
Chapter 4

The Security Dimension of the Czech Foreign Policy

Ondřej Ditrych and Jan Eichler

In the area of the security and defence dimensions of the foreign policy, the previous year was mainly about the adaptation to the perceived change of the security environment in connection with the Ukrainian crisis, and also the significant securitization of the issue of refugees and the uncontrolled transit of foreign nationals across the territory of the Czech Republic. On the one hand, the trend toward the mainly passive constructive formation and implementation of the Czech foreign policy could have continued in relation to its environment. On the other hand, the normalization, which here means the broad acceptance of the idea of the uniqueness of the contemporary security situation and the necessity to adopt adequate, exceptional measures, brought new risks.

THE SECURITY DIMENSION OF THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY: POLITICAL CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

In the last year, 2015, four important strategic conceptual documents relating to the area of defence and security were approved: *Bezpečnostní strategie ČR (The Security Strategy of the Czech Republic)*, *Koncepce zahraniční politiky ČR (The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic)*, *Dlouhodobý výhled pro obranu (Long-Term Outlook for the Defence) (2030)* and *Koncepce výstavby AČR (The Concept of Development for the Army of the Czech Republic)*. The first one was prepared under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic as a response to the Ukrainian crisis and the perceived related change of the security environment in the previous year in combination with the ongoing problem of the instability in Levant, which hit Europe in the form of providing motivation for lone shooters with the ideology of violent Salafi jihadism from the side of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) and also of the *veteran effect*: the actions of returnees – not strictly the foreign fighters, although the difference between trainees, temporary inhabitants of an area controlled by ISIS and direct participants of rebellious fights that are citizens of a for-

eign state (this is a conventional definition of foreign fighters in literature)¹ is usually blurred, mainly among the securitization groups of security experts, but also in the wider political debates – during the preparation and carrying out of the terrorist attacks in the territory of Western countries. (The association not only with the construction of a cultural threat, but also with the risks of terrorist attacks has become an integral part of the securitization discussion about migration. But, at the same time, the risk of smuggling trained returnees through migration, which is difficult to trace, is not excluded, of course, as its existence is proved, among others, by the case of the so-called Düsseldorf cell.²)

The new security strategy,³ which was approved by the Government of the Czech Republic at its meeting on 4th February, is not an entirely original document, but it is an update of the previous strategy (2011).⁴ But the changes made in it are not of a superficial nature. The first mentioned document was introduced by the former Prime Minister Petr Nečas (ODS) using a rhetorical question: “*Why is it necessary to pay attention to the security issues in peacetime? Why don't we pay attention to the construction of new houses, hospitals and schools?*” In the second one, the current Prime Minister, Bohuslav Sobotka (ČSSD), talks about a world marked by “*a series of crises*”. The new strategic security interest is cybernetic security and, hand in hand with it, the importance of securing the critical infrastructure is becoming more important. The new strategy also points to the importance of asymmetric threats and draws attention to the intersection between the internal and external security – and it follows a more general conceptual development in the European security discussion. In the part devoted to the strategic context it newly talks about the power aspirations “*of some countries that increasingly cease to respect the international order and basic principles of the international law*”, and it includes “*the weakening of the mechanism of cooperative security*” as a consequence of revisionist tendencies, among the new security threats, with an obvious but indirect message to the foreign policy of the Russian Federation. It emphasizes the increasing severity of non-military threats, among others, in the energy sector. In this context, it sees the political cohesion of NATO and the EU as a vulnerable one because of the misuse of the position of the sole supplier for strategic raw materials – again by an unnamed but unmistakable country in the neighbourhood. According to the new strategy, the deterioration of the international security environment points to the need for a strong and, if necessary, an independently acting EU that is able “*to react to the crisis in its neighbourhood, as well as to the global security appeals*”. Therefore, it emphasizes the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) among the tools, including the missions of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and it also emphasizes the shared values among the countries of the EU and the countries in its neighbourhood. The role of NATO is in the background, and on the background of the alliance adaptation measures that point out the increasing general defence effort, the strengthening of the ability to accept the armed forces of allies in our own territories, the support for the strengthening of the alliance infrastructure and the participation in intentional trainings. Both documents talk about the negative aspects of international migration that had been markedly problematized in the political as well as public discussion last year regarding the

significant increase of the movement of refugees along the so-called Balkan route. The updated strategy also includes extremism and increased inter-ethnic and social tension among the threats. With its reference to the action of ISIS, it finally talks about the new and non-state actors who “*replace the elements of the state system with their own structures*” and try to implement their territorial ambitions, and, for the first time in relation to the ongoing and more general securitization of this phenomenon, it also mentions the foreign fighters.⁵

The security dimension of the Czech foreign policy was, unsurprisingly, touched by its new concept, which was prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and approved by the Government at its meeting on 13th July. The vital interests of the Czech Republic are defined there, such as the assurance of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence as well as the preservation of all aspects of a democratic legal state. Similarly to the security strategy (*Bezpečnostní strategie*), the concept directly refers to the area of finding out about the security, and it is based on an assumption that the possibility of the territory being threatened by a massive military attack is low; within NATO this security is regarded as the main framework of the country’s defence, and it is inseparable. The main areas of interest in security are determined by the European neighbourhood in broad terms, e.g. including Sahel, and, in addition to NATO and the EU, the OSCE and the international regimes of mass-destruction weapon controls under the UN belong to the multilateral framework of the security in the Czech Republic. Like the security strategy, *Bezpečnostní strategie*, the concept emphasizes the energy security and, in this relation, talks about the necessity to diversify the supplies of strategic raw materials.⁶

