

**The Significance of the Washington Summit for  
strengthening the Membership of the Czech Republic in  
NATO**

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## **The Czech army before the velvet revolution**

After the fall of the communist regime in the year 1989 the Czech Republic had to remove the consequences of 50 years of its totalitarian domination which it has left in all spheres of life including the army.

From the very birth of the independent state in the year 1918 the Czechoslovak army has been besides its character as a highly mature democratic instrument, the main pillar of its existence. The government of the state led by President Masaryk designed the build up of a strong army as one of the priorities for securing the existence of an independent state. The significance of the armed forces still strongly grew when the republic began to be the main object of the Nazi expansive policy in the second half of the 30's. The Czechoslovak republic took a strong stand against this policy, became an asylum for persecuted Hitler's opponents and participated very actively in international activities which had tried to stop the penetration of fascism into Europe. The origin and activities of this "island of democracy" in the center of Europe led to further political pressures from the side of Germany and deepened its aggressive international-political activities. In this situation the Czechoslovak government responded by further reinforcement of the army. The government decided to build up large border fortifications which had to defend the country in the first stage of war. The fortifications were so massive that the alternative of defending the borders of the country with manpower would require as much as 200 divisions.

In the strategic conception of defence of the republic the alliance with European democratic powers, England and France, played the decisive role. The government counted also with the promised help of the Soviet Union. However, all these states went back on their obligations, which finally led to the Munich agreement according to which a large part of the Czechoslovak territory had to be handed over to Germany. Munich meant also a liquidation of all possibilities to defend the country by a direct military defense.

The preparedness, the decision to fight and high moral qualities of the Czechoslovak army were proved during the mobilization in September 1938. The possibility of effective defense was enlarged even by the modern equipment of the armed forces and by the possible use of the border fortification.

The resolution of the army to take up arms to defend the motherland was accompanied by the determination of the civil population to participate in the fight and opposition to Nazi occupation.

The capitulation enforced by the Munich Agreement and the following German occupation of the country has changed the character of the fight against Nazism and for restoration of the Czechoslovak republic. Many Czechs left the country to fight for freedom abroad. The Czechoslovak resistance during the second world war was then a significant contribution to the defeat of fascism. The Czechoslovak Republic has won again its independence.

The independence and freedom, however, remained in the country only for three years 1945-1948. The division of the spheres of influence, agreed by the victorious allies has again thrown the Czechoslovak republic under the Russian domination. With the exception of the years 1945-1948 the domination of the foreign

power continued for further 40 years. The Czechoslovak army was put under direct Soviet domination and was transformed in the spirit of the Soviet military doctrine. The organization of the deployment of troops, armaments and equipment training and internal life of the troops, all was modeled after the Soviet pattern.

The structure of the army was subordinated to the main intentions of the Soviet strategy. In the aggressive Soviet plans the Czechoslovak army was built as the front line part of the forces of the Warsaw Pact since through the “Iron Curtain” it has been in direct contact with the NATO troops in West Germany. The territory of Western Bohemia where the largest part of the Czech army has been deployed, was planned to be the place of the first attack of the Warsaw Pack forces. The civil development of this territory was planned and realized in accordance with the strategy of the first attack.

Thus as the end of the Soviet presence in Czechoslovakia the territory around the town Pilsen could quickly change to a piece of devastated land with no other destiny than a battlefield full of nuclear arms.

The communist regime strongly tried to educate a new class of officers and soldiers, devoted to Marxism-Leninism ideas and to the service in the “people-democratic” army. The selected young soldiers were sent to special military schools in the Soviet Union and after leaving the service they used to be rewarded by attractive posts in the military or state institutions or in the diplomatic service.

The regime was aware of the importance of gaining young people for its program on its side and for the realization of the tasks dictated by the Soviet strategy. This intention has been also realized in the course of the university studies. University students were liberated from the two years compulsory military service while

special military courses were organized at universities and similar schools. These courses were included into the curriculum and consisted of two parts. In the first part students have to participate every week in special series of military lectures which have been organized during every academic year. The second part included the participation in training campuses during summer holidays where they learned both the theory and practice in military disciplines. This type of military education, however, could not fulfil the expectations. Both parts of this type of education were too short to give the participants the necessary knowledge and experience. The planners of the courses did not succeed to create an attractive milieu, which would awake the attention of the students: In many cases the courses were realized in the spirit of the “adventures of the brave soldier Švejk”. Only few ambitious young men tried to use the university military education as a start of a military career.

The opinions and behavior of both the university graduates and the conscripts were reflected in the development of the army and corresponded to the opinion of a part of soldiers and officers in other parts of the army. This development has then influenced even the political situation in some units as well as the attitudes of their commanders. As a whole, the Czech army has remained not fully influenced by the Soviet indoctrination. To a large extent it remained passive and neutral to the official military policy and remained in such a state even in times when the communist regime tried to sabotage or stop the democratic changes after the revolution in 1989.

## **The state of the armed forces of the Czech Republic before the reform**

The development of the Czech army after the revolution in 1989 has brought several outstanding results especially in measures leading to its depolitization and transformation. In comparison with other post-communist countries the depolitization of the Czech army has been relatively quick. The leading role of the communist party was liquidated during three years. The most important step was the removal of the leading role of the communist party from the Constitution. In the year 1990 the main communist political institutions, the political departments in the individual parts of the army and the function of political officials were abolished. The prohibition of all political activities of regular soldiers and conscripts has significantly attenuated the influence of the communist party on the armed forces and has contributed to strengthen the political character of the armed forces, in accordance with the stabilization of the political scene. Of great importance was the peaceful transfer of Soviet units from the territory of the state and also a peaceful course of the division of the army. The competition for management and control of armed forces were gradually transferred to constitutional officials determined by the Constitution of the Czech Republic i.e. on the President of the republic, the government, parliament, civic justice organs and the Supreme Audit Office. With one exception since the year 1990 the head of the defence resort has always been a civilian official.

However, in other spheres the changes have not brought fully successful results.

The contemporary state of the armed forces is a result of the 10 years long development which was influenced by all important

political, military, economic and social events which took place in this period.

The armed forces gradually became a part of the democratic society, their credibility increased. Especially at local and regional levels the interconnection and cooperation between the army units and the public began to be created.

The army has a professional personnel which in its majority is well prepared for its duties. It has proved a high operability, the ability for improvisation and for finding non-traditional solutions. It is not its fault that its structure still does not correspond to the new requirements.

The armed forces are highly appreciated for the operations where they can show their capabilities. The army is able to react in time to the requirements for assistance activities and for help in unusual situations occurring on the territory of the Czech Republic.

Nevertheless a certain extent of inertia may be found in the traditional understanding of the defence. The importance of the accession to the Alliance for securing the security and as the striking power for the defence of the Republic has not been fully understood yet.

The present state of the Czech army is influenced by four factors: the development of the security milieu, especially after 11 September 2001; the integration of the Czech Republic in NATO; the rapid spread of modern technologies and the overall heritage of the remote and the closer past.

The ground forces have passed through a series of organizational, mobilization and dislocation changes which substantially lowered the number of persons, weaponry and technique. Until now the organizational structure of the ground forces is based on the planned defence of the Republic only with its

own forces. Insufficient financial and human resources, however, limit their build up. The human sources do not attain even 50% of the necessary level. To attain the necessary combat readiness mobilization measures have to be realized.

The only formation the structure of which corresponds to new requirements and which can be used in the period of peace without larger additional measures is the Rapid Deployment Brigade and the Battalion of Chemical Protection.

The airforce has many types of aircraft – fighters, transport planes and special planes. After excluding the aircraft of the type Su the airforce has only 20 fighters MiG – 21 MF. From them 8 planes were modernized and are able to fulfil (with certain limitation) the tasks according to the NATO classification. They can be in operation, however, only until the first quarter of 2005. The transport airforce in its contemporary state is not able to assure the needs of strategic transport and the mobility of the army.

