

TRANSFORMATION OF THE CZECH ARMED FORCES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF NATO

The authors argue that the Czech Republic's integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has become an important factor in shaping the security system of Central and Eastern Europe and is a part of the vital interests of NATO candidate states and Washington's policy on the European continent. The asymmetry of potentials and the lack of formation of the Czech security sector, as well as the other CEE states, allowed Washington to fill the niche of the so-called "security guarantor" and create an image of a long-term strategic partnership, strong ties between NATO and the United States who were the world leaders at the time. Guarantees of the collective security system of all members of the Alliance, according to Art. 5 of the Washington Treaty, were "attractive" to a post-communist state that distrusted its Western partners (in connection with the events of 1938 and 1968) and did not have sufficient resources and defense capabilities to build security on its own. We believe that in terms of the security policy of the Czech Republic, the partnership and cooperation with the United States in the transition phase has created the conditions and tools for the integration of the Czech Republic into the European and transatlantic security system.

Keywords: the Czech Republic, USA, NATO, foreign policy, Czech-American relations, security system, joint security policy

TRANSFORMACJA CZESKICH SIŁ ZBROJNYCH POD AUSPICJAMI NATO

Autorzy artykułu udowadniają, że integracja Republiki Czeskiej z Organizacją Paktu Północnoatlantyckiego stała się ważnym czynnikiem kształtowania systemu bezpieczeństwa państw Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej oraz weszła w żywotne interesy krajów kandydujących do NATO oraz politykę Waszyngtonu na kontynencie europejskim. Duża różnica potencjału i brak sektora bezpieczeństwa w Czechach, jak również z innych krajów Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, pozwolił Waszyngtonowi wypełnić niszę pewnego „gwaranta bezpieczeństwa”, kształtowanie wizerunku długoterminowego partnerstwa strategicznego, silne więzi z NATO

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i Stanami Zjednoczonymi, którzy w tym czasie byli liderami na świecie. Gwarancje zbiorowego systemu bezpieczeństwa dla wszystkich członków Sojuszu, zgodnie z art. 5 Traktatu Waszyngtońskiego, były „atrakcyjne” dla państwa postkomunistycznego, którzy nie ufali zachodnim partnerom (w związku z wydarzeniami 1938 i 1968) i nie miał wystarczających zasobów i zdolności obronnych, do samodzielnego tworzenia zabezpieczeń. Wierzymy, że w interesie polityki bezpieczeństwa Czech, partnerstwa i współpracy ze Stanami Zjednoczonymi w fazie przejściowej stworzył warunki i narzędzia do integracji Republiki Czeskiej z europejskim i transatlantyckim systemem bezpieczeństwa.

Słowa kluczowe: Czechy, USA, NATO, polityka zagraniczna, stosunki czesko-amerykańskie, system bezpieczeństwa, wspólna polityka bezpieczeństwa

ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ ЗБРОЙНИХ СИЛ ЧЕХІЇ ПІД ЕГІДОЮ НАТО

Автори статті доводять, що інтеграція Чеської Республіки до Організації Північноатлантичного договору стала важливим фактором формування системи безпеки держав Центрально-Східної Європи та увійшла до життєво важливих інтересів держав-кандидатів на членство в НАТО і до політики Вашингтона на європейському континенті. Велика різниця потенціалів та не сформованість безпекового сектору Чеської Республіки, як і інших держав ЦСЄ, дозволили Вашингтону заповнити нішу певного «гаранта безпеки», створити образ тривалого стратегічного партнерства, міцних зв'язків із НАТО та США, які в той час були лідерами у світі. Гарантії колективної системи безпеки всіх членів Альянсу, згідно ст. 5 Вашингтонського договору, були «привабливими» для посткомуністичної держави, яка недовіряла партнерам із Заходу (що пов'язане з подіями 1938 і 1968 рр.) та не мала достатніх ресурсних і оборонних можливостей, щоб самостійно формувати безпеку. Вважаємо, що це був правильний крок, з погляду інтересів політики безпеки Чеської Республіки, адже партнерство і співробітництво зі США на перехідному етапі, а також і в наступному періоді, створило умови та інструменти для інтеграції Чеської Республіки в європейську і трансатлантичну систему безпеки.

