

SECURITY STRATEGIES
PROGRAM REPORT

WORKSHOPS ON CZECH POLISH SECURITY POLICY: VIRTUAL SECURITY FORUM



EUROPEAN VALUES
Protecting Freedom

2020

EUROPEAN VALUES CENTER FOR SECURITY POLICY

European Values Center for Security Policy is a non-governmental, non-partisan institute defending freedom and sovereignty. We protect liberal democracy, the rule of law, and the transatlantic alliance of the Czech Republic. We help defend Europe especially from the malign influences of Russia, China, and Islamic extremists.

We envision a free, safe, and prosperous Czechia within a vibrant Central Europe that is an integral part of the transatlantic community and is based on a firm alliance with the USA.

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Description

Within the EVC-UW project funded by the CZ-PL Forum 35 government and non-government experts during Czech-Polish workshops on security policy.¹ For each workshop the brief background materials containing key findings and recommendations were prepared by the EVC and UW experts. This facilitated a structured discussion. The following text summarizes key findings and recommendations relevant for the Czech-Polish security bond. Apart from the expert debate on security policy, another goal of the project was a designing of the “Virtual Security Forum”. Background materials and Rules of Procedure of the VSF are enclosed.

¹ Due to Covid-restrictions, the four workshops were organized within one standard and two on-line events.

WORKSHOPS – KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Significant rise of EU security and strategic ambitions

From the Czech Republic's and Poland's point of view, current debate within NATO (establishment of the Reflection Group) is a perfect timeframe to shape the agenda which they would see as a proper balance and tasks management (military, civilian, financial, operational, and other capabilities) between NATO and the EU. Possible lack of funds (e.g. due to Covid-19 consequences on budgets) and manpower may seriously hamper the performance of both organizations. **Proper coordination of positions between the Czech Republic and Poland on NATO-EU agenda is of outmost importance.**

The main pillars of the Czech Republic's and Poland's approach should stay unchanged: no discrimination, no decoupling, no duplication (3D). **Europe needs to develop further its capabilities.** Still, any duplication of NATO Defense Planning Process and EU Capability Development Plan is not in our interest. We must do utmost to mitigate the risk of the "EU strategic autonomy" becoming a guideline for the next version of the CDP. On contrary, it must focus exclusively on the capability's shortfalls identified in military and civilian CSDP missions, as it was the case in 2018's CDP edition. **Collective defense capabilities is an agenda for the NATO.**

Czech Republic and Poland should insist that major defense investments should be undertaken with a careful estimation of costs and support both organizations – NATO and the EU. **The Military Mobility project is of special importance for our region.** It is meant to ensure seamless movement of military equipment across the EU in response to crises by reducing physical, legal and regulatory barriers.

The EU should pay more attention to development of disruptive technologies, and these projects should also be undertaken and coordinated with NATO. There is a trend that the US and several NATO countries are investing in the AI technologies, and the EU is leading in adopting legal regulations in this field. Ideally, the European Defense Agency should take the lead of coordination of these efforts to avoid unnecessary duplications and wasting scarce resources. The Czech Republic and Poland should **advocate that Commission** proposal to provide €4.1bn for joint defense research **will also be allocated to the research in the disruptive technologies' domain.**

Besides the political debate on the general shape of the Common Security and Defense Policy, the EU crisis management system requires some structural improvements. First and foremost, it is about enhancing the structure of command and control as well as about strengthening synergy between the civilian and military component of the system. The EU needs a full-fledged operational headquarters that would be able to plan and conduct the EU CSDP military missions. Further issues where intensified cooperation between civilian and military component of CSDP is needed, represent force protection, IT, sharing of premises or better use of the Joint Support Coordination Cell which is formed by the MPCC and CPCC together. **Czech and Polish experts should be among those who will to replace British planners and analysts withing EU crisis management structures.**

Both the EU and NATO should consider a serious **enhancement of its mechanism of fighting disinformation.** The #Covid19 pandemic revealed how serious these threats are as there were many voices form different countries (most notably form Italy) that the EU "abandoned" its Member States and this void was successfully filled by Russia. Also, many opinions on erosion of democratic institutions, political corruption, chaos and decadence in the EU, its ineffectiveness, general defeatism towards the EU integration project show (but only partially) the influence of pro-Russian propaganda. The same applies to NATO. Apart from security policy issues, there is a whole set of topics, which are fuelled by pro-Russian media - like extreme ecology movements opinions, anti-vaccination organisations and the like. It is worth noting, that disinformation is not a random activity undertaken by a group of ideologically motivated volunteers,

but well-designed mechanism with enormous and sustainable funding with most advanced technologies supporting these actions. Both organizations should apply the same scheme with proper coordination between them.

