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## Czech Defence Policy – Critical Assessment and Recommendations

### Česká obranná politika – kritické hodnocení a doporučení

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**Abstract:** The research described in this paper was conducted in the framework of institutional research project Strategic Alternatives (STRATAL) within the Centre for Security and Military Strategic Studies of University of Defence in Brno, the Czech Republic. The main objective of this contribution is to assess the evolution of the Czech defence policy (CDP) since the last summer 2016. The authors analysed the key change drivers (KCDs) and measures taken in political, military, administrative, economical and societal domain in order to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the defence policy. Finally, the authors offer several recommendations to enhance the responsiveness and preparedness of the Czech defence system and the Armed Forces both in short- and long-term time span.

**Abstrakt:** Výzkum popsany v tomto dokumentu se uskutečnil v rámci výzkumného projektu Strategické alternativy (STRATAL) v rámci Centra bezpečnostních a vojenskostrategických studií Univerzity obrany v Brně, v České republice. Hlavním cílem tohoto příspěvku je zhodnotit vývoj české obranné politiky od léta 2016. Autoři analyzovali klíčové hnací síly změn a opatření prováděná v politické, vojenské, správní, ekonomické a společenské oblasti s cílem vyhodnotit celkovou účinnost obranné politiky. Na závěr autoři nabízejí několik doporučení s cílem zvýšit reakceschopnost a připravenost českého obranného systému a ozbrojených sil v krátkodobém i dlouhodobém časovém horizontu.

**Keywords:** Defence Policy; Key Change Drivers; Armed Forces; Defence System; Security Strategy; Defence Strategy; Strategic Environment; Security Environment.

**Klíčová slova:** Obranná politika; klíčové hnací síly změn; ozbrojené síly; obranný systém; bezpečnostní strategie; obranná strategie; strategické prostředí; bezpečnostní prostředí.

## INTRODUCTION

The authors of the paper argue that the current process of adaptation of the Czech Republic's defence policy is heavily shaped by numerous external as well as internal aspects, however, their implications are not always addressed adequately. This will be the main focus of this article.

From the external point of view, both continuous trends and new impetus must be taken into account. External continuous trends include mainly the threat of assertive Russia, migration from North Africa and Middle East, terrorism and cyber-related threats with other implications such as hybrid, asymmetric and information warfare. All of these were underlined in various strategic documents of the Czech Republic, e.g. most recently in the updated version of our Defence Strategy 2017<sup>1</sup> and previously in Security Strategy 2015. These trends and their impact were assessed in the last year's version of this study<sup>2</sup> and remained unchanged in their pattern. According to the authors' assessment, new impetuses 2016/2017 can be summed up in three areas: (1) Brexit - challenging the EU integration; (2) US president Trump - mounting pressure on European allies to provide fair collective defence contributions (2% of GDP benchmark as a precondition for article 5 guarantees); (3) Turkey - currently playing the role of Trojan horse within NATO.

Internal factors for the purpose of this article are assessed in following domains: (1) political; (2) military; (3) administrative; (4) economic, and (5) societal.

Furthermore, the authors' ambition is to offer their view on the way ahead in those areas in order to promote discussion on the future course of action in the evolution of the Czech defence policy. Conceptually, this text is put in the context of long term adaptation of the Czech defence policy after 1989 and methodologically it follows the logic of the defence policy assessment from the last year.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic 2017. The Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic – MHI Prague, 2017. ISBN 978-80-7278-702-9 Available at: [http://www.army.cz/images/id\\_8001\\_9000/8503/DefenceStrategy2017.pdf](http://www.army.cz/images/id_8001_9000/8503/DefenceStrategy2017.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> PROCHÁZKA, Josef and Lukáš DYČKA, Jakub LANDOVSKÝ, Reakce české obranné politiky na dynamiku vývoje bezpečnostního prostředí. Vojenské rozhledy - Czech Military Review, 2016, 25 (special issue), pp. 3-17. DOI: 10.3849/2336-2995.25.2016.05.003-017. ISSN 1210-3292 (print), 2336-2995 (online). Available at: [www.vojenskerozhledy.cz](http://www.vojenskerozhledy.cz)

<sup>3</sup> PROCHÁZKA, Josef, DYČKA, Lukáš, LANDOVSKÝ, Jakub. Proces získávání poznatků a využívání zkušeností jako součást procesního řízení v resortu Ministerstva obrany. Vojenské rozhledy - Czech Military Review, 2016, 25 (Mimořádné číslo), pp 3-17. DOI: 10.3849/2336-2995.25.2016.05.003-017. ISSN 1210-3292 (print), 2336-2995 (on-line). Available at: [www.vojenskerozhledy.cz](http://www.vojenskerozhledy.cz)

## EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

The last year (2016/2017) has been dominated by the aforementioned external influences, out of which (in chronological order) Brexit represents the first significant issue to be dealt with. One of the immediate responses of the Czech Republic to Britain leaving the European Union, echoed even by the Western media, was the call from certain members of the political elite for the creation of an EU army.<sup>4</sup> This included president Miloš Zeman and the then prime minister Sobotka, who stated that “only EU-wide armed forces will allow us to defend our interests on our own”.<sup>5</sup> According to the original idea voiced by the Czech prime minister during the summer 2016, the European Army was supposed to be used mainly for the defence of the EU borders against migrants and as a sign of European military emancipation (with regard to the USA). While not generally accepted, the idea of the Common EU Army spurred a considerable debate. It was, however, quickly rejected by the Minister of Defence<sup>6</sup> with the main argument being that even the embryonic phase of building an EU army - the EU battlegroups - is hardly considered a successful project, thus, any further integration is premature and it would only weaken NATO. More recently, “Common EU Security Forces” replaced the name “Common EU Army” in political rhetoric.

Nevertheless, Brexit is creating space for strengthening the military cooperation among the remaining EU member states. The need to step up defence cooperation is echoed not only from France and Germany, but also from many other capitals. Because of structural changes in both the strategic environment (demand) and the economics of defence (supply), when it comes to technology, procurement, and weapon manufacturing, there is a strong case for European countries to move beyond their traditional approach to defence cooperation.<sup>7</sup> Framework for this enhanced cooperation provided by the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) published in June 2016<sup>8</sup> creates room for subsequent initiatives. Along with the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), the European Defence Fund, the prospect of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PeSCo) and the so called coordinated annual review on defence (CARD) emerge at a time when member states are seeking to build on the momentum of European defence. Especially the work on CARD should be undertaken in coherence with the implementation of the European

4 Hamáček, Jan. 2017. Proč potřebujeme evropskou armádu. Available at: <https://www.cssd.cz/aktualne/blogy/proc-potrebujeme-evropskou-armadu/>

5 Ghez, J, Kirchner, M., Shurkin, M., Knack, A., Hall A., Black, J., 2017. Defence and security after Brexit: A snapshot of international perspectives on the implications of the UK's decision to leave the EU. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, Available at: <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE225.html>.

