

VIEWS OF SELECTED CZECH PARLIAMENTARY POLITICAL PARTIES ON THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE CZECH ARMED FORCES

Libor FRANK

Introduction

This contribution deals with the ideas of the significant political parties about the future prospects of the Czech Republic's Armed Forces from the point of view of their professionalization. It is not intended to develop a complex programmatic analysis of the ideas shared by all the political parties that have entered the supreme legislative body after 1989 (or 1990). Its purpose is to analyze the ideas of those parties that - due to their positions in Parliament or in executive bodies - have influenced or could influence the shape of the defense sector or the transformation of the Czech Armed Forces. This includes parties that will most probably succeed in the elections in 2002 then and which could then take decisions concerning the further development of the Armed Forces, including their possible professionalization either from their governmental or significant opposition positions.

Professionalization of the Armed Forces as a political theme

Almost all the political parties, on the Czechoslovak and later the Czech political scene in the course of the last decade, have expressed their views concerning the external security of the country and the character and tasks of the armed forces. Nevertheless, owing to the international situation and principally the because of the wide-ranging internal economic and social transformation of the country, this theme has been a marginal subject for a long period of time. More attention has been paid to the armed forces since the middle nineties, when, mainly thanks to the Czech Republic's effort to join NATO and the participation of Czech units in peace-keeping operations, discussions have begun on the Czech Republic's Armed Forces features and on their possible professionalization.

In the framework of these discussions, which are still going on, both sides put forward a variety of arguments that can be generalized and summed up as follows:

Reasons for Armed Forces professionalization	Reasons for maintaining the compulsory service
- Demographic development of the society reduces the number of conscripts and diminishes the recruitment basis ¹	- Closer integration of the Armed Forces into the society.
- Conditions in the conscripts' Armed Forces are not attractive enough for young and well-educated people who prefer to pass through the civilian service, so that the compulsory military service gets a discriminative nature ²	- Better civilian supervision of the Armed Forces
- Military equipment is more and more exacting as for the operation	- Better general readiness of the population for the situations of crises even of non-military nature
- Owing to the characteristics of the forthcoming conflicts and alliance compromises, the Armed Forces have to be ready to intervene mainly out of the territory of the Czech Republic and the conscripts may not be charged with the accomplishment of such duties	- Compulsory military service is a natural expressions of the coherence of the citizen with the state and an expression of the will to defend the country
- Excepting Germany and Norway, all NATO countries professionalize or are going to professionalize their Armed Forces.	- Possibility of building up relatively impressive armed forces owing to the size of the country.
- The conscripts' Armed Forces as they are now militarily non-effective and costly	- Transition to the professional Armed Forces and its support are financially very disadvantageous
- The compulsory service addresses men only, so that two categories of citizens arise with different rights and duties	

¹ CR conscripts' population (men capable to join the compulsory service): 1996 – 93 000, 2006 – 67 000 individuals. Recruitment ratio in CR (ratio of the conscripts' population to the number of individuals who actually join the Armed Forces): 1989 – 78%, 1995 – 54%, after 2000 – about 40% (it means that as many as every second man able to join the Armed Forces will actually join them. The others either get the “blue certificate” or decide to pass the alternate or civilian service.

HOŘEJŠÍ, T: Conscripts are progressively less, the Armed Force may not avoid the professionalization, Lidové noviny, 1999-10-4. (<http://www.lidovky.cz>)

² Only 20 percent of university-educated men pass the military service already now.

HOŘEJŠÍ, T: Conscripts are progressively less, the Armed Force may not avoid the professionalization, Lidové noviny, 1999-10-4. (<http://www.lidovky.cz>)

This list is not exhausting, but it comprises all of the most frequently expressed pros and cons. The political parties operate with the arguments outlined above and they base their program concerning security policy and armed forces on them. Their response in their programs and media, in the media and their past and present views on the armed forces and their tasks are documented in the which follows.

