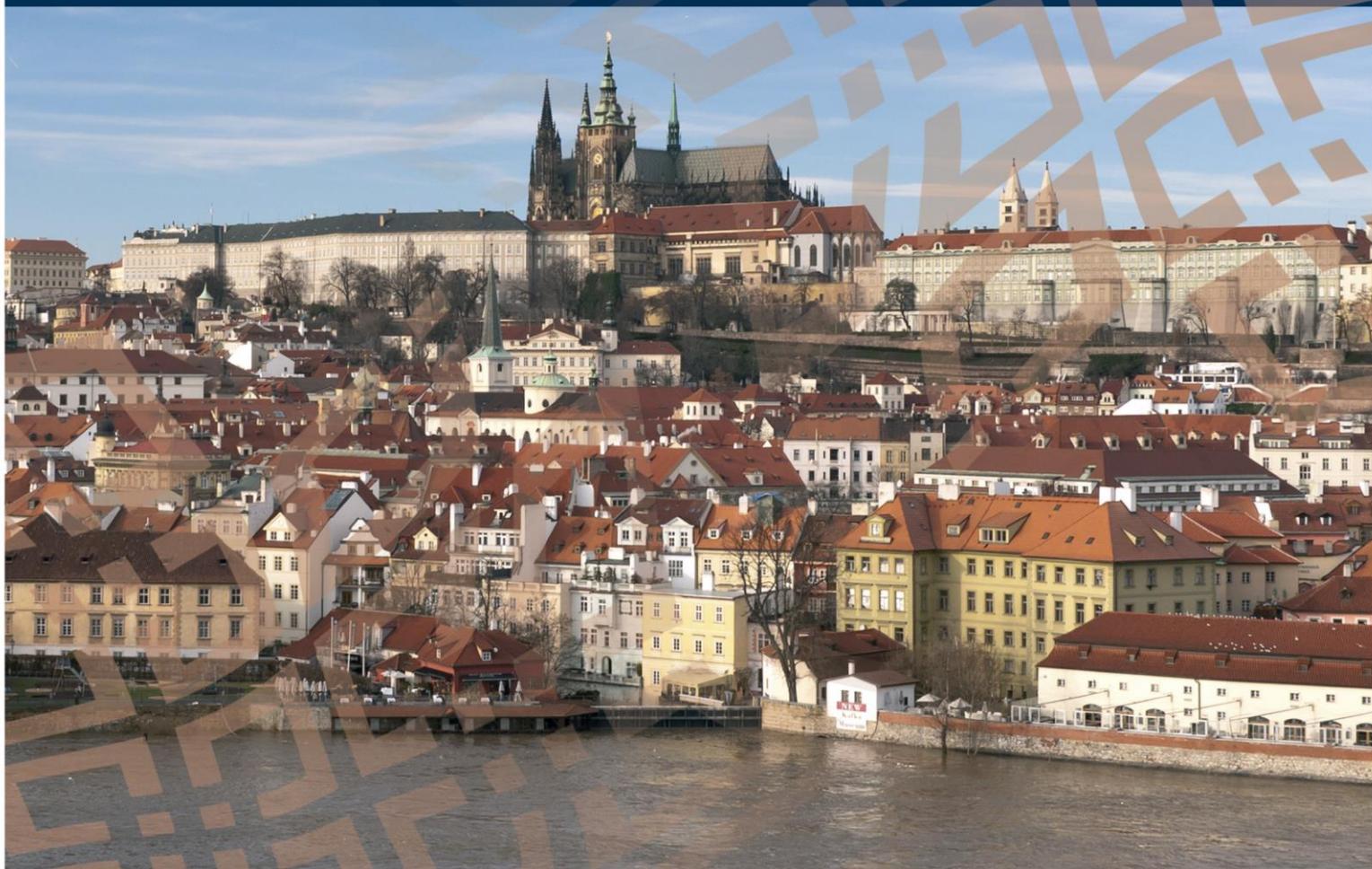




CENTRUM TRANSATLANTICKÝCH VZTAHŮ  
Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations

# PCTR Newsletter

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## Message from the Director