6 Novotná, K., 2016. Evropská armáda je utopie a plýtvání penězi, kritizují politici Sobotku. Available at: <http://echo24.cz/a/iubn7/evropska-armada-je-utopie-a-plytvani-penezi-kritizuji-politici-sobotku>

7 Gilli A. Gilli, M. 2017. European defence cooperation in the second machine age. Available at: <http://www.iss.europa.eu/de/publikationen/detail/article/european-defence-cooperation-in-the-second-machine-age/>

8 Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy. 2017. Available at: [http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top\\_stories/pdf/eugs\\_review\\_web.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf)

Defence Action Plan. Common feature of all of these initiatives within the EUGS framework is the stress on the gradual synchronisation and mutual adaptation of national defence planning cycles and capability development practices.<sup>9</sup>

While the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU may (in some regards) be strengthened by Brexit, NATO has been much more influenced by the accession of the newly elected US president Donald Trump. The security guarantee provided by NATO and the US forms the cornerstone of security policy for the EU member states, especially in Eastern Europe, which applies to the Czech Republic as well. However, president Trump's push for "America First" policies awkwardly coincides with a build-up of NATO troops in Eastern Europe. In 2016, NATO re-established deterrence of Russia as one of the main priorities of the alliance and approved the deployment of four multinational battalions in Poland and the Baltic states. In May 2016, the US officially activated a land-based missile shield system in southern Romania. In January 2017, the first contingent of US troops arrived in Poland. Moreover, the US already has several hundred soldiers in each Baltic state, including the US special operations troops.

What is more pressing, though, is Trump's desire to end the perceived free-riding on US security guarantees and to encourage other NATO members to increase military spending.<sup>10</sup> However, this is not a fundamental change in the US foreign policy. The Obama administration had taken a similar approach. Many EU countries have been increasing defence expenditure since 2014 in response to the rising concerns about Russia following its annexation of Crimea, but the confrontational tone of the Trump administration may accelerate these countries' efforts to reach the NATO's 2% of GDP target for military spending. The Baltic states have committed to increase their military spending to at least 2% of GDP (Estonia is already there) and others, including the Czech Republic, but also France, Germany and Romania were already increasing their military spending even before Trump's election - but certainly not up to 2% of GDP.

After his visit in the US and meeting with the US Secretary of Defence Mattis in early May 2017, Czech minister of Defence announced that reaching 2% of GDP is likely in 2025.<sup>11</sup> This step is widely seen as a reaction to the substantial pressure from the US president. However, similar promises were made repeatedly in the past.

The last year's list of important external factors influencing the Czech defence policy (at least in an indirect way) would not be complete without including the gradually changing status of Turkey. In regard to its defence policy, this move away from the NATO values started long time ago and it is tied to president Erdogan's domestic political ambitions

<sup>9</sup> The CARD on the EU defence table by Daniel Fiott European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) April 2017 2

<sup>10</sup> The Economist. 2017. Available at: [https://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1715169755&Country=Czech%20Republic&topic=Politics\\_2](https://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1715169755&Country=Czech%20Republic&topic=Politics_2)

<sup>11</sup> Ministr Stropnický: Vrtulníky české armády dodají USA nebo Itálie. 2017. Lidovky.cz. Available at: [http://www.lidovky.cz/ministr-stropnicky-vrtulniky-ceske-armade-dodaji-usa-nebo-italie-p9d-/zpravy-svet.aspx?c=A170502\\_224422\\_In\\_zahranici\\_ELE](http://www.lidovky.cz/ministr-stropnicky-vrtulniky-ceske-armade-dodaji-usa-nebo-italie-p9d-/zpravy-svet.aspx?c=A170502_224422_In_zahranici_ELE)

escalating into the Turkish constitutional referendum in April 2017. Not only did it abolish the existing parliamentary system of government and replaced it with a presidential one, but violent pre-referendum campaign among members of the Turkish minority abroad damaged the relationship with some NATO countries.<sup>12</sup> Relations with the Netherlands are all but broken off, Germany is so far struggling to remain civil under a barrage of Erdogan's insults, and Denmark is siding with its north European neighbours. Furthermore, according to the proposed amendments to the Turkish constitution, individuals with relations to the military would be ineligible to run for election, which is another move away from the Turkish defence posture in the last century. These changes in many ways qualify the Turkish political system as non-democratic.<sup>13</sup> Turkey is in some respect already violating the statement in the Preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty, that the alliance is "determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their people founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law". Add to this Turkey's differences with the US and the perennial tension between Turkey and Greece, and it is no longer clear how much of a NATO member Erdogan's country really is. Despite its considerable military strength, Turkey's participation in alliance activities is not extensive, and its interests do not necessarily align with those of NATO".<sup>14</sup>

As far as the Czech Republic is concerned, the greatest impact of current turmoil in Turkey on our defence policy came in the aftermath of the failed coup d'état attempt in July 2016. As a result, massive purge took place among Turkish soldiers and civilians in NATO structures, which horrified the Czech personnel serving alongside them and most likely caused serious long-term damage to the credibility of Turkey as a reliable ally. The questions frequently heard in the Czech defence sector regarding Turkey concern how effective the Turkish military will be in the future given the wholesale purges. What has this done for the morale of the Turkish armed forces? Will the Turkish military now be focused internally on the process of loyalty checks? And how will it influence the interoperability within NATO? All of this remains to be seen but the prospects are looking increasingly bleak.<sup>15</sup>

With Great Britain out of the EU, Turkish move to a position of a rather untrustworthy partner within NATO and with US under new leadership implementing the "America first" policy, the Czech defence policy is currently facing new challenges from its external environment - for the first time coming not only from the potential enemies, but from would be partners and allies.