Ключові слова: Чеська Республіка, США, НАТО, зовнішня політика, чесько-американські відносини, система безпеки, спільна політика безпеки

Relevance of the topic

The transformation of the main priorities of the foreign policy of the CEE states after the collapse of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, the unification of Germany and

the processes of democratization that took place on the European continent and the Balkans, testified to the inevitability of the evolution of their security system and changes in the political, economic, military and other spheres. The need to form its own security policy arose at the beginning of Czechoslovakia's statehood formation in 1989. However, one of the main factors in the creation of its own bodies and institutions designed to guarantee the security and defense of a small state was the division of the state into the Czech Republic (CR) and the Slovak Republic (SR) on January 1, 1993. After 1993, the Czech Republic's security environment reflected a general trend towards integration with Europe and distancing itself from the communist past. However, the lack of a clear security strategy, defense capabilities and energy dependence of the state held the danger of turning it into a "buffer zone" between the Russian Federation and Germany. The vulnerability of the Czech Republic's political and economic systems required internal reforms and foreign policy support.

Presentation of the research materials

The alternative in this context was to form strong ties with NATO and the United States, which were the world leaders at that time. Guarantees of the collective security system of all members of the alliance, according to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, became an "attractive goal" for a post-communist state that did not trust its partners from the West (which is related to the events of 1938 and 1968) and did not have sufficient resources and defense capabilities to form its security independently. An additional factor was also the public opinion's low confidence in the army and other military forces designed to guarantee the security of the state.

The personal factor also played an important role. Vaclav Havel and Madeleine Albright were the main players in the Czech-American relations at that time. In February 1990, President Havel delivered a speech to two chambers of the Czech parliament. He stressed the key role of the United States in shaping the European security system and called on the members of parliament to support the state in its Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Subsequently, at one of the first meetings of the Chamber of Deputies in April 1993, the President defined the main goal of the Czech Republic's foreign policy – the protection of democratic values and membership in NATO³. Another lobbyist for the Czech Republic's integration into NATO was M. Albright. In 1993-1996, as the US ambassador to the UN, she tried to show Washington the progress and changes that were taking place in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary. And in 1996-2000, as the United States Secretary of State, she conducted bilateral negotiations on the formation of the foundations of a common security policy, basic strategic documents and coordination of forces against international threats.

³ R. Khol. *Česka bezpečnostní politika 1993-2004*. [w:] O. Pick, V. Handl (Eds.). *Zahraniční politika České republiky 1993-2004. Úspěchy, problémy a perspektivy*. Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2004. s. 40.

One of the first manifestations of US support was the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in December 1991, which coordinated NATO's activities with the CEE countries seeking to become members of the alliance. The main requirements of NATO membership for the CEE states were submitted to the Council. The US ambassador to the United Nations M. Albright and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US Armed Forces J. Shalikashvili in a conversation with representatives of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic, indicated that the issue of Czech membership in European and Transatlantic security structures will be considered not only in Brussels, but also in Washington. "The security of Central Europe and the Czech Republic depends on the security of the United States and NATO," M. Albright said⁴. President Clinton's congressional report on NATO expansion notes that "peace, stability, and prosperity in Europe are vital to American national security. Therefore, the Czech Republic's accession to NATO will help the United States protect and promote American interests in the transatlantic space."⁵ J. Solak wrote that, in fact, joining NATO took place with the direct participation and control of the United States, that Washington provided the states that declared their desire for integration into NATO with the conditions and instruments of ratification. Therefore, the report on the state of training of the military and defense sectors of the candidate states for participation in NATO was also received by the US government and the Secretary General of the Alliance. The researcher believed that Washington fully used the tools of coordination and control over the integration process⁶.

In 1994, a stronger foundation for security cooperation was formed – the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. The main tasks of PfP were related to the preservation of international and regional security systems, defense and military budget planning, strategic policy and military exercises, modernization and professionalization of the army according to NATO standards. PfP included joint exercises and preparation for participation in international operations.

Scientists O. Pick and R. Khol wrote that most of the foreign policy goals of the Czech Republic at the beginning of its formation as a state were realized precisely thanks to Czech Republic's participation in PfP, which laid the foundation for transatlantic cooperation with the United States⁷. As a member of PfP, the Czech Republic has implemented technical, administrative and political changes in the reorganization of the sectors since March 10, 1994. As part of the PfP program, the President of the Czech Republic V. Havel and the US President B.