The project of the light fighter L-159 ALCA is the most important, but at the same time most problematic program in the modernization of the armed forces. It started already before the entry of the Czech Republic into NATO but it did not support in a corresponding way the integration into the Alliance.

The anti-aircraft missile forces do not fulfil the requirements of the minimum interoperability with NATO and therefore are not at present included in the integrated system of the anti-aircraft defence of NATO in Europe (NATINADS).

The contemporary level of securing the airspace of the Czech Republic is near the limits of acceptability. Thus only the stability of the security milieu created by the membership in NATO enables to



make the conclusion that this situation does not represent a basic safety risk for the Czech Republic.

The armed forces are located in 133 garrisons and use further 33 dislocation places. The dislocation of the army is a result of previous requirements and from a part also of political compromises which took place under the reorganizations of the army since the year 1993. The number of garrisons has been a consequence of the too big organizational structure of the armed forces. This dislocation is economically inefficient and the losses are estimated to be as high as 25 billions Kč.

The function of control as an integral part of the management processes has been restrained at all levels of the management process. The analytic activities are often limited to a simple specification of the quantitative characteristics. The conclusions of the analysis are only exceptionally used in the decision processes, which in the final result leads to subjective decisions.

The capabilities of the Czech armed forces are significantly limited by the fact that the armed forces consist of soldiers doing their compulsory military service. Because of this they cannot fulfil the required tasks without substantial additional measures. Regular soldiers cannot be sent to operations abroad and, finally, the quality of their training is considerably restricted by the length of the military service.

The main disadvantage of the current situation in which series of further problems arise, is the old system of management, in which the ability to operate has been raised to better basis of planning and managing the development of the armed forces. The factual and resource sides of the whole process were divorced from one another.

The surviving shortcomings influence all levels of the armed forces: their organizational structure, quality and structure of the personnel, the character, state and utilisation of resources, means and technologies which the army has at its disposal and the course of the inner processes in the army.

The preservation of the current situation would mean to accept the risk that the necessary harmony between the human, financial and material resources on one side, and the required capabilities of the armed forces on the other side, would not be reached for a long time. Thus the army would not be able to fulfil the military obligations of the Czech Republic. It would then gradually become a backward element in the Alliance system and the Czech Republic would be a weak link in NATO's and Europe's security systems. This, of course, would endanger the existence and the strategic interests of the Czech state.

From the analysis of the above described situation it follows that a basic reform of the armed forces is necessary in order to secure the safety of the Czech Republic and to fulfil the obligations which follow from the membership in NATO.

### **The reform of the army**

In May 2001 the government determined four imperative conditions which had to be respected in the reform. It was above all the task to structure the armed forces in such a way that they would be able to defend the territory of the Czech Republic and fulfil the so called assistance tasks according to the law of the Czech Republic for the benefit of the integrated rescue system of the Czech Republic and its parts.

Another task is to utilize to maximum the membership of the Czech Republic into NATO for the benefit of the defence of the republic.

The source possibilities for the build up of the armed forces were determined by the government to be 2,2% of the GNP for defense expenses until the year 2004.

The demographic development of the society has determined the limit for the size of the armed forces and also the prerequisites for creating a professional army that will be built in the Czech Republic until the end of the year 2006.

Moreover, the whole conceptual material on the future armed forces is based on several unchangeable principles which influence its resulting structure.

The main task of the armed forces is the defence of the Czech Republic. The best way how to fulfil this task is to avoid conflicts, and in case that it will not be possible, to solve the conflicts in the place of their origin and prevent their transfer to the Czech territory. To realize this decision the armed forces must be prepared to act not only on our own territory but also abroad as a part of an international grouping.

Second, with regard to its source possibilities the Czech Republic may afford itself a participation in solving conflicts abroad and these possibilities determine the military and political ambitions of the Czech Republic. In the time of peace it is a brigade sized contingent (up to 5000 members of group forces for a period of six months or a long term-operation of a contingent of 1250 persons with rotation). In both alternatives an element of air forces can be used instead of the ground forces in the corresponding source value or eventually in a combination.

Third, the armed forces of the Czech Republic must at the end of the reform attain the required capabilities that are unavoidable for their operation in alliance or coalition forces. The key capabilities include the level of training, mobility, efficiency and sustainability in operation, resistance and self-defence, affectivity of the command and management systems etc.

Fourth, the capability of the armed forces to realize the military and political ambitions of the Czech Republic and the tasks of national responsibility is based on realizing the military functions in the armed forces in average to 85%. This is connected even with the expeditiousness in using the forces without necessary supplementation of large reserves.

One of the most important parts of the reform is the amendment of the law 221 concerning regular soldiers. The application of this law led to several problems that were not possible to solve in the time of its preparation in the years 1997-98, or that arose from the fact that some institutes of the law have been altered during its reading in the Parliament. The amendment has to unequivocally define some conflicting matters and to react to the qualitatively other situation in our time. The amendment should come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2003. The preceding version did not suppose to create a totally new conception of the build up of the Czech army on a professional basis and it did not take into the account the important aspects in the development of international situation.

The new institutes in the amended law are above all the contribution for housing, the trial period in calling up to military employment and the appointment to a lower function. The breaking point is the changed strategy in the sphere of housing policy. The Ministry of Defence will not further manage flats but will solve the

housing problems by yielding the so called contribution for housing. Instead of an overall claim the above mentioned contribution will be designed only for regular soldiers for whom the Ministry were not able to find a flat in the municipality where they perform their service. The contribution for housing will not be given to a soldier who refuses to live in a flat secured by the Ministry of Defence without a serious reason (for example a defective or disproportionately small for big soldier family).

At present time the 1,5 multiple of the minimum wage is considered. However, since the wage is changing its value, its is proposed to use another multiple of the minimum wage or determine a fixed amount. The basic value of this fixed amount should be 7.500 Kč net.

Another change concerns the severance pay. The scale of the severance pay has been newly defined so as to more prefer those regular soldiers whose service is of highest interest to the army. It is a period between 10 – 15 years of service. This period of service is seen as optimum for a professional soldier from the point of psychical and physical demands of the service.

The proposed amendment also more precisely defines some institutes solving the indemnification of health damages. The indemnification is first of all designed for people with most risky activities. Besides active pilots it concerns for example soldiers in foreign peace missions.

The reform counts with a dislocation of regiments and units. It should be a decisive measure to use more effectively the allocated financial means. On one side there is a necessity to leave tens of garrisons and to sell out quickly the useless objects, on the other hand it is proposed to build up 2-3 new bases for several thousands

of soldiers. The intention to centralize military contingents and equipment into special bases and large garrisons is dictated by the necessity to assure most effectively the training and life of the soldiers. The task is to reduce the operational costs of many small garrisons. To lodge, board and train large military groups concentrated in one larger place, is much more economic than to yield similar services to 100 soldiers located in a garrison determined originally for 1000 men. Since the professional army will have a more intensive training than the existing armed forces, it is planned to locate the new bases immediately near the military training spaces. This will spare, besides other expenditure, expenses for the transport of people and above all of the military technique. It has been also proved that the repair of old objects in very bad condition is in the majority cases more expensive than the build up of new objects.

The costs of constructing one large base could reach 3 billions Kč. Besides the combat part the base will be equipped with business offices, shops, social and cultural centers and sport facilities with all necessary infrastructure. The base will contain post branch offices and branch offices of financial institutions as well as shops and restaurants. Such a large concentration of persons at the base invites also investments of the great restaurant chains.

