
Chapter 7

The United States of America in the Czech Foreign Policy

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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY: BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The United States of America has been regarded as a key partner and ally of the Czech Republic on the international scene in the long term. The mutual relations, which laid the strong foundations during the presidency of Václav Havel, are built on three pillars. They have not changed much in the long term; the main role in the system of mutual relations is the cooperation in economic, defensive, and security fields and in the field of common values and human rights. After the stately celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution in November 2014, which culminated in the ceremonial unveiling of the bust of Václav Havel in the premises of the American Congress, and which was accompanied by the statements of the Prime Minister, Bohuslav Sobotka, and the Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies, Jan Hamáček, on the importance of Václav Havel and his legacy, we might have expected that with respect to the Czech-American relations, the year 2015 would be the year of the renewal of the human-rights agenda and common attitudes to the key events on the international scene. But these expectations were thoroughly wrong.

In the mutual relations, the year 2015 was characterized not only by the sustenance of most of the common initiatives and interests but also by some considerable shocks caused by the growing disunity of the attitudes of the Czech foreign policy, which had been visible already in the previous years. On the one hand, the year 2015 was evidence that some areas of mutual cooperation had a solid foundation and functioned more or less due to inertia, on the other hand, it was shown that the turning away from Atlantism and the inclination towards Russia were, in some circles of the Czech political scene, stronger than expected. The persistence of the functioning small projects and initiatives in combination with a few new topics brings also the slow emptying of the mutual relations that, due to the existence of disturbing elements in the long-term, may negatively affect the mutual cooperation.

In the context of the political situation in Europe, which, in 2015, was characterized by a particularly increased tension between Russia and the EU and by the polar-

ization of society in connection with the migration crisis, there was an even greater polarization on the Czech political scene, which, to some extent, confirmed a certain disunity and illegibility of the Czech foreign policy towards the United States. On the one hand, there was a relatively high activity and strong mutual contact, initiated mainly on the governmental level, on the other hand, there was the unpredictable and strongly pro-Russian rhetoric of President Zeman, whose stealthily anti-American attitudes culminated in the statement that the US Ambassador, Andrew Schapiro, had a closed door to the Castle.¹ In 2015, the counterweight of Zeman's attitude toward the United States was mainly Prime Minister B. Sobotka, who, besides the visit to Washington, D.C., also repeatedly emphasized the importance of the transatlantic relations for the Czech Republic and who called the statement about the closed door to the Castle to be inadequate.²

Regarding the absence of a big electoral contest on the Czech as well as American political scene in 2015, there were only a few possibilities to record strong foreign-policy oriented statements that were often characteristic of the election years. But some of the statements of President Barack Obama evoked negative reactions on the Czech political scene, in connection with the issue of migration, particularly the statement in which Obama supported the immigration policy of the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and also the statement in which he described the quota for the redistribution of migrants to the individual EU countries as rightful.³ Although these statements, as well as their subsequent criticism, were mainly of internal political significance for both parties, they can be used to point out the progress of a certain ideological schism that, in 2015, was more visible in the topics of mutual relations to a greater extent than in the previous years. The above-mentioned statements and the disagreements with the statements of President Obama, along with some negative reactions to the passing of the US military convoy across our country, also point to the potential increase of antipathy towards the United States in the Czech public, which is probably related to the general decline of the values associated to the personality of Václav Havel in the Czech society.

Despite the above-mentioned shocks and the slightly decreasing trend in the mutual relations, the United States are still considered to be a key partner in a number of areas of cooperation, and it can be expected that they will keep this position for some time, if there is no crucial change on the political scene of one or the other party. On the governmental level, the stable position of the United States in the Czech foreign policy was confirmed by the approval of the concept of the foreign policy of the Czech Republic, *Koncepce zahraniční politiky ČR*, in July 2015 that identified the USA as the main guarantor of the Euro-Atlantic security. According to the Concept, the priority of the mutual relations are the science and research, the defensive, economic and human-right policies, while it joins the promotion of the liberalization of trade between the European Union and the United States and the intensification of cooperation of the EU – the USA, and other key areas of the mutual relations, such as the environmental issues, the fight against terrorism and others.⁴

Other aspects of the Concept, which are directly related to the relation with the United States, are mainly the emphasis on the transatlantic dimension of the security

policy and the declared support for the promotion of human rights in foreign policy. The Concept emphasizes the importance of the collective defence within NATO for the security of the Czech Republic and also emphasizes the commitment to increase the spending on defence to 1.4% of GDP by 2020 and to continue increasing this spending. The field of human rights is then identified as a fundamental objective of the Czech foreign policy, suggesting that, despite some turning away from these values by some state officials and politicians, the Czech Republic officially still promotes these values. The successful fulfilment of the above-mentioned objectives is then a potential pledge for upkeeping very good relations with the US, provided that the incidence of the controversial points from the previous years is reduced.