Civic Democratic Party³ (ODS)

The election program of the Civic Democratic Party “*Liberty and Prosperity*” of 1992 still reflects the situation after 1989 and mainly concentrates on the themes of economic and social transformation of society, but attention is also paid to the armed forces. ODS states that “*the communist party left behind non-effective armed forces, excessive in numbers of men and armaments, unsuitably deployed and formed for on attack to the West, headed by unqualified commanders and, in addition, largely afflicted by mass communist education. At present (in 1992 – author’s remark) the armed forces still keep the mass of conscripts captives of the old ideology or in the spiritual vacuum which it caused. These soldiers do not understand the motive of the military service as such*”.⁴ The program also states that an essential decline in public confidence in the armed forces and the loss of the professional military’s prestige were the most onerous consequences of the unfavorable development of security and of the armed forces in the period of bondage. “*There is a widespread conviction that this is an alien element that vattens on society, that consumes resources in vain while being, practically antisocial. That duply has paralyzed the work of the armed forces and has to their disintegration from within*”.⁵ The Civic Democratic Party at that time proposed to solve that situation through changing the armed forces’ characteristics by reducing their offensive capability and, vice versa, building-up their defensive potential, by cutting back their numbers and shortening military service to a 12-month period. The ODS at that time believed that “*the Armed Forces should progressively professionalize become semi-professional so that many functions now assigned conscripts could be taken over by professionals. The system of military education has to be adapted to these needs, its links with the civilian education system have to be strengthened and the possibilities of education abroad for our soldiers have to be enhanced ... The Armed Forces should a new spirit, a new moral awareness based on the civic responsibility for the security of the state. Their combat readiness has to be founded on the consciousness of citizens who take the state as their own, are interested in its success and, therefore, are resolved to defend it. ... The military carrier should become attractive for capable young people and not be an escape from an honest job for those who could not succeed elsewhere.*” Transformation of the Armed

³ ODS was a nucleus of the coalition right parties and it occupies the post of deputy minister of defense. At present time, it is in charge of head posts in the Czech Republic’s Parliament including the chairmanship in the Committee of Defense and Security.

⁴ Liberty and Prosperity. Poll program of the Civic Democratic Party, 1992, msript. page 72.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 75

Forces had to take place – as the ODS thought at that time – within a wider framework of the progressive integration into European security structures and incorporation in the security zone of NATO.

In the long-term orientation of the *ODS' Political Program* of 1995, the Party also supported the incorporation into NATO and rejected the neutrality status. At the same time the ODS accepts share of -responsibility for international security. As for external security, it stresses that “*the duty of the state, and of every citizen to maintain*” the armed forces being considered as one of the main attribute of a sovereign state.⁶

Support for the Czech Republic joining NATO and then the European Union, became an integral component of the program documents of the ODS. The election program of 1996 still reflects views on the exterior security situation of the Czech Republic mainly in relation to the disintegration of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent building-up of autonomous Czech Armed Forces. Just as in 1992 it is stated there that the Armed Forces suffered to considerable extent from the heritage of the previous régime, but some partial changes had already been achieved including, for instance, the transformation of their offensive characteristics into defensive ones. The ODS declared as its goal the creation of mobile Armed Forces that would respond – as to their extent and functions – to the size and economic possibilities of the country. It insisted in maintaining compulsory military service: “*When formulating its concepts of external security, the ODS starts from its conviction that the assurance of security is the self-evident duty of the state and participation in the security of the state is one of the basic duties of every citizen.*”⁷ Professionalization should be limited to selected military units only: “*Forces capable of rapid deployment– even in international actions under joint NATO command or the UN, must become the core of our Armed Forces. These and progressively other components will be professionalized in conformity with the economic possibilities of the Armed Forces. The increase in the number of professional soldiers on the lower levels of command and modification of training will make it possible to shorten compulsory military service.*”

Maintenance of compulsory military service was later confirmed in the coalition – ODS, KDU-CSL and ODA – government’s declaration after the victorious elections in 1996: *The Czech Republic Armed Forces will continue to rely on compulsory military service even though with an increasing number of military professionals. ... The Armed Forces have to be modern, always ready to fight, operating economically, capable of defending the sovereignty of the Czech Republic and of assuming its share of international obligations in the military operations outside the territory of our country.*⁸

⁶ Political Parties in the Czech Republic, joining MNATO and security risks. In: Czech Republic in the security architecture of Europe. I.Ed. Z Kříž, Prague, Ministry of Defense of the Czech Republic – AVIS 1998, p. 41.