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<sup>12</sup> Elliot Ackerman. Turkey Is a Dictatorship Masquerading as a NATO Democracy. Available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/29/the-dictatorship-in-natos-clubhouse-erdogan-kurds-turkey/>

<sup>13</sup> The Trouble(s) with Turkey: Turkey and NATO. 2017. Available at: [http://www.cgai.ca/the\\_troubles\\_with\\_turkey\\_and\\_nato](http://www.cgai.ca/the_troubles_with_turkey_and_nato)

<sup>14</sup> Bershidsky, L., 2017. Turkey's Troubled NATO Status. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-03-14/turkey-s-nato-status-grows-more-troubled>

<sup>15</sup> Nato's second biggest army just bought nearly £2bn of weapons from Russia. 2017. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/nato-army-buys-2-billion-dollars-weapons-from-russia-military-deal-a7942521.html>

While the collective defence mechanism remains paramount for safeguarding the national security, prudent defence policy dictates both to rely more on our ability to become more self-sufficient in terms of political decision making and military capability development and to contribute more to the enhancement of the EU defence cooperation.

## DOMAINS OF ADAPTATION OF THE CZECH DEFENCE POLICY

### 1. Political Domain

Since 2014 we can see clear political commitment to boost the capabilities and capacities of our armed forces and effort is being made on political and military levels in order to keep the defence system and armed forces relevant and fit for future challenges.

In the political domain, in particular, the Czech defence policy was dominated during the last year by the outcomes of the NATO Warsaw Summit, chiefly by assurance measures, deterrence, enhance forward presence and many other aspects.

In practical terms, the NATO commitments influenced the amendment to the Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic 2017. The Czech government approved this document in March 2017. It creates a solid groundwork necessary for enhancing the overall resilience of the government bodies and agencies, local administrations and citizens against the negative impacts of the unstable security environment and supports their ability to withstand it.

The defence strategy includes several important measures, such as the establishment of new units and the rise in the number of soldiers by 5000. Furthermore, for international crisis management operations, the Czech Republic will, depending on the nature of crisis, deploy a land brigade task force without rotation for a six-month period. In the event that such a task force is not deployed, the Czech Republic will be able to deploy simultaneously a sustainable battalion and a company size land task force, or an air force component, with rotation, for international crisis management operations.<sup>16</sup> This is a significant increase in the level of political-military ambitions. So far, the previous Defence Strategy counted with the deployment of Czech brigades to secure NATO's collective defence only. For international crisis management operations, the Czech Republic was able to assign the forces and assets only up to the size of a battalion task force rotated after a six-month period.

In this context, the defence strategy provides the required top-down political guidance for the defence planning process which is the principal tool for enhancing the capability delivery, strengthening the defence potential of the country and reinforcing the armed forces' fighting ability. It establishes a clear vision both for the development of the defence system and the armed forces' capability. It frames the *right things to do* and

<sup>16</sup> Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic 2017. The Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic - MHI Prague, 2017. ISBN 978-80-7278-702-9 Available at: [http://www.army.cz/images/id\\_8001\\_9000/8503/DefenceStrategy2017.pdf](http://www.army.cz/images/id_8001_9000/8503/DefenceStrategy2017.pdf)

creates one important precondition for an effective defence provision for our country and security of our populations.

Nevertheless, there are several aspects which still keep some level of ambiguity or are not presented at all in our updated Defence Strategy. The ambiguity is related to the response to an armed conflict, which threatens the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Czech Republic; in such a situation, all forces and assets of the Czech Armed Forces (CZAF) are employed, including an option to invoke conscription. More should be done to transfer this rather unclear political statement into an exact political commitment and military task in terms of war time structure of our armed forces.

Unfortunately, the Defence Strategy does not offer measures for further institutional innovation including the rationalisation of all MoD internal processes and processes at the level of state administration related to the provision of defence. In practice, it means that the creation of effective and efficient structures and processes which will make sure that all the right things will be implemented *in right way* is a compromise to a significant extent. Despite the fact that the period of resource driven strategy seems to have passed, responsible political behaviour should ensure that we will get out most of tax payer money spent on defence.

These above-mentioned deficiencies in our Defence Strategy, however, have been creating sort of dilemma for policy makers. There is no doubt about the continuing worsening of the security situation of the Czech Republic and its allies - comprehensively reflected in the updated security and defence strategies, demanding capable armed forces and higher level of resources. But there is no clear and commonly shared vision among policy makers and military leadership on the future force posture (role of the CZAF and structure of its wartime establishment), as well as on capabilities this country should exactly invest in.

This sort of dilemma is underscored by so far limited ability of the MoD administration to implement the already agreed plans and modernisation programs and of our military to justify their capability development needs for future modernisation based on holistic and appropriately detailed operating concepts.<sup>17</sup>

Under these circumstances, the authors of this article feel growing scepticism that more resources allocated to defence are going to increase our defence potential and armed forces fighting capability.<sup>18</sup> This attitude is underpinned also by several examples of failed modernisation efforts in the past.

## 2. Military Domain

Even during the 2016/2017 time period, the military has continued to fulfil political tasking from Wales and newly also from the Warsaw Summit. This applies especially to the implementation of commitments stemming from the Readiness Action Plan (RAP).

<sup>17</sup> *Kontrolní závěr z kontrolní akce 16/05: Peněžní prostředky určené na pořízování vybrané techniky Armády České republiky.* Nejvyšší kontrolní úřad. Praha, 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Lukáš DYČKA, Příležitost nebo krize? Výzvy současné obranné politiky ČR, 1. část. Natoactual.cz Officiální portál Informačního centra o NATO. 2017. Available at: [http://www.natoactual.cz/prilezitest-nebo-krize-vyzvy-soucasne-obranne-politiky-cr-1-cast-pya-/na\\_analyzy.aspx?c=A170605\\_110709\\_na\\_analyzy\\_m02](http://www.natoactual.cz/prilezitest-nebo-krize-vyzvy-soucasne-obranne-politiky-cr-1-cast-pya-/na_analyzy.aspx?c=A170605_110709_na_analyzy_m02)

The CZAF also increased assignments of units to NRF (over 800 soldiers in 2016). In this framework, the Czech Republic supports the Forward Enhanced Presence in the Baltic states starting 2018 by employment of one mechanized company within the German unit to Lithuania and later then one mortar platoon to Latvia as part of the Canadian contingent.