⁴ М. Олбрайт Госпожа госсекретарь. Мемуары Мадлен Олбрайт / пер. с англ. А. Лисовского, А. Лисицкой, Е. Китаевой. М.: Альпина Бизнес Букс, 2004. С. 473. [M. Olbrajt. Gospozha gossekretar-. Memuary Madlen Olbrajt / per. s angl. A. Lisovskogo, A. Lisicynoj, E. Kitaevoj. M.: Al-pina Biznes Buks, 2004. s. 473].

⁵ Report to the Congress on the Military Requirements and Costs of NATO Enlargement. "Journal of International Security Assistance Management" 1998, nr 3, p. 778.

⁶ J. Solak. Siedemnaście kroków do NATO : narodowe i ponadnarodowe aspekty ratyfikacji układów o członkostwie Polski, Czech i Węgier w Sojuszu Północnoatlantyckim. Warszawa : Biuro Prasy i Informacji Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej , 1999. s. 23.

⁷ R. Khol. Česká bezpečnostní politika 1993-2004. [w:] O. Pick, V. Handl (Eds.). Zahraniční politika České republiky 1993–2004. Úspěchy, problémy a perspektivy. Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2004. s. 58.

Clinton organized meetings with representatives of other European states, during which they called for cooperation in the PfP program and support for NATO's international operations⁸.

The difficulties associated with changing the security policy in accordance with NATO norms have caused political contradictions in the Czech Republic, related, in particular, to the parliamentary elections before the ratification of the NATO accession pact and discussions on the "Government draft on the decision on the Czech Republic's accession to NATO" document (11.02.1998). Although practically the political forces of the Czech Republic supported the European and transatlantic direction as a key one in the development of the state, the communist and republican parties of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic contradicted this aspiration. It should be remembered that in 1992-1998, the Parliament coalition was formed by the Civic Democratic Party, which emphasized the importance of the US presence in the region. However, the Social Democrats, led by M. Zeman, believed that "the decision on our integration into NATO, as well as holding a referendum on this issue, should be made at the session of the new parliament."⁹ The election did not change the situation: 32.3% of the vote was won by Social Democrats, 27.7% – by Civic Democratic Party. To compromise and form a reliable partner image, on April 15, 1998, the Lower House of the Czech Parliament approved the decision on the Czech Republic's membership in NATO by a majority (154 out of 192 deputies)¹⁰.

On April 30, the Czech Senate ratified the Treaty on NATO Accession by a majority (64 out of 69 deputies) and it was subsequently signed by President V. Havel. This had a positive impact on public support for joining NATO, reaching 54%¹¹.

The cadence of the next government changed the balance of power: in 1998-2004, the pro-government coalition was headed by the Social Democrats, and V. Klaus became the Prime Minister. His pragmatism and focus on the development of the Czech economy coincided with the growth of American investment in strategic industries. A takeover of the "Rakona" plants by the "Procter & Gamble" took place, the United States aerospace firm "Boeing" invested in the Czech "Aero Vodochody"; a tobacco corporation "Philip Morris" invested in the Czech company "TATRA". The volume of the US investment increased to \$3.2 billions¹². The United States was the fourth largest trading partner of the Czech Republic.

An analysis of the reports of the Czech Foreign Ministry shows that in addition to meetings, Presidents V. Havel and B. Clinton developed intersectoral relations between the ministries of foreign affairs, defense, internal affairs, trade and industry, and economic consortia¹³. Coordi-

⁸ V. Havel. Členství České republiky v NATO – spoluzodpovědnost za osud světa. "Mezinárodní politika" 2004, nr. 1, p. 7–8.

⁹ J. Solak. Siedemnaście kroków do NATO : narodowe i ponadnarodowe aspekty ratyfikacji układów o członkostwie Polski, Czech i Węgier w Sojuszu Północnoatlantyckim. Warszawa : Biuro Prasy i Informacji Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej , 1999. s. 24.

¹⁰ Problemy bezpieczeństwa Czech, Polski i Węgier w kontekście poszerzenia NATO, red. R.Grodzki, Poznań 2011. s. 285.