⁷ Liberty and prosperity – ODS’s Poll program, 1996. (<http://www.ods.cz>)

⁸ Czech Republic Government’s Program declaration (Klaus 1996). Czech Republic Government’s Office (<http://www.vláda.cz>)

Within the framework of the party, the ODS continued elaborating its idea about the future shape of the Armed Forces. That idea could be summed up by 3M: Modified, modern, and mobile.⁹ Such Armed Forces should be – as the ODS thought at the time – an effective force meeting the standards of the North Atlantic Alliance and disposing of units capable of rapid deployment. *“This is exactly the segment of the armed forces that we are going to professionalize preferentially.”* The Civic Democratic Party wanted to increase the number of professionals, also at lower levels, of command and to motivate strongly and retain particularly young professional soldiers. This approach to professionalization had to be of a selective nature and compulsory military service had to be kept. That opinion was also confirmed by the ODS’ chairman and Prime Minister at the time Václav Klaus when he declared: *“The Government does not consider - and I hope no one of the other governments in the future will do so either – a full professionalization of the Armed Forces. Instead it will enforce the maintenance of general compulsory military service”.*¹⁰

A change in the ODS’ opinions on the Armed Forces and their structure could be noted at the time of the 1998 election. In its program document the party no longer expresses a clear opinion on maintaining compulsory military service or the desirable extent of professionalization. The program just promises in general terms: *“We consider well-trained, motivated and well-supported soldiers as a priority for our armed forces. The armed forces must become a means to a successful life-long career and an opportunity for people with good prospects. We want armed forces that enjoy the public’s confidence and represent a contribution for our allies.”* These armed forces based on a long-term concept should be – in the ODS’ opinion – sufficiently and effectively financed and modernized so that they would be comparable to the other NATO members’ armed forces.

In this respect, it was probably the influence of the group around Petr Nečas, M.P. and ODS’ Executive board member¹¹, who virtually declared – still in 1995 – when he was deputy minister of defense – that *“he was not a supporter of fully professional armed forces”*¹², but who gradually came to support full professionalization and, at currently, is probably its most important, most active, and most publicized advocate.

⁹ Pre-poll conference – Petr Nečas’ speech. Bulletin ODS, 1996, No.7, p.18.

¹⁰ Prime minister has refused the professional Armed Forces. Mladá fronta DNES, 1997-11-05 (<http://www.newton.cz>)

¹¹ M.Sc. Petr Nečas is M.P., in 1995-96 held the post of the First Deputy Minister of Defense, since 1996 has been the chairman of the Committee of Defense and Security of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic Parliament. Since 1998, the deputy vice-chairman of the ODS club of deputies. He is the Minister of defense of the shadow government of that party.

¹² KUBITA, J., BÍKEK, O.: Politicians calling for the professional armed forces. Lidové noviny, 1999-01-10 (<http://www.lidovsky.cz>)

