

V. International Symposium “Czech Foreign Policy”

Democracy and Democratisation

Wednesday, 13th November, 2013

Venue: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Loretánské náměstí 5, Prague

Panel I: Czech Foreign Policy in 2012: An IIR Analysis

Chair: Jiří Kuděla, Director, Strategy, Analysis and Project Management Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Jiří Schneider, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Vít Beneš, Institute of International Relations, Prague

Veronika Bílková, Institute of International Relations and Faculty of Law, Charles University, Prague

Marek Čejka, Institute of International Relations, Prague

Vladimír Handl, Institute of International Relations, Prague

Petra Kuchyňková, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno

Tomáš Karásek, Association for International Affairs and Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague

The debate took place as a discussion and interpretation of the Institute of International Relations's conclusions about Czech foreign policy in 2012.

JIRÍ SCHNEIDER

First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Schneider opened the debate by introducing the Institute of International Relations's newest analysis as a mirror to Czech foreign policy. According to Mr. Schneider, critical reflection – without which there could not be a good policy – plays a key role in today's society, and is a path to democracy. However, even though critical reflection is a necessary condition for democratic systems, alone it is insufficient. In this case it is important not only to have knowledge and understanding, but also to know how to use it. Mr. Schneider discussed the importance of courage, acknowledging that today's understanding of the term may differ to that of 24 years ago, but maintained that the principle remained as defying the majority. He pointed out that in each state there are rulers and advisers, and both groups face the daily temptation of power and corruption. Even knowledge is power, which is why there is a need for critical reflection. Since critical reflection is only possible in a free society, democracy should be supported.

VERONIKA BÍLKOVÁ

Institute of International Relations and Faculty of Law, Charles University, Prague

Ms. Bílková presented the first chapter of the book, which discusses the human rights dimension of Czech foreign policy. Ms. Bílková explained that it was not possible to assess this policy solely in the context of 2012, pointing out the importance of presenting the long-term concepts and practices of this policy. She explained that this broader approach was necessary, seeing as this topic was introduced into the publication for the first time. Czech human rights foreign policy faces many dilemmas which remain unanswered, starting with the question of which policies the Czech Republic emphasises more – human rights or transformation. This is very complicated question, because there is widespread concern that human rights are sacrificed for transformation politics in non-democratic states. Another dilemma concerns the type of rights that the Czech Republic wants to promote in its foreign policy. Ms. Bílková explained that despite the Czech

Republic's professed belief in the universality and equality of all human rights, it only promotes first generation rights in the world (i.e. political rights). The question of where the Czech Republic wants to promote human rights also remains unanswered, further complicated by focusing on limited territories. The Czech Republic is also unable to draw from its historical experience, including that of Communism; focusing on Communist states has not always been successful seeing as those states' politics have not corresponded with the Czech Republic's memories, and thus have required a different approach to human rights. Finally, there remains the question of how to spread human rights – whether through the projects of multilateral politics, or through politics of transformation (i.e. through the support of civil society). Ms. Bílková concluded that in general, human rights are a long-term priority of the Czech Republic, but the past year has seen a move from activist to autonomous politics; thus, domestic politics should be seen as reflecting independent states, and be disassociated from other foreign policies.

PETRA KUCHYŇKOVÁ

Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno

Ms. Kuchyňková described the main events in the field of Czech–Russian relations. She expressed that on both sides, the situation was strongly influenced by domestic affairs, in Russia particularly by Vladimir Putin's re-election. Two discourses emerged in the Czech Republic regarding the question of human rights in Russia. The first was represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whereas the second by the government and Prime Minister. The latter emphasised economic interests over the adherence to human rights, but it must be noted that apart from its ideological dimension, this dispute was a political conflict between two parliamentary parties. Russia's importance in Czech politics emerged during the Czech Republic's first direct presidential election, where its suitability as a political and business partner was discussed – reaching no consensus. Candidates included proponents of Czech integration into Russian market structures, and opponents pointing to Russia's human rights abuses. Other topics discussed included the completion of Temelín power plant, visa policies, the position of Russian ambassador in Prague, and Ukraine's moves towards the EU. Generally, Ms. Kuchyňková assessed Russia as an important but unreliable partner.