### **The modernization of the Air Force**

The modernization of the Air Force is burdened, besides the common heritage of the totalitarian regime affecting all parts of the army, by several specific political factors that arose during the 12 years after 1989. It is evident that immediately after the velvet

revolution a detailed revision of the defence and security policy of the country was not the main common goal of the newly formed political parties and movements. Unambiguous consensus has been reached only in the requirement for the removal of the Soviet military from the country and for the abolition of the Warsaw Treaty. These priority requirements were successfully realized. Gradually, but relatively rapidly, the political and social development led also to the understanding of the necessity to join the existing Western security structures.

The further development of the democratic society has brought, besides big advances in all spheres of its life, several unsolved problems as well as some failures. The necessary reform processes have opened even the possibility of undesirable or damaging processes in personnel, administrative and technical spheres as well as in economic measures. The army has changed gradually by several new conceptions of its tasks and development, by new revisions of these conceptions and by other measures that often were realized inconsistently.

As an example of such inconsistent procedure the attitude of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) in the matter of the purchase of supersonic fighters can be cited which remains to be a source of discomfort in this sphere. The Klaus government as early as in the year 1997 approved the purchase. This government then many times stressed the importance of this measure for the overall development of the Czech armed forces. The contemporary attitude of the ODS to this question is, however, very critical and in some questions clearly negative. According to Petr Nečas, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Defence and Security, the purchase should be postponed and realized perhaps 3-5 years later. The ODS shade minister of foreign affairs, Jan Zahradil, recommends the

orientation to used American aircrafts F-16. Though according to the management of the ODS it is not an official standpoint of this party, the existence of such a controversial opinion could block the modernization process of the Air Force as a whole. The consequence of such attitude has already been manifested in the negative standpoint of the Senate of the Czech Republic in the second half of May 2002.

According to some experts the obsolescence of the Czech Air Force has already caused several severe accidents. On 10 October 2000 there was the crash of the airplane MIG-21, which has been in operation for 25 years. In this accident two skilled Czech pilots died. Already before this catastrophe another pilot died in the Soviet ASU-22 M4 in June during the NATO exercise and finally in August 2000 the pilot of the Czech airplane L-39 died. All these events led to the decision of the Commander of the Czech Air Force to realize a series of special measures in order to avert further air crashes. This topic was also a subject of several conferences of pilots and other persons participating in air operation. Finally, extraordinary measures were introduced in the building of new airplanes. Then the chief of the Czech army, General Jiří Šedivý, definitely decided that the operation of the Air Force based in its decisive parts on aircrafts produced in the former Soviet Union, is endangered by a general unreliability of these machines as well as by the fact that the contemporary Russian market does not offer sufficient amount of spare parts.

On 10 January 2000 the Ministry of Defence announced the tender for the delivery of 24-36 supersonic aircraft in the total amount of 100 billions Kč at maximum. The following firms have been invited: BAE Systems/SAAB (Gripen), Boeing (Super



Hornet), Dassault Aviation (Mirage 2000-5), EADS (Eurofighter Typhoon) and Lockheed Martin Aeronautic (F 16).

The Czech government demanded that the winner of the competition would realize direct offset investments, the transfer of appropriate technology and a subvention of the export of Czech products, all in the total cost of 150 % of the value of the purchase. For assessing the tender a selection committee was created which consisted of 5 representatives of the Ministry of Defence and 3 representatives of the Ministry of Finance, Industry, Trade and Foreign Affairs as well as one specialist from the Czech Technical University. The offers had to be presented until 31 May 2000 and the tender has to be closed to 30 September 2002. The decision of the government had to be pronounced until 31 October 2000. The Czech government has reserved itself the right to cancel the tender.

Nevertheless, the Minister of Finance Pavel Mertlík expressed his sceptical opinion about the costs of the deal which he supposed to be 150-200 billions Kč. According to the military and political circles of NATO and of the American government the Czech Republic should once more consider the purchase of the new aircraft in order not to burden its economy in the future.

The Czech government then changed its decision of the purchase of 24-36 aircraft Gripen that originally has to be confirmed until 31 October 2000. On 29 October the Minister of Defence Tvrdík said there are still 2 possibilities: to begin immediately the negotiations on Gripen or to postpone the whole process by several months.

Nevertheless, the Prime Minister Miloš Zeman then announced that the result of the assessment of the 15 members of the Selection Committee have found that the Consortium SAAB/Aerospace/BAE System fulfilled the required criteria

including the direct and indirect offsets. Meanwhile the French company Dassault Aviation of France and the firm Eurofighter announced their withdrawals from the tender. The American government announced its standpoint by a diplomatic note sent to the Czech Minister of Defence on May 25, 2001. The Consortium thus stayed to be the only participant of the tender.

While at first it was announced that the American government withdrew the tender because of the contents of the criteria of the Czech government, industrial sources indicated that the real reason of the decision was the insufficient transparency. This situation was commented even by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for the Defence and Security and the shadow minister of defence Petr Nečas from ODS: “We stood very clearly against the realization of the tender, since from the beginning it was evident that the Czech Republic could not afford a purchase of new fighters in this time. It is not a good reputation for our country when four important Western concerns withdrew from an international tender”.

On 5 June 2001 the Consortium BAE System/SAAB Aerosystem announced the details of its offer. The cost was set to be lower than 75 billions Kč. The consortium promised to cover operational costs including training of pilots and the delivery of spare parts in the first 3 years of operation. The first airplane has to be delivered in the year 2004 and the first wing of 123 aircraft should be fully operative in the year 2005. In the case of the alternative of 36 aircraft the delivery has to be completed in the year 2008 and in the case of delivering 24 aircraft in the half of the year 2007. The offsets have to include investments into the economic underdeveloped regions of the Czech Republic, into civilian sectors like transport, production of iron and steel, electronics, telecommunication and information technologies.

The management of the consortium further stated, that the system of providing and financing offsets has been elaborated in the period of 4 years in order to fulfil the requirements of the Czech government. The Swedish and British governments agreed to finance 85% of costs for the purchase. The remaining amount will be covered by the consortium of Czech banks. The offer also enables a 15 years installment plan when the main payment will begin to be realized as late as in the year 2006. Nevertheless, as it was stated above, the Senate rejected the corresponding law necessary to realize the purchase, in May 2002. Hopefully, the new Czech government will be finally successful in both Chambers of the Parliament.

The situation in the Air Force is further complicated with the development of the L-159 project. For this project the army will get the strongly needed simulators as late as in the half of the year 2002, i.e. 18 months after the delivery of the first series of the airplanes. Until then stationary equipment must be used which does not enable pilots to attain the same affectivity as when they went through training on simulators. According to General Antonín Rašek, the former Deputy Minister of Defence, a number of accidents was higher because of this situation. While in the period 1989-1996 only four accidents in the Air Force happened, in the last four years their number raised to 12.

The situation in the Air Force is to a large extent influenced by the social climate. Its contemporary level is relatively favourable. A large shift has not been observed even in the course of the years 1996-2001 when only few changes happened. As positive factors the good relations among people, interesting work, the quality of family life and the possibility of getting cheap recreation are cited. On the other hand the negative factors are: the little stability of the

profession, the low level of legislative elements (military orders and instructions), poor material and technical equipment, insufficient wages, bad conditions for increasing career positions and low evaluation of soldiers by the public.

In the year 1998 the majority of the members of the Air Force was very critical and did not believe that the Air Force could defend the air space of the Czech Republic. They were also of the opinion that the future situation would be even worse. This opinion was more negative than in the year 1992 when the technique was considered to be still functional in spite of the fact that in that time large problems existed with spare parts and with the maintenance of the training equipment.