In February 1998, Petr Nečas, in cooperation with the commission for defense produced, the conceptual material “*Czech Armed Forces for the 21st century*”. In its shortened form, that document has become the conceptual thesis approved by the ODS’ second conceptual conference II and, at present, it represents an integral component of the program of that party. The conceptual material analyzes the status of the Czech Armed Forces in detail, characterizes the social, economic, and security trends both at home and abroad, and concludes in a definite suggestion of a time-table for building up fully professionalized Czech Armed Forces. These ought to be small in number, modern, mobile, counting 38 thousand soldiers and 6 thousand civilian employees¹³ with an established system of active paid reserves (30 000 to 50 000). Within the framework of personnel reductions and the general transformation process whose duration is foreseen for 8 to 10 years, severe reductions in the number of officers and civilian employees, an increase in the number of non-commissioned officers, radical reductions of heavy materiel (including supersonic aircraft), and up-grading of units equipped with light, mainly mobile anti-tank and anti-aircraft capabilities should take place.¹⁴ These Armed Forces should be able to develop the system of transport and logistic support (enlargement of transporting and helicopter capacities, etc) principally in relation to the growing trend of defending of the Czech national interests abroad rather than within the Czech Republic’s territory. The Armed Forces – reduced, up-graded and professional in this way should not involve an increase of costs and represents the only solution of the demographic, social and security trends in the Czech Republic. It also represents a way of regaining respect for the Armed Forces.¹⁵

In the course of 1998—1999, the ODS progressively abandons the idea of conscripted Armed Forces and accepts the idea of full professionalization. This process was accompanied by increased media activities, during which the party (and mainly its shadow minister of defense) tried to explain its new approach, responded to the opinions of its political adversaries and, in general, accelerated the discussions on those points of issue.

The main ODS argument in this discussion is a change in the Armed Forces’ missions after joining NATO and demographic and social trends in Czech society: “*A sharp shift from the protection or defense of territory to the defense of interests is taking place. Our participation in different peace-keeping and peace-making operations represents often also the defense of these interests. The defense of our allies is the defense of our interests. All those operations will most probably take place outside our*

¹³ The later versions stating 5 000 civilian employees.

¹⁴ Czech Armed Forces for the 21st century. Conceptual material developed by Petr Nečas in cooperation with the nation-wide commission for defense, 1998, p. 16.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 20

territory.”¹⁶ *Consequently there is no need for building-up for a powerful armed force for war depending on General mobilization and we shall need flexible and mobile armed forces for operations out of our territory.”*¹⁷

*“In the situation when only a minority of the male population passes through the compulsory military service, that service acquires a discriminative character. All this contradicts the sense of general compulsory service...The only actually systematic and actually just solution is to build up considerably smaller professional Armed Forces based fully on the voluntary principle.”*¹⁸ The principle of voluntarism should also be applied to reserves: *“Yes, even the professional armed forces will need trained reserves in case of a crisis or threat to the country. But these reserves, too, must be built up fully on the voluntary principle and on the basis of a series of motivating measures. It is impossible to insist on the compulsory training of ‘reservists’ ”.*

ODS also responds to the objections (mainly from the side of the KDU-CSL and CSSD) concerning the financial cost or it rejects the allegation that professionalization will increase the burden on the state budget: *“This is not true. Holland and Belgium have also built up fully professionalized armed forces. In the first case, the defense expenses remained the same, and in Belgium they even went down. ... But it would be indispensable to reduce the number of soldiers from the current 60 thousand to approximately 38 thousand.”*¹⁹

The Armed Forces have mainly passed through a quantitative reform. The qualitative one is still ahead. The Armed Forces have mainly reduced in number, and now they must improve. An important condition is, nevertheless, that they reduce even more ... An enormous mistake was that on building up the independent Czech armed forces, the priority was not placed on the development of human resources. The number of professionals in the Armed Forces should be increased considerably. I should like to see fully professional Armed Forces in the horizon of eight years”, stated Petr Nečas in 1999.²⁰

“Defense of our country and the safety of our citizens must always remain the most essential mission of the Armed Forces. The full professionalization of the Armed

¹⁶ NEČAS, P.: Professional Armed Forces: Positives and negatives, *Vojenské rozhledy*, 1999, No.2. (<http://www.army.cz/vti/vojroz/299.htm>)

¹⁷ Should be implemented the professional Armed Forces in the Czech Republic? *Lidové noviny*, 1999-03-06 (<http://www.lidovky.cz>)

¹⁸ NEČAS, P.: Compulsory military service! But what to do with the others? *Mladá fronta DNES*, 1999-07-23 (<http://www.newton.cz>)