In 2016, the Czech Republic deployed, already for the third time, 75 soldiers and four SAAB 39C Gripen aircrafts (the fifth as a reserve) from the 21<sup>st</sup> Tactical Air Force Base Čáslav to provide air defence coverage over the territory and waters of Iceland.

Regarding the operations deployments the Czech government decided in 2016 that not only NATO's collective defence but also Afghanistan, Mali and fight against the IS group are among the main priorities of the Czech military abroad in 2017-2018. Besides that, numerous other smaller missions are traditionally supported by the CZAF (e.g. Kosovo, Bosnia, Sinai, etc.).

The biggest unit is to operate again in Afghanistan. In 2017, the Czech army expects to have 270 soldiers there. Another 20 are to be designated, as of now, for the protection of the Czech embassy in Kabul. The Czechs will continue with their focus on the protection of the allied forces and training of their Afghan counterparts.<sup>19</sup>

The military is continuing its mission in Mali in 2017 by sending its second most numerous contingent there in history. Altogether 60 persons are to serve there. The bulk of this force will make part of the EU training mission. Ten soldiers will work in the staffs of the Malian mission headed by the United Nations (UN).

As a part of the package deal of selling L-159 light combat aircraft to Iraq, the Czech Republic sent an air force consultancy team to help train the local air force. This represents probably the greatest contribution to fighting the Islamic State (IS). Additional capabilities were either already deployed (field surgical team in Mosul) or will be sent during 2017 (five to ten persons strong military police training team).

Other notable project regarding interoperability with allies envisaged in 2017 is planned with the affiliation of the Czech 4<sup>th</sup> Rapid Deployment Brigade with German 10<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division and Rapid Response Forces Division. This integration (which involves also Romania's 81<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Brigade) was been agreed upon on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 under NATO's Framework Nation Concept. The affiliation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Rapid Deployment Brigade is to be organized at the tactical level of the German Division, which will allow the already planned exercises and trainings to be used as entry points for further practical cooperation. The affiliation will be mainly focused at common activities of staff elements and affiliated units, common training, education and harmonization of military requirements, procurement and logistical support.<sup>20</sup> In practical terms, this

<sup>19</sup> Gov't approves military's foreign priorities for 2017-2018. Prague Daily Monitor. Available at: <http://www.praguemonitor.com/2016/04/19/govt-approves-militarys-foreign-priorities-2017-2018>

<sup>20</sup> Letter of Intent between The Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic and the Federal ministry of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany. 2017. Available at: [http://www.army.cz/assets/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/smlouva-cr-srn\\_1.pdf](http://www.army.cz/assets/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/smlouva-cr-srn_1.pdf)

affiliation was heavily criticized<sup>21</sup> by Czech opposition parties as well as by influential magazines such as *Foreign Policy*<sup>22</sup> due to misunderstanding of its implications. This affiliation has been wrongly seen as putting the CZAF under the German command and integrating both armies, while in reality it will be rather focused on systematic common training with German soldiers at divisional level, which the CZAF (due to the fact, that the highest-level units are only brigades) cannot train on its own. Additionally, it is of utmost importance for command and staff development (rather than for soldiers in basic assignments).<sup>23</sup>

Considering the broad spectrum of operational deployments and level of military cooperation, it could be argued, that the Czech Republic is reflecting 360 degree approach to defence and in its nature it is balancing its commitments toward NATO, EU and UN.

In terms of the long-term adaptation, the CZAF pursues the implementation of its Development Concept 2025.<sup>24</sup> Despite the increasing defence budget, several envisaged acquisition programmes and initiatives are being postponed due to both lack of clarity of military specifications and prolonged acquisition process.

It seems that the CZAF struggle with deficiencies stemming from the long-standing neglect of the importance of sustained maintenance and development of credible defence capability will be even more difficult to overcome that it was previously written down in CZAF Development Concept 2025.

The defence capability development is inevitably tied to procurement of material. During the studied period, the pace of modernisation was sluggish. The originally envisaged strategic programmes were subject to change in terms of scope and timelines. This applies particularly to acquisition of multipurpose helicopters, artillery systems and mobile air defence radars (MADR). Nevertheless, there are several projects, e.g. 20 pieces of command and control armoured wheeled vehicles PANDUR (8x8) and 42 vehicles of similar purpose based on the TITUS platform (6x6), 40 IVECO special CBRN supporting vehicles, several thousand sets of body armour and helmets. It is obvious that successful acquisition embraces less sophisticated, smaller or cheaper programmes. The reason for that is the missing military personal responsible for setting requirements, insufficient project management capacity in the civilian part of the MoD (age and sheer numbers of project managers) and excessive fear of punishment accompanying any disputable decision making related to contract signature. The newly adopted strategy<sup>25</sup> goes in right

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21 Opravdový hnus. EuroWehrmacht. Kolaborantské hovado. Stropnický přidružil české vojáky k německé divizi a toto nám na to řekli Bělobrádek, Schwarzenberg či Lorencová. 2017. Available at: <http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/arena/monitor/Opravdovy-hnus-EuroWehrmacht-Kolaborantske-hovado-Stropnicky-pridruzil-ceske-vojaky-k-nemecke-divizi-a-toto-nam-na-to-rekli-Belobradek-Schwarzenberg-ci-Lorencova-477344>

22 Germany is quietly building a European army under its command. 2017. *Foreign Policy*. Available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/22/germany-is-quietly-building-a-european-army-under-its-command/>

23 Písemná reakce ministra obrany na interpelaci poslance Filipa. 2017. Available at: <http://www.psp.cz/doc/00/12/33/00123315.pdf>

24 CZAF Development Concept 2025 known under the Czech abbreviation KVAČR (Konceptce výstavby Armády České republiky).

25 Armament and defence industry cooperation strategy not available in English version

direction but the authors of this article expect effects of most of the measures rather in long-term than quick wins.

	Main Battle Tanks MBT	Armed Combat Vehicles ACV	Artillery Systems AS	Combat Aircrafts CA	Attack Helicopters AH
1993	1617	2315	1516	227	34
1995	1011	1451	893	215	36
1997	952	1367	767	143	36
1999	938	1219	754	114	34
2001	652	1211	648	97	34
2003	541	1235	528	125	34
2005	298	747	362	103	32
2007	181	580	321	38	38
2009	178	490	259	42	29
2011	166	494	244	38	25
2013	123	501	182	39	24
2015	123	442	179	39	17
2017	120	439	179	35	17
CFET* Ceilings	957	1367	767	230	50
*Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe					

**Figure 1:** Main Weapon Systems of the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic<sup>26</sup>

While the problems with modernization programs are widely medialized and have become politically visible as a welcome tool for critics of the current ministry of defence leadership, the problems do not stop here and include other areas as well.