The main problems were identified as follows:

- bad conditions for training (lack of spare parts, bad state of armament which led to a small number of flying hours and to low safety of training)
- problems in the management both of the Air Force and the Army (lack of financial means, excessively strong bureaucracy, unclearly defined authorities)
- insufficient possibility for professional growth (77% pilots and 69% flying personnel)
- priority problem of the insufficient financial means for the Air Force
- insufficient material equipment.

The condition of the law 221 which has to improve the working and living conditions in the army are more strongly criticized by the Air Force than by members of other parts of the army. Their criticism concerns the conditions of employment, compensation of damages, responsibility for damages etc. They

criticize the small contribution of the law to the sphere of human rights, to protection of the safety during the service etc. On the other hand the contribution of the law to the healthcare and preventive rehabilitation was evaluated positively.

A substantial change occurred in evaluating the situation after the termination of the contract:

- Nearly 2/3 of military professionals in 2001 expressed their decision to serve in the army even after the end of the contract if their service would be prolonged. 16,8 % of military professionals orient themselves to a temporary career in the army. About 1/10 (11,8 %) would like to retire into reserves.
- The members of the Air Force are more inclined to serve in the army even after the agreed period of the service (60,6 %). At the same time they also more incline to leave the army after the termination of the period of the service (19,9 %).
- No conflict is evident between the ideas of the future career in the army and their own identification with it. More than a half of them expressed a positive reaction.
- In spite of the fact the will to entry again into the army increased since 1998 (42,1 % in 1998 up to 61,9 % in 2001), still remains to be the lowest in comparison with other types of forces.
- A high identification with the Air Force was found, especially for pilots and the flying personnel. This fact was expressed in a strong interest about the future of the Air Force and by a stronger criticism of its present state. At the same time it was evident that in this case identification with the Air Force did not mean identification with the army.

## **The professional army**

The problem of the recruitment of soldiers into the professional army can be divided into three categories: The first category represents officers the number of which should be about 7000. This will require a reduction of the existing state nearly by 5000 persons. In the contemporary period, however, the resort should gain approximately 250 new officers in a year. In the next years, when the reserves will be recruited from the originally larger and otherwise structured army, the enlistment should cover 300-400 officers per year. In this case there will not be a problem with quantity but with quality. Until now the members of the officer corps have been recruited, with small exceptions, from the graduates of military universities. Applicants have been evaluated in entrance examinations on the basis of their knowledge of general educational disciplines, without examining how they suited for example for commander posts. In the future the applicants should pass, besides the medical examination, through the so called personnel collection centers and do that still before the entrance examination. The tasks of these centers will be to verify the qualification for performing individual functions. The education for many functions in the army is nowadays offered even by several civilian universities. In these cases it may be assumed that for the army it will be economically more advantageous to recruit the university graduates and in short courses prepare them for the specific requirements of the military profession. This will be enabled, besides other, by a promotional contribution, the possibility of paying defray costs for education and a provision of scholarships. In future the recruit specialists will find and determine suitable candidates already in the course of the study and direct them to proficiencies required by the army.

Also the recruitment of warrant officers should not bring larger problems. The required number, about 8000 persons, in this case nearly correspond to the numbers of persons in this category which the army has at disposal nowadays. The only difference is in the fact that the warrant officer corps will no more be recruited from military secondary schools. In this temporary period this category of regular soldiers has to be educated at the Military Academy at Vyškov from applicants with a full secondary education in one-year special courses for warrant officers. Later the most talented soldiers from the sergeant corps will be promoted to higher ranks after fulfilling the qualification prerequisites.

The greatest problem will be brought by the recruitment of more than 19 000 members of the sergeant corps since a similar category of professional soldiers does not exist yet. To build this corps it will be necessary to start on the green field side. In the temporary period, it will be thus necessary to recruit 5 500 soldiers every year. From a simple mathematical calculus it is evident that this task is very difficult. The recruitment of soldiers for the compulsory military service show for example that the 2/3 of young people do not satisfy the health requirements of the army or prefer the civil service. A necessity will arise to enter into recruitment competition for the rest of young people not only with the corps of similar character as policemen or firemen, but also with other offers on the labor market existing not only in the Czech Republic. After the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union, this competition for high quality human potential will become, in spite of all protective measures, even more acute. This all will happen in the situation when the yearly category of men population in the age of 18 years comprise about 65 000 persons. On the other hand, the positive factor is the recruitment of women, which is planned to

reach 20 % of the enlisted persons. This is a great ambition in spite of the big interest of women in the military service. Some of the women are even better suited for military service than men. However, the planned number of women recruitment in the Czech army is very high which is evident when compared with the NATO countries (the highest number of women in the army is in USA - 14%).

The first prerequisite for a successful result of this large recruitment campaign is the realization of the corresponding legislative changes. They have to bring to a soldier a monthly contribution for housing in the value of about 7000 Kč, an independent salary system and an attractive retirement relevance after 10 years of service.

Another task is to make the lowest ranks more attractive even in other spheres than the financial one. It is necessary to make attractive even the military training itself and to use the fact that young people have such hobbies as regular raising their physical condition, performing “adrenaline disciplines” etc. which all can be realized during the training even at the lowest grades.

The concentration of units in large garrisons should create not only a corresponding social background for the service but also conditions for enjoyment in leisure time. The army should help the soldier with finding work for his spouse and enable him access to information and education. As a rule the soldier should leave the army with one grade higher education than when entering the military service. At the end of his military career the army would secure for him a participation in a retraining course and then should help him to find a profession. Soldiers will have priority even in getting professions in military administration. There is, however, a problem with filling up individual functions in the professional



army. The worst estimates are different and they expect a maximum of 70%. For the lowest functions the expectation is even significantly lower.

The professional army has to bring savings first of all in the sphere of training. Contrary to the contemporary practice it will not be necessary to repeat the training of basic skills of conscripts incessantly in yearly circles.

Every applicant for the professional service will firstly go through a very intensive and hard basic training, which will last 10-12 weeks. In the course of these 70-90 days every individual should master the basic military capabilities.

Afterwards a special training will follow which will be already specialized to individual proficiencies. In this case the extent of the training program will correspond to the function for which the soldier is designed. According to the requirements of individual proficiencies the special training will be realized in the period of three months up to one year. The final phase of the training will be realized directly at the combat formation after bringing soldiers into functions for which they have been prepared. With growing skills of the soldiers the intensity and costs of this kind of training will gradually decrease.

The first phase of the training of voluntary reserves will be in principle the same as for professional soldiers. They will take part in the 10-12 weeks long basic training. Instead of the two other phases, weekend training course will be organized or every year exercises in the length of 2 up to 3 weeks. It is evident that the compulsory reservist will not have to undergo the basic training.

There is another significant change: both the basic and specialized training will not take place at the combat formations as it has been the practice until now. Thus the combat formations will have less duties in this sphere and they will be able to fully concentrate themselves on their main duties. All training will be transferred to five training and mobilization centers. Their dislocation has to be, above all in the case of the ground forces, identical with the dislocation of the combat formations.

In the close future the training and mobilization centers will obtain significant investments for the installment of modern training facilities. It is planned to purchase perfect training machines and simulators which will help to substitute the real training and at the same time to spare large financial means.

Besides the training the mobilization centers will also fulfil another functions. They will take care of the maintenance of all training facilities. This will bring another improvement of the activities of the combat units. The centers will be used also for the creation of mobilization formations. They will store their technique, weapons and the corresponding materials. The main task of the centers will then be the mobilization development of these formations. All five training and mobilization centers will form together the training and mobilization brigade who will become the most important part of the division of territorial and supporting forces.