¹⁹ KUBITA, J., BÍLEK, O.: The politicians call for professional Armed Forces. *Lidové noviny*, 1999-02-10 (<http://www.lidovky.cz>)

²⁰ KUBITA, J.: The essential reform of our Armed Forces is still pendant. *Lidové noviny*, 1999-06-18 (<http://www.lidovky.cz>)

Forces will result ... not only in, higher defense potential for our country, but also in raising the prestige in of the Armed Forces in the eyes of the public. And respect, esteem, and prestige of the Armed Forces are the basic roots of the ethos of civic responsibility for national defense."²¹

In 2000, the ODS fully supports the idea of full professionalization of the Armed Forces, in principle it accepts the ideas and suggestions contained in the material "*Czech Armed Forces for 21st century*"²² and it actively propagates those ideas in the media.

Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD)²³

The CSSD's election program of 1992 pays only a minimum of attention to the issues of the external security of the state and to its armed forces. In principle, only the support of Czechoslovakia's effort for joining worldwide and particularly European political, economic, and security structures, strengthening of relationship with the USA and of the position within the UN framework and within other international organizations²⁴ are expressed there.

In the middle of the nineties, the CSSD accepts the program document "*Society of education, participation, and solidarity*" in which the party supports the Czech Republic's membership of the European Union and NATO. Relatively large space was devoted there to the armed forces. The CSD evaluated positively the reduction of the armed forces establishment, and of the length of compulsory military service and partially the reorganization, but it stated that "*the basic problem of the Armed Forces consists in their insufficient legislative support. The personnel transformation was carried out as an uncontrolled process, which resulted in an unsatisfactory personnel structure... The professionalism of control and command is declining.*"²⁵

In the CSSD's opinion, a complex of legislative measures be a remedy for this unfavorable situation in the Armed Forces, because only "*on that base is it possible to continue building up the functional, semi-professional, conventionally equipped armed forces that would be able to develop in an organized way to deal with a situation of war and, at the same time, take part in the operations of international forces.*"²⁶

²¹ NEČAS, P.: Compulsory military service! But what to do with the others? Mladá fronta DNES, 1999-07-23 (<http://www.newton.cz>)

²² See for instance the document: By means of professionalization we are solving the situation in the Armed Forces – Program materials (<http://www.odst.cz>)

²³ The CSDP has formed the current single-colored government and since that time it has also controlled the Ministry of Defense.

²⁴ Poll program. Czechoslovak social democracy 1999, p. 7.

²⁵ Point of departure of the Czech social democratic party "Society of education, participation, and solidarity". Prague, CSDP CEC's Program Commission, p. 14.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 37

The election program of 1996 called "*Humanity against egoism*" does not develop the field of defense policy. The need for the indispensable acceptance of complex legislation on defense, the decisive solution of the personnel situation in the Armed Forces and reestablishment of the capacity for action of the Czech Republic Armed Forces as an effective defense potential capable of incorporation into the European security structures, reappears.²⁷ However these themes were not developed into more concrete theses.

The mid-term program of the Czech Social Democratic Party "*Alternatives for our country*" of 1997 stated that the Armed Forces had to become a guarantee of our independence, state sovereignty, territorial integrity and the further development of the country. The Armed Forces should be able to become part of the European and Euro-Atlantic structures and, at the same time, be ready in the peacetime to deal with non-military risks. As these documents show, – the CSSD was considering the reorganization of the Armed Forces, but it did not put forward any concrete suggestions for the essential reform of the Armed Forces. It postponed this step until after the approval of the defense strategy and related legislation.