*Dear PCTR supporters,*

*It is the end of the month during which we have prepared in our monitoring the most important news from Transatlantic relations. As usual, we also prepared the PCTR Bulletin, where you can read about all the events we held last month.*

*On this occasion, I would like to draw your attention to the release of our new monograph "[Helsinki Process, Velvet Revolution of 1989 and the Czech Transformation: Lessons for Korean Peninsula?](#)", which was published with the kind support of the Korea Foundation. The monograph was developed with the participation of leading experts from the Czech Republic and you can acquire a hard copy of the publication at the CEVRO Institute library (Jungmannova 17, Prague 1)*

*I would also like to invite you to our next public event that will be focused on the terrorist act in Tel Aviv in 2003. The event called "Mike´s Place: Love, Blues and Terror in Tel Aviv 2003" will take place on November 26<sup>th</sup> at 17:30 in cooperation with Aligier Publishing. The keynote speaker will be a documentary filmmaker Joshua Faudem. You can find more information [here](#).*

*I believe that we will meet again during our future events and I would like to wish you a pleasant reading of this tenth PCTR Newsletter in 2015.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Alexandr Vondra  
Director*



## PCTR Bulletin

PCTR and the Center Sion organized a public lecture "Security of Israel" with Brigadier General Avigdora Kahalani. The event took place on 13th of October in the atrium of the CEVRO Institute. The lecture was opened and moderated by Tomas Pojar, the former Czech Ambassador to the State of Israel and Vice president of the CEVRO Institute.

General Kahalani is a legend of the Israeli Defense Forces. Moreover, he was also a member of the first Netanyahu's Cabinet in the position of the Minister of Public Security in the 27th Israel government from 1996 to 1999. He visited the Czech Republic on the occasion of the Czech edition of his publication: Tanks which saved Israel (previously released under the name The tanks against tanks), which maps out their combat deployment in the Yom Kippur War, where he served as Lieutenant Colonel and a Battalion Commander.



The special guest shared with the public memories from the Yom Kippur War. The lecture was followed by a discussion and questions from the audience. In addition to the current problems - such as the migratory crisis or Syrian conflict - General Kahalani was also asked whether or not they are tanks outdated weapons. General Kahalani said: "Of course not." At the end of the event he was signing his new monograph, which the audience could purchase during the day of the event.

We would like to thank our media partners: Civic Institute, Czech-Israeli Chamber of Commerce, journal Defense and Strategy and Eretz.cz. We would also like to thank for the support Česká zbrojovka, the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) at the university IDC Herzliya and Mr. Petr Mothejl.

Media output from this event can be found on [Idnes.cz](http://Idnes.cz), [ParlamentniListy.cz](http://ParlamentniListy.cz) and [Echo24.cz](http://Echo24.cz).

On 19th October, a public lecture labelled "Russia-Ukraine: What's Next" was held at the CEVRO Institute. The lecture was opened by the Director of the Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations of the CEVRO Institute (PCTR) and former Defence Minister and Foreign Minister Alexandr Vondra. The main speaker was Steven Pifer who currently serves as the Director of the Arms Control Initiative Brookings and Senior Fellow



at the Brookings Center on the United States and Europe. Steven Pifer, among other things, served as the US ambassador to Ukraine.