### ***The interest of young people (18-30 years old) in military profession***

According to the research realized in August 2001

- About 32 % of young men and 20 % of women prove interest in military profession in the professional army while the willingness for the service in the existing army is smaller (men 21 %, women 16 %).
- The willingness to become a soldier in the professional army is not influenced by education. However, the level of education influences the interest to be included in individual corps. People with primary education and skilled persons prefer to serve in the warrant officer corps, young men with higher education in the warrant officer corps as well as in the officer corps, while university graduates prefer exclusively the officer corps. The service in the lowest functions is the goal of skilled men and men with primary education (in both cases 21 %) for women only for skilled ones (15 %); in average this type of the service is attractive only for 13 % of young people.
- The age of young people change the interest in military profession in the future professional army as well as in the existing army, which is different for men and women. Men are mostly interested in the military profession at the age of 18 – 19 years, while their interest later is lower but stabile. For women the higher interest is at the age 18, 20 and 24-26.

#### **Interest in service in the voluntary reserves corps**

- The idea of participation in the voluntary reserve corps has a relatively high response from men (29 %), from women (15 %), with the average of 22 %. For men this interest is directly proportional to the level of education: with increasing education the interest is lower. The interest in service in the professional

army, especially for a short time contract, is substantially larger (64 % for men and 54 % for women).

- At the age of 18-19 men have the greatest interest in reserve service (42 %) while women the lowest (8 %). With higher age the rejection of the reserve service by women declines and the most pronounced interest attains about 20 %.

### **Civilian and military wages**

- The civilian public has distorted ideas about the initial wages of regular soldiers, especially of officers, which they consider to be higher by one half than the real values. People try to compare the wages of officers with the wages of university graduates in civilian professions. In reality they are lower.
- In comparing civilian and military wages we see that the initial wages of a sergeant and a warrant officer are by 11-13 % higher than the wages of skilled civilians, but the wages of officers are by 6 % lower than in civilian professions.
- Even the wages of the beginning regular soldiers in the sergeant corps, related to initial civilian wages of skilled men, do not initiate a sufficient number of applicants for the military profession. The wage and further material advantages in the army have to be significantly higher than those in civilian professions so that they would compensate the special conditions of the military profession, especially the danger in work, the unpopularity of this profession, the work on order and the temporality of the profession.
- On the other hand the initial wages of women are at minimum by 2000 Kč higher than the initial wages in civilian professions. It is evidently one of the reasons of the great interest of women in the

military service where the wages of men and women in equal functions are balanced.

### **The size of the recruitment source**

- The recruitment according to the existing rules could bring up to 2900 men and 2000 women in a year.
- The increasing part of women in the professional army is the guarantee of its increased size. Without them the recruitment source could not maintain the army in required numbers. In the existing army women form a substantial part of the sergeant corps and warrant officers corps (in the officer corps they are represented by about 3 %). It may be assumed that their proportion can be increased to 20 % at minimum. If we would fully take into account their interest in the service in the professional army (with all other assumptions as for men) the proportion of women in the army could attain 48 % (a significant role would be played also by the lower wage requirements of women). When limiting this large interest of women to 20 % it may be assumed that the result of the recruitment will be fully satisfactory. Women enter into military schools under larger competition, but they attain better results not only in the course of study but also in practice, as it is evident from periodical evaluations.
- The full profesionalization of the army will totally change the factor of “Blue book” and also the effort to evade the military service by performing the civil service which today exclude two thirds of men in the age of 18 years from the military service. This will significantly increase the source of recruitment for the professional army. Under the assumption of raising the

recruitment from the existing 60 % to 80 %, and the substantial reduction of the civil service (which includes one third of the recruited men) it will be possible to attain the figure of 35 000 persons (28 000 men and 7 000 women). Even this increase, would not be, however, sufficient to maintain the necessary size of the professional army.

- Thus the enlargement of the recruitment source will require the change of the health classification “A” (until now given to 50 % of the enlisted) to 75 %. The alternative measure would be to enable the entry into the professional army even to persons with classification “B”. These measures would represent the enlargement of the recruitment source to 60 % of the population.

### **The reform of the military school system**

The reform of the Czech army includes as its important part a reorganization of the military school system.

The military education has been negatively influenced by the unfinished systematization of the military posts. The military study secures a good quality of academic knowledge, but it is not sufficiently connected with the preparation for the activities of the officer – military manager. At the same time the education of students continue to lack the traditional military values. Thus a discrepancy arose between the needs of the armed forces and the outputs of military education. Also the relation of the numbers of the service personnel to the number of students is too high.

From the strictly economic point of view the whole system of education is not too effective. But it educates specialists for the army who in their decisive majority have good capabilities for

performing the military service. However, it is necessary to persuade above all the scientific and pedagogical public that a reduction of the military school system is necessary for the future existence of the army. People in the military schools are in the majority used to have a relatively quiet life with sufficient financial means. The military school system did not change its main task – to educate and prepare a certain required number of students and deliver them to the armed forces. The measures prepared for military schools within the framework of the reform were therefore in detail discussed with all relevant persons in order to eliminate faulty decisions.

In the structure of the military school system the only high military school will have its seat in Brno and will have the name “Defense University”. It will have several faculties, in a similar way as now the Military Academy. It will further include the Institute of Strategic Studies and the Institute of Languages. The study program will be reduced and according to the results of this reduction it will be determined which part of the university will have its seat in Brno and which in Vyškov.

All future bachelors at the Defence University will have the same educational minimum for the first two years. Their specialization will be profiled in the third year. The main difference will be above all in the system of study that will be very close to the system of civilian universities. It will be a normal bachelor study free of the specific military preparations, with universal subjects that will be needed by the future military manager. The habits which now go through the whole study, a perfect knowledge of military technique and the capability of repairing it with a thorough knowledge of its principles – will be cumulated in the last part of the bachelor study in the form of practice which will be partly realized

at the training base. The training base is in Vyškov and also the special education of the future soldiers will be realized there. In comparison with the contemporary Military Academy, the numbers of the permanent staff at the Defense University will be reduced by nearly 50 %, which will be connected with leaving of some unusable objects at the Brno garrison. The savings due to this reduction is expected to reach 300 millions Kč. These financial means have to be used for improving the quality of accommodation facilities and the purchase of new teaching aids and new computer technique.

Within the planned reduction of the number of the permanent staff at Defence University some specialists from the High Military School of the ground armed forces will be offered jobs at the Defence University, while some specialists of the Military Academy will find work at the Resort School in Vyškov. In the year 2003 some members of the university staff will have to leave it, but the number is nevertheless small. It aims to reduce the number of regular soldiers and civilian personnel employed in the “service for students”.

A reduction of the number of the permanent staff has to be realized also at the Military Medical Academy in Hradec Králové. There, however, at the same time a significant growth of the number of students is expected from the middle medical staff and the sergeant staff. The Military Medical Academy has proved that its operation is highly economic which besides other is due to the fact that it has a perfect co-operation with medical faculties of Charles University in Prague.

A part of the Defence University will be transferred into Vyškov where a Resort School will be established which will educate the sergeant corps and the warrant officer corps for the



whole Czech army. The Resort School will have two other parts, the existing school of “Military Police” and the “Training Center for Ground Forces”.

In the Vyškov Resort School several warrant officer courses, application courses and courses for officers will take place, so that this school, thanks also to the unique special training base, will become a center through which nearly every military professional will pass.

The future of the two other secondary schools has not been determined yet. The liquidation of the secondary school in Moravská Třebová would create difficulties and problems in the whole region. Also the future of the Military Conservatory in Roudnice n.L. is not clear in spite of the fact that it has a long tradition and that it is a unique facility which could serve even for the study of foreign students. There the problem lies in the bad state of the very old object of the school.

Nothing will be changed in the existence of the military department at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport of Charles University. This department is a similar element as at Military Medical Academy in Hradec Králové since it has very effective and fruitful co-operation with Charles University in Prague.