To conclude this section, it is necessary to emphasize that, in the vast majority of cases and sectors, the relations between the Czech Republic and the United States are without conflicts and the presence of controversial issues is very sporadic. The mutual relations proceed mainly due to inertia. On the political level, it is necessary to draw the attention to some areas of disagreement, which, given the context of the development in Europe, may deflect the mutual relations more than ever before.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY: EVENTS AND AGENDA

In 2015, the shocks in the mutual relations, occurring on the political level, got the greatest attention of the public. The above-mentioned statement of President Zeman that the US Ambassador Schapiro has a closed door to the Castle was only the culmination of the escalating tension between the American party and the Czech President and his surroundings. Zeman's inclination to Russia and the subtle undermining of the unity of the transatlantic cooperation, particularly in the relation to the crisis in Ukraine, was an eyesore for the American already in 2014. Given the fact that the Czech Government had not detached itself from the action of the President, the American diplomatic circles were dominated by strong uncertainty about the actual Czech attitude. The imaginary detonator was Zeman's forthcoming visit to the military parade organized by the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, which was rejected by almost all Western state officials. The inconsolable situation, regarding the relation of the Czech President and the American representation, was mostly emphasized by the visit of Zeman to the USA at the beginning of March when the President did not meet any of the American governmental officials. In addition, Zeman, as part of his speech at AIPAC (see below), held talks with the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who was in the US at the invitation of the Republican opposition, to quite a great indignation of Obama's administration. It is interesting that the US party reportedly had considered a much tougher diplomatic protest than only the criticism from the side of the Ambassador, when, according to the information that leaked to the media, Obama's administration played with the idea of sending the Secretary of State, John Kerry, to Prague when Zeman was having a speech at the AIPAC conference in Washington, D.C. The Americans finally chose a milder form of protest, which

was beneficial for the American party when the Czech President gave into the general pressure and he went to Moscow but he did not participate in the military parade.

As mentioned above, the year 2015 was, among other things, also characterized by frequent contacts of the Czech and US officials. The list of important high-level meetings can begin with the visit of President Zeman to the United States (1st and 2nd March). But the President did not meet any important American officials and his visit culminated with a speech at the conference of the pro-Israel lobbyist organization AIPAC and with the meeting with the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu.

At the end of March (22nd–29th March), the Minister of Agriculture, Marian Jurečka, visited the USA, accompanied by Czech businessmen and the representatives of the Food Chamber. In addition to negotiations with the US Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Alexis Taylor, on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the delegation also visited the states of Virginia, Arkansas, and Texas, where it worked on the establishment of professional and business relations.

Less than a month later (13th–20th April), the Minister of Finance, Andrej Babiš visited the USA. In addition to the meetings with prominent US investors in the Czech Republic, at a ceremonial lunch, A. Babiš discussed with Madeleine Albright, the President of the Council of Economic Advisers of the White House, Jason Furman, and the Deputy Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland. At the end of his visit to the USA, the Czech Minister of Finances participated in the spring meeting of the International Monetary Fund.

Another visit to the United States in 2015 (12th–15th May) was undertaken by the Minister of Industry and Trade, Jan Mládek, accompanied by business leaders, mainly from the aviation sector. He had talks with the representatives of the American administration on the further development of the mutual economic cooperation and on the transatlantic relations. He had a speech at the prestigious Atlantic Council and discussed with the representatives of the World Bank. The Minister also met the chief US negotiator for the TTIP, Daniel Mullaney, with whom he spoke about the current state of talks, and with the representatives of the US Ministry of Energy, where he discussed the possibilities of the future cooperation.

At the same time (12th–16th May), the delegation of the Committee for European Affairs, led by the Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies, Jan Hamáček, visited Washington, D.C. Hamáček met several representatives of the Congress, the former Ambassador in Prague, Norman Eisen, and representatives of major US research institutions and think tanks.