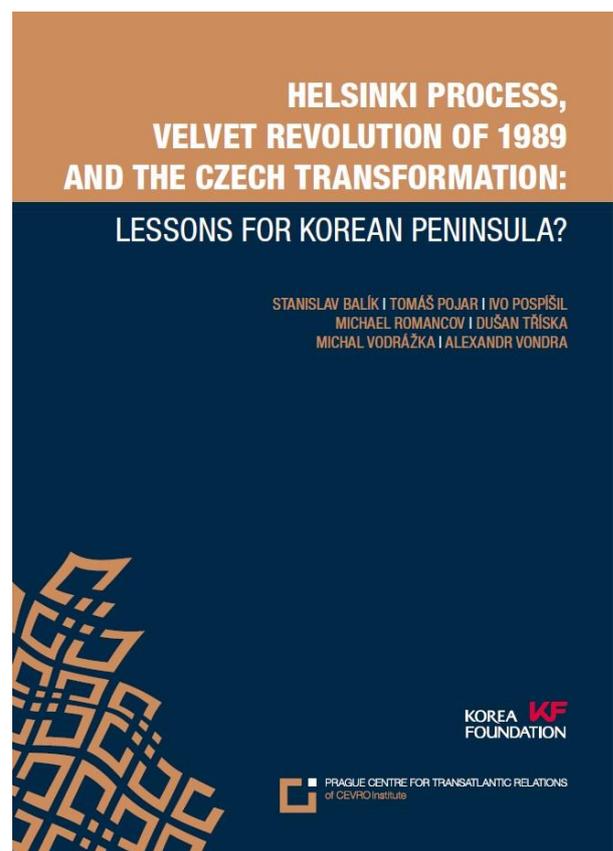
The main guest extensively addressed the present and future of Ukraine and also recalled how the current Ukrainian-Russian conflict evolved. Additionally, he outlined his vision for the future development of events. According to S. Pifer, one of the most important factors is the mood within the Russian society. His lecture was followed by a lively debate, in which questions including also e.g. anti-Russian sanctions were answered.

PCTR is very grateful to the American Center for co-organizing such an important public event. PCTR also thanks reviewed journal Defense and Strategy and NATO Information Center in Prague for media support. **An audio record from the event can be found [here](#).**

PCTR, with the support of the Korea Foundation, realized in the academic year 2014/2015 the project „Czechoslovakia Transition to Democracy: Recommendations for the North Korea Peace-seeking Process“. One of the aims of this project was to develop a monograph with active participation of selected experts. The publication is now available in PDF format and can be [downloaded for free](#).

The authors are Assoc. Prof. Stanislav Balík, the Head of Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University; Tomáš Pojar, the Vice President for International Relations at the CEVRO Institute and the former Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the State of Israel; Dr. Ivo Pospíšil, the Secretary General of the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic; political geographer Dr. Michael Romancov; economist Dr. Dušan Tříška; Michal Vodrážka, research fellow at the Association for International Affairs; and Dr. Alexandr Vondra, the PCTR Director and the former Minister of Defense and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Thanks are also due to the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Prague for their kind support of the project. A physical copy of the publication can be obtained (for free) at the CEVRO Institute's library (Jungmannova 17, Prague 1).



## Events in Euro-Atlantic relations (October 2015)

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the hospital run by the Doctors Without Borders in Kunduz, Afghanistan, was hit by American airstrikes against Taliban. At least 30 people were killed during the attack. According to the Army Gen. John Campbell, the chief of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, the American attack was a response to the Afghan forces calling for support, because they were under direct fire. The incident is now under U.S. military investigation. The city of Kunduz was conquered by Taliban forces on September 28<sup>th</sup> and it was thus the first major city to fall into the Taliban's hands in 14 years. The worsening security situation in Afghanistan led President Obama to rethink the planned withdrawal of American troops before the end of his term. On October 15<sup>th</sup>, Obama announced the extension of Afghan mission into 2017. According to Obama, up to 5500 American troops will remain in Afghanistan.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/10/05/us-commander-afghans-requested-us-airstrike-kunduz-doctors-without-borders/73371730/>,

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/10/15/obama-extends-afghanistan-mission-into-2017-troops-surge/73981218/>

The first large cyber security exercise in the Czech Republic named "Cyber Czech 2015" was held October 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>. The exercise focused on the protection of the key strategic facilities, e.g. nuclear power plants. Two teams of hackers competed against each other – the blue team represented the defenders, while the red team played the role of the attackers. The event was organized by a 60-person team of staff from the National Cyber Security Centre, which is operated by the Czech National Security Authority (a part of CERT) and by the experts from Masaryk University in Brno.

<http://connect.zive.cz/clanky/cesko-si-poprve-otestovalo-hackerske-utoky-na-elektrarny/sc-320-a-180009/default.aspx>

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, NATO Defense Ministers agreed to build two new regional headquarters in Slovakia and Hungary. Around 40 officers will serve in each of this new NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU) whose creations follow the establishment of six NFIUs activated in September in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania. NFIU are meant to ensure a quick and effective NATO Response Forces move in case of deployment and simultaneously increase the security of eastern member states.