VÍT BENEŠ

Institute of International Relations, Prague

Mr. Beneš, together with Mats Braun, analysed the European dimension of Czech foreign policy, and its main orientation. The Czech Republic's relationship with the Eurozone was identified as fundamental; the Czech Republic does not limit the Eurozone, but neither does it cooperate with it, and it did not accept any responsibility for the Eurozone crisis, with doubts regarding the Czech Republic's joining the monetary union deepening. The Czech Republic's rejection of the 2012 fiscal pact was crucial for its position within the EU. According to Mr. Beneš, this situation was reminiscent of the 1990s, when the Czech Republic was not a full member of Europe, and thus threatened with geopolitical uncertainty. In addition, doubts about joining the Eurozone have deepened, leading to a “policy of waiting” whereby the Czech Republic's decision will depend on further developments in the Eurozone. This, however, could leave the Czech economy isolated from the EU. Mr. Beneš summarised that European topics are not prioritised in the Czech Republic.

MAREK ČEJKA

Institute of International Relations, Prague

Mr. Čejka analysed the Czech Republic's role in the Middle East. The conceptions of Czech foreign policy towards the Middle East since 2011 and those of NATO were adhered to. The Czech Republic, including its political elites has refrained from commenting on the changes resulting from the Arab Spring. Apart from positive relations with Israel, there is a lack of consensus about the region among top politicians. The Czech Republic has remained divided even with regards to the Syrian civil war; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs opposed the current regime, whereas the Czech ambassador in Damascus expressed support for Bashar Assad, and President Klaus appealed for non-interference. A key moment was the proposal to change Palestine's status in the UN, which the Czech Republic – as the only European state – voted against, ushering both criticism from within the Czech Republic and the EU, and respect from the US. The second part of Mr. Čejka's analysis discussed the situation of minorities from the Middle East living in the Czech Republic, exposing xenophobic tendencies – mainly towards Jews and Muslims. The increase of Islamophobia is an interesting phenomenon, seeing as this minority is genuinely minimal in the Czech Republic. Mr. Čejka placed blame on the media, who exaggerate the problem to minorities' disadvantage. He added that antisemitism has generally not increased, with only sporadic cases during Jan Fischer's presidential campaign.

VLADIMÍR HANDL

Institute of International Relations, Prague

Mr. Handl analysed Czech–German relations. Issues of the past, instead of as previously dividing the two countries, had last year brought them together. The example Mr. Handl presented was the visit of the Lidice memorial by the leaders of both countries. In general, Czech-German relations follow a continuous path at all the levels and across the political spectrum. Despite conservative and anti-German trends in Czech politics, Czech-German relations remained on good terms, which is a testament to Czech diplomacy. Germany is seen as a key partner, as well as a source of inspiration. A consensus was reached regarding economic plans and the significance of cooperation in the field of military security. Nonetheless, problems and disagreements remain, such as the lack of consensus regarding energy policies, and low levels of confidence in the Czech government from the German side. The Czech Republic is the main subcontractor in the German market, but from the Czech side there remain problems such as the lack of knowledge of German language and law, corruption, and workforce scarcity.

TOMÁŠ KARÁSEK

Association for International Affairs and Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague

Mr. Karásek summarised the analyses made by the Institution of International Relations's experts. He expressed appreciation for their successful and unified methodological framework, which provided a complex analysis of Czech foreign policy in 2012. Mr. Karásek presented his own conclusions about the aforementioned year, such as the Czech Republic's more affirmative attitude towards a European security policy. Nonetheless, he cautioned that reactions to world affairs remain in the sphere of diplomacy, and that both the Czech public and politicians are losing interest in international affairs – a phenomenon that Mr. Karásek attributes to political fatigue. He acknowledged that the media is also partly responsible for this, owing to its incompetence in presenting world problems. He concluded by referring to topics that both Czech politics and academia should pay attention to in the future, such as: Is the globalisation still perceived as a positive process? What will the Czech Republic's position within the global society? How does the Czech Republic want to understand the Euro-Atlantic partnership? How to react to the US's declining influence on European politics? What is the Czech Republic's future within NATO? How should Germany's position in the EU's decision-making process be perceived? Should Russia's growing influence in Eastern Europe be a concern? These are the questions on which Czech foreign policy should have a clear stance.