Topical agenda of NATO. Geopolitical competition in military domain: How should NATO respond to Russia and China?

NATO's challenges are manifold. It is of paramount importance that the Alliance remains **relevant for the United States, credible for its members most exposed** to the external threat and **politically cohesive** at the same time.

The dichotomy between NATO collective defense tasks and out of area operations has been discussed in the Czech Republic and Poland for years. The proper balance between three main tasks i.e. collective defense, crisis management and collective security is an issue of a permanent character. If NATO wants to stay relevant for the United States, it must tackle the balance newly from the perspective of the **great-power competition**. Basic approach of the Czech Republic and Poland, countries of the Eastern Flank must be, that the **concept of "great-power competition" is not against the interests of the NATO Eastern Flank countries**. On the contrary, if played right, the NATO Eastern Flank can gain from this new paradigm.

The Alliance needs to improve threat assessment of Chinese military capacities. China has more than 2 million of people in the armed services and its annual budget for defense is about 225 billion USD. Nevertheless, it still has a limited ability to project power. For this reason, its military strategy concentrates on the limited warfare and similarly as Russia, it applies "fait accompli" tactic. Russia, within the concept of competition of powers, is problematic, because it surrounds NATO with its naval capabilities. It is sending submarines through Turkish straits to the Eastern Mediterranean and building up its Arctic fleet.

This situation necessitates an **effective division of roles** between the NATO on one side and the United States with their Indo-Pacific Allies. **This division of roles should be reflected in the next document that will define NATO defense and deterrence policy or even in next NATO Strategic Concept.**

The NATO Cold war doctrine had put emphasis on the rapid gaining air superiority. Russia's and China's A2/AD strategy adds further doubts about the calculation that NATO can count on quick air superiority in case of conflict, especially when facing near-peer-adversary. If NATO should help the USA in great power competition, it needs to invest more in relevant capabilities. A robust navy is one of them. NATO should adopt a **new maritime strategy** – outside of the multi-domain strategies NATO has worked on since 2011 – to help guide NATO allies and partners in making investments. The aim would be to spare USA capacities in the Mediterranean and the Arctic for other tasks.

In short, NATO need to concentrate besides collective defense of its territory to the deterrence of Russia and helping US increase the deterrence on China. The **deterrence of Russia must be applied in broader perimeter** than just Baltic states. The region where NATO encounters Russian strategy and capabilities covers Scandinavia, Baltics, the Black Sea, but also the Mediterranean and the Arctic.

Czech Republic and Poland should advocate for an **increase in the European level of ambition within NATO**. Under a new European level of ambition, NATO defense planners could be instructed to develop European capabilities needed to conduct one MJO and three SJOs for crisis management **with limited or no American support**. Alternatively, NATO's European members could commit to providing half the combat capabilities including combat support and combat support service needed to conduct an Alliance-wide MJO+. The goal would be to achieve this capability by 2024, when European nations have committed to deliver on their 2 percent of GDP defense spending pledge..

The measures adopted by the Baltic states themselves and deployment of NATO eFP increased the resilience of NATO Eastern Flank. Though, the mission is not completed yet. **More needs to be done by member**

states most exposed to Russia's military threat, as well as by the entire Alliance. Whatever scenario occurs in the Baltic Sea region, NATO will not have enough forces in the theatre. Therefore, the Alliance must focus on the deterrence. There must be a unity of effort and a mutual understanding of how to achieve effective deterrence. That applies to the command structure all the way from SACEUR down to the tactical command and control structures.

The modular approach to NATO deterrence is required. The Czech Republic should consider boosting bilateral cooperation with Poland in the context of a strengthened US presence in Poland and NATO deterrence on the Eastern Flank. **The new airborne regiment** could also contribute to this task. The new unit is intended for rapid deployments in addressing quickly emerging crises. The Czech Republic plans that this unit will be ready for deployment in a matter of hours. This ability **should be frequently exercised on the Eastern Flank**, joining other multinational units operating in the area.

Special Forces of the Czech Armed Forces are, too, expected to be employable in full spectrum of conflicts, including those of high intensity. Since Special Forces has no practical experience with these scenarios, they could exercise regularly with its US and Polish counterparts. The US 10th Special Forces Group activities with the Polish Special Forces Command can provide for a permanent training platform for SOF of Polish and Baltic countries. **Czechs could join such an effort and jointly exercise the employment of SOF in high intensity scenarios.**

Russia is weaker than the Alliance. Therefore, if in a conflict with NATO, Russia must target the political cohesion of the Alliance at its initial phase. **The topical task for Czech Republic and Poland must be to boost the political cohesion, NATO's weakest point.** During peacetime, **political cohesion needs to be cultivated** and the **period of extreme political vulnerability** of NATO during the conflict **needs to be shortened.**