Before the parliamentary elections in 1998, the Czech Social Democratic Party, in its election program, also dealt with the issue of defense, but it did not submit any clear idea on the future and nature of the Czech Armed Forces. Though the Party did not express its opinion on the issue of professionalization, its program endorsed rather the concept of defense on the basis of general interest. Literally it was stated there: "*Maintaining the principles of state policy in the field of security and defense, fitness for action of the armed contingents and the Armed Forces are unthinkable without the involvement and fulfilment of the rights and duties by all citizens, state and autonomous bodies, and legal entities.*"²⁸ The priority for CSDP is the development of national Armed Forces with emphasizing the building-up and training of fast-reaction units and territorial defense forces. The CSDP slightly modified its mid-term program, where it looks for a progressive improvement in the Armed Forces' capacity for action, enhancement of their for the incorporation into international security structures and their continuous readiness to intervene as part of the integrated emergency system even in the cases of non-military risks and threats. However, it does not express its explicit opinion on the character that the armed forces assigned to these missions should have. The party seems to prefer keeping the "status quo" with maintaining the compulsory military service and just getting a higher quality of the commanding staff. This reflects in the following statement: "*We require a higher quality of the commanding staff, raising of its motivation, rewarding this demanding profession and improving its social*

²⁷ Humanity against egoism – The Czech Social Democratic Party's poll program. CSDP Program conference 1966, p.16

²⁸ Poll program of the Czech Social Democratic Party (approved by CEC's plenary session) (<http://www.cssd.cz>)

environment. Transformation of the system of military education, recruitment of the capable young people for the military profession and their stay in the Armed Forces in order to cover the requirements of renewing of the agreed establishment of professional soldiers are the preconditions for achieving that goal.”

This approach, which practically defends the existing state of affairs, was also confirmed by the program declaration of the social democratic government constituted after the election²⁹. The program dealing with the Armed Forces, states: *“The Czech Republic will provide the forces required for collective defense and the various Alliance missions including its adequate engagement in its military structure and the collective planning of defense. In conformity with the new NATO tasks, it will take part in the humanitarian operations of the Alliance ...The Government does not consider the defense of the Czech Republic as an issue purely for the Armed Forces, but as a task of the whole society, of all citizens. This is why it assumes the maintenance of compulsory military service. In order to ensure the fulfillment of the tasks of defense the Government will enforce the building-up of a modern Armed Forces that could secure the sovereignty of the country, accomplishment of its international obligations and which would be compatible with the Armed Forces of NATO countries.”*³⁰

The fact that the CSDP wishes to maintain of the compulsory military service results from its conviction that professionalization is admittedly necessary, but it is too expensive and it lies currently outside the prospective possibilities of the state budget the minister of Defense Vladimír Vetchý, said: *“I agree of course that the army should become more professional, but at the same time he added that the CR cannot, at this time and for financial reasons, afford fully professional Armed Forces.”*³¹ *“Quite prospectively, professionalization must be considered. That is in the future”*, said the social democratic deputy Jan Žižka.³²

The draft of the long-term CSSD’s program called *“Open to new challenges – faithful to traditions”* of September 2000 does not reflect any essential shift in comparison with the preceding program. The Czech Social Democratic Party supports the development of the European defense and security policy and the participation of the Czech republic in that process. It stands up for the Czech Republic’s – a prospective member state of European Union – participation in the creation of the foreign, security,

²⁹ Tošovský’s government program declaration of 1998 does not deal practically with the security policy and defense, which is understandable owing to the assumed tasks of that time, provisional nature and the period of function of that government.

³⁰ Czech Republic’s Program Declaration (Zeman 1998). Office of Government of the Czech Republic (<http://www.vlada.cz>)

³¹ KUBITA, J., BÍLEK, O.: The politicians call for professional Armed Forces. Lidové noviny, 1999-02-10 (<http://www.lidovky.cz>)