Panel II: Support for Democracy and Czech Foreign Policy: Between Dreams and Reality, Between Interests and Responsibility

Chair: Michal Kořan, Deputy Director, Institute of International Relations, Prague

Karel Schwarzenberg, *Member of Parliament, TOP 09, former Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Petr Fiala, *Member of Parliament, ODS, former Minister of Education and Rector of Masaryk University, Brno*

Jaromír Štětina, *Senator, No Party Affiliation*

Daniel Herman, *Member of Parliament, KDU-ČSL, former Director of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes*

Michaela Marksová-Tominová, *former Director of the Department of Equal Opportunities in Education of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic, ČSSD*

Mr. Kořan welcomed all the guests and thanked the symposium's organisers. Democratisation, owing to its growing importance, was the overarching theme of the symposium. Mr. Kořan posed the question of whether democratisation will remain a priority of Czech foreign policy or not. Both the concept of democratisation and the international environment have changed, and as a result democratisation is sometimes perceived as a form of Western imperialism. Additionally, it remains uncertain whether democracy can be successfully implemented in different countries. These and other questions were discussed among the panelists, who represented various political parties. During the discussion, each panelist briefly presented their view concerning the aforementioned questions regarding democratisation.

KAREL SCHWARZENBERG

Member of Parliament, TOP 09, former Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Schwarzenberg said that the key question in Czech foreign policy is not the role of democratisation, but the role of human rights – which is a crucial difference. Human rights have been a priority in Czech foreign policy since the 1990s, and should remain so. Democratisation, on the other hand, is a matter of gradual development, and it is important to monitor whether a state is heading towards democracy or not. If the rule of law and human rights are observed, a state will develop into a democracy. In the words of Karl Popper, the degree of democracy is not as important as its balance. Thus, the direction in which a state is heading, an emphasis on human rights, and a sense of balance are important factors, according to Mr. Schwarzenberg.

PETR FIALA

Member of Parliament, ODS, former Minister of Education and Rector of Masaryk University, Brno

Mr. Fiala also stressed that the support for democracy belongs to the Czech foreign policy tradition, but added that the kind of democracy, by what means, and where are also important questions. Democracy requires cultural prerequisites, which determine its quality. Mr. Fiala cautioned that support for democracy through words alone is insufficient; it is necessary to support individuals and public activities. In this field, the Czech Republic can benefit from its experience, seeing as it had also received support from abroad. This support should be given to others living in states where the human rights are not respected. Mr. Fiala mentioned the development of a civil society in Ukraine and projects in Burma, which he believes the Czech Republic should support.

MICHAELA MARKSOVÁ-TOMINOVÁ

Former Director of the Department of Equal Opportunities in Education of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic, ČSSD

Ms. Marksová-Tominová underlined that in the international context, the Czech Republic has a developed democracy, in spite of its persistent domestic problems. It is necessary to deliberately strengthen democratic conscience which it should be preached to the public. According to Ms. Marksová-Tominová, the 1989 revolution would not have been as successful without help from abroad, which should not be forgotten. Ms. Marksová-Tominová added that we should not tolerate dictators or terrorists, since it can have a negative impact on us as a result of the globalised character of today's world. It is important to support specific individuals and groups who we know to promote democracy and human rights, and are aware of their countries' realities.

JAROMÍR ŠTĚTINA

Senator, No Party Affiliation

Mr. Štětina concentrated on the dilemma between economic interests vs. human rights. Czech foreign policy made several mistakes, e.g. Lubomír Zaorálek's open preference for Russia while in Georgia during the 2008 war; or Milan Štěch's refusal to secure a meeting between the Senate and Dalai Lama; and the Czech foreign committee's taking sides during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. According to Mr. Štětina, the Czech Republic should co-ordinate its economic and human rights interests through a so-called "division of lots". State diplomacy cannot afford to mirror parliamentary diplomacy, where human-rights questions can be opened. Human rights can also be promoted through non-state organisations. Mr. Štětina added that it is important to have courage when promoting human rights, and that human rights violations should not be a country's domestic affairs.

DANIEL HERMAN

Member of Parliament, KDU-ČSL, former Director of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes

According to **Mr. Herman**, Czech democracy can be traced back 150 years, although at times it had to be fought for. As the former Director of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, Mr. Herman confirmed that many exiled governments and opposition groups are interested in the Czech Republic's experience, wanting to learn about how to proceed following the fall of a regime. However, the Czech Republic takes into account economic relations with other states, and thus does not in fact have everything „in order“. Mr. Herman believes it unacceptable that some officials were strongly advised against meeting with the Dalai Lama. According to Mr. Herman, there is a trend of politicisation of the state administration, and if human rights are not upheld, democracy cannot work.