### **The trust in the reform**

In October 2001 the Ministry of Defence organized a large research which included 800 regular soldiers, 800 conscripts and 700 civilian personnel. The research was based on the general conclusion that the army as a whole supports the reform but that

there is not a neglectable number of those who support the reform but at the same time believe that it will not be possible to realize all its goals.

In October 2001 nearly all questioned soldiers supported the reform (94 %) as well as nearly the same numbers of conscripts and civilian personnel (86 and 84 %). In the same period the civilian public pronounced its support in 82 % of cases. The faith in the reform of military professionals grew by 6 % in comparison with the July 2001 research.

Among the regular soldiers the highest support came more from younger soldiers with higher military education. The highest support of the reform was found at sergeants (100 %) as compared with warrant officers (95 %). In all categories of respondents people with higher education declared a high support of the reform. The confidence in the realization of the reform is, however, a little lower than the support of the reform. The most sceptical view was expressed by the graduates and by regular soldiers in the age over 50. The education plays a significant role even in the opinion on the realization of the reform. Most optimistic are soldiers with full secondary or university education and newcomers. It is interesting that soldiers who believe strongly in the success of the reform, are more willing to become regular soldiers (for a short time period until 5 years in the existing army) or in the future professional armed forces. As to civilian employees the faith in the realization of the reform is mostly pronounced by people in the age of 26-30 years and by youngest employees under 25 years.

## **The activities of the non-governmental organizations**

Substantial changes were expected by all non-governmental organizations (NGO's), which participated in the democratization processes to take place even in the transformation of the army. This was also the case of the Czech Atlantic Commission (CAC) which began to work in Czechoslovakia immediately after the revolution in 1989. The activities of the CAC were based on the idea formulated by Václav Havel that "the values on which the state has been founded are not a gift but a result of common efforts". The predecessor of the CAC, the Czech Atlantic Club, adapted the tasks of its activities to the existing situation in the country where the reconstruction of democratic structures began in difficult conditions and where the activities of the non-governmental organizations were in making. Thus it determined as its priority a goal to inform the population about the North Atlantic Alliance as a decisive institution securing the defense of democratic values in the North Atlantic area. The second main priority were in accordance with the recommendation of the Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA), efforts to realize a democratic control of the public over the relevant governmental measures, especially in spheres of army, armament and foreign policy. Therefore as early as in October 1992 the conference "Public Scrutiny of Defense Policy and Armed Forces in Parliamentary Democracies", with the participation of 130 politicians and experts from 19 countries (including South Africa, Mexico and Guatemala) was organized.

The CAC, which after the division of the Czechoslovak federation was officially established on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1993, has based all its work on the main principle securing the strength and stability of NATO, i.e. its nature as the institution expressing the common

interests of the inhabitants of its member states. By realizing this goal NATO adumbrated the contemporary situation, when the interest and will of people organized in various NGO's began to be one of the decisive factors of the social and political progress.

The possibilities, speed and the extent of the support of the NGO's from the side of the corresponding governmental institutions were and still are, more limited in post-communist countries than in countries with traditional democracies, which is given above all by their historical development. The Czech Republic was no exception in this direction.

At the same time it is necessary to state that the CAC had, in comparison with several other states of the Central European and East European regions, substantially worse conditions, both in the small interest of the state structures in its activities and in the poor material support of them. Moreover, the CAC was less successful in gaining the sponsors than the other similar organizations. . The financial support of the state to the Hungarian Atlantic Commission was 73 000 USD per year only for operational expenses, while the only higher support of the state which the CAC obtained, was 10 000 USD in the year 1997.

At the beginning, the only sponsor, which helped the CAC to organize its activities, especially in the field of international relations, was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. Later a similar modest help came from the Military Academy in Brno without which it would not be possible to realize courses and seminar for teachers. Within the Ministry of Defense only a few individual departments have participated in the CAC activities.

In 1997 the member countries of ATA proposed to realize the future General Assembly of ATA in Prague. The representatives of

all member states of ATA made this proposal as a recognition of the efforts of the Czech Republic to become fully involved in the Atlantic structure soon. Thus Prague received a possibility of advertising its decision to enter in NATO to the relevant circles in the world and to the public at home in a natural and highly convincing way. The General Assembly of ATA is an extraordinary event, measured even within the framework of whole NATO, where besides the generality of NATO and ATA many representatives of the Alliance countries participate as well as large delegations of the member states (in 1998 over 500 participants).

It was thus a very strange situation when everybody from abroad tried to help the CAC to develop its activities while nearly all domestic institutions refused to participate.

The individual member state of NATO offered and yielded a highly effective help in nearly all spheres where it was possible. It was first the Netherlands Atlantic Commission that in fact enabled the establishment of the CAC, then the Czech-French Symposium on high level concerning strategic alternatives of NATO. Since 1994 Denmark used to invite every year young members of the CAC to its exceptionally successful international seminars dealing with both theoretical and practical subjects. Belgium similarly enabled the CAC to organize every year specialized courses on defence policy for teachers of secondary schools. Both young members of the CAC and the Czech experts had the possibility to go through the several months long scholarship stay in the USA. From the very beginning of the existence of the CAC there was also a regular co-operation with Slovakia, the other states of the Visegrad group and with Slovenia.

The above described co-operation included also unofficial working and friendly activities such as common educational projects realized with nearly all Atlantic Commissions within ATA.

At home the CAC carried out his activities thanks to the understanding of Charles University and to the strong support of several departments of NATO. In co-operation with the NATO Office of Information and Press a series of translations and CAC's own publications were issued and distributed to secondary schools, to universities and to further users. Regular international meetings and seminars with large participation of scholars and other professionals were held, aimed at gaining the support of expert groups home and abroad.

Another CAC priority has been its regional activities, such as the establishment of the Center of Atlantic Cooperation and Security in Český Krumlov and the "NATO Days" held in the towns throughout the Czech Republic and attended by leading military representatives, military attachés of several NATO member states and large groups of local communities (students, teachers, representatives of local authorities etc.). The NATO Days were held for instance in Brno, Pilsen, Jindřichův Hradec, Olomouc and Znojmo. Each "NATO Day" comprised several lectures or seminars organized separately for teachers and students, local representatives and the wide public.

In the educational field the most effective were the courses of defence policy for teachers of secondary schools. More than 700 Czech teachers passed through them and 100 teachers had the possibility to become acquainted in the NATO structures in Belgium.

Later a co-operation with the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic evolved and included for example two seminars on human

rights and the whole day courses on the defence policy and NATO, organized for the employees of the Ministry of Interior at various levels.

The basic questions of functioning and development of NATO, including its relations to the Czech Republic, were every year a subject of a seminar or of an international conference. These events undertake in the town Český Krumlov that after Prague started to be the town with largest Atlantic activities. Besides the Center for Atlantic Co-operation, the goal of which is to widen the relations between Europe and North America since 1997, there is also the Association for Atlantic Co-operation, which organizes voluntary activities of inhabitants of this town and its region. In the intentions of Czech Atlantic Commission Český Krumlov had to become a base for further extension of the Atlantic ideas into other spheres of the Czech Republic.

In the years 1998-99 the CAC concentrated itself to the project “The Year of NATO”, which was a part of the celebrations of the 50 anniversary of the signature of Washington Treaty. The CAC project involved competitions of teachers and students in writing essays on defence policy, drawing competitions of children, lectures in seven towns of the so called “Czech Inspiration”, the travelling exhibition on NATO, the Day of Military Music, seminars on defence policy for teachers and employees of local offices and finally, the large international seminar “The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Time of Conflicts”. The seminar has been of interest especially for the towns of Czech Inspiration where many cultural objects exist and in which also UNESCO is interested. The project should have its climax in the event “Czech Republic Enters NATO” where the winners of individual competition would be announced and a meeting with veterans of the Second World War

would be organized together with inhabitants of the town, ending up with the ceremonial meeting at the symphonic concert.