Bilateral contributions to the NATO resilience are conceivable. One option that can shorten the period of extreme political vulnerability of NATO during the conflict is to make the 7th mechanized brigade (and possibly other force elements, such as a Gripen air defense detachment) to be put on alert and ready to start the movement to Poland automatically, based on certain Russian threat indicators. **A bilateral defense agreement with Poland would be concluded, which would specify events that would trigger putting the brigade on alert** – such as full mobilization of Russian Western Military District, and the brigade's movement to reinforce the Eastern Flank – for example after the first land military incursion into NATO's territory. Since this would be agreed upon by the sides and mandated by the parliaments in advance, Russia would not be able to disrupt at the time of NATO's contemplation of a counter-attack. **In line with 'modular approach', this has to be later coordinated with NATO collective defense plans.**

Czech and Polish activities in countering Russian disinformation & manipulation of historical facts.

Czech and Polish experts from the governmental and non-governmental sectors exchanged information on the face of Russian hostile operations. The discussion was also focused on the specific phenomenon of operations using manipulations of historical narrative, disinformation campaigns and the security-defense aspect of the issue. There is solid know-how and a system for responding to enemy attacks on both sides. **At the same time, there is a need to strengthen national coordination both in the Czech Republic and in Poland. This is especially true in the area of strategic communication.**

The Czech Republic and Poland have a lot of knowledge to share with each other. Countering hostile influence operations is a cross cutting agenda. Intensive cooperation between the government and the expert community as well as intra-administration coordination is needed.

The Czech and Polish governments should put this issue on the agenda of Czech-Polish intergovernmental consultations. It is evident that Russian hostile operations will continue. The format of

intergovernmental consultations allows direct contact of relevant components of public administration on the Czech and Polish sides.

Manipulation of history is an integral part of Russian influence operations. So far, it has been used more in the Baltics or Poland than in Czech case. The „Koněv statues case” was a wake-up call. It is about testing of the Czech redlines. As the Russians learn from their operations, so must we. **Czech and Polish mutual support would be of bog merit.**

Failure does not mean the end of operation for Russian intelligence; therefore, such operations will continue. The Russians have long-term experience with psychological operations. One of the Russian methods is the “reflexive control”. It shapes an adversary’s perception such that a foe takes actions not in their own interest. This was used to “explain” the recent case of two intelligence officers expelled from Prague

Historical narrative is a weapon. We must be well armed. Critical thinking is absolutely the key. **Significant school curriculum changes are needed.** Education cannot be based on the priority of mastering big amount of data. The priority of every school subject must be to make students think critically. Modern history should be taught with more resources and attention.

The Russian Federation often uses historical anniversaries in order to push their own narratives (i.e. occupation in the Czech Republic in 1968). **Czech and Polish state institutions and the media shall be prepared for such cases ahead of time and adjust their strategic communication strategies.** Stratcom system of the Polish MFA was thoroughly discussed . It constitutes good model for the Czech side.

A direct link between CTHH and Polish Stratcom within MFA has been established. Consultation between them ahead planned.

Virtual security platform

Apart from workshops, another goal of the project was a preparatory work on designing of the on-line application devoted to NATO and EU security issues. The online application will provide for a “Virtual Security Forum”. This VSF will enable Czech and Polish experts to exchange opinions in very flexible manner and to prepare common standpoints/recommendations on topical issues concerning security of both countries. Later on, the platform will be extended into broader format - Virtual Security Forum of the Bucharest Nine. Rules of procedure of the VSF enclosed.

Content

- **Functionality I.** – preparation of common standpoints reflecting the topical EU, NATO and regional agenda; the design of the functionality I. shall allow for on-line drafting session, rules of procedures on the drafting of common standpoints enclosed.
- **Functionality II.** – Common working space/dashboard – an overview and stock market of ongoing research projects, including funding and involved experts; This functionality will have a search engine that allows for exchange of information enabling flexible public commissioning based on the on-line network between the public administration and experts – In this section, the limited access for public administration officials is envisaged; rules of procedures enclosed (to be added).

Maintenance

- **VSF administrator:** part-time job for one person in the first year of CZ-PL format, full time job as for the B9-stage.
Responsibility: Substance (initiation and facilitation of the drafting of common standpoints) and technical issues; public promotion of the VSF.
- **VSF members:** voluntary membership – leading principle of the VSF is a common ownership.

Security

- The first year in the CZ-PL format, the on-line application might work within an existing platform (such as Decision 21 etc.)
- In the later stage in the B9 Format, a brand new independent on-line application will be established.
- VSP will not handle any classified materials – the access to it doesn't require a security clearance