On 18th June, the Deputy Secretary of State of the USA, Victoria Nuland, visited the Czech Republic; she held talks with Andrej Babiš and Lubomír Zaorálek in Prague and she also met the foreign-policy adviser of the President, Hynek Kmoníček. The main discussion topic was the security in Europe, particularly the issue of the relations with Russia and the support of Ukraine as well as the TTIP.

At the end of September (26th–29th September), President Zeman visited the USA again and had a speech at the UN General Assembly. In his speech, Zeman talked mainly about the terrorist threat and called for the international effort for its liquidation. At the same time (28th–29th September), the Prime Minister, B. Sobotka, and

the Minister of Foreign Affairs, L. Zaorálek, arrived in the USA, at the invitation of President Obama, to take part in two international summits dedicated to the fight against the so-called Islamic State. Both Czech leaders, within their activities in the USA, also met the US Vice President, Joe Biden, who appreciated the active policy of the Czech Republic in the fight against terrorism, especially the supply of the ammunition that the Czech Republic had provided to the Kurdish militia and Iraqi army. Minister Zaorálek then went on a working visit to Washington, D.C., (1st–3rd October) where the main points of his agenda were the negotiations about the possibilities for the deepening of the economic cooperation and expansion of the investment opportunities that the Minister had with the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers to the US President.⁵

The security relations

The cooperation in the field of security has continued as in the previous years, especially on the level of joint military training or projects organized by the American party. Among the proven and successful projects, we can include the Czech participation in the American initiative *State Partnership Program*⁶ which connects the National Guard of the US states with the armed forces of the partner countries around the world. In 2015, the Czech armed forces continued in the nearly a quarter-century cooperation with the National Guards of Texas and Nebraska through several events of trainings and courses. The training included the exchange of the explanatory tactics and technology, including the provision of communication as well as the planning of the aviation logistics and cybernetic security, while the cybernetic security is an area where we expect the most intense mutual cooperation in the future.

One of the most publicly discussed events, which caused a certain degree of politicization and polarization in the bilateral relations, was the passing of the US military convoy through the Czech territory as part of the operation called *Dragoon Ride* between 29. 3. and 1. 4. 2015. Although, according to the statements of the Czech officials, this was a part of the standard Alliance military training called *Atlantic Resolve*, it was clear due to the security situation in Europe that in the context of the Russian procedure in eastern Ukraine it was a certain kind of demonstration of power and cohesion of the eastern wing of the North Atlantic Alliance. Before the passing of the American convoy, ambivalent reactions from the public were expected, but the result were the crowds of several thousand people welcoming the US convoy in different places of its route.⁷ We should not overestimate its significance because it was probably and mainly about the interest in modern military technology, but the fact that the expected anti-American attitudes were not confirmed is quite interesting, it was because the entire passing was without any incidents, with the exception of a few small actions. The great attention of the media and the discussions that had preceded the passing of the convoy showed, however, that similar moods probably existed in society, even though they were not publicly visible during the event. The project of military cooperation and joint training called *Atlantic Resolve*, within which the passing of the US military convoy had been prepared, was the main pillar of the military cooperation of the Czech Republic and the United States in 2015. In 2014, the US

Congress released 1 million USD for this long-term programme of the US military forces,⁸ which was the response to the deteriorating security in Europe after the Russian annexation of the Crimea and the related need to increase the US military activity within NATO in Europe. In 2015, the joint training of the Alliance units, which had been standardly organized for several years, were more intense. In total, our armed forces participated in seven military training events on various topics. In the territory of the Czech Republic, for example, the traditional tactical air training called Ample Strike took place at the base at Náměšť nad Oslavou.

In September 2015, another project of the joint military activities within NATO was introduced, when the Multinational Aviation Training Centre in Vyškov was opened. The aim of the project, which was approved as an initiative of the Czech party at the NATO summit in Chicago in 2012, is mainly the provision of general training and the preparation of special training programs for air and ground units. The primary participants of the programme, besides the Czech Republic, will be Croatia, Hungary, and Slovakia, when mainly the existing training capacities will be used and the centre will also be available to other partner countries. But it is important to underline that, although the USA is not a direct participant in the project, the implementation of the centre would not be possible without it. The successful putting of the centre into operation meant the achieving of a several-year effort to create a helicopter training centre of high quality, where we could expect great interest in its usage not only by the Alliance partners.