The most critical realm is the command and control function. During the more than last two decades there was a mistaken logic of “slashing fat”, i.e. cutting the higher officer corps positions and reducing command structure perceived at that time as unnecessary. The original intension, allegedly, was to introduce lean management in military business and turn the rank pyramid inherited from the Warsaw Pact era. Through today’s lenses it seems that as well as the “fat”, the Czech Republic slashed also a substantial proportion of “brain” of its military. Therefore, the Czech military has currently limited ability to provide balanced military advice to politicians, capacity for long term strategic planning and to prepare, plan and conduct larger military operations (small joint operations - SJO). The way out is, for instance, to reinforce the strategic level of decision making by separating operational and conceptual functions within the General Staff, re-introducing war games and staff military drills into daily military business and military

<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Defence, 2017. Available at: <http://www.mocr.army.cz/dokumenty-a-legislativa/cisla/cisla-pocty--souhrny-95091/do>

education.<sup>27</sup> More specifically, one of the steps might be the creation of organisation within the General Staff tasked with the planning and control of military crisis operations on the territory of the Czech Republic.

Furthermore, the military should react to the different strategic assumption - increasingly shortening the reaction time for managing crisis. Therefore, the peacetime establishment of armed forces must be capable of building up and mobilizing robust command and force structures in the case of war faster than in the past. The first mobilization exercise was conducted in April 2017 when more than 300 reservists were involved and process and procedures verified. The scope of this exercise was definitely not militarily significant, nevertheless, it was a much higher political gesture symbolizing the changing attitude to defence.

In the area of doctrines, there was a great deal of effort during the last year dedicated to elaborating further on the CZAF Development Concept 2025 into lower level conceptual documents (land forces development concept, air forces development concept, military police development concept, etc.), which more or less progressed successfully over the year. However, there is still no firmly set hierarchy of strategic conceptual documents within the MoD. This sometimes leads to overly creative drafting of this sort of documents - simply saying, the respective services are producing too many of them. What is probably even more puzzling, it is the absence of an overreaching operational concept<sup>28</sup> (capstone concept) from which the long-term capability operational needs of CZAF should stem. The pace of works on this document - even though still ongoing - is rather inadequate.

Based on the aforementioned lower level conceptual documents, the development programs of respective services (air forces, land forces, etc.) have been currently (2017) outlined and approved by the Ministry of Finance and implemented through the mid-term plan for the 2019-2023 period.

Modernisation of the aging infrastructure was one of the priorities of the CZAF Development Concept 2025. Nevertheless, implementation of this priority was not done in a systematic manner during the last year. As rather an ad-hoc solution at the end of the fiscal year, unspent financial resources for modernization of military equipment were reallocated for the purpose of repairs of barracks and other facilities. While undoubtedly important, this task is thus exploited to a subsidiary measure.

An ambitious plan is designed to recruit a high number of professional soldiers (1800 new soldiers in 2016 and 2000 in 2017) as well as members of Active Reserves (to reach

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<sup>27</sup> Zapomněli jsme, že smyslem armády je boj, varuje šéf elitních speciálních sil Karel Řehka. 2017. Aktualne.cz Available at: <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/zahranici/zapomneli-jsme-ze-smyslem-armady-je-boj-varuje-sef-elitnich/r~642f4b0cd35411e6be7d002590604f2e/?redirected=1495017887>

<sup>28</sup> An operational concept known under the Czech abbreviation KOPOS (Koncepte operačního použití ozbrojených sil).

5000 in 2025 - currently less than 1300 positions are filled). Currently over 5000 positions are not filled - some units are only at the 65% level of manning.

### 3. Administrative Domain

Administrative domain comprises internal MoD functions and structures. During the last year, there were several issues potentially with a considerable level of risk for proper functioning of the MoD. The first of these issues stems from the Act on Civil Service, passed by the Parliament in 2015. Its implementation lowered the attractiveness of civilian servant positions at the MoD due to disbalance between higher level of qualification requirements and uncompetitive salaries. There are two trends keeping their pattern - ageing of the personnel and rising numbers of unfilled civilian positions, some of them critical (Defence Policy and Strategy Division and Armament Division). Nevertheless, the true ticking bomb with long-term consequences is the ageing of the civilian personnel. The structure is largely populated with former military personnel enjoying military pension and related benefits, for whom even less paid civilian position is acceptable. While it may be beneficial in terms of experiences and institutional knowledge on the downside, it puts considerable barriers for innovative and out-of-the-box way of thinking. Additionally, it creates a "personnel bubble" when "old-timers" are leaving without proper (and younger) replacement.

Possible solution may be twofold. Firstly, a conceptual solution must be sought in the form of, for instance, comprehensive long-term human resource strategy (currently non-existing) reflecting and balancing the needs of the MoD, career development opportunities and labour market limitations.<sup>29</sup> Secondly, it should be accompanied both with more competitive salaries and motivating sets of benefits.

Fundamental function for the implementation of defence policy goals is acquisition. This function has deteriorated during the years of economic austerity. Processes were not adapted properly and personnel competencies gradually declined. The New Armament Strategy is in the process of implementation. It aims to introduce the best practices - SMART acquisition, sound project management and proper management of life cycle. The preferred principle for material procurement is "government to government". It should minimise corruption and create additional security guarantees by following the proverb "By buying our weapons, you also buy our friendship".

The second most significant function is Human Resource Management. It should be able to implement personnel policy in its complexity and to guarantee skilled and motivated people for each function as stipulated in the new Act on Civil Service. The new career management for professional soldiers should deal with the understaffing of command and force structures, lack of motivation, declining knowledge, and inadequate age structure of military personnel.

### 4. Economical Domain

While there was a considerable resistance to spend 2% of GDP on defence among the coalition parties, after the visit of the Czech minister of defence in the US in early

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<sup>29</sup> The Bundeswehr Personnel Strategy 2016 could serve as an inspiration for the Czech Republic.