¹¹ J. Solak. Siedemnaście kroków do NATO : narodowe i ponadnarodowe aspekty ratyfikacji układów o członkostwie Polski, Czech i Węgier w Sojuszu Północnoatlantyckim. Warszawa : Biuro Prasy i Informacji Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej , 1999. s. 37.

¹² Zpráva o zahraniční politice ČR 1998–1999. Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí ČR, s. 100–103. URL: http://www.mzv.cz/file/415493/Zprava1998_1999.pdf [20.04.2020].

¹³ Zpráva o zahraniční politice České republiky za období od ledna 1993 do prosince 1993. Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, 1994. s. 73-74.

nation of the security policy was carried out at the level of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic and the Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Zieleniec (1993-1997), and later the Chief of the General Staff of the Czech Armed Forces, general J. Šedivý (1998-2002).

In the context of expanding relations with the United States, we should mention the training program for military and Public Administration representatives proposed by Washington for the exchange of information and acquisition of American experience by Czech officers. More than 50 official meetings and exchanges were held between representatives of the top military leadership, and almost a thousand employees completed internships from three months to three years in the United States¹⁴. One of these employees was general J. Šedivý, who studied at the US Army War College in 1993-1994. Exchange programs have contributed to bilateral cooperation and the implementation of integration policies in transatlantic and European security structures. In addition, in order to modernize the military forces of the Czech Republic, align their professional level and training with NATO norms and standards in 1996, under the “Foreign Military Financing” program, Washington allocated more than \$87 million for advisory assistance and restructuring of the army¹⁵.

An integral condition for Washington’s support for the Czech Republic was the formation of a regulatory framework in the field of foreign and security policy, the preparation of strategic documents in the field of security and defense. Among these documents were the “Law on the Army of the Czech Republic” (1993) and The Military Strategy (1994), which declared the need to form a strong army “ready to respond to any security threat or military attack of the enemy and use the potential of the international security structures and NATO allies.”¹⁶

After the NATO summit in Madrid and receiving an invitation to become a member of the transatlantic security system in July 1997, the Czech government approved the first National Defense Strategy. The document contained wording on the need for systemic changes in the defense policy approach, provided for the creation of a unified security system and proclaimed NATO membership as a means of improving the security and defense of the Czech Republic¹⁷; conditions for the participation of military units outside of the state (with the consent of the parliament); an important document in the field of security policy of the Czech Republic was adopted – Constitutional Law No. 110/1998 “On the Security of the Czech Republic”, which as the main duty of the state defined protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of

¹⁴ Ibid., s. 131.

¹⁵ Military spending of the Czech Republic. Global security. URL: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/cz-budget.html> [20.04.2020].

¹⁶ Bezpečnostní strategie 1999. České strategické dokumenty. URL: <http://www.mocr.army.cz/images/Bilakniha/CSD/002.pdf> [20.04.2020].

¹⁷ The North Atlantic Treaty, other documents and Summit Declarations. NATO Archives. Files on-line. URL: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049c.html> [20.04.2020].

the Czech Republic, “protection of democratic values, life, health and property of citizens as the main value”¹⁸.

The next regulatory document that came into force in the event of a critical security situation in the Czech Republic was Decree No. 33 of the government of the Czech Republic dated 11.01.1999. The document allowed the government to gather interdepartmental commissions in a short time to respond to the crisis situation and form an administrative apparatus responsible for the security and defense of the Czech Republic¹⁹.

Despite previous agreements on the formal expansion of NATO during the anniversary summit in April 1999, the US government was interested in signing ratifications as soon as possible. This was defined by the US interest in the transatlantic military intervention against Yugoslavia and the crisis of negotiations on the need to review the new strategic concept of NATO (1991). The increased attention to the security system in Europe on the part of the United States is also explained by the negative reaction of the Russian Federation to the process of integration of the Czech Republic with the Alliance. Threats to block the “START II” Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and the “advance” of Russian propaganda in the Czech media space may indicate a “clash” of Russian aspirations to influence the policy of the CEE states with Prague’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Therefore, the negative position of the Russian Federation motivated Washington to focus more material and non-material efforts in expanding NATO even before the summit began.