Mr. Kořan opened the discussion by reacting to the panelists. According to Mr. Kořan, the support of non-governmental organisations is complicated because financial resources are often used for their own survival and not for enacting change. There is also a difference between the opinions of the active civil society, and those of the rest of the public. Next, **Mr. Schwarzenberg** reacted to the aforementioned visit of the Dalai Lama. According to him, Czech export levels rose even though the Czech Republic strongly promoted human rights. He expressed belief that the quality of goods and actual interest in Czech goods is more important than foreign policy. He added that consistency in Czech foreign policy and the predictability of its main actors is also of high importance. **Mr. Fiala** pointed out that although some non-governmental organisations use financial aid to support their own existence, this is not a problem because their very existence is important. He added that generally, there is no conflict between human rights and economic interests; we are merely influenced by the example of China. **Mr. Štětina** pointed out that democracy can indeed be successful in culturally different destinations, referring to Afghanistan where the democracy is similar to the principle of council of elders.

The discussion was opened to the public, and **Mr. Beneš** asked whether the Czech Republic is ready to fight for human rights even if they are being violated in democratic states, and whether it can fight for human rights even if this conflicts with its geopolitical interests. **Mr. Fiala** replied that values and interests should correspond in the same way that they do in every-day life, and there is no reason that a state should act differently. He acknowledged that a state cannot sacrifice its interests in favour of abstract principles. Not only are undemocratic regimes often rich, but they also attempt to legitimise themselves by imposing seemingly democratic mechanisms on an undemocratic environment. He remarked that his thesis will be provocative in response to a provocative question. He posited that it is undeniably better for Western interests to tolerate a mild military dictatorship, than to carry out free, long-distance elections and risk legitimating a radical Islamist regime, which would threaten Western interests. Mr Fiala acknowledged that this is an uncomfortable reality, but it is the „lesser of two evils“. Such decisions are at times acceptable, and are not only in our interests, but in the interests of the world's inhabitants. **Mr. Schwarzenberg** stated that there is never an optimal decision, and cautioned democracies about violating human rights (e.g. Israel, US), concluding that the question of human rights should be approached with reason.

Panel III: Foreign Perspectives of Support for Democratisation

Chair: Jan Látal, Human Rights and Transition Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

Cornel Ciurea, *Expert, Viitorul Institute for Development and Social Initiatives, Moldova*

Kornely K. Kakachia, *Associate Professor, Tbilisi State University and Director, Georgian Institute of Politics, Georgia*

László Csicsmann, *Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Corvinus University of Budapest*

Mr. Látal began by first thanking the organisers. He gave a brief overview of the panel's intentions, which were to gather experts from Eastern European countries in transition – represented here by Moldova, Georgia, and Hungary – and to provide feedback on EU and Western countries' democracy promotion policies. He added that this was an important feature of Czech foreign policy, and encouraged their recommendations.

CORNEL CIUREA

Expert, Viitorul Institute for Development and Social Initiatives, Moldova

Mr. Ciurea prefaced his speech by stating that owing to his experience in politics, his approach to the topic of democratisation is of a political character. His discussion of Moldova centred on a comparison with Georgia and Ukraine, countries which are also currently seeking Association Agreements with the EU. Mr. Ciurea first analysed how Moldavians perceive democracy in the region, and then outlined several problems with the state of democracy in Moldova, including: how to proceed with the oligarchy, which promotes EU association; the dilemma between the rule of law and democracy; the dilemma between politicisation and de-politicisation; and the dilemma between slow and fast integration. The latter is directly connected to the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit, which Mr. Ciurea identified as an attempt to rapidly integrate the region; if it were to fail, he posited that a slow transformation approach would be implemented. Mr. Ciurea concluded by describing the Czech Republic's presence in Moldova as “mismatched”, explaining that it contributes financially more than the other Visegrad countries yet remains discreet, and suggested that this strategy would be justified if the Summit fails.