While the updated version of the security strategy, *Bezpečnostní strategie*, quite faithfully describes the change of the security environment in which the Czech Republic has been since the Russian occupation of Crimea and the intervention in eastern Ukraine, and since it adapted its security attitude against the background of its firm position in the security institutions of NATO and the EU, the new concept of foreign policy, *Koncepce zahraniční politiky*, is rather a disappointment regarding the number of unanswered questions (in general, also in the security area) – despite the clear ambitions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to give a clear ideological horizon and a firm order to the Czech foreign policy. For example, it does not specify at all whether the Czech Government perceives the destabilization of the eastern or southern neighbourhood, under the influence of Russia on the one hand and of the ISIS on the other hand, to be a greater threat; what meaning, against the background of the renewed emphasis on the collective defence of NATO, the expedition missions projecting security and stability beyond the Alliance’s borders should have; what non-military tools should be used to reduce the risks of hybrid war, when in fact hybrid war combines the political, economic, military and social levels; how the Czech foreign policy wants to contribute to the ongoing relevance of the multilateral institutions that are extremely important for the security of such a small country as the Czech Republic; and whether the stable international legal order should guarantee only the security and welfare of the countries, or also that of individuals or other non-state actors (which, in general,

are omitted in the world policy, or they and their needs of “sufficient regulation” are only extraordinarily and conservatively pointed out).⁷

In the area of defence, the first approved document was the long-term outlook for defence, *Dlouhodobý výhled pro obranu (2030)*.⁸ Its original version was already prepared in 2013, but as a consequence of the fall of the Government of Petr Nečas and then the subsequent change of the security environment, its approval was postponed, and the State Security Council approved it only last year (on 23rd March), and finally also the Government as a whole approved it a few months later (on 15th June). The *outlook* is based on the analysis of the long-term development of trends in the security environment, in which a high degree of dynamism and cohesion is assumed. In the analysis of the security environment, mainly the scattering of power, hybrid wars, the increasing autonomy of non-state actors, and unstable governance leading to a regional crisis are described. At the same time, similarly to the security strategy, *Bezpečnostní strategie*, it specifically talks about the phenomenon of foreign fighters as the motive force of overflowing instability. According to the *outlook*, the nature of the security environment will be connected with higher demands in responsiveness on the part of NATO and the EU, and the assumption that the Army of the Czech Republic will use its armed forces mainly outside the territory of the Czech Republic in common operations with the allies on the basis of task forces. (In case Article 5 on collective defence is activated, NATO still considers that a task force, in the form of a mechanized brigade, will be sent out.) Regarding the principles of the armed forces, it talks about the whole scale of intensity and the full spectrum of operations within the allied effort (in connection with the principle of modularity), without geographical limitations (i.e. for example, in Arctic conditions) and with the concurrent course of a larger amount of foreign engagement. Finally, in terms of the financial provision, it mentions not only the increase in the defence budget to 1.4% of GDP by 2020, which was a commitment of the Government from the previous year, but it mentions also its further increase up to 2% of GDP a decade later. The long-term outlook for defence, *Dlouhodobý výhled pro obranu*, mentions that the five-year plans will specify the basic guidelines for defence planning. It also directly follows the concept of development for the Army of the Czech Republic, *Koncepce výstavby AČR (2025)*.⁹ It focuses on the demanded state to be reached by 2025 and argues that due to the fact that “*the Czech Republic and its European allies are in the worst security situation of the last twenty years*” and it is not possible to exclude “*an inter-state military conflict in Europe*” that may “*arise unexpectedly and very quickly*”, with the statements being very strong and not quite in the spirit of the mentioned conceptual documents, including the outlook, the Army of the Czech Republic should receive 460 billion CZK in the next decade for the modernization of its investments. The following list of threats, already in accordance with the outlook and also with other security documents similar to it, does not order them according to their importance and urgency or the relevance of the mentioned emphasized threat of the inter-state conflict. The concept then quite concisely summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the contemporary Army of the Czech Republic. According to it, the strengths are mainly the firm position of the

Czech Republic within NATO, the experience the Czech soldiers gained in international operations, the high capability to protect troops against mass-destruction weapons, the experience of the Special Forces, and the professionalism and other personal characteristics of the professional soldiers. Also, the weaknesses are described in detail, especially the lack of inter-operability, unfinished transformation processes, personnel and material insufficiency, the deterioration of the age structure of the Army of the Czech Republic, the insufficient number of active reserves, the slow acquisitions and mainly the shortcomings in the training of units and staff (especially the lack of ammunition and simulation training technologies). Subsequently, the concept describes the missions and tasks of particular types of armed forces. For the ground forces, it focuses on the acquisition of new wheeled vehicles that should replace the old BVP-2 and the modernization of other parts of their arsenal. For the air forces, the main aims are the improvement of security in the airspace of the Czech Republic within the system NATINADS, the completion of the integration of the night vision system for the L-159 and JAS-39 Gripen aircraft, progress in the modernization of the Mi-17Š helicopters, the purchase of new multi-purpose helicopters, the purchase of a new transport aircraft, and the purchase of a modern passive monitoring system. Regarding the state, according to the concept, the Army of the Czech Republic should have almost 25,000 professional soldiers in 2025 – this means about 6,000 more than at the present time – and then it should also have 3,700 civilian employees and 5,000 members of the active military reserves. The increase in the active reserves, which have played an important role in the discussion on defence for a few years, would be a significant progress compared to the contemporary state, and the command and control of the Army of the Czech Republic believe in an increase of the capabilities for crises and other urgent needs. Regarding the general parameters of the political discussion, it can be said that President Miloš Zeman again, as in the previous year, inhabited a different “universe of facts” than the other representatives of the executive power in terms of the assessment of the security environment and key threats. Zeman’s criticism of the problematization of the Russian revisionist policy in the eastern neighbourhood of NATO and the EU, which was dissonant with the position of the Government, was completed by Zeman’s pointing to the risks associated with the arrival of refugees in the Czech Republic, which was publicly argued against mainly by the Prime Minister. While the President repeatedly stated that the arrival of the refugees is “*a well-organized invasion*” and a threat that “*has never been here, perhaps with the exception of the Nazi occupation*”, the Prime Minister criticized mainly his appearance with representatives of the group Blok proti islámu on 17th November in the Albertov district of Prague, which, in the opinion of the Prime Minister, placed him among the populists who parasitized upon the fear of the people.¹⁰ In general, migration as a securitized topic in last year’s political discussion overshadowed the Russian assertive policy in Eastern Europe. With a few exceptions, the reactions to the problematization of the refugees (or rather of their virtual nature due to the number of arriving people) were in the spirit of a tendency towards the closing of the society, the nationalization of the internal security, and a rejection of some tools of the common procedure of the EU, mainly the redistribution quotas.