To this end, on December 8-9, 1998, at a meeting of the foreign ministers of the NATO member states in Brussels, it was decided that Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary would become NATO members before April 1999²⁰. However, the intention to ratify the NATO membership agreements caused considerable discussions in the US Congress. Representatives of the Republican Party and Liberals of the Democratic Party opposed the “expansion” of NATO²¹. They pointed out that the conditions for NATO membership were not met, that the military forces were not prepared, that they were unable to maintain a certain level of funding for the integration process of states applying for NATO membership, and so on. Only the intervention of President Clinton, the involvement of experts and representatives of ethnic groups – Americans of Polish, Czech and Hungarian origin – to participate in the hearings on the “expansion” of NATO, changed the negative positions on the integration of the Czech Republic into NATO. An important role before the approval of the ratification agreements of the Czech Republic’s membership in NATO was also played by M. Albright, who assured the

¹⁸ Vláda České republiky vyjádřila souhlas se členstvím v NATO přijela Ústavní Zákon pro Českou bezpečnost 21.1. 1998. Poslanecká sněmovna PČR, tisk 384/0 -PS 1996-1998. Zpráva o zahraniční politice České republiky - MZV ČR. URL: www.mzv.cz/file/13970/zahr.pol._i.doc. [10.04.2020].

¹⁹ Kapitoly o bezpečnosti, red. M. Balabán, A. Rašek, L. Stejskal, Praha, 2008, s. 215.

²⁰ The North Atlantic Treaty, other documents and Summit Declarations. NATO Archives. URL: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html>. [20.04.2020].

²¹ Ibid.

US leadership of the need to “expand” the alliance as one of the steps to prevent the spread of Russian influence in the post-communist CEE states.

Despite discussions in the Congress, the US Senate approved and ratified the protocols on Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary’s accession to NATO. After the vote, one of the leaders of the Republican Party, J. V. Rose, explained his position on expanding the Alliance by saying that “otherwise, the Russian Federation will return the “sphere of influence” at the expense of Central Europe.”²² The Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, republican J. Helms, believed that “support of the NATO expansion in the US Senate will contribute to the restoration of historical justice in Yalta, the realization of US national interests and the strengthening of democracy in Europe.”²³

As a result of lobbying for the NATO “expansion” process by the United States, in February 1999, President V. Havel signed an Agreement on the Czech Republic’s accession to the Alliance, and on March 12, Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kavan received the Agreement from the hands of US Secretary of State M. Albright. In a media report, Kavan said: “This treaty is the result of the Czech Republic’s efforts towards full membership in NATO and the US efforts to consolidate the status of a permanent ally for the CEE states.”²⁴ The entry of the Czech Republic into NATO took place together with the ratification of two main treaties – the Act on the Status of Military Forces of Other States on the Territory of the Czech Republic and the Constitutional Act, which defined the conditions for sending Czech troops to international missions and operations, the activities of internal armed forces and participation in international defense organizations²⁵. Responsibility for the implementation of these regulatory documents was divided between the government and parliament.

At the domestic level, the final consolidation of the security policy of the Czech Republic took place in the same year, 1999, when the Czech Security Strategy adopted by the Parliament came into force. The document established the priority of NATO norms and compliance with the main regulatory legal acts of the Alliance, and also proclaimed the strategic interest of partnership with the United States and the EU in the field of security and defense policy²⁶. For the first time, the main security policy document clearly defined the security environment of the Czech Republic, national interests (which were divided into “vital”, “strategic” and “important”), risks and threats of the Czech Republic; the obligation to train the armed forces for actions in military operations within the framework of NATO multinational forces and the like was

²² Declaration on strategic cooperation in defense between the Czech Republic and the United States. Embassy of the United States in the Czech Republic. URL: http://www.aic.cz/press/Declaration_on_strategic_defense_cooperation.pdf, p. 112. [20.04.2020].

²³ Ibid., p. 113.

²⁴ Zpráva o zahraniční politice České republiky za období od ledna 2006 do prosince 2006. Praha: Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, 2007. s. 156.

²⁵ The North Atlantic Treaty, other documents and Summit Declarations. NATO Archives. URL: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html> [20.04.2020].