KORNELY K. KAKACHIA

Associate Professor, Tbilisi State University and Director, Georgian Institute of Politics, Georgia

Mr. Kakachia titled his presentation “Mixed Record of Democratic Governance in Georgia”, and prefaced by pointing out that Georgia is more concerned with the US and other Western countries, than with the Czech Republic. He gave a brief overview of the Czech embassy's official priorities in Georgia, drawing attention to the mismatch in the countries' economies, and that Czech presence is in fact “invisible” in Georgia – especially in contrast to that of other states regarded as “friends of Georgia” (including the Baltic states, Sweden, and Poland). Mr. Kakachia briefly discussed the projects implemented by the Czech Republic in Georgia, which encompass the social, healthcare, and agriculture sectors, and which have amounted to nearly 3 million Euro. He then discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the development of democracy in Georgia. He considered the post-revolutionary reforms to be successful, and called the recent government change “peaceful” and the presidential election “democratic”. Nonetheless, the presence of human rights problems demonstrates that Georgia falls short of being a fully-fledged democracy, and he expressed belief that there is space for further reforms – in particular a judicial reform. Mr. Kakachia acknowledged that Georgia has retained its traditional mentality and that the new post-election government lacks experience, touching upon the country's contested media freedom; thus, he appealed to the West to consolidate Georgian civil society, which is attempting to model itself after the Czech Republic by disassociating itself from Russia and the South Caucasus. He suggested that this could be achieved through a system of exchanges between young people in order to generate mutually beneficial experience. Mr. Kakachia summarised Georgian democracy as a case of democracy versus security, a dilemma abused by Georgian elites, and concluded by stating that despite a lack of democratic institutions, Georgia had undergone a huge transformation in the past nine years.

LÁSZLÓ CSICSMANN

Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Corvinus University of Budapest

Mr. Csicsmann's presentation, "Political Transformation in the Middle East and North Africa: Potential for Democratisation?" focused on placing the Arab Spring in context. Mr. Csicsmann first expressed his distaste for the term "Arab Spring", on account of its various connotations and overall irrelevance to Syria. He first presented the Arab Spring's differing narratives, which included it as proof of the end to exceptionalism theory, the centrality of youth empowerment, and Islamism as an important sociopolitical driving force. Next, Mr. Csicsmann discussed democratic transition theory, Orientalism, the demise of post-colonialism, and "Refo-lution" (reform + revolution) in reference to the Arab Spring, expressing his disagreement with these views, and instead identified the Arab Spring as an evolution of the neo-authoritarian system. He discussed the ongoing shifts in the region's balance of power as having started long before the Arab Spring, resulting in an Arab "renaissance" and the prominence of the BRIC countries, thus limiting the space for Western countries to influence democratisation in the Middle East. He described the Western view of the Arab Spring as a dilemma between democracy and stability, with most states preferring the latter, and expressed criticism for the West's attempts to securitise democracy. He proposed several methods of dealing with the Arab Spring, including: foreign intervention, economic sanctions, arms embargo, diplomatic pressure, freezing of economic/military aid, support of the opposition/civil society, and a new conditionality. His proposal for the Visegrad 4 included humanitarian assistance and providing a functionalist perspective from the experience of 1989, but acknowledged that the EU's role in the region is restricted owing to limited financial assets and the need for "indigenous democratisation". Mr. Csicsmann referred to a graph demonstrating attitudes towards the Arab Spring in the Arab world, which showed a more than 50% positive view. He concluded by stating that the Arab Spring was a political transformation, not an example of democratisation.