May 2017, it was announced that reaching this level of expenditures is likely in 2025.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, so far there has been only commitment of the Czech government from 2014 to increase the defence spending progressively to reach 1.44% GDP in 2020.<sup>31</sup> But even our ambition to reach the recommended NATO benchmark is not entirely new. The Czech Republic has a sort of valuable lessons from the past when the 2% of GDP were being met. At that time (1993-2005)<sup>32</sup> it resulted in overheated procurement of equipment, which did not always fit the operational needs, and as a consequence there were not enough money to operate it and some of this equipment was put on storage (e.g. subsonic fixed-wing fighter L-159).

But the amount of expenditures is only one part of the equation. Political representation in the Czech Republic should be seriously concerned about the effective and efficient use of the allocated resources. In this respect, the internal structure of the defence budget is of utmost importance. The so-called 50/30/20 formula for defence expenditures, with 50 percent of the budget allocated for personnel costs, 30 percent for operations and maintenance, and 20 percent for modernization was long seen as an ideal goal in the Czech Republic. However, defence expenditures in 2016 in the proportions of 59/30.5/10.5 clearly indicate that the investment level is still unsatisfactory and the pattern of modernisation of our armed forces is rather slow.<sup>33</sup>

However, it seems that the current intensions to allocate these fast-growing funds are following the opposite, yet in a way also mistaken logic. The most worrying recent trend is the ambition to invest 30% of the MoD's annual defence budget in the procurement of new equipment, which was promised to the US partners in 2017. If we take into consideration that our ability to estimate the life cycle cost in a reasonable way is very limited, it means - most likely - the operating costs will even increase. There is clearly a considerable level of risk that by this approach the readiness and preparedness of Czech Armed Forces will be put in serious question. And at the same time the personal costs are expected to be under constant pressure due to the increased recruitment, rising salaries and competition over personnel on the market.

In addition to this fundamental set of benchmarks within the NATO context, there are also other criteria followed, e.g., by the EU or the European Defence Agency (EDA), respectively. They emphasize the need for enhancing the investments in research and development (R&D), which should comprise 2% out of all MoD's investments, and multinational cooperation through cooperative modernisation programs (35% out of all money spent on modernisation of main acquisition programs) and 20% out of the total R&D.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Ministr Stropnický: Vrtulníky české armádě dodají USA nebo Itálie. 2017. Aktualne.cz. Available at: [http://www.lidovky.cz/ministr-stropnicky-vrtulniky-ceske-armade-dodaji-usa-nebo-italie-p9d-/zpravy-svet.aspx?c=A170502\\_224422\\_In\\_zahranici\\_ELE](http://www.lidovky.cz/ministr-stropnicky-vrtulniky-ceske-armade-dodaji-usa-nebo-italie-p9d-/zpravy-svet.aspx?c=A170502_224422_In_zahranici_ELE)

<sup>31</sup> Czech Coalition Agreement. 2014. <http://www.army.cz/en/ministry-of-defence/newsroom/news/czech-governmental-coalition-sign-agreement-on-the-progressive-increase-of-the-defence-budget-101455/>

<sup>32</sup> Figure 2.

<sup>33</sup> KDU-ČSL: Navýšení výdajů na obranu je v zájmu bezpečnosti naší země. 21.4.2017. Available at: [www.parlamentnilisty.cz](http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz)

<sup>34</sup> FIOLT D. The CARD on the EU defence. European Union Institute for Security Studies. QN-AL-17-010-2A-N. ISBN 978-92-9198-517-3, ISSN 2315-1129 DOI:10.2815/173153

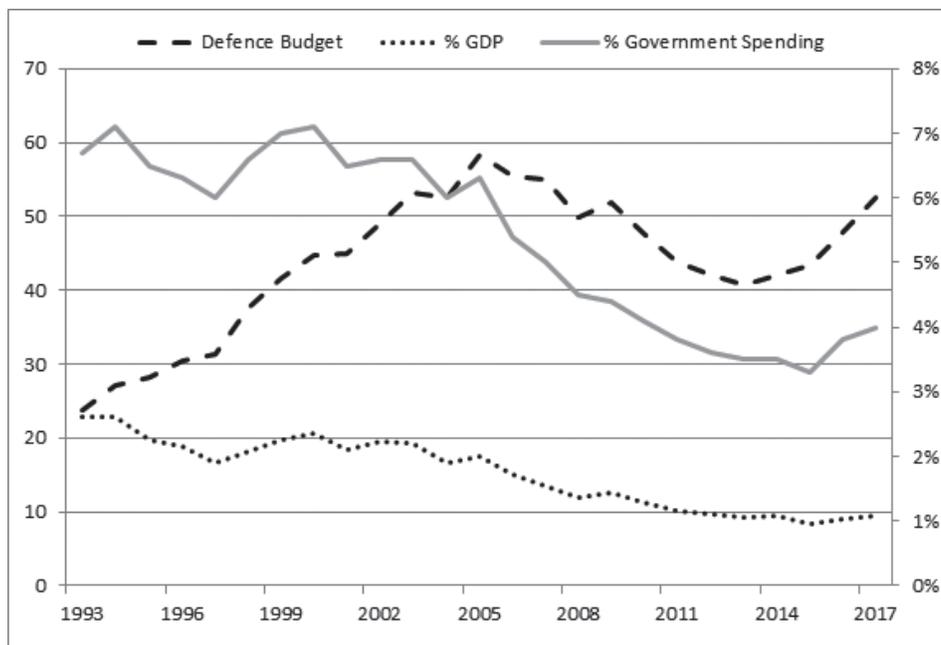


Figure 2: Defence Spending of the Czech Republic<sup>35</sup>

## 5. Societal Domain

The defence potential of every state is traditionally based upon the Clausewitzian notion of the trinity of “people, army, and government”.<sup>36</sup> While “army” and “government” were covered in the previous chapters, it is the societal domain that is often overlooked. It is widely recognised that personnel represent the most significant resource for any given organisation and that cannot be echoed more than by the defence sector. It was acknowledged that there is a significant underfinancing in the area of military equipment and infrastructure.<sup>37</sup> However, we argue that the most devastating effect caused by the shrinking defence budget in the past was in the human resource domain. Figure 4 depicts the evolution of the quantitative characteristics of personnel. The trend of slashing personnel, however, ended in 2014.