²⁶ Bezpečnostní strategie 1999. České strategické dokumenty. URL: <http://www.mocr.army.cz/images/Bilakniha/CSD/002.pdf>. [20.04.2020].

declared²⁷. The Security Strategy was supplemented by the adoption of the Military Strategy of the Czech Republic. In the same year, the “Concept of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic until 2009” was approved, the basic principles of which defined the norms for modernizing the armed forces to the NATO level and updating the personnel of the security system.

Therefore, the first Security Strategy of the Czech Republic was adopted in accordance with the commitments of the state security concept within the framework of NATO membership. The change in NATO’s Strategic Concept in 2000 for the Czech Republic meant the need to change its approaches to the Czech security system under the terms of membership in the Alliance. The document supplemented the concepts of “risk” and “threat”, fixed provisions on the priority of the EU integration and cooperation with the United States, and focused on the prevention of internal threats and the implementation of NATO membership commitments.

The next stage in the transformation of the Czech security policy was caused by the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States and the change in the NATO Strategic Concept adopted at the Prague Summit in 2002²⁸. Declaring its solidarity in the fight against terrorism, the Czech government adopted a new “Concept of Czech Foreign Policy 2003-2006” and modified the Security Strategy by adopting a new version in December 2003²⁹. Both documents consolidated the fight against terrorism as a top priority of security policy, and the Czech Republic provided for strengthening its participation in NATO by strengthening its own defense capabilities. The Foreign Policy Concept cemented the role of the United States as a reliable partner, and NATO as a guarantor of security, a “solid force” and a tool for maintaining American forces in the region³⁰. Compared to the 1999 Strategy, the next two versions of the main security document are more expressive, expanded and conceptual. The main difference is a change in the assessment of risks and threats facing the state security policy and ways to combat them. The key “security risks” in the 1999 Security Strategy are: “natural disasters, food and environmental disasters, pandemics”³¹, that is, factors that fall within the sphere of internal security. And the 2001 Security Strategy recognizes the development of the situation in southern Europe as the main threat to the European security system. The change in the emphasis on security threats in the security strategy of the Czech Republic is due to changes in the security policy of the NATO ally – the United States.

The next version of the Security Strategy of the Czech Republic was adopted in 2003. It consolidated the need to fight terrorism as the main threat, pointed out the possibility of

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Prague Summit Declaration, listopad 2002. NATO. URL: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>. [28.04.2020].

²⁹ Bezpečnostní strategie 2003. České strategické dokumenty. URL: <http://www.mocr.army.cz/images/Bilakniha/CSD/2003%20Bezpecnostni%20strategie%20CR.pdf>. [28.04.2020].

³⁰ Security Strategy of the Czech Republic, 1999, 2003, 2011. Ministerstvo obrany CR. Strategické dokumenty. URL: <http://www.army.cz/scripts/modules/fg/fulltxt.php?searchtext=Security+Strategy&x=12&y=7&site=site%3Awww.army.cz+OR+site%3Awww.mocr.army.cz+OR+site%3Awww.acr.army.cz+OR+site%3Awww.mise.army.cz&expr=&filter=0&locale=CZ&sort=rank&tmplid=369/> [28.04.2020].

³¹ Bezpečnostní strategie 1999. České strategické dokumenty. URL: <http://www.mocr.army.cz/images/Bilakniha/CSD/002.pdf>. [28.04.2020].

using “hard power” together with NATO allies, if necessary. The Strategy also consolidated the indivisibility of the Euro-Atlantic space and declared support for projects of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defense policy (CSDP), provided that they do not contradict NATO standards. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs C. Svoboda explained that “the issue of mutual cooperation within NATO and the EU plays a key role for the foreign policy of the Czech Republic. But a common foreign and defense policy should complement Euro-Atlantic relations. NATO is more important for us.”³² Therefore, the Czech Republic has formed two main directions of foreign policy – European and Atlantic. According to R. Joch, this created an opportunity for the Czech Republic and other CEE states to become a “link” of Western states, the “old members” of NATO, and the United States³³. R. Khol also wrote about the reverse influence of the Czech Republic on the United States in the common security and defense policy and the interests of Europe³⁴.