Nevertheless, the year of NATO was not completed since according to some Czech military authorities the extent of the program was too large. It may be true that due to financial restrictions some parts of the project could be excluded from the program. But on the other hand the negative attitude of the corresponding officials of the Ministry of Defence showed that the necessary support would not be obtained from there. This was confirmed by the standpoint of the Ministry of Defence as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the case of other events supposed to be realized. In 1998, prior to the entry into NATO, when another international seminar was under preparation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs promised to give to CAC the required grant. However, this consent was connected to an unusual restricting prerequisite: the CAC chairman should abdicate and would be replaced by an ex-politician and the CAC director will be recalled. With regard to this attitude and the fact that there were very limited possibilities of non-governmental sponsorship, the CAC activities had to be gradually restricted and in fact lost its NGO character.

### **The Security Community**

Besides the Czech Atlantic Commission no other institution existed which would deal consistently with the participation of the Czech Republic in NATO and with NATO itself. The existing small departments or individuals in several offices and some academic institutions examined these problems as a part of wider spheres of international policy and international relations. The largest research was realized at the Institute of International Relations in Prague



where especially its Director Jiří Šedivý proved a good understanding of the relevant problems. The co-operation of the CAC with this Institute was realized at several levels, which was a significant help to the CAC activities. Especially the publication department, headed by the excellent expert Dr. Dalibor Matějka, helped to a great extent to the preparation, arrangement and production of nearly all CAC publications.

NATO and relations to NATO were also observed by individual political parties but only the Czech Social Democratic Party has included this topic as an important subject of research of its Scientific and Information office.

No inspiring outputs were obtained from the corresponding departments of the Ministry of Defence, which had to realize the communication with the public. The Ministry has realized only occasional campaigns mostly consisting of general proclamations. This was in contradiction with the fact that there have been excellent outputs inside the army coming from the research department working within the framework of the personnel section of the Ministry. Unfortunately these results were badly advertised so that the wider expert public could not be easily acquainted with them. The author of this report himself has found these analyses as late as when studying foreign magazines and other sources in the library of the Ministry. In the mess dominating in many activities of the Ministry, the work of the research group was an exception characterized by high quality and outstanding selection of the topics to be analyzed.

It is also characteristic that within the framework of several recent reorganizations this research department was not enlarged which was strongly expected, but it was reduced both in staff and financial means. If we take into account the role, which the new

minister plans for a totally new structure of analytical work in the reformed army, this situation is strange and will be hopefully changed very soon. A co-operation of the research work performed inside the army with the work and results of the NGO's could enormously improve the relations among the army, the experts and the public.

Such development could also contribute to the revival of the security community, which was born with great expectations, but then slowly died without bringing the expected results.

The idea to build up a security community in the Czech Republic is based on the experience from Western countries, where it is defined as a community of politicians, diplomats, soldiers, journalists, experts and representatives of the economic sphere, who all have some relations either to the defence of the country or to its security policy. The security community and its activities should play a significant role in gaining the support of the public for the realization of the security policy of the state.

The goal of the security community was defined as early as in the first year of our efforts to join NATO. The later Deputy Director of the Institute of International Relations, Dr. Jaroslav Janda, had defined it as follows: "To contribute to the development of the civic and social consciousness of the responsibility for safety, defence and protection of both the citizen and state, and spreading the knowledge how to improve the defence system of the Czech Republic".

The Ministry of Defence decided to initiate steps for the creation of the security community in the Czech Republic soon after the entry of the Republic into NATO. This effort was preceded by two communication strategies of the Ministry of Defence realized in the years 1997-99, i.e. in the period between the Madrid and

Washington Summits. According to the Ministry these two communication strategies fulfilled their basic goals – to yield maximum information about the Alliance to the public and explain what the membership in NATO represents for the Republic and its army.

Independent observers, however, are of the opinion that neither the two communication strategies nor the so far activities of the security community have brought such results that would correspond to the needs of the reform.

### **The opponents of the reform**

The opinions of both soldiers and the public are strongly influenced by the standpoints of the official military and political authorities which include criticism as well. The most critical voices come often from high officers of the army.

According to Minister Tvrdík a not neglectable number of high officers oppose the principles of the reform. They do not criticize openly but they evidently wait what will happen after the general election and they wait until he will cease to be minister. General Jaroslav Škopek, the Deputy Minister of Defence, who has led the work on the reform of the armed forces, explains the resistance of the part of the officer corps by the fact that many promises on principal changes in the army have been proclaimed after 1989, but not realized. “Without regard to the reform plans rather changes of ministers were realized and incessantly reassessment of the goals have been done. Thus many officers expect that even the last reform will be swept under the carpet”. General Škopek divides the opponents of the reform into 4 groups:

- officers whose pride was wounded since they have lost their influence in the General Staff and in the Ministry
- officers from operational elements which are designed for dissolution
- officers who think that the compulsory military service should be preserved
- officers opposing to any type of changes

Nevertheless General Škopek hopes that the majority of these opponents will begin to understand the necessity of the changes that these changes will then wipe out. “The army is in such a horrible state that any changes have to include radical measures and that those units, which will survive, will have enough financial resources for exercise and for their equipment”. The supporters of the reform base their optimism above all by the fact that the reform is now directed to the changes of General Staff and of other leading parts of the army. It will contrast, they hope, to all previous efforts to change the army at the operational level.

In NATO evaluation from the end of the year 2001 the preparedness of the Czech Republic for fulfilling the corresponding tasks is criticized as little satisfactory. The criticism touches also the lengthy furnishing of units of the front line with modern systems compatible with the equipment in other states of the Alliance. Even the Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic stated this on January 9, 2002. Several analysts are of the opinion that the Czech Republic risks becoming a second class member of NATO with a minimum influence inside the Alliance. Karel Kovanda, the Czech Ambassador to NATO, adds: “The Czech Republic may find itself in a weaker situation than other members of NATO similar by its size which fulfil better their duty”.

On the other hand the first Deputy Minister of Defence, Štefan Füle, sees the situation of the Czech Republic in the optimistic way: “The course of the reform processes show that the Czech Republic is capable and reliable”. The advocates of this opinion say that the Czech Republic did not get a worse evaluation than other new members of NATO, Hungary and Poland did.

The main reason for the worse evaluation is the bad financial situation of the army. According to the Czech experts insufficient finance influence above all the production and improvement of the L-159 aircraft. Negative is also the fact that the army nowadays requires only 36 from the 72 originally ordered L-159 aircraft. According to the Commander of the General Staff it is no secret that more than 70 % of all investments go into the L-159 program. This leads to the situation when the army cannot afford to modernize its information system, to furnish itself additional equipment for night operations or to modernize the combat vehicles. Also in furnishing the units designed for NATO operations the problem continues to exist, like in the parachutist unit which in 2001 participated in the operation “Essential Harvest” in Macedonia. On the other hand, Czech soldiers are continuously positively valued for their operations in NATO and UNO in former Yugoslavia.

Minister Tvrdík himself criticized the army in early 2001 when he said: “This cancer in thinking, as I see it, is due above all to the fact that we have sent many officers to foreign schools and courses which led to the situation that many of them speak fluently foreign languages. Thus we all have perhaps mastered the form and contents of the matter. However, for the majority of them still the thinking from the past army prevails. This cannot be learned at any school. I have invited people to try again to develop new initiatives in spite of the fact that they have bad experiences from the past... I

receive many proposals, comments and remarks but I do not find there concrete things, which we could include into the reform of the army. I meet again the attitudes which I criticize i.e. efforts to see the world only from a narrow point of view. It is above all the endeavour to fight for the unit in which I serve and not in the wider context of the whole army. I am also annoyed by the efforts not to discuss problems inside the army but to transform them into the political public. The mayors, the members of Parliament and other authorities, with whom we now discuss the problems, call me often that the soldiers have already visited them with requests for help. It is very harmful ..... Our army, in spite of its indisputable successes, has no chance to survive in the existing state. This is necessary to say and say it very loudly”.