³² KUBITA, J.: KFOR missions will not shorten the compulsory service. Lidové noviny, 1999-06-17 (<http://www.lidovky.cz>)

and defense policy –in accordance with to its possibilities and in conformity with Czech vital interests.³³ In other words, we are going to support the military actions of the European Union (even outside its territory) and we assume the participation of Czech units in them. The impact that this will have the nature and characteristics of the Armed Forces is not stated. The Czech Social Democratic Party has not presented any concrete vision to indicate the further development of the Armed Forces.³⁴ It has just stated that the security of the Czech Republic has to be assured in a complex way and it has to be derived from clear and plausible conceptual materials whose aspects are – as the party says – continuously open. From the point of view of a long-term perspective, it is just stated there that *“if we want to become a full, professionalized, professionally equivalent, recognized, and contributing member of the transatlantic and European security structures, we have to build up our own security system and its structures in conformity and on the basis of the accepted ideas, about our national security identity. We conceive defense policy as a complex of means contributing to and aiming at the formation of a modern defense and security consciousness and readiness of the citizen – as an active actor and component of the security system – of our new democratic society.”*³⁵

The Czech Social Democratic party has not clearly expressed its opinion on the problems of professionalization, and its future position remains open. From the point of view of practical policy, it nevertheless seems that it is more inclined to the maintenance of compulsory military service without more pronounced move towards professionalization.

Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia³⁶ (KSČM)

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia was founded in March 1990 as the successor of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. In the long term it is a strong, but for long time ostracized and isolated political party whose political program is ideologically very sharply defined. The sharp definition and incompatibility with the political programs of democratic parties is significant for the KSČM throughout along the nineties. This also holds for its opinions on preserving the security of the state and for the tasks of the Armed Forces.

³³ Draft of the long-term program of CSDP “Openness to new challenges – faithfulness to traditions” .Basic material for the Program conference of CSDP in Hradec Králové – September 2000 (<http://www.cssd.cz>), p. 20.

³⁴ This statement being singular mainly owing to the fact that the Ministry of Defense is directed and coordinated by this party since 1998.

³⁵ Draft of the long-term program of CSDP “Openness to new challenges – faithfulness to traditions” .Basic material for the Program conference of CSDP in Hradec Králové – September 2000 (<http://www.cssd.cz>), p. 46.

³⁶ KSČM has been politically isolated since long time and, up to now, it has not staffed any post correlated with the defense.

At the beginning of the decade, the KSCM did not pay much attention to this issue, which was on the one hand the result of changes inside the Party, and on the other hand of the international political situation. In their program of 1992, the communists in principle just confined themselves to a general statement supporting the development of the worldwide security and the processes aiming at the reinforcement of peace. But even so, the program which is still valid being in force rejects membership of Czechoslovakia in military pacts (at that time NATO only – author’s remark) and prefers a system of collective security based of CSCE, later OSCE: “*KSCM supports the transition from the post-war block assurance of security and stability to a new Europe-wide system of trust and cooperation outside any military blocks. It supports the revival of the Helsinki process under new conditions*”.³⁷ The communists did not deal with the armed forces in their program.

Half way through the nineties, the situation is already different. The independent Czech Republic aims towards NATO and the European Union. As a response to that, the “*Political declaration of the 4’ Congress of KSCM*”, as approved in Liberec in December 1995, stated that: “*By incorporating the CR into NATO and EU, the ruling élite strives for assuring their positions and the survival of their supremacy. To that end it is preaced, to send Czech soldiers to international ventures, to support the stationing of foreign forces including the German ones on our territory ... Above all the consent to the deployment of nuclear weapons on our territory creates an unforgivable risk for the population of our country.*”³⁸ The demand for the dissolution of NATO is repeated.

KSCM defined its program theses more exactly in 1996 in approved election program “*For civic and social justice. Socialism – Chance for the future*” where the Communists deal with the issue of the Armed Forces. The Czech Republic should strive for military neutrality, dissolution of NATO and its substitution by a Europe-wide system of collective security. In the KSCM’s opinion, “*the building-up of modern serviceable CR’s Armed Forces on the basis of general compulsory military service, the establishment of the population’s, effective for defence, trained reserves training and functional civil defense*”³⁹ are the guarantee of security.