Also in 2015, the Czech Republic joined the US security activities in the context of the fight against terrorism in the Middle East; specifically, it was the regular supply of ammunition to the Iraqi army and the Kurdish militias. In addition to the donated ammunition that was sent to Iraq in several batches and was distributed through the American party, dozens of refurbished T-72 tanks were sent to Iraq, within the large supply of weapons for the Iraqi government.⁹ During the visit of Prime Minister Sobotka to the United States at the end of September, the US Vice President, J. Biden, appraised the Czech Republic for the active approach in the fight against the Islamic State and for the supply of weapons and ammunition. Due to the ongoing insoluble situation, the Middle-East negotiations will include the supply of weapons and ammunition in 2016, although the last delivery had to be sent in November 2015.

In conclusion, we can say that the year 2015 did not bring any fundamental news in the field of security cooperation. There was rather a gradual implementation and fulfilment of the earlier commitments and programmes and, in general, we could see greater activity with the cooperation of NATO in relation to the crisis in Ukraine. Another important topic, into which the United States wanted to engage as many of its Alliance allies as possible, was the fight against the Islamic State and terrorism. In this context, the year 2015 brought the negotiations on the prolongation of the NATO mission in Afghanistan because the originally planned exit from Afghanistan in 2016 was shown to be non-sustainable. Likewise, the doubling of the NATO Response Force and the establishment of two new bases on the eastern edge of the Alliance were agreed by the NATO Ministers of Defence at their meeting in Brussels in October.

The economic and business relations

In 2015, on the level of economic and trade relations, there was a further significant growth of the Czech export to the United States, and, at the same time, the United States also ranked among the biggest investors in the Czech Republic. The political dimension of the economic cooperation did not intensify on the bilateral level because there were no major common themes, such as the tender for the completion of Temelín, which had been cancelled in 2014. But this does not change the fact that the United States are still an important economic and business partner for the Czech Republic and the largest non-EU market for the Czech export. In 2015, the activities of the politicians and the public attention in this field focused mainly on the negotiations of the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP), but this did not bring such a fundamental progress that it would be possible to conclude the agreement and the concerns about the further future of the TTIP materialized even with respect to the expected change in the White House at the beginning of 2017.¹⁰

The concept of the foreign policy of the Czech Republic says that the Czech Republic “*will promote the trade liberalization between the EU and the USA, conditioned by the preservation of the European social, environmental and consumer standards, including the standards in food safety*”,¹¹ and this lists the issues of the lengthy process of negotiations on the TTIP. On the Czech side, the agenda related to the TTIP is governed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade, which organized 25 actions with the topic of the TTIP in 2015 and which tries to inform the public effectively about the impact of the possible agreement. The US Embassy in Prague fulfils the same role, as it actively lobbies for the conclusion of the agreement through public discussions and lectures. In 2015, four rounds of negotiations on the TTIP were held but, despite the optimistic statements of their participants, there are still various controversial points among the negotiating parties. It concerns the fields of agriculture, where the European Union tries to find solutions for the obstacles in the non-tariff area that the European agricultural products have to face, and energy, when the EU, unlike the USA, wants to classify it as a separate section.¹² There are concerns that the agreement has no end in sight, especially with respect to the time pressure in connection with the upcoming change of the Presidents in the White House.

In terms of economic and business opportunities, the conference about the aviation industry was an important event; it took place on 13th May in Washington, D.C. and it was organized in the cooperation with the agency CzechInvest. The conference presented the possibilities of the Czech aviation industry to the American business partners. The Czech companies from the aviation industry as well as the US investors in this field in the Czech Republic were introduced there. In this way, the conference mediated the direct contact between the representatives of the companies from both countries. In 2015, there were also problems with the planned delivery of the Czech trams, which should have been a part of the restoration project of the tram system in the US capital. In the first half of 2015, the project had serious problems solely on the American side, which were solved in the end, and the Czech trams actually rolled out into the streets of Washington, D.C. at the beginning of 2016. This followed up the successful tradition of the Czech collective means of transport in the United States.