In relation to the ongoing crisis between NATO and Russia, the positions of the main political actors remained predictable. A good example was the response to the demonstrative passing of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment of the US Army through the Czech Republic, the so-called Dragoon Ride, as the regiment was returning at the turn of March and April from its training in the Baltic to its home bases in Bavaria.¹¹ (This regiment had previously protected one part of the border between the Federal Republic of Germany and the former Czechoslovak Socialist Republic during the Cold War. After its completion of this task, it took part in missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Afghanistan.) The Minister of Defence, Martin Stropnický, the generals of the Army of the Czech Republic,¹² and President Zeman all expressed a very positive attitude to the passing. Among other things, the President criticized the so-called “anti-American fools” who called this convoy an occupation army and wanted to stop it like any occupying force. He also repeated that he was against every permanent presence of foreign armies on the territory of the Czech Republic.¹³ Minister Stropnický called the convoy a manifestation of the determination to stop Russia from further filling in “*the empty spaces*”.¹⁴ In contrast, the Chairman of KSČM, Vojtěch Filip, called the convoy a provocation and a misuse of weapons that only complicated the diplomatic solution of the Ukrainian crisis.¹⁵ The passing of the convoy and the subsequent discussions confirmed the ongoing opinion polarization of the conflict parties in Ukraine; nevertheless, the critics and opponents of the convoy, either in the political discussion or in the public space, remained in the minority.

Finally, in terms of the political context, we should not ignore the culmination of the conflict between the soon outgoing Chief of General Staff of the Army of the Czech Republic, General Petr Pavel, and Minister of Defence Martin Stropnický. At the beginning of the conflict, there was the amendment of the Act on Soldiers, which had been prepared for several years, and it was withdrawn by Minister Stropnický from the programme of the Government after assumed office. This was followed by Pavel’s protest against the engagement of the Army of the Czech Republic after the explosion of the ammunition dump in Vrbětice with the explanation that the Army of the Czech Republic was not “*a security agency*”.¹⁶ Another part of the conflict was the disagreement about the type of military helicopters that should have been purchased for the needs of the Army of the Czech Republic. Even here, the Minister opposed the recommendation of the generals that had been the result of several years of debates. At the end of January 2015, the conflict between General Pavel and Minister Stropnický culminated after the Minister had promoted his candidate, the Lieutenant-Colonel Pavel Kříž, to the position of the Commander of the Military Police. General Pavel pointed out mainly the fact that Lieutenant-Colonel Kříž, a former professional lawyer, had never led a military unit, and his appointment would have been contrary to the career order of the Army of the Czech Republic and the guidelines for the selection of personnel for the position with the planned rank of General. President Zeman entered into this conflict as the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and asked General Pavel not to carry out his threat to resign. The conflict pointed out two important facts of a systemic nature. Firstly, a quarter century after the restoration of the country’s democratic statehood, such a situation may occur when the position of the

Minister of Defence is occupied by a politician who becomes familiar with the given department only at the moment of his appointment. Secondly, the Army of the Czech Republic can generate a commander who, while respecting the democratic principle of the civil control of the army, is able to defy an action threatening his professional activity and capability. But we should also note that the broader context of this conflict was the confirmed appointment of General Pavel to a high position in Brussels, and after his departure, Lieutenant-Colonel Kříž was really appointed to be the Commander of the Military Police.

THE SECURITY DIMENSION OF THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY: AGENDA AND EVENTS

The Czech Republic and NATO

At the summit in the Welsh city Newport in September 2014, the Czech Republic committed itself to actively contributing to the adaptive measures of NATO in the response to the assertive Russian policy at the eastern borders of the Alliance, which are embodied in the *Readiness Action Plan*. These commitments were implemented last year. In particular, there was the contribution of 150 persons from the 43rd Airborne Battalion based in Chrudim to the provisional group of the front-line fast response forces of NATO (NRF-VJTF) led by Germany as a *framework nation*. At the same time, the Czech Republic promised the involvement of a Czech chemical company in the British rotation prepared for the year 2017 with a view to further involvement of the units of the Army of the Czech Republic in the NRF at the beginning of the next decade under the leadership of Germany and Poland. (Upon the proposal of the Government, in December, PS PČR approved the increase in the number of allocated Czech soldiers for the common NRF for the year 2016, from the originally planned 452 to 816 persons. But in comparison with the 1,500 persons allocated in the previous year, this was a decrease.) The Army of the Czech Republic also participated in allied training, including Trident Juncture 2015 and the training in the headquarters in the Spanish city Zaragoza, the tactical training Allied Spirit II and the training titled VJTF Noble Jump 2015 in the Polish city Zagan, and it hosted the regular allied training of the cooperation of pilots with the controllers within the support of the ground operations, this time under the name Ample Strike 2015 in Náměstí in Čáslav and on the training premises Boletice and Libavá. During Trident Juncture, the largest allied training since 2002, to which the Czech Republic sent more than 250 soldiers of the ground, air and special forces, experts from the Centre Against Mass Destruction Weapons in Vyškov, and Mi-171Š helicopters and L-159 planes, there was an accident involving one Mi-171Š machine, and five crew members were injured in it. As part of the adaptation, on the level of the executive power (inter-departmental management), legislation amendments were adopted, facilitating the transit of allied troops across the territory of the Czech Republic, if necessary. Among the member countries of NATO, where the issue of the removal of obstacles during the transit of the armed forces is thematized as “the Schengen crisis”, the Czech Republic moved

into the medium category of “permeability”. At the same time, a possible constitutional amendment (Article 43) was discussed that would allow the deployment of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic in foreign operations, but the Government’s proposal for this was not prepared, and it was rather about the assessment of the will of the members of the Government to submit this amendment separately.