Analyzing the main foreign policy line of the Czech Republic governments, we want to point out that along with consolidating the key role of NATO for collective and individual security systems, the development of good relations and close cooperation both with the United States within NATO and the EU, and at the bilateral level, one of the most important priorities of the foreign policy of the Czech Republic was confirmed, regardless of the ideological or political orientation of the government. In the Foreign Policy Concept of the government, V. Špidla (2002-2004) set the main role of the United States in transatlantic relations and as a guarantor of the European security system³⁵. Priorities of the next government of S. Gross (2004-2005) followed the transatlantic tradition of foreign policy, “strengthening partnership relations between the EU, the United States and Canada” and confirmed “readiness to jointly fight modern dangers and threats, including international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and international crime.”³⁶ Similarly, the government of J. Paroubek (2005-2006)³⁷, M. Topolánek (2006-2007, 2007-2009)³⁸, J. Fischer (2009-2010)³⁹, P. Nečas (2010-2013)⁴⁰, J. Rusnok (2013-2014)⁴¹ and B. Sobotka (2014-2017) considered partnership with Washington.

³² Perspektivy české zahraniční politiky, rozhovor s Cylem Svobodou, “Mezinárodní politika” 2004, nr. 28, s. 4. URL: <http://www.iir.cz/upload/MP/MPArchive/2004/MP012004.pdf> [29.04.2020].

³³ R. Joch. Je – amá být – česká zahraniční politikapromacrická? “Mezinárodní politika” 2007, nr. 31, s. 2.

³⁴ R. Khol, F. Šulc. Protiraketová obrana: americký projekta jeho mezinárodní souvislosti, Praha, 2004, s. 7.

³⁵ R. Khol. Česká bezpečnostní politika 1993-2004. [w:] O. Pick, V. Handl (Eds.). Zahraniční politika České republiky 1993–2004. Úspechi, problémy a perspektivy. Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2004, s. 44.

³⁶ Zahraniční politika ČR. Data, č. 1-7, 2010. Praha: MZV ČR. S. 222-229.

³⁷ Zpráva o zahraniční politice České republiky za období od ledna 2004 do prosince 2004. Praha: Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, 2005, s. 210.

³⁸ Zpráva o zahraniční politice České republiky za období od ledna 2006 do prosince 2006. Praha: Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, 2007, s. 96.; Zpráva o zahraniční politice České republiky za období od ledna 2007 do prosince 2007. Praha: Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, 2008, s. 325.

³⁹ Zahraniční politika ČR za rok 2008. Data, č. 1, 2009. Praha: MZV ČR, s. 178.

⁴⁰ Zahraniční politika ČR. Data, č. 1-7, 2010. Praha: MZV ČR. s. 243.

⁴¹ Česká zahraniční politika v roce 2013: Analýza ÚMV, red. M. Kořanák a kol., Praha, 2014, s. 197.

A kind of generalization and “extension” of the concept of security policy at the international, state and local levels is the Security Strategy 2011, which extends the responsibility for maintaining security not only to state players, but also to the level of international organizations, that the CR is a member of, and local administrations, responsible for implementing security policy at the local level. The main external threats are terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and so on. Natural safety risks come last. But an important task of security policy is “the development of a comprehensive, hierarchically organized security system that combines political (internal and external) and military means in ensuring internal and external security systems, protecting the population, economic and financial stability at the legislative and social levels.”⁴²

The security system clearly defined the bodies that implement the security policy of the Czech Republic: “the President, parliament, government, the National Security Council and state authorities at the central, regional and local levels, the armed forces, military security detachments, intelligence and rescue agencies, as well as emergency services.”⁴³ The role of the highest institutions which ensure the security of the state is to perform legislative, executive, and control functions. Thus, the Parliament of the Czech Republic approves laws in the field of security and defense of the state, participates in the formation of security policy and decision-making on the participation of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic in international operations. In addition to its legislative function, the parliament also serves as a control body over the activities of the government, state institutions and organizations in the field of security and defense. The functions of monitoring and supervising the state of security and defense are performed by the relevant bodies of the parliament: the Security and Defense Committee operates in the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic, and the Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Committee operates in the Senate of the Czech Republic. The President of the state is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces and has the right to vote during meetings of the government and the National Security Council. During a military crisis, the president’s functions are expanded. However, in the absence of a military threat, the president is not endowed with special functions.