<http://echo24.cz/a/ikpaj/hraz-proti-rusku-nato-umisti-na-slovensku-nove-velitelstvi>

Since early October Turkey has recorded several accidental flights of Russian fighters-bombers over the Turkish territory. The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg called the situation alarming and declared that the Alliance is able and prepared to defend its members, including Turkey. On October 18<sup>th</sup>, the Prime Minister of Turkey Davutoglu confirmed that Turkish air defense would not hesitate to shoot down any aircraft violating Turkish air space.

[http://www.natoaktual.cz/nato-chce-chronit-turecko-0yi-na-zpravy.aspx?c=A151008\\_161124\\_na\\_zpravy\\_m00](http://www.natoaktual.cz/nato-chce-chronit-turecko-0yi-na-zpravy.aspx?c=A151008_161124_na_zpravy_m00), [http://www.tyden.cz/rubriky/zahranici/asia-a-oceanie/davutoglu-turecko-bez-vahani-sestrel-i-bojovy-letoun\\_359333.html](http://www.tyden.cz/rubriky/zahranici/asia-a-oceanie/davutoglu-turecko-bez-vahani-sestrel-i-bojovy-letoun_359333.html)

NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg denounced the Russia Federation involvement in the Syrian conflict. According to the Secretary General, Russian engagement will just prolong the conflict that can be resolved only by diplomatic means. Russia is criticized for airstrikes targeting not only the ISIS.

but also the moderate opposition supported by Western countries. The President of Russia Vladimir Putin confirmed that the Russian aim is to stabilize the legitimate authority of president al-Assad. According to Putin, Russia wants to create conditions for political compromise in Syria and it is not interested in a ground operation. On October 20<sup>th</sup> the United States and Russia signed a memorandum on safe flights over Syria. They agreed on series of safety protocols that should prevent any incident between American and Russian troops.

[http://www.natoaktual.cz/ruska-pomoc-asadovi-prodluze-podle-nato-vaiku-f4z-na-zpravy.aspx?c=A151012\\_171333\\_na\\_zpravy\\_m00](http://www.natoaktual.cz/ruska-pomoc-asadovi-prodluze-podle-nato-vaiku-f4z-na-zpravy.aspx?c=A151012_171333_na_zpravy_m00), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34502286>, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/2015/10/20/us-russia-sign-memorandum-on-flights-over-syria/74279956/>

The Memorandum of Understanding on cyber defense cooperation between NATO and the Czech Republic was signed on October 12<sup>th</sup>. This memorandum is based on 2014 Wales summit "Enhanced NATO Policy on Cyber Defense" and "Cyber Defense Action Plan" and it represents a new generation of cooperation between NATO and national cyber defense authorities. The Czech Republic was the first country to sign the memorandum.

[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_123857.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_123857.htm)

Czech soldiers are helping patrolling the Hungarian borders. A group of Czech soldiers was deployed October 13<sup>th</sup> and on October 15<sup>th</sup> they fully participated in the duty. Their main task is to help Hungarians with logistics. Czech soldiers are thus, for example, teaching the use of PK-50 field kitchen or they are helping with building of a training polygon.

<http://www.acr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/cesi-podporuji-madarske-kolegy-hlavne-v-logistice-115818/>

The first Democratic Party presidential debate from October 13<sup>th</sup> significantly focused on the foreign policy issues. The former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton supported a no-fly zone over Syria, but the idea was not favored by other candidates. When asked about the most important security threat to the U.S., Democratic candidates mentioned nuclear weapons, situation in the Middle East or climate change, but nobody named Russia. On October 21<sup>st</sup> Vice-president Joe Biden ended months of speculations, when he announced that he will not run for the president in the next election. His decision would probably help Clinton, who is now leading the polls.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/10/13/democratic-debate-first-defense/73907426/>, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/oct/21/joe-biden-not-running-president-2016-election>

At the annual conference of the Association of the United States Army on October 14<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said that the USA has to revise its European strategy due to the Russian involvement in Ukraine and Syria. According to Carter, the USA should be prepared to face new challenges, including hybrid and cyber warfare, and effectively deter Russia. He also cited the intelligence capacity as the key factor.