Besides this, the Czech Republic tried to diplomatically promote its governmental interpretation of the changes in the security environment included in the new conceptual documents as well as the steps of NATO that would be adequate, in its opinion, and especially its activities as part of the so-called Bucharest Group comprising the Baltic member countries, the V4, and Romania and Bulgaria. Despite the fact that the Czech Republic is not among the so-called *front-line allies*, the Czech diplomacy tried to act from the position of “a moderate ally” to support them, and its activities included the increased enforcement of the permanent presence of the allied forces at the eastern borders (the so-called *advanced force presence*). The meaning of the initiative for the result of the negotiations of NATO on this issue, which culminated with the summit in Warsaw, is not indisputable. The Czech participation, however, disclosed certain internal tensions that were the result of various departmental institutional entities on the one hand (the agenda under the responsibility of foreign ministries that, according to the Minister of Defence, have a tendency towards less “realistic” attitudes)¹⁷, and, on the other hand, and more significantly, were the result of different opinions on the threat posed by Russia and the response of NATO to it. President Zeman refused to participate in the summit of the heads of states in Bucharest (he preferred to visit the Pardubice Region) that resulted in the declaration proposing the strengthened Alliance presence at the eastern borders, and therefore the Czech Republic was represented there by the Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies, Jan Hamáček (ČSSD).

Although the Czech Republic joined the international coalition against ISIS initiated at the summit in Newport (2014), last year it did not participate in the actions of its military group. But it will engage in it in 2016, when the training mission of the Army of the Czech Republic in Ballad, Iraq (approximately 60 km to the north of Baghdad) will be started, as this mission is related to the implementation of the long-delayed delivery of the Czech L-159 Alca machines to the Iraqi army in November 2015 with the prospect of their use against ISIS. President Zeman, who had been thematizing the threat of the jihadist Islamism for a long time, introduced his own plan for the fight against ISIS at the General Assembly of the UN in September,¹⁸ and this plan would, in addition to deploying small tactical groups of special forces for paralyzing the nerve centres of terrorist groups, include a new coalition – with the participation of Russia. But the plan was not accepted.

In the previous year, the implementation of the Multinational Aviation Training Centre (MATC) continued as a *smart defence* project that was approved already at the NATO summit in Chicago. But the Czech Republic failed to achieve the direct involvement of the USA in it, which was the main *raison* of the project in its original form, and also the support of the project on the side of other participants was not very generous, which led to the project’s lack of personnel. Another *smart defence*

project initiated by the Czech Republic, which focuses on the modernization of the Soviet weaponry in the arsenal of the new member countries of NATO, resulted so far in the initial analysis and creation of a common database of the participating member countries.

The European global strategy

In the field of the CSDP, the main theme of the year 2015 was the preparation of the Global Strategy of the EU, which was to set out the objectives and means of the action of the EU as a political and security actor beyond its borders. The Czech Republic participated in the preparation of this document, which was comprehensively presented to the member countries at the European Council in Brussels at the end of June 2016, after the British referendum on leaving the EU,¹⁹ with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (within OPP) as the main coordinating actor. Among other things, it completed the questionnaire sent to the member countries to find out their preferences in the thematic area of global governance, global trade, regional integration architecture, attitudes to crises and conflicts, strengthening of states and social resilience and integration and cooperation on the European continent. In the security area, the Czech position, in accordance with the conceptual documents analysed above, emphasized the central role and responsibility of NATO in ensuring the collective defence, but, at the same time, the Czech Republic spoke in favour of a more powerful and more capable CSDP. At the same time, the Czech Republic used its position as the presiding country within the V4 to formulate the common non-paper that also contributed to the revival of the transatlantic partnership as well as the institutional structure of the CFSP/CSDP.

Foreign missions

In the previous year, the Army of the Czech Republic participated in the foreign missions of NATO, the EU, and the UN in accordance with the applicable mandate for the deployment of armed forces. In connection with this mandate, we should mention the analysis of the Parliamentary Institute for the Members of Parliament of the Chamber of Deputies, according to which, for example, the provision on the assignment of 150 soldiers as part of the possible, immediately intervening special multinational units of the EU and NATO in the Middle East and North Africa, was not in accordance with the Constitution because the condition of certainty of purpose had not been fulfilled.²⁰ A similar and more serious issue, in the long term, is connected with the approval of the possible deployment of the Army of the Czech Republic in the NRF or as part of the Union *battle group* (which is particularly relevant because of the deployment of the Visegrad *battle group* in emergency situations in 2016). It is possible here, in contrast to the time framework and the amount of force, to define the place of deployment in advance. But it seems that this fact is not problematized by the Parliament or the Government of the Czech Republic, and, for example, according to the expert on constitutional law Jan Kysel from the Faculty of Law at Charles University, it is not inevitably necessary to harmonize the particular parts of legislation.²¹

The deployment of the units of the Army of the Czech Republic in Afghanistan went according to plan as part of the operation of NATO called *Resolute Support*.

The Czech soldiers protected the outer perimeter of the base in Bagram and fulfilled their tasks connected with the protection of the units (*force protection*), and then they participated in the training of helicopter crews and provided medical assistance. The contingent consisted of the headquarters of the task force at the international airport in Kabul, the National Support Element (NSE), the training unit AAT (*Air Adviser Team*) in the same place, the guard company in Bagram, the representatives at the headquarters of the mission called *Resolute Support*, and the field surgeon team. An undoubted honour for the Army of the Czech Republic was the appointment of Major Miroslav Šajban, the commander of 200 members of the joint training squadron (which consisted mostly of Afghans, but also of Americans, Croatians, and Hungarians), because until then, similar groups had always been led only by members of the US military forces. Another important deployment within NATO was the exceptional provision of the air forces of the Army of the Czech Republic in the mission called *Air Policing* in Iceland in July and August, where the originally planned Canadian rotation was replaced so that their machinery could engage in attacks on ISIS targets. In the KFOR mission, the deployment of a smaller task force in the international staff continued.

Another place of the action of the Army of the Czech Republic was Mali. There the mission EUTM continued, within which 34 Czech soldiers protected the headquarters of the operation in Bamako, and four other instructors with a lot of experience from foreign missions worked in the training camp and the surrounding area in Koulikoro (approximately 60 km to the north-east of the capital city). At the same time, after a few delays, 25 members of the 601st Special Forces Group were prepared as part of the Dutch contingent of the operation called MINUSMA, which acted in the north of the country. The related governmental resolution was accepted, and the approval of it by both chambers of the Parliament of the Czech Republic took place already in the spring of 2014.