The societal domain is also tied to the holistic way of understanding the term “resilience”. It includes the informational domain and also activities related to general public. Since the end of the Cold War, it has been a general trend in Europe to phase out mandatory military conscription. Recently, however, there have been some setbacks in

<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Defence, 2017. Available at: <http://www.mocr.army.cz/dokumenty-a-legislativa/cisla/cisla-pocty--souhrny-95091/do>

<sup>36</sup> Christopher Bassford and Edward J. Villacres. 2011. Reclaiming the Clausewitzian Trinity. Available at: <https://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Bassford/Trinity/TRININTR.htm>

<sup>37</sup> Czech Armed Forces Development Concept 2025

this trend. While it is true that some European countries reintroduced conscription, in the last years, most of the EU and NATO members still rely on some sort of volunteer or professional armed forces (see Figure 3). Also in the Czech Republic, this discussion of reintroducing conscription was notably present during the last year. It might be potentially reflected in the programmes of certain political parties for the upcoming 2017 parliamentary elections (Christian Democratic Union–Czechoslovak People’s Party, etc.<sup>38</sup>).

Country	Status	Service Length	Conscripts
Austria	Compulsory	6 months	N/A
Belgium	Abolished 1994	--	--
Bulgaria	Abolished 2008	--	--
Croatia	Abolished 2008	--	--
Cyprus	Compulsory	14 months	10,700
Czech Rep	Abolished 2005	--	--
Denmark	Compulsory	4>12 months	1,250
Estonia	Compulsory	8>11 months	3,000
Finland	Compulsory	6>9>12 months	13,650
France	Abolished 1996	--	--
Germany	Abolished 2011	--	--
Greece	Compulsory	9 months>1 year	48,950
Hungary	Abolished 2004	--	--
Ireland	--	--	--
Italy	Abolished 2004	--	--
Latvia	Abolished 2006	--	--
Lithuania	Reintroduced 2015	9 months	3,000
Luxembourg	Abolished 1967	--	--
Malta	--	--	--
Netherlands	Abolished 1997	--	--
Poland	Abolished 2012	--	--
Portugal	Abolished 2004	--	--
Romania	Abolished 2006	--	--
Slovakia	Abolished 2006	--	--
Slovenia	Abolished 2003	--	--
Spain	Abolished 2001	--	--
Sweden	Reintroduced 2018/19	9>12 months	4,000
UK	Abolished 1960	--	--

Figure 3: Conscription in EU countries\*

\* SIPRI, Institute for Security Studies EU, adapted by authors

<sup>38</sup> KDU-ČSL: Navýšení výdajů na obranu je v zájmu bezpečnosti naší země. 2017. Available at: [www.parlamentnilisty.cz](http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz)

A common denominator of all pro-conscription arguments in the Czech Republic was not to strengthen the national defence but rather to supplement the seemingly insufficient education of young population, both at schools and in the family.<sup>39</sup>

As a result of resilience enhancement suggested in the Audit of National Defence,<sup>40</sup> the Czech MoD is seriously considering new initiatives aiming at strengthening physical fitness and developing fundamental knowledge and practical skills of young population related to tactical level basic military competencies. Instead of reintroducing the conscription model, the generally discussed idea is to improve cooperation and communication with associations, clubs and societies, such as volunteer firefighters, sport pilots, chasseurs, kennel clubs, and sport societies. This approach reflects historical experiences with organizations such as the Sokol movement (from the Czech word for falcon) founded in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as an all-age gymnastics organization. It was based upon the principle of “a strong mind in a sound body”. Sokol members also helped create the Czechoslovak Legions during WWI and formed local patrols that kept order after the disintegration of the Habsburg rule and during the creation of Czechoslovakia in October 1918.<sup>41</sup>

While the original plans endorsed in the Czech Armed Forces Development Concept 2025 expected reaching 24,162 soldiers, the newly adopted Defence Strategy 2017 added further 5000 of military personnel. Based on the evaluation of security threats and the ensuing risks, it states that it is essential, in the long term, to develop new units in order to enhance the combat capabilities, and thus increase the Czech Armed Forces personnel numbers by the aforementioned additional 5000 military professionals, but at the same time maintain the priority of providing adequate manning, equipment, armaments, training standards, and achieving full operational capabilities of the existing structures. The commitment to reach 5000 strong active reserves remains unchanged.

However, achieving this relatively high level of ambition faces considerable obstacles. Externally, there are worrying demographic and societal trends. Firstly, the increasing societal diversity as well as the multitude of possible individual choices characterise complex modern societies. As a consequence of this social change and the ensuing change of values, people have different expectations of modern working conditions, predictable career paths or opportunities to balance their professional and private life. Combined with an increasing individualisation and geographic mobility of both private life and work, this trend also affects leadership, communication and organizational cultures and structures of the CZAF.

There are also numerous other trends and factors influencing the ability of armed forces to attract suitable cohort of personnel on the open market, e.g., the aging appli-

<sup>39</sup> Češi budou moci na vojenské cvičení, Čunek volal i po povinné vojně. Idnes. 2017. Available at: [http://zpravy.idnes.cz/cesi-budou-moci-na-vojenske-cviceni-cunek-volal-i-po-povinne-vojne-p9m-/domaci.aspx?c=A160113\\_125708\\_domaci\\_kop](http://zpravy.idnes.cz/cesi-budou-moci-na-vojenske-cviceni-cunek-volal-i-po-povinne-vojne-p9m-/domaci.aspx?c=A160113_125708_domaci_kop)

<sup>40</sup> Audit národní bezpečnosti. Government of the Czech Republic. 2016. Available at: <https://www.vlada.cz/assets/media-centrum/aktualne/Audit-narodni-bezpecnosti-20161201.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Ministerstvo obrany chce zapojit občany do plnění úkolů ozbrojených sil. Denik.cz. 2017. Available at: [http://www.denik.cz/z\\_domova/ministerstvo-obrany-chce-zapojit-obcany-do-plneni-ukolu-ozbrojenych-sil-20170520.html](http://www.denik.cz/z_domova/ministerstvo-obrany-chce-zapojit-obcany-do-plneni-ukolu-ozbrojenych-sil-20170520.html)