<http://www.defenseone.com/threats/2015/10/russia-forcing-pentagon-rewrite-its-european-playbook/122815/>

According to Montenegrin Foreign Minister Igor Luksic, there is a high possibility that Montenegro will soon be invited to join NATO. In the mid October, NATO officials visited the country to monitor its progress on reforms that are required to join the Alliance. Montenegro's accession to NATO would not imply any significant increase in the Alliance capabilities, but it would have a symbolic meaning. Since Russia is very concerned about the NATO's eastern expansion, some reaction may be expected.

Montenegrin public opinion is divided mostly because of the significant ethnically Serbian population and historical connection to Russia.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/10/15/putin-may-hate-it-but-nato-may-be-about-to-expand-again/>

The international military exercise "Blue Flag 2015" started on October 18<sup>th</sup> in Israel. Air forces from Israel, the United States, Greece, and Poland participate in this largest air force exercise Israel ever hosted. More than testing technical capabilities, the focus is on the training of the pilots.

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-hosts-its-largest-ever-international-air-force-exercise/>

A contingent of 250 Czech pilots and other specialists from Vyškov participate in the "Trident Juncture" exercise, one of the largest NATO military trainings of the last decade. 36 000 military units from 30 states from NATO and its partners would join the exercise between October 3<sup>rd</sup> and November 16<sup>th</sup>. The training takes place in Spain, Italy, and Portugal. The main aim of this exercise is to examine the Rapid Reaction Forces.

<http://www.acr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/na-cviceni-trident-juncture-2015-vlaje-i-ceska-vlajka-115773/>

The President of China arrived in the United Kingdom on October 19<sup>th</sup> for a four-day state visit. President Xi Jinping and his wife were ceremonially welcomed by the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales, and the Prime Minister David Cameron. The Queen emphasized not only the cooperation between China and the United Kingdom, but also the friendship between the countries. Moreover, the UK and the PRC concluded an agreement according to which China will participate in construction of three new British nuclear power plants. It is expected that during the Presidential visit contracts worth up to 25 billion GBP will be made.

[http://zpravy.idnes.cz/navsteva-cinskeho-prezidenta-v-britanii-fd9-zahranicni.aspx?c=A151020\\_145134\\_zahranicni\\_aba](http://zpravy.idnes.cz/navsteva-cinskeho-prezidenta-v-britanii-fd9-zahranicni.aspx?c=A151020_145134_zahranicni_aba), <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-34587650>

The Liberal Party won Canadian federal election held on October 19<sup>th</sup> and its leader Justin Trudeau became the new Prime Minister. In his campaign, Trudeau promised a withdrawal of Canadian forces from the campaign against ISIS and he also proposed the improvement of relationship with the USA and President Obama. The previously ruling Conservative party ended second, losing 60 seats in 338-member parliament.

<http://zahranicni.ihned.cz/amerika-usa/c1-64762760-liberalove-ovladli-kanadske-volby-optimismus-zvitezil-nad-strachem-z-muslimu-pisi-komentatori>

Russian Defense Ministry announced on October 20<sup>th</sup> that a military base was being built in the northern Arctic. This massive military base named "Arctic Trefoil" can house up to 150 soldiers, who can live there autonomously for 18 months. The new base follows the construction of another Arctic military base "Northern Shamrock" and it is a part of Russian militarization of the Arctic region that is based on the recently updated Naval Doctrine of Russia.

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/10/21/russia-builds-massive-arctic-military-base.html>

The United States carried out the first ever live shot down of a ballistic missile over Europe on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. This was a part of European sea-base ballistic missile defense test under the Maritime Theater Missile Defense Forum. Adm. Mark Ferguson, commander of US Naval Forces Europe-Africa, said that this international exercise shows the commitment of the USA to the European defense.