The other missions of the Army of the Czech Republic included the naval mission called EUNAVFOR Atalanta (HQ Northwood) and the new mission EUNAVFOR MED (Sophia), where the members of the Army of the Czech Republic operated in the OHQ mission in Rome on the flagship of the operation (FHQ). Also, the participation in the MFO in the Sinai operation continued, which included the aviation contingent consisting of CASA C-295M aircraft and air and ground personnel with the aim to monitor the situation over the Egyptian-Israeli border and ensure the transportation of people and materials for the mission.

Despite the declared efforts to return to the UN missions, the only prepared larger expedition was undoubtedly the important and, in terms of asymmetric attacks, “front-line” mission called MINUSMA. President Zeman continued in his efforts to engage the Army of the Czech Republic in the mission called UNDOF at the Golan Heights, and he repeated his desire to do so, among others, at the command meeting (on 24th November). But the security situation in the perimeter of the mission is still extremely complex and non-transparent. The Syrian part of the border is not controlled by the Syrian government – there are twenty border crossings, and as the Chief of the General Staff Pavel warned that only four of them were active at the northern zone of the separation – and in the rest of the area there were groups hostile to Israel as well as

the UN units for which the source of finances or influence was kidnapping and blackmailing, in better cases.²² So, UNDOF can fulfil its mandate only on the Israeli side of the border. In the mission, established by the resolution of the UN Security Council 350/1974, which places it among “the old UN missions”, there are currently three officers of the Army of the Czech Republic, who have worked there since July 2015 (with an estimated twelve-month rotation) at the site of the temporary headquarters of the mission in Camp Zouhani on the Israeli side of the separation zone. Despite the difficult situation, the Minister of Defence does not exclude the possibility of sending larger units there, but for the Czech Republic it is still difficult to get into the planning process of the DPKO and to effectively enforce its own preferences and conditions of deployment in the more important unofficial decision-making structures of the UN: in 2015, exactly this was fatal for the considered deployment of Czech engineers.²³ Then smaller numbers of members of the Army of the Czech Republic acted as military observers in other UN missions and, in accordance with the mandate for the deployment of forces, up to 50 persons were delegated to the emergency system called UNSAS (newly with their expected growth to 200 persons in the next year).

Budget and acquisitions

The draft budget for the year 2015, which was approved by the Government in September, still does not guarantee the increase of the spending on defence to the amount of 1.4% of GDP in 2020. But at the same time, it is also a real turnaround to the increase of these expenses, and their further increase by 10% is expected in the next two years. On the other hand, the Ministry of Defence did not use 3 billion CZK from the budget of the previous year because of unrealized investments. (They managed to partially settle the deficit by a “pre-payment” of the rent of the JAS-39 Gripen supersonic airplanes and several accelerated acquisitions, including the order of 2,600 CZ 805 BREN attack rifles with accessories and 5,500 CZ-75 SP-01 PHANTOM pistols for a total of 476 million CZK from Česká zbrojovka.)²⁴ Already in the previous budget period, it did not use 1 billion CZK, so we can repeat the conclusion from the last version of this yearbook: that the increase of the striking power of the Czech Republic and its contribution to the collective defence of NATO will be dependent not only on the amount of the budget that is spent on defence but also on the relevant organs’ real ability to effectively use their finances.

According to the regular comparative *Index of Transparency and Integrity of the Departments of Defence* of the non-governmental organization Transparency International, there was a moderate risk of corruption in the Department of Defence in the Czech Republic. The highest risks were found in the area of foreign operations and procurement.²⁵ According to the Index of the Centre of Applied Economics, which is affiliated to the Institute of Economic Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Charles University, the Ministry of Defence was the worst in procurement out of all the governmental departments.²⁶

In the monitored year, large acquisitions with a value of up to 14 billion CZK were planned, according to the Government’s plan. On the shopping list of the Ministry of Defence we can find other Pandur vehicles (six commander and 14 signal vehi-

cles worth a total amount of 1 billion CZK), MADR mobile radars (which are used to guide JAS-39 Gripen fighter planes, among other things), 42 Titus vehicles from the French company Nexter Systems with a Tatra chassis for the expected sum of 2.7 billion CZK (Nexter, thanks to its lower prices, defeated SVOS Přelouč in the competition for the deal, as the latter was offering Vega domestic vehicles, which also had a Tatra Trucks chassis),²⁷ new multi-purpose helicopters (with the expected value of 5 to 8 billion CZK) and perhaps two other CASA airplanes as a replacement for the outdated Russian Jak-40 planes. The decision of the Czech Republic to order multi-purpose, not only combat, helicopters, was cancelled two years ago, and the scheduled date for receiving the supply of machines that would replace the Russian Mi-24/35 in 2017 seems to be unreal at present. The same applies to the 3D radars and airport radars. The replacement of the Russian P-37 has been discussed for almost ten years, and now there may be a supplier of such a replacement – the Israeli company Elta with the EL/M 2084 AD radar – but the planned order in the amount of 6 billion CZ has also been delayed.²⁸

But the planned acquisitions are still only on a piece of paper, and there is the question of whether they can be realized in the near future. The ongoing institutional and personnel consolidation of the Ministry of Defence means that there is some hope when the already third Deputy Minister for Arming of Minister Stropnický was appointed – the former Deputy Minister for Defence Policy and Strategy and former diplomat Daniel Koštoval, who replaced Pavel Borovec, who had come to the Department of Defence from ČEZ – and, at the beginning of the year, the National Office for Arming was cancelled, and its departments were moved to the new Section of Arming and Acquisition at the Ministry. The cancellation of the office, the operation of which had been questioned in the last few years, evoked some critical reactions. According to its former director Jaroslav Štefec, it was “*a non-system step*,” and the decisions about the purchases will now be made by the politicians, and not according to the needs of the Army of the Czech Republic. Also, Transparency International has some concerns about the politicization of arms procurement.²⁹