Table 1:
Trade Exchange with the USA in 2015 (in billions of USD)¹³

Export	3.75
Import	3.33
Turnover	7.08
Balance of trade	0.42

As mentioned above, despite the small number of new topics within the framework of the economic cooperation, in 2015, the USA was an important investor and business partner, in terms of the economic balance. The Czech export to the United States rose by more than 13% and exceeded the amount of 90 billion CZK, so it doubled in the last 5 years. The share of the US market in the Czech export was 2.4%, which was higher than the export to Russia and China. In 2015, the increased share of the export was recorded mainly in the export of tires, drugs, and microscopes, but we expect a major demand also in the field of the IT or the ecological technology or even in the cosmic and aviation industries. In 2015, the US strengthened its role as a major investor in our country, when it became the largest investor in the Czech Republic if we count the investments that reach us through the agency CzechInvest.

Human rights, cultural diplomacy, and other agenda

The area of the common values and human rights, based on the legacy of the policy of Václav Havel, has been one of the main pillars of the mutual relations in the long term, and, although there is a slight decline from this attitude on the Czech side, the political conflicts of the year 2015 did not have a negative impact on the projects and initiatives that have been implemented within the Czech-American cooperation for several years. The US Embassy in Prague significantly promotes the cooperation on the level of common values, by supporting specific projects and by participating in the maintenance of the message of Václav Havel. The traditional projects dealing with human rights, which are supported by the American representation in the Czech Republic, include the Prague Pride festival, the projects of the organization Forum 2000, and the projects related to the Roma issues and the better integration of the Roma into society.¹⁴

Regarding the joint projects, the programme of scholarships of Václav Havel continued successfully in 2015; it was aimed at helping those students who could not study because of various political circumstances. Last year, mainly students from Ukraine were supported. Also, the scholarship programme called Václav Havel Journalism Fellowship continued at Radio Free Europe, which was aimed at young journalists from countries where there was no or limited freedom of the press. The Czech Republic also participates in the programme of the US government called the Open Government Partnership (Partnerství pro otevřené vládnutí), which aims to the enhancement of openness, transparency, fight against corruption, and civic engagement.

The specific commitments, arising from the participation in the programme, are mentioned in the Action Plan of the Czech Republic called *Partnerství pro otevřené vládnutí na období let 2014 až 2016*, the content of which was also reflected in the Government's action plan called *Akční plán boje s korupcí na rok 2015* and in other programme documents. The event, which is worth mentioning, is the extradition of Kevin Dahlgren to the Czech Republic for the criminal prosecution because of the suspicion of committing four murders.¹⁵ Given the fact that the United States releases their citizens abroad only in exceptional cases, this event is a proof that the United States considers the Czech Republic to be a full-value, legally consistent state, respecting the human rights and the principles of a fair trial.

In 2015, an important part of the mutual cooperation was science and research. The agreement on cooperation in the field of nanotechnological research and development was signed between the Nonwovens Institute at the University of North Carolina and the institute Ústav pro nanomateriály, pokročilé technologie a inovace Technické univerzity v Liberci. The signing of the agreement was followed by a conference on the above-mentioned topic called "NART 2015 – Nanofibers, Their Applications and Related Technologies". It is expected that the cooperation on the level of research and development will bring new business opportunities in this field.

The technological mission, organized by the agency CzechInvest, was also focused on the cooperation in the field of science and research and it aimed to present the Czech Republic as a rapidly expanding base of the scientific research, with the ability to cooperate in research and development on the highest level. The mission facilitated a meeting of the representatives of Czech scientific institutions and the leading US universities and research centres. The main topics of discussions and meetings were mainly related to the IT, cybernetic security, nanotechnology, and medical research. The Czech side evaluated the mission as a very successful one, so the Czech Embassy and the agency CzechInvest organized a visit of Czech experts in robotics to Washington, D.C. and the neighbouring area on 2nd–4th November. The mission was attended by the representatives of leading Czech institutions dedicated to research in the field of cybernetics and robotics and it was led by Professor Vladimír Mařík, the director of the Czech Institute of Informatics, Robotics and Cybernetics at ČVUT. The Czech representatives met their counterparts from the research institutions and universities (e.g. Johns Hopkins University or the University of Maryland), with whom they discussed the possibilities of the mutual cooperation, and they obtained information about the possibilities of financing the joint projects.