Mr. Látal made several clarifications regarding the Czech Republic's visibility in Moldova and Georgia, stating that the Czech Republic prioritised content over self-presentation. He expressed satisfaction with Mr. Kakachia's recommendations, stating that support for civil society was a core priority of the Czech Republic's Georgia Programme. He then asked Mr. Ciurea to develop on the thematic topics for Moldova's development, and whether the failure of the Eastern European summit would by extension imply the failure of Western countries. **Mr. Ciurea** replied that a failure would not be a "total disaster", but it would imply that Moldova's pro-EU forces would lose the next election. He once again acknowledged that mismatched priorities, as in the case of judicial reforms, render recommendations difficult for successful implementation, but that nonetheless the idea of approaching closer to the EU should be revisited. The discussion was opened to the floor, and in response to a question asking to clarify the public opinion statistics presented in his graph, **Mr. Csicsmann** explained that the overall public opinion on the Arab Spring is one of disappointment. Support for democracy has decreased since 2011 and owing to worsening economic conditions, both the Muslim Brotherhood and the military regime continue in their popularity. **Ms. Tamchynova** asked why there was fewer media coverage of the protests in Turkey compared to that of the Arab Spring, to which **Mr. Csicsmann** replied that the two are incomparable systems. **Mr. Kakachia** was asked to give his opinion on Georgia entering NATO, a situation which he described as difficult and hinging on the dilemma between territorial integrity and EU/NATO integration, opining that Georgia is inclined to prioritise the former. He added that Russia is aware of this and uses it to its advantage, additionally opposing both Ukraine's and Moldova's integration into the EU. **Mr. Ciurea** added that he felt sceptical only about Ukraine joining the EU, and not about Moldova or Georgia. **Mr. Kakachia** made the final remarks, stating that the Czech Republic can help Georgia by virtue of its own transformation experience. By setting up a German-Georgian forum, it can facilitate Georgia's NATO membership, and quell the belief in Georgia that Germany is Russia-friendly.

Panel IV: Democratic Progress vs. Regression: Two US Views

Chair: Alexandr Vondra, Director, Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations – School of Political Studies, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Czech Defense Minister

Adrian A. Basora, Director, Project on Democratic Transitions, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Philadelphia, former US Ambassador to Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic

Charles Gati, Professor, Johns Hopkins University

Mr. Vondra began by pointing out the problem with providing one single “American” view. He introduced both Mr. Basora and Mr. Gati, underlining their shared history of prestige in the spheres of diplomacy and political science, respectively. He added that he expected Mr. Basora's account to be more optimistic, whereas Mr. Gati's more pessimistic.

ADRIAN A. BASORA

Director, Project on Democratic Transitions, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Philadelphia, former US Ambassador to Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic

Mr. Basora's presentation, titled “Post-Communist Transitions: Progress or Regression?”, focused on post-Communist transitions, evoking the euphoria of the Velvet Revolution while simultaneously acknowledging its shortcomings. He addressed three issues: anxieties regarding the future of democracy owing to the loss of the democratising momentum in many post-Communist states; the process of democratic transition; and the role of the US. He began by placing the post-Communist states into a global context, using Freedom House's “Freedom in the World” statistics. These demonstrated a general increase in the percentage of democracies, with a rapid increase during the 1990s, thus rendering the recent “slow-down” less surprising. Referring to Samuel Huntington's “waves of regime change”, Mr. Basora acknowledged the possibility that we are currently at the stage of the third reverse wave, which confirms the degree of slowness and turbulence of post-Communist transition. He stressed that the creation and consolidation of a truly viable democracy is a long, complex, and non-linear process, which is influenced by both internal and external factors. Referring to Freedom House's scale of democracy – which identifies democracies as either consolidated, semi-consolidated, hybrid, semi-authoritarian, or authoritarian – Mr. Basora showed that the pace of democratisation slows as one goes further East; nonetheless, he expressed belief that democratic regression can be avoided if acted upon swiftly. Next, Mr. Basora listed the most important factors for a successful transition: direct experience with democracy; democratic diffusion; leaders of high calibre; a high level of civil society; high levels of education and middle class; prior statehood or national identity; and an absence of national conflicts. Negative factors included the “energy curse” and the “stickiness” of political culture, which results in a slowness of change; formal institutions are not enough, since civil societies must be steeped in behavioural norms. Mr. Basora's recommendations included the necessity of developing norms by making use of enhanced democratic diffusion, and the development of young leaders. Finally, Mr. Basora emphasised that Europe should avoid ignoring the US, and should instead learn from its mistakes as much as its successes. Referring to the US's growing concerns about Asia, Mr. Basora expressed belief that the US cannot maintain a counterweight to China without a free and democratic Europe. This geopolitical balance is of just as much an interest for Europe, and Mr. Basora sees this mutual interdependence as an opportunity for Europe and the US to work more closely. He concluded by reiterating the necessity of finding a “second wind” for the post-Communist states and the worthwhile nature of a true democracy – in spite of its long and complicated process –, and encouraged the European-American partnership with countries whose transitions are recent and whose memories of the alternative remain vivid.