Besides the mentioned acquisition plans, a contract worth almost one billion CZK was concluded with the Polish company PZL Świdnik regarding service support, software upgrades, and training of the crew for the W-3A Sokol helicopters in the weaponry of the Army of the Czech Republic. Also, already in February, the Ministry concluded a contract with the manufacturer on service support for the CASA transport planes. The extension of the contract on the service of L-159 and L-39 planes last year was only a subject of negotiations with a view to entering into a negotiation procedure without a publication for the existing supplier, Aero Vodochody. The Army of the Czech Republic also acquired some Javelin anti-tank guided missiles (254 million CZK) within the FMS programme between the US and Czech governments. In June, a guard company in Bagram used tens of ScanEagle pilotless planes that the Army of the Czech Republic had received together with a firing and capturing device from the USA. (The planes are used to fulfil the ISR tasks and for the laser marking of targets, and they do not have their own weaponry.)³⁰ Also a joint purchase of air-to-ground rockets for JAS-39 Gripen planes was successfully accomplished with several allies

whose air forces own these planes in their weaponry, which we had mentioned in the 2014 yearbook.³¹ The implementation of this plan shows that a pragmatic cooperation in the area of acquisitions on the basis of *smart defence* is possible, despite previous disappointments in connection with the Czech acquisition process (mainly the abandoned joint purchase of the MADR radar by the V4 countries).

The assessment of the modernization of the Army of the Czech Republic by the top leaders of the defence apparatus was heard at the 2nd National Armaments Conference, which was held on 22nd October. At this conference, Minister Stropnický critically spoke about the period before his appointment, when, according to him, defence and security had not belonged to the priorities of the Government, there had been a long period with an under-financed Department of Defence, the modernization had been delayed and the permanent reorganization had caused chaos in the acquisitions as well as in the personnel policy. These trends were visible also after his appointment (see above), but the Minister of Defence believes that the modernization programmes will be restarted and that the Ministry of Defence is becoming “*again a reliable and prospective customer*” for the defence industry.³² Also at the conference, the Chief of General Staff Josef Bečvář reminded the other participants of the recently approved concept *Koncepce výstavby AČR*, but at the same time, he warned that a violation of the budget commitments, e.g. due to the decline in economic performance, would threaten the effectiveness of the acquisition process regarding the needs of the Army of the Czech Republic. This warning can be explained as an expression of the existing doubts of the highest representatives of the Army based on the previous unfortunate experience in connection with the irreversibility of the turn in the modernization of the Army of the Czech Republic. J. Bečvář also talked about the necessity to develop the domestic defence industry and to engage it in the modernization cycles of the Army of the Czech Republic; their absence might lead to an inability to complement the material losses in critical situations.³³ In his speech at the conference, the Chairman of the Association of the Defence and Security Industry, Jiří Hynek, appreciated the cooperation of the Ministry of Defence with the Czech arms industry, but at the same time, he pointed out that many Czech companies thought that the armies of the member countries of NATO, with whom they had long-term contracts, were more reliable partners; they participate in the production of weapon systems, and thanks to this they are improving their own advanced technologies.³⁴ This critical practical opinion should be complemented by the fact that the exports of weapons to the unstable areas of the Middle East and North Africa have increased five times in the period of the years 2012–2014, and, according to Amnesty International, in 2014 almost half of the exported weapons were sent to countries with undemocratic regimes (for example Saudi Arabia, which is one of the least democratic countries in the world, has recently become an important customer with 16.38% of the Czech exports³⁵ going there). For the Czech Republic, the increasing volume of these exports is increasingly difficult to maintain, and it is also increasingly difficult for it to develop a profile of a state with a value-oriented foreign policy, the basic tool of which is the support of human rights and democracy, according to the concept of foreign policy titled *Koncept zahraniční politiky*.³⁶

Domestic security

The spectacular terrorist attacks in Europe have become the legitimating reference point for the strengthening of the apparatus of the domestic security in the Czech Republic as well. Especially the November attacks in Paris were followed by manifestations as well as strategic measures. Two categories of reactions to the attacks can be mentioned here. The first category includes mainly the introduction of the threat scale (approved by the Government in January 2016)³⁷, and the visible strengthened presence of the Police of the Czech Republic in public places in combined patrols with members of the shock troops of the Army of the Czech Republic. The second category includes mainly the beginning, based on a decision of the National Security Council, of the so-called Audit of National Security under the Ministry of the Interior (with the participation of several departments, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence) that should be completed by the end of this year. The already presented proposals of the audit include the establishment of the Centre of Terrorism and Hybrid Threats at the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic and the establishment of the National System of Soft Targets Protection.

In the political and bureaucratic discussion, illegal migration was thematized as an important security topic. The taken measures in reaction to it were in the spirit of the nationalization of the internal security with an emphasis on the protection of the border of the Czech Republic and on the policy of deterrence for the potential arriving or transiting migrants, which was implemented through the procedures of the detention facilities, among others, and criticized by a high official of the UN.³⁸ In July, the new migration strategy of the Government, *Strategie migrační politiky ČR*, prepared by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, was accepted with the aim to define a policy that would be “*balanced and flexible*”.³⁹ To suppress illegal migration, it expands the residence controls and strengthens the measures for administrative decisions for the purpose of prevention of illegal migration, and then it assumes the strengthening of the activities with the aim to help the refugees abroad. It also stipulates that the Czech Republic will promote the maintaining of the benefits of free movement of people within the EU and in the Schengen area, but it also emphasizes the necessity to observe the common Union rules by all the partners with the warning that “*a different situation may destabilize the common system and finally it may also threaten the fundamental pillars of the European integration*”. The result of the successful securitization of migration also strengthened the apparatus of the internal security: according to the plans prepared in the previous year, the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic should employ up to 1,123 new workers, who would be divided proportionally between the Foreign Police and the Ministry Department of the Asylum and Migration Policy. (At the time when the plan was published in October, this number was higher than the number of the applications for asylum received since January.⁴⁰ According to the manager of the Department, Tomáš Haišman, in the period from 17. 6. 2015 to 23. 3. 2016, 3,409 foreigners were arrested for crimes in the category of illegal transit migration, of whom 55% were citizens of Syria.⁴¹) In order to strengthen their protection in case of need, a common training of the Police of the Czech Republic and the Army of the Czech Republic took place near the Aus-

trian border, among other measures. “*The training should show how the security forces acted at the moment when there was a task to protect the state border and close it,*” explained the Chief of Police, General Tomáš Tuhý.⁴²

On the one hand, these measures respond to the public demand caused by the media images depicting the immediacy of the threat of terrorism, and they sensationally emphasize the pitfalls of the inter-cultural coexistence of different groups; on the other hand, they are the results of the efforts of the security experts, who are promoting their interests, and for whom the social environment is increasingly characterized by uncertainty and anxiety, and thus for them, this is an opportunity to have a successful campaign to increase the budgetary resources or competencies. The stricter security measures are often ambivalent, as they generate a sense of security, but also of danger; an example of this is the above-mentioned combined patrols in the streets with automatic guns, and the security measures intensify the tension between safety and freedom when the balance is threatened in favour of the security measures. This causes a state in which a citizen is not only a subject but also an object of the security procedures in the modern *panopticon* of Bentham and Foucault.