The visit of the Chairman of Czech Telecommunication Office to Washington had a technological background too; he participated in the meeting of telecommunication regulators and internet policy-makers from the V4 countries on 1st–3rd December. The delegation met the representatives of federal agencies and private companies in the telecommunications industry. The main topic was the so-called *Net Neutrality* and the discussion also covered the protection from patent trolls as well as the possibilities of the mutual cooperation.

The relations of the Czech Republic and the USA in the field of cultural diplomacy are quite rich too. In the Czech Republic, the mutual cultural exchanges are supported

mainly by the US Embassy in Prague through the support for a wide range of cultural and educational events. The Americans thus supported dozens of projects; as an example, we can mention the Allen Ginsberg Memorial Freedom Festival organized by the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Charles University or the support of American artists at the jazz festival called Mladí Ladí Jazz. Overseas, the Czech diplomatic representation in the USA carries out important activities in connection with cultural diplomacy. The events organized by the Czech Embassy in Washington, D.C. include for example *the Mutual Inspirations Festivals 2015* about Karel Čapek,¹⁶ under the patronage of President Obama, accompanied by the annual exhibition on the life and work of this important Czech writer. The Czech Embassy also celebrated the 25th anniversary of the speech of Václav Havel in the US Congress, attended by the representatives of the US Lower Chamber, including John Boehner and Nancy Pelosi, at the bust of Václav Havel in the building of the Congress.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY: IDENTIFICATION OF THE MAIN ACTORS

Since the relations between the Czech Republic and the United States take place in a very wide range of topics and areas, the list of the key actors in the mutual relations is quite extensive too. Therefore, the following brief summary selects only those actors that were really important in 2015. From the perspective of the Czech Republic, the most important player in the mutual relations was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its individual departments and organizational units, especially the Czech Embassy in Washington, D.C.; also, the consulates in other American cities, which are the most active players in the mutual relations. In the field of economic and business relations, an important role was played by the Ministry of Industry and Trade, which was in charge of the Czech participation in the negotiations on the TTIP, and which, together with the agency CzechInvest participated in the organizing of business missions, which were described in detail above. The Ministry of Defence and the Army of the Czech Republic are also important actors in cooperation in the field of defence and security as well as in the cooperation within the activities of NATO. Due to the expansion of cooperation in the field of science and research, the scientific and research institutions played an important role too, such as The Institute for Nanomaterials, Advanced Technology and Innovations at the Technical University in Liberec (Ústav pro nanomateriály, pokročilé technologie a inovace Technické univerzity v Liberci), The Czech Institute of Informatics, Robotics and Cybernetics at ČVUT (Český institut informatiky, robotiky a kybernetiky při ČVUT) etc. On the political level, President M. Zeman was a significant negative actor; he was partially counterbalanced by the Government, but there were no fundamental delimitations against the procedures of the President.

Of course, a number of other actors, such as the Parliament of the Czech Republic or other state-funded organizations or educational institutions contributed to the development of the mutual relations.

THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE USA IN THE MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC SPACE

Regarding the fact that the relations between the Czech Republic and the United States were fully standardized in most of the areas and were kept in the maintenance mode, they did not draw the media attention a lot. Of course, the highly politicized topics were an exception, which, on the contrary, filled the front pages of the media for several weeks. The issues on the political level of the mutual relations were significantly perceived in the public space, especially the conflict between President Zeman and US Ambassador Schapiro, which was actually a big media fall-out, where Schapiro manifested himself as a more cultivated opponent. Also, the passing of the US military convoy draw the attention of the media, which was initially quite controversial, but after the end of the event, it had to be noted due to the positive public attitude that the Czech public inclined to the United States much more that the media had anticipated. Periodically throughout the whole year, the media published reports related to the fight against terrorism and to the participation of the Czech Republic in the activities of the Alliance, and the extradition of Kevin Dahlgren for the trial in the Czech Republic draw their attention too. It should be noted that, due to the wide variety of interesting and long-term functional levels of cooperation, this media image is not very precise and it describes the mutual relations in a quite misleading way, which, due to the small number of controversies, is a logical result of the more or less calm mutual relations.