### **The attitudes of the political parties to the membership in NATO**

The attitudes on NATO are of course influenced by the standpoints of individual political parties and their leaders. However, this fact has a little impact on the public in the present time when all democratic parties regard the membership in NATO as absolute priority.

Immediately after the accession to NATO, as well as during its preparation, however, some politicians expressed the opinions that could produce doubts of their approval of the entry. It is mainly the question put at the top level immediately after the accession: If and under what conditions a NATO member state can leave the Alliance. Also the constraints connected with bombing Yugoslavia and the initiative for contemporary halt of the bombing weakened

the otherwise unambiguous government attitude and negatively influenced the public.

The Czech Social Democracy which is the main architect of the defence policy proclaims in its program for the elections in May 2002: “We proclaim our adherence to the principle of collective defence. We declare our support to our membership in NATO and to enlarging our participation in the functioning of the North Atlantic Alliance and the same time also our willingness to take part in the build up of the European Security Structure. The army of the Czech Republic will undergo a relatively large reorganization, the aim of which is a modern, effective and small army, based on the principle of mobility, ready to be used both on the territory of the Czech Republic and in international missions. By the year 2006 we will endeavour to transform the army into a fully professional force formed by regular soldiers. By the year 2010 we will complete the reform of the army. We also suppose that it is necessary to concentrate ourselves on improvement of relations between the public and the army and to increase the participation of people in preparing the defence of the state. The professionalization of the army, the defence of the state will not be a matter of only professional soldiers. Moreover, the army should attain the newly defined goals under the same budget, which should not exceed the level of 2,2 % GDP”.

“We support the principle of civil management and control of armed forces. It is for us the basic relation between the army and the legislative and executive parts of the state. At the same time it expresses for us the responsibility of political forces for providing the necessary sources and for creating necessary conditions for the development of the army”.

“The Czech Social Democracy observes very carefully the change of the global security milieu and the growth of new risks and menaces in relation to the international development after the end of the cold war and in relation to the rapid development of science and technology. Nowadays the most dangerous risks are regional conflicts, economic menaces including social disturbances, ethnic hostilities, unsure and not secured borders (legal migration), organized crime, information war etc. The greatest security risk is the international terrorism. The Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) will try to find, in co-operation with allies and further countries, a solution which would lead to the minimization of these risks. The Czech Social Democratic Party considers the transatlantic backbone to be also the backbone of the contemporary European security system. It supports the enlargement of the North Atlantic Alliance by further states, which share the same values and which will prove their preparedness to become its members. We have a special interest in the entry of Slovakia into the Alliance”.

The Civic Democratic Party (ODS) supports the membership of the Czech Republic from the same position as the CSSD. It would prefer, however, a little altered course of the reform of the army, it calls for a more in-depth economic control of the political processes and stresses the special role of the USA in protecting European security.

The ODS stresses the military presence of USA in Europe since it is the guarantee of the effectivity of the European defence. It warns before the spreading the anti-Americanism and before comparing Europe with USA.

The ODS supports the co-operation of the members of the European Union in military matters but it is against the build up of the Common European Army. It says: “Nobody else than our



citizens through the Czech government and Czech Parliament can ever have the right to decide on the future use of the Czech army.

In contrary to the consensus of the democratic parties on the membership of the Czech Republic in NATO the Communist Party (CP) rejects the contemporary strategic conception of NATO, which it sees as contradictory to the basic principles of international law, expressed in the Charter of the UNO. The program of the CP states that the contradicting standpoint of the CP to the membership of the Czech Republic into NATO and to its contemporary activities should help to suspend the Czech Republic from the military structure of the Alliance. A long term goal should be a dissolution of NATO as a military organization.

The standpoint of the Coalition Party (Christian Democrats and the Union of Freedom) in the matter of NATO is nearly identical with the position of the other two democratic parties. It stresses, however, the entry into EU as an integral part of the European Economic and Security space.

The Coalition party understands the entry into the European Union as a return of the Czech Republic to the community to which it belongs historically and culturally. The union thus opposes the opinions that try to present the Czech European future as an unintentional child of the geo-political position of the state.

## **Václav Havel and NATO**

Václav Havel considers the membership of the Czech Republic in NATO to be a permanent priority of the Czech foreign and security policy and he attentively follows the development in this sphere. He expresses his standpoints both in the direction to the Czech political scene and to its individual actors as well as to the

wide public. In accordance with the above mentioned shortcomings of the most forms of the official propaganda, Havel's voice is of extraordinary significance. This can be proved on his evaluation of the Alliance which he pronounced at the occasion of the first year anniversary of the Czech entry into NATO: "The enlargement of the Alliance behind the iron curtain by three new members is an extraordinarily important step which remains not to be fully appreciated until now. For our Republic as such it is for the first time in its history when it is firmly anchored in Europe. Europe is one political body, one entity. The inner order of this entity has been dictated for long centuries by the strong against the weak. Today another situation arises, today we search and find a just arrangement, equal, fair and binding. It should be another arrangement, not the same we had before the Second World War, based on a kind of treaties, which should be kept but also should not be kept".

To the criticism of the air strikes of NATO in Yugoslavia and its activities in Kosovo he said: "NATO is changing very much, it is in the process of transformation, which will last for a long time since it goes slowly forwards. Every large organization or institution in this contemporary civilization of ours changes very protractedly and heavily. NATO undergoes a change. Its role is changing as well as the structure of the dangers which it has to face. It changes since it has no more the great strategical enemy. It is no more and it cannot be more a club of veterans of the cold war. It has totally new missions, in which a part of these purely military functions would change their roles and its activities further to police functions. It seems to me that what the Alliance is doing in Bosna, Herzegovina, in Kosovo etc. is very important and that it is something which de facto is the guarantee that there is no war in

this region. If these forces were not there, it could happen that some never-ending war and conflicts would continue.

I consider as a one of the most important thing of Mr. Clinton's international policy that it forwarded, and without Americans, it would heavily happened in the Alliance, at least the first enlargement by those three countries. According to my opinion this enlargement would continue. It could gradually comprise the whole Euroatlantic space. It seems to me that it is awfully good and important that we succeeded to organize the coming Summit this year here in Prague, since it will be organized here for the first time, behind the former iron curtain on the soil of the new Member country.

By this it will be made obvious that the membership of these new countries is taken seriously, that we have a confidence of the Alliance. Secondly, it will be a sign that the Alliance is really transforming itself, that it is and it will be something other that it was in the time of the cold war. And thirdly, it will be, according to my opinion, a clear sign of the will to enlarge NATO further, by other countries.

The Prague Summit, besides other, is not the Summit of only Member States. Here 46 heads of states should be present since they represent all these countries which are participating in the Partnership for Peace etc. And it is also important that we should show by our own way of transformation of our old army that it is worthwhile to accept new countries and that it is in the interest of Europe as a whole".

Asked whether the transformation of NATO should include also the defence against non-military dangers like waste, changes of climate, draughts, migration movements etc., Václav Havel answered: "The North Atlantic Alliance is not only the military

defence alliance, but it is above all an alliance which protects a certain civilization sphere, a certain civilization circle with its cultural tradition and responsibility. And I do not know if the Alliance should or should not deal with these things about which you speak as it is very difficult to deal with them because of their character. But NATO will undoubtedly enlarge its activities towards them. But we must all, as individual countries, to consider all these matters since it is a part of our responsibility for our country, for our continent and for the whole world.”

## References

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