The Secret Service

Last year, the intelligence community was shocked by a scandal of the Military Intelligence Service (*Vojenské zpravodajství*, VZ) when one of its members was arrested or kidnapped in July and detained for several months together with some other Czech citizens in Lebanon. The group of five was finally returned to the Czech Republic after the release of Ali Taan Fayad (also called Ali Amin) and Khalid Merabi, two citizens of Lebanon and the Ivory Coast, who had been arrested in the hotel Sheraton in Prague in April 2014 when concluding a contract on the supply of 9K38 Igla manual missile systems to a group of alleged members of the Colombian rebel group FARC who actually turned out to be American DEA agents. The military intelligence officer, who was part of the mission in Lebanon, had been probably sent there with the hope that he would possibly gain information (supposedly originating from the Qatari Secret Service) on the Czech hostage of ISIS in Libya. Although the identities of the kidnappers and the circumstances of the entire event are not publicly known, it is believed that this was not a terrorist act, but rather an act of coercion from the Lebanese government, which had caught a Czech intelligence analyst so that he could be exchanged for Fayad (a former adviser to the Ukrainian President, Viktor Yanukovich), who was said to be its agent, and to prevent Fayad's extradition to the USA, where he had been accused of organized conspiracy and terrorism.

The severity of the case is not only in the failure of the VZ or the unfortunate statement of the Minister of Defence, Martin Stropnický, after the return of Fayad and Merabi back to Lebanon in February of this year, which confirmed the exchange for the kidnapped Czech citizens, but also in the mere fact that the news of the exchange leaked out to the public, most likely due to the rivalry existing between the elements of the Czech intelligence community. And the response to it came in a short period of time: it came through the magazine *Respekt*⁴³, which published the amount of money that has been supposedly used to ransom the two Czech female citizens kidnapped

in Pakistan, whose earlier release had been negotiated by the civil secret service of ÚZSI. Against the background of this rivalry, which is extremely unfortunate because of the effort of NATO to share intelligence information more effectively, it seems that the deployment of a military newsman in this case could have been avoided if the Czech secret services had better communicated with each other, and, according to some sources, ÚZSI had information from the embassy in Beirut that the Lebanese government was going for a counter-attack to the arrest of Fayad, and there was a discussion about an intensification of the control of the Czech intelligence services. At the beginning of July, Prime Minister Sobotka introduced the plan of the new two-stage control. The first stage should be the control commissions of the Chamber of Deputies, where the two existing commissions for the Security Information Service (*Bezpečnostní informační služba*, BIS) and the Military Intelligence service (*Vojenské zpravodajství*, VZ) should be completed by the third commission for the control of ÚZSI. The second stage should be the specially selected “*Council of the Wise*” with the competence to access the so-called live bundles. The amendment of the Act on the Intelligence Services in this term was approved by the Government in June 2016.⁴⁴

At the same time, the Ministry of the Interior started to prepare the act defining the competencies of ÚZSI. (At present the competencies of ÚZSI are solely regulated only by Sections 17–19 of the Act on the Intelligence Services.) The bill, which includes the strengthening of the competencies of ÚZSI in the territory of the Czech Republic and also abroad, was submitted in the first months in 2016; in the comments to it, there were many reservations.⁴⁵ Also the preparation of the amendment of the Act on VZ was started that should add to it the responsibility for an active cybernetic defence (i.e. including the *offensive* capacities towards the source of the attacks), which is, at present, more emphasized in NATO (through the strengthening of the capacities of the member countries) in relation to the declaration of relevance in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty on collective defence for the cybernetic domain. Already in the last quarter of the year 2015, the preparations for the construction of a new office at VZ, the National Centre of Cybernetic Forces (*Národní centrum kybernetických sil*, NCKS) began, and its estimated budget is 300 million CZK per year. NCKS should ensure the cybernetic protection, and in case of an emergency or a state of war, it should also ensure the cybernetic security of the Czech Republic, which is under the control of NBÚ under normal conditions.

THE SECURITY DIMENSION OF THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY: IDENTIFICATION OF THE MAIN ACTORS

Like in the previous years, the number of the actors participating in the establishment and implementation of security and defence policy did not change significantly. The updated security strategy, *Bezpečnostní strategie*, includes mainly the diplomatic services, intelligence services, the armed forces and especially the Army of the Czech Republic (and the Military Intelligence Services as its part), other institutions of the state administration and local governments, and security forces (especially the Po-

lice of the Czech Republic and the Fire and Rescue Brigade) as well as the Municipal Police, ambulance services, law enforcement bodies, and the National Security Office (as a national authority for cybernetic security, including the National Centre of Cybernetic Security as its part), but also the private security services as well as “*the corporate entities and natural persons in the scope defined by the law*” into the institutional framework of the security and defence of the country.⁴⁶

