.
9. ZSF should continue with the practice of supporting and providing opportunities for participation of young scientists and researchers on their development in the future ZSF.
10. The ZSF should continue with the good practice of a scientifically based approach to the problems and challenges that societies and states are facing as well as those that will face in the foreseeable future. At the same time, practical and real-life examples should be used to educate people who encounter crisis management and strategic communication on a daily basis so as not to repeat the mistakes made by others.
11. International cooperation is not a luxury but an important necessity. It is an integral part of the answer given that hybrid threats are not only threat at the local and regional level, but also on a global level. Therefore, the answer must be as such. The education and training system must not be limited within national frameworks. The construction of cross-border cooperation should be developed in a similar way to the already established disaster management system.



12. Global warming and climate change is an issue requiring international cooperation to reach a substantial reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and totally by 2050. Climate change impacts security in Europe and the Mediterranean region in a number of ways, including extreme climate and nature catastrophes; sea level rise and its effect on coastal regions and cities; declining sources of freshwater; heatwaves and forest fires; decline of tourism; and more. All those influences have a negative impact on intensive illegal and irregular migrations, organized crime activities, spread of violence, creating human basements for extremism, violence, and terrorism, and even misuse by hybrid attackers.
13. Exchange of information and knowledge on all levels on national, regional and international level, whole-of-government approach, supported by whole-of-society activities is necessary to strengthening democracy, and protecting freedom and society.

