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Foreign policy, rhetorical action and the idea of otherness: The Czech Republic and Russia[☆]

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Abstract

This article employs the concept of rhetorical action in an analysis of the recent developments in Czech-Russian political relations. Through the discourse analysis of key Russian political speeches and official documents related to the Czech Republic, as well as Czech speeches tackling the same issues, we look at two different rhetorical actions employed by Russia to induce changes in Czech policy. The attempts to make Czech policy unacceptable in the wider community of European democracies were only partially successful. While the first rhetorical action aimed against Czech NATO membership failed, the new diplomatic strategy stressing the need for a “normalization” of relations was successful in transforming Czech policy towards Russia.

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Keywords: Czech foreign policy; Russia; Rhetorical action; NATO enlargement; Speech acts; Discourse analysis

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