CHARLES GATI

Professor, Johns Hopkins University

Mr. Gati opened with a few personal reflections, invoking Mr. Vondra's favourable relations with the US, and his own acquaintance with Mr. Basora stemming from the 1990s when they were pushing for the Czech Republic's integration into NATO. He also pointed out that he feels critical of the Hungarian (i.e. his native) government. He began by questioning whether the US has the right to debate democracy and democratisation given the history of the 20th and 21st centuries, a question he hasn't heard previously addressed in the Czech Republic. In Mr. Gati's opinion, the US does have the right to preach democracy, because its problems are not permanent and it will “bounce back”. Mr. Gati alluded to the US's economic and cultural indicators, the prevalence of which suggest we should not neglect the US. He expressed his disagreement with the

Hungarian government's view of the West as in decline, claiming instead that the West is “the wave of the future” in spite of its problems, political deadlock, and bureaucracy in Brussels. He cited Freedom House's classification of the Czech Republic as a “consolidated democracy”, in contrast to both Hungary and Poland, but nonetheless recognised the problems of Czech democracy – referring to the Prime Minister's resignation. However, he emphasised that the circumstances under which the resignation took place were of greater importance, because they demonstrated the existence of punishment in spite of corruption. Thus, Mr. Gati summarised that Czech democracy is “doing well”, but he also addressed why Central and Eastern Europe is not faring better than it was expected to in the 1990s. First, he explained that the prevalence of corruption results in laws and regulation being neither good nor implemented; he added that corruption is understandable in a region whose politicians have no other skills or training. Second, democratic fatigue has rendered the public disappointed with the “dissonance of democracy”. Third, issues with minorities throughout the region have constituted the public's ignorance of the benefits of diversity. Fourth, the style of politics creates a sense of polarisation, where adversaries are regarded as enemies, creating tension between political parties. Finally, the political culture remains suspicious of the West (illustrated by the presence of conspiracy theories), while simultaneously wishing that the West would pay more attention to the region. In Mr Gati's opinion security issues, important during the 1990s, are no longer relevant today, and more emphasis should be placed on democracy, trade, education, and moreover, teaching through example. He concluded by adding that after putting its issues in order, the US, along with the EU and NATO, could be of great help to Central and Eastern Europe.

Mr. Vondra commended Mr. Basora's and Mr. Gati's ability to remain inoffensive, and asked them to identify, in their opinion, the most successful examples of the US's democratic preaching. **Mr. Basora** cited the “unreplicable” examples of Germany and Japan, and emphasised that of Poland because the US did not “preach” to it, but saw its potential and provided support to help its transformation. **Mr. Vondra** asked the speakers to expand on the German transformation. **Mr. Gati** attributed Germany's success partly to its occupation by the West. He underlined the necessity for elites to want a democracy, which he believes not to be the case in the Czech Republic. However, he added that if people unite with the Western style of democracy despite its flaws, democratisation will continue. **Mr. Vondra** noted that Germany's past three generations attest to the viability of a democratic transformation, confirmed by its perseverance despite the Euro crisis. The first question from the floor concerned the US public's view on democratisation and foreign affairs, remarking that there is a there is a lack of interest in democratisation from the Czech public. **Mr. Gati** stated that outside issues pertaining to the Middle East and China, interest in democratisation and foreign affairs is in decline amongst Americans, as it is perceived to be an elite issue. He noted that the US public is tired of democratisation following Iraq and Afghanistan – engagements made in the name of democratisation, yet having little to do with democracy per se. Furthermore, he highlighted the necessity of “fertile soil” for the implementation of democracy, and expressed scepticism about Bulgaria and Romania joining NATO. **Mr. Basora** opined that most Americans are not interested in the *promotion* of democracy, but are committed to the *idea* of democracy, adding that he perceives the Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova to be “fertile soil” and is optimistic about their reception of democracy. **Mr. Beneš** asked whether Europe is ready to be a partner in preaching democracy, questioning the state of democracy in European states. **Mr. Gati** replied that currently, there is a need to focus on *strengthening* democracy in countries where it already exists, instead of attempting to *spread* democracy. In this connection, he expressed scepticism about in Central Asia. **Mr. Basora** pointed out his distaste for the term “preach”, but expressed his support for Europe's right and responsibility in actively nurturing democracy where there is a demand for it. **Mr. Vondra** concluded the discussion by highlighting the dichotomy of the Czech Republic's position as a country, which supports democracy because it can benefit from its advantages, while simultaneously sharing Europe's scepticism about it.