<http://www.defensenews.com/story/breaking-news/2015/10/20/ballistic-missile-defense-bmd-navy-destroyer-ross-sullivans-frigate-provincien-lezo-hebrides-scotland-test-exercise-target/74299016/>

On October 22<sup>nd</sup> President Obama vetoed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2016 fiscal year. Among others, the bill featured an increase in military pay and adjustments of the military retirement system. The provision of defense weapons for Ukraine is also included in the 612 billion USD bill. The NDAA passed through Congress in early October with a dominantly Republican support. President Obama on the other hand disapprove of the 38 billion USD increase through Overseas Contingency Operations. After negotiations between the President and the Congress, the final agreement on the defense budget was achieved on October 31<sup>st</sup>. The budget was cut to 607 billion USD and compromises were reached on the distribution of the funds.

<http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense-news/2015/10/22/obama-poised-veto-2016-ndaa/74386314/>, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/10/31/us-budget-deal-provides-industry-military-stability/74868238/>

In CNN interview from October 25<sup>th</sup> the former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair apologized for following a misleading intelligence that led to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. On the other hand, Blair states that he finds it "hard to apologize for removing Saddam." While Blair admitted that the 2003 invasion contributed to the current rise of ISIS to some extent, he identified two more important issues – the sectarian policy of Iraq and Arab spring from 2011.

<http://echo24.cz/a/i95r9/invaze-do-iraku-prispela-ke-vzniku-islamskeho-statu-priznal-blair>

The parliamentary election held in Poland on October 25<sup>th</sup> ended with a landslide victory of the opposition Law and Justice (PiS) party lead by Beata Szydlo. PiS received 37.58 % of votes and 235 of 460 seats, thus reaching the absolute majority in the parliament. The ruling Civic Platform finished second with 137 seats. PiS victory will probably lead to changes in the foreign policy of Poland. Party President Jaroslaw Kaczyński is known for his euro-skeptic and anti-Russian rhetoric. The strengthening of relationship with the United States and with Polish central European allies may also be expected.

<http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/10/28/election-results-could-shift-polish-military-priorities/74761820/>, <http://zahranicni.ihned.cz/c1-64785570-polsti-konzervativci-vyhrali-volby-s-velkym-naskokem>

The third Republican Party presidential debate broadcasted by CNBC was held on October 28<sup>th</sup>. The candidates were very critical not only of the Democratic candidates and of each other, but they also attacked the debate's moderators, which lead to a calling for change in format of the future debates. Texas Senator Ted Cruz was named among the winners of this debate, while the 43<sup>rd</sup> Governor of Florida Jeb Bush performed poorly. Donald Trump still leads the polls with 28 % followed by Ben Carson with 22 % support and Marco Rubio with 10 %.

<http://zahranicni.ihned.cz/c1-64799200-republikani-v-debate-utocili-na-media-a-sebe-navzajem-trump-pusobil-unavene-pozadu-zustal-jeb-bush>

NATO considers a deployment of 4000 troops to the states bordering with Russia. The aim of this action is to deter possible Russian aggression against the eastern NATO members. Reportedly, two plans exist – one that envisages battalions of 800 to 1000 troops deployed to each country and a less extensive one that would see a single battalion deployed in the region. According to the former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Steven Pfifer, this planning show that NATO sees Russia as a potential enemy

and that the Alliance is determined to protect its territory. Pfifer also said that Russian response would depend on the types of forces deployed.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/11961836/Nato-considers-sending-4000-troops-to-Russian-borders.html>

On October 30<sup>th</sup> another round of peace talks with Syria took place in Vienna. For the first time, Iran was one of the 17 participants. Although no significant breakthrough in negotiations was reached, participating parties agreed on some general directions of the next steps. The declared goal is to maintain Syria's unity, independence, territorial integrity and secular character, while the United Nations should oversee the political process of dealings between Syria's government and opposition. Also on October 30<sup>th</sup> U.S. President Obama decided to expand American mission in Syria by deploying Special Forces to assist and advice Syrian opposition in the fight against ISIS.

<http://zahranicni.ihned.cz/c1-64806580-svetove-mocnosti-ve-vidni-jednaly-o-budoucnosti-syrie-na-osudu-prezidenta-asada-se-neshodly>, <http://zahranicni.ihned.cz/c1-64806190-obama-vysle-do-syrie-specialni-jednotku-ma-radit-umirnenym-povstalcum>