The 2011 Security Strategy consolidated the indivisibility of the security policy of the Czech Republic and its commonality with the security of the Euro-Atlantic region and the global security system, “one of the country’s long-term interests is to maintain the effective role of the UN and promote the unity of the Euro-Atlantic region.”⁴⁴ The Czech Republic’s accession to NATO contributed to the reform of the military and defense sectors, began the process of professionalization of the army and the formation of a regulatory framework for security policy. The PfP program has become a key form of Czech-American cooperation in

⁴² Bezpečnostní strategie 2011. Ministry of Foreign Affairs České Republiky. URL: https://www.mzv.cz/file/699914/Bezpecnostni_strategie_CR_2011.pdf [14.12.2020].

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

the transition phase, the transition of the Czech Republic to the standards and norms of the so-called first “wave of expansion” of NATO. US support for the foreign policy aspirations of the Czech Republic as part of the collective security system has achieved the goal of maintaining the presence of the Czech Republic and its allies in the transatlantic security system in the context of transformation in Europe and the Balkans.

Proclaiming integration with NATO as the main direction of the Czech Republic’s foreign policy, reforming the armed forces and bringing them in line with the Alliance’s standards has become a priority along with the formation of an independent state. But changing approaches to security and defense policy and modernizing the military sector required increasing expenses on the needs of the national defense industry, forming the foundations of control and management. The effectiveness of the change process and the compliance of the defense complex with NATO standards became obvious at the initial stages of integration, but full membership raised doubts about the defense capabilities of the Czech Republic.

The period of 1999-2003 was particularly active in the development of the security and defense policy of the Czech Republic at the strategic and tactical levels. NATO membership regulated the legal status of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic in international operations together with the Alliance forces, expanded the possibilities of joint training events at the military base in Pardubice. During this period, defense spending corresponded to the minimum set by NATO and fluctuated at the level of 2.1% – 2.35%. The increase in military and defense spending is associated with the participation of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic in NATO operations: 1999 – the beginning of the operation in Kosovo, 2001 – in Afghanistan and 2003. – in Iraq. But since 2004, there has been a decline in them. This led to the completion of one of the stages of professionalization of the army, its transition to a contract basis (2004) and simultaneous continuation of participation in NATO operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

From 2006 to 2014, there was a further decline in defense spending – from 1.72% to 1.08%. In official documents of the Ministry of Defense of the Czech Republic, the reduction in defense spending was explained by the absence of serious threats to national security. In our opinion, the reduction in the level of spending on the defense complex had several factors. First, there is a general decline in security and defense spending among CEE states. Only Poland managed to keep its defense budget at 2% during the crisis. Secondly, the increase in spending was directed to defense mechanisms for protecting airspace, the purchase of armored personnel carriers and light utility vehicles, the modernization of mechanized troops, transport helicopters, etc., in particular, the purchase of multifunctional combat aircraft “L-159 Alca” in 1999-2008 and the modernization of tanks “T-72M4 CZ” in 2000-2005. However, out of 72 purchased combat aircrafts, only 24 were involved in international missions⁴⁵. Third, the 2008 financial crisis negatively affected the reduction of the defense budget, as a result of which the state budget

⁴⁵ J. Kufčák: The V4 Countries and the Impacts of the Austerity Cuts on their Defence Spending and Armed Forces. “Obrana a strategie” 2014, nr. 2, s. 35-48.

deficit increased from 2.7% of GDP in 2008. Thus, the national debt of the Czech Republic increased from 30% of GDP in 2008 to 35% in 2009. In the context of the state budget deficit, defense spending halved⁴⁶.

Conclusions. So, the integration of the Czech Republic into NATO became an inevitable factor in the formation of the security system of Central European states and was part not only of the vital interests of candidate States for NATO membership, but also of Washington's policy on the European continent. The asymmetry of potentials and the lack of formation of the Czech security sector, as well as other CEE states, allowed Washington to fill the niche of the so-called "security guarantor" and create an image of a long-term strategic partnership. At the same time, from the point of view of the interests of the security policy of the Czech Republic, partnership and cooperation with the United States during the transition stage created conditions and tools for the integration of the Czech Republic into the European and transatlantic security systems.

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⁴⁶ Česká zahraniční politikavroce 2011: Analýza ÚMV, red. M. Kořan, O. Ditrych, Praha, 2012, s. 297.

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