In relation to the establishment of the defence and security policy, it is necessary to mention the Government of the Czech Republic, the National Security Council and its permanent working body, the Committee for the Coordination of Foreign Policy (*Výbor pro koordinaci zahraniční politiky*, VKZBP), the Government Office of the Czech Republic (which enters into the process of the articulation of positions for the common foreign and security policy), and the Office of the President of the Czech Republic (which promotes its preferences mainly informally, but often effectively). Then we can mention the particular ministries, mainly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (among its other functions, as the coordinator of the updated security strategy, *Bezpečnostní strategie*, and the new concept of foreign policy, *Koncepce zahraniční politiky ČR*), the Ministry of Defence (the coordinator of the conceptual documents in the field of defence), the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and, of course, the legislative institutions, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, which fulfill regulatory and control functions. The arrival of the new Chief of the General Staff, General J. Bečvář, was a significant change in the annual comparison. He entered the command office with a double *handicap*. The first one is his lack of leadership experience – his highest leadership function was the command and control of a troop with the planned rank of a captain, and then he served only in staff functions, at the Military Police (as a commander, but never of a unit) or as the military attaché at the embassy in Paris.⁴⁷ It is not possible to be unaware of the fact that in the Army of the Czech Republic there are several commanders with extensive experience from the level of a platoon to the level of a troop. But these remain in the background in the process of promoting officers to higher positions, which is a problem in the army because the criteria for who should be in positions of command and control should be based mainly on experience. The other disadvantage of General Bečvář is the fact that he has never served in a foreign mission. In the army, whose members think that the number of missions they participated in is very important, especially Afghanistan is taken into account because some of the officers and warrant officers have been there up to three times, and this means that at the time of Bečvář’s accession to the highest military function, he had much fewer medals than his predecessors and many of his subordinates. The statement that the new Chief of the General Staff made after his inauguration shows that he thinks the main security threats are radicalism, which he identified especially with ISIS, and the unpredictable instability that he connected with the development in Ukraine and the change of the attitude of Russia.⁴⁸ His priorities are the modernization of the weaponry of the Army of the Czech Republic (mainly of the tracked vehicles of the 7th Mechanized Troop in Hranice and the modification of the artillery

weapon systems), the improvement of his personnel (his desire that each soldier be “*a motivated and well-trained soldier*”, and the improvement of the fight preparation and the training of the troops) and the optimization of the command and control system.⁴⁹ Lieutenant-General Bečvář was not very polite when he said that in the period before his accession, the state of the Army of the Czech Republic had been “*very critical, [and] we were on the bottom*”,⁵⁰ and at that time it was mainly important to ensure that there were enough financial resources to start the development and modernization programmes, eliminate the so-called Emmenthal organizational structures and stop the trend of the so-called Afghanization, in which the training of the Army of the Czech Republic was subject to the needs of one particular battlefield during the entire last decade (but he also emphasized that the participation of Czech soldiers in the missions in Afghanistan was beneficial for the Army of the Czech Republic).⁵¹ Finally, the priority of the new Chief of the General Staff is the establishment of a system of active reserves with the aim of creating a corps of reserve forces with a total number of 5,000 soldiers, and half of them should fulfil tasks involving the protection of important objects or the solution of critical situations (e.g. floods), if necessary, and the other half should be joined to the professional units for possible deployment in the territory of the Czech Republic and also abroad.⁵²

THE SECURITY DIMENSION OF THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC SPACE

In 2015, the topic of defence and security, as in the previous year, was significantly politicized. The conflict in Ukraine, as the main reference point for the participants of the discussion in the public space, was replaced by the issue of migration, which was securitized by the security and defence apparatus and also by the majority of the politicians, including the mainstream ones, with the considerable contribution of a large number of media. In this relation, mainly the attitude of the television channel Prima was quite scandalous because its management ordered the editors to depict refugees as a threat and a risk.⁵³ The difference was also seen in the media analysis of the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting.⁵⁴ The distorted and tendentious news reporting about this topic and the European and domestic reactions was spread also through the outlets of the Kremlin information operation in order to accentuate the isolationist and anti-system sentiments in the Czech society by deepening the gap between the “elites” and the “society” and by spreading ontological chaos and uncertainty. For this purpose, these media covered also the promotion – with the use of emotive figures or manipulative techniques, such as exaggeration, rumours, and blaming⁵⁵ – of an alternative universe of facts about the contemporary international policy in general, the relations between Russia and the West, and the characteristics of the western and Russian societies.

CONCLUSION

In terms of the conceptual apparatus of the project, the development in the field of defence and security of the Czech foreign policy in the previous year confirmed the trend towards adaptation as a rather reactive, but more positively and constructively tuned type of action that we had identified in the last edition of this yearbook. This was particularly evident in the relation to NATO. The Czech Republic not only welcomed the regionalization tendency after entering the post-intervention stage, but it also actively contributed to the adaptive measures, and in its attitude, we can find also elements of proactive cooperative action (formation of a common policy). But its position remained reactive in general, while the full acceptance of the external policy in this domain was prevented by the internal politicization on the level of the executive power. Besides this, the modernization of the Army of the Czech Republic that would enable an even more effective contribution to the collective defence from the viewpoint of the outputs – which are more important than the fetishized values of the proportion of the defence expenses for the GDP that have a limited explicitness in relation to the real contribution, and especially in small countries they sharply deviate in accordance with the investments made in the given year – is still being held back by institutional barriers. The declared return to the UN missions, among other things, and the way of the identity declaration of liberal multilateralism were successful only partially, mainly due to the focus on the UNDOF mission and the partial ability to effectively enter the UN planning process at the headquarters (DPKO). The sending of Czech soldiers into the mission called MINUSMA, a dangerous stabilization mission in the broader European neighbourhood, is certainly not a negligible result of this effort, and, furthermore, it has a distinct connection to the European security. The exception to the tendency towards a more constructive and more adaptive position is the policy in relation to migration (which is conceptualized as a security issue), where, at some moments, the attitude of the Czech Republic fulfilled the requirements of active rejection, i.e. offensive reactive action.

After the politicization of the defence and security from the year before last due to the Ukrainian crisis, which was further strengthened by the significant securitization of migration, the year 2015 brought a number of related particular measures: the conceptual documents, the new tools and the increase of the resources for the apparatuses of the internal and external security. There was some normalization, as there was a broad acceptance of the exceptionality of the security situation requiring extraordinary measures, despite the opposition of the neo-liberal right wing and the critical left wing. (Compared to this, migration was strongly thematized by a new xenophobe movement, for which, because of its anti-system basis, all the steps of the Government in this area, no matter how fierce, were considered to be *a priori* insufficient.) If we made an evaluation of these complex processes now, it would be very early; but this does not apply to the caution about the risks of “securitocracy”, a society ruled by security imperatives at the expense of the liberal principles.

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