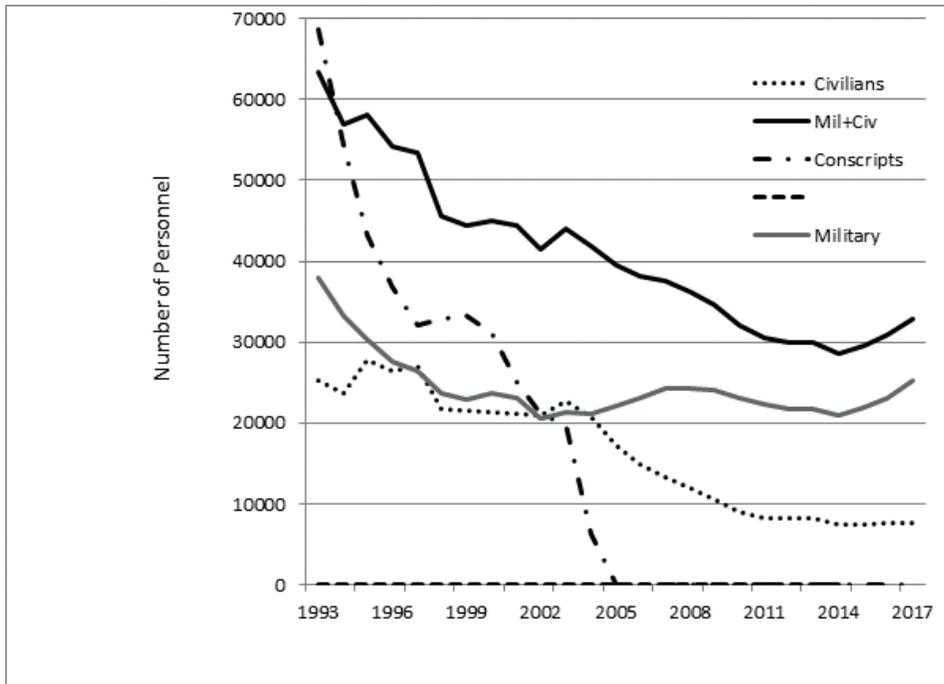


Figure 4 Personnel of the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic\*

\* Ministry of Defence, 2017. Available at: <http://www.mocr.army.cz/dokumenty-a-legislativa/cisla/cisla-pocty--souhrny-95091/do>

cants for military service, educational expansion (more young people seeking academic education, thus being progressively unwilling to enlist to basic military assignments), declining general fitness and psychological abilities of population, and low flexibility of workforce, resulting in soldiers often refusing to serve in garrisons far from their homes. All of these factors will continue to present a challenge to the CZAF to recruit, qualify, develop, and maintain personnel.

Our human resource management needs to be more flexible and out-of-the-box thinking is required. The right policy response is to expand the draft to women, foreigners and in the long term to offset shortages of personnel by higher level of robotization and digitalization. With regard to foreigners, the potential and acceptable pool might especially consist of EU citizens (EU-wide recruitment).

The most significant disadvantage of the CZAF human resource management seems to be its lethargy, which is most apparent in constantly trying to hire people with very generic broad skills and qualities with no regard to actual needs of their future assignments and career paths. Simply, we need to have more flexible approach to people management. For example, adjust the physical selection requirements to the actual position being occupied (e.g., vastly different requirements on members of special forces vs. IT specialists); provide soldiers with attractive education useful not only in their military but also in the ensuing civilian career; offer rewarding career opportunities not only

in vertical but also in horizontal directions; design effective set of benefits to enhance positive motivation; and invest heavily in the aging and obsolete military infrastructure. Furthermore, successful human resource management should not be built exclusively on salary and benefit increase, but it should be accompanied with the change in the organisational culture and shift of leadership priorities.

Strategic communication as a significant part of the societal domain has been “reactive” rather than “proactive” in the past. The result is alarmingly low knowledge of ordinary citizens about the defence sector. Only 20% of respondents in the public survey were able to guess the size of CZAF or defence budget correctly. The natural outcome is that just 43% of respondents are willing to participate in defence of the country in the case of war.<sup>42</sup> The Ministry of Defence has currently commenced work on the Strategic Communication concept. One of the key preconditions is that it will be orchestrated with other ministries. However, the Ministry of Interior has the lead in this case.

An inherent part of the potential scenario is also the hybrid kind of activities targeting the countries’ cyber space. Allies agreed during the summit meeting in Warsaw in 2016 to designate the cyber space as an official operational domain of warfare, along with air, sea, land, and space. Cyber security capability the Czech MoD is going to maintain and develop will embrace passive, preventive and reactive measures.<sup>43</sup> The critical capability gap within the C2 domain is the secured line of communication in integrated national and multinational information environment which we are still unable to resolve effectively.

Despite the acknowledgment that societal resilience and cyber and strategic communication are essential elements of the Czech defence capability portfolio, more needs to be done, both conceptually and in practical terms. Additionally, more resources should be allocated toward these areas and holistic approach institutionalised - clear responsibilities and organisational arrangement should be established. Stove piping is not the way we should pioneer through because it would again create an unacceptable risk to our defence provision.

## CONCLUSION

The authors of this paper intended to assess the defence policy of the Czech Republic in the past year (2016/2017). To do that, this article reviewed the Czech defence policy adaptation in the following domains: (1) political; (2) military; (3) administrative; (4) economic; and (5) societal, and it offers several ideas for its further improvement. In the beginning, also the most important external trends were assessed.

It seems that the Czech political leadership’s attitude to defence matters has evolved over the last years. Additionally, Brexit, Turkey’s changing position and the election of

<sup>42</sup> “Armáda a veřejnost 2015” - Ministry of Defence.

<sup>43</sup> The Long Term Perspective for Defence 2030. Prague 2015. Available at: [http://www.army.cz/images/id\\_8001\\_9000/8503/THE\\_LONG\\_TERM\\_PERSPECTIVE\\_FOR\\_DEFENCE\\_2030.pdf](http://www.army.cz/images/id_8001_9000/8503/THE_LONG_TERM_PERSPECTIVE_FOR_DEFENCE_2030.pdf)

a new US president have reinforced this trend. The outcome of this might be split into several areas. First of all, the decline of defence budget has been stopped and hopefully will be reversed in the near future (from the current 1.06% to 2% of GDP by 2024), thus reaching the NATO benchmark of 2%. Secondly, several strategic documents were amended to reflect new security realities and implications – chiefly, the Defence Strategy 2017, which is already based on a different set of strategic assumptions than the previous one. Thirdly, the capability of armed forces is a subject of reconsideration in order to enhance its preparedness and readiness. In addition, the defence system, as a whole, requires enhanced resilience and proper functioning in terms of mobilisation of all society resources.

Nevertheless, the implementation of the updated Czech defence policy still faces significant obstacles.

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