CONCLUSION

The relations between the Czech Republic and the United States were, in the vast majority of topics, on the maintenance level, and they can be described as the standardized ones with the inclination to certain emptying, due to the lack of new key topics in the mutual relations. Like in the previous years, the pillars of the mutual relations were security, economics, and the common values, and it should be noted that in all these areas the cooperation was the same as in the previous years. The economic and business relations, compared to the political ones, recorded a significant increase. On the political level, the trend of illegibility of the Czech political officials continued, especially the conflicts between the President of the Republic and the attitude of the Government. With concern, the Americans were observing a gradual shift towards Russia in the rhetoric of President Zeman and the verbal undermining of the Alliance activities, particularly in the context of the crisis in Ukraine.

In general, the tone of Czech foreign policy towards the United States can be assessed as a reactive and cooperating approach, with no higher degree of politicization and polarization. After the long process of standardization of the mutual relations, these can be characterized by stability and pragmatism in almost all areas of cooperation in the last few years. Simply put, the Czech-American relations were not accompanied by any unrealistic expectations, as it was before, and both parties basically knew what to expect from the other partner in the particular areas of coopera-

tion. However, the already mentioned illegibility of the Czech attitude, concerning the statements of President Zeman, led to several situations in which it was possible to see elements of an offensive procedure and of politicization as well as polarization. In general, the heavily publicized events (in addition to the quarrel, also the passing of the US military convoy) had a tendency to exhibit a certain degree of politicization and polarization, also due to the contradictory statements of the Czech politicians across the political spectrum. If we think of the possible future development of the Czech-American relations, we can expect in the coming years that the mutual cooperation will continue in the same way as before, mainly on the maintenance level. Further development can be expected in the business relations. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to find new common major topics, the presence of which would effectively prevent the emptying of the mutual relations, which would limit the risks of future conflicts similar to those, which we had the opportunity to experience in 2015.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Zeman: Americký velvyslanec Schapiro má dveře na Hrad zavřené*. Lidovky.cz, 5. 4. 2015. On-line: www.lidovky.cz/dvere-na-hrad-ma-zavrene-vratil-zeman-americkemu-velvyslanci-za-jeho-kritiku-1s2-/zpravy-domov.aspx?c=A150405_115033_in_domov_sk.
- ² Česká televize, 6. 4. 2015.
- ³ ČTK, 23. 9.2015.
- ⁴ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic: *Koncepce zahraniční politiky ČR*. On-line: www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni_vztahy/analyzy_a_koncepce/koncepce_zahranicni_politiky_cr.html.
- ⁵ More about the particular journeys: www.mzv.cz/washington/cz/.
- ⁶ More about the programme *State Partnership Program*: cz.usembassy.gov/cs/nase-vztahy/state-partnership-program/.
- ⁷ *Americký konvoj vítaly podél cest stovky lidí*. Echo24, 29. 3. 2015. On-line: echo24.cz/a/wmAgG/americky-konvoj-vitaly-podel-cest-stovky-lidi.
- ⁸ The Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic: *Vojenská spolupráce ČR a USA je nedílnou součástí aktivit NATO*, 5. 3. 2015. On-line: www.mocr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/vojenska-spoluprace-cr-a-usa-je-nedilnou-soucasti-aktivit-nato--107464/.
- ⁹ Česká televize, 6. 2. 2015.
- ¹⁰ Detailed information on the negotiations about TTIP – BussinesInfo.cz. On-line: www.businessinfo.cz/cs/clanky/transatlanticka-dohoda-o-obchodu-a-investicich-mez-eu-a-usa-ttip-41079.html#!&chapter=11.
- ¹¹ *Koncepce zahraniční politiky ČR*, op. cit.
- ¹² *Transatlantická dohoda o obchodu a investicích mezi EU a USA (TTIP)*. Chapter 1: Jak šel čas s TTIP. BussinesInfo.cz, 16. 7. 2016. On-line: www.businessinfo.cz/cs/clanky/transatlanticka-dohoda-o-obchodu-a-investicich-mez-eu-a-usa-ttip-41079.html#!&chapter=11.
- ¹³ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. On-line: www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/encyklopedie_statu/severni_amerika/usa/ekonomika/ekonomicka_charakteristika_zeme.html.
- ¹⁴ The complete list of supported projects is available on-line: cz.usembassy.gov/cs/education-culture-cs/granty-velvyslancevi-usa/.
- ¹⁵ Česká televize, 31. 8.2015.
- ¹⁶ More information about the festival and its annual productions on-line: www.mutualinspirations.org/.