Two years later, in its program for elections parliamentary, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia again reacts negatively to the on going current process of integration of the Czech Republic into NATO and submits other suggestions for safeguarding external security: “*We do not consider the incorporation into NATO the proper way for assuring the security of the CR that would meet the long-term interests of our republic. Instead of military pacts subordinate to the power interests of big*

³⁷ KSCM’s program. In: Documents – Congress II of KSCM. Kladno. KSCM CC 1002, p. 42.

³⁸ Political declaration of the Congress IV of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. Appendix to Haló Noviny of 1995-12-11, p. 4-5.

³⁹ Poll program of KSCM 1996 “For civic and social justice. Socialism – a chance for the future.” mscr, p. 11-12.

powers, we prefer a wider system of collective security that would not restrain our sovereignty and would not require excessive financial resources".⁴⁰ According to the KSCM, joining NATO "requires almost doubling defense expenses just at the moment when there is lack of finance in the social area: support to families, pensions, education, culture etc. Membership in the pact also involves considerable limitations of state sovereignty, the possibility of deployment of nuclear weapons and military bases on our territory." The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is regarded by Communist a relic of the cold war misused for the interests of the USA and FRG. This is why they want to "build up the Czech Republic as a sovereign state that actively supports the peace initiatives and coexistence among nations. (We want) to aim our effort at the general reduction of armament potential of all countries, mainly of nuclear weapons and at the prohibition of their use"⁴¹. The KSCM's opinions are always imbued with requirement of military neutrality. However the security of the Czech Republic, as the Party alleges, has to be assured mainly by diplomatic, economic and other activities within the framework of European collective security (symbolized by OSCE). But we also must "build up serviceable modern CR's Armed Forces as a guarantee of national security on the basis of general compulsory military service". The Armed Forces would be mainly assigned to defend of our own territory and would be provided with only limited possibilities for intervening abroad. "Employment of units of the Czech Republic's Armed Forces outside the state territory – in conformity with the CR constitution – must be previously approved by the Parliament of the Czech Republic, the same as activities within the framework of the forces and means earmarked for the UN. We shall insist on the humanitarian, orderly or police character of earmarked forces; we shall not admit their employment in battle actions." The establishment of a wideranging and effective system of civil defense to deal with both military threats, and natural and industrial disasters and calamities should also contribute to the country's defense readiness.

At its 5' Congress held in December 1999 at Žďár nad Sázavou, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia repeated its long-term approach to the issue of the external security assurance of the Czech Republic. In the document denominated "Jointly against crisis (KSCM at the turn of millenium)", the Party responds to the incorporation into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and to the state of global security. It says: "The increasing instability in the world and in the European continent makes the struggle for peace and prevention of armed conflicts one of our decisive priorities. We are opposed to the militarism connected to enormous expenses on armament and to intimidation with the use of military forces. Even after incorporation into NATO in 1999, the KSCM does not cease attempting to change the character of security structures, in

⁴⁰ "Forward to socialism – not backward!" – poll program of KSCM 1998. Appendix to Haló Noviny of 1998-4-30. p. 14

⁴¹ "Forward to socialism – not backward!" – poll program of KSCM 1998. Appendix to Haló Noviny of 1998-4-30. p. 15

cluding the transformation of NATO leading up to the dissolution of that remnant of the cold war while freezing the active engagement of the CR in that pact. The escalation of selfishness and NATO's direct aggression of NATO against Yugoslavia confirmed our critical reservations regarding this military block.”⁴²

The KSCM reaffirmed its view concerning alternative (to NATO) security arrangements in Europe: *“We regard the development of collective security in Europe – free of the dictate of the USA as a prospect for the future. Security built up on the principle of equality and peaceful solution of conflicts as required by the UN Charter, and also within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We want to stop the armament process and to restue the process of global disarmament including the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction and the creation of a nuclear – free zone in Central Europe.”*

According to the most recent political program approved in 1999 and called *“Program of restoration (A Better way for our country)”*, the goal of the communists consists in providing a sustained support for peace and international cooperation. In the case of the Czech Republic, it consists *“of striving to reduce the risks of war conflicts, participating in the integrating processes while safeguarding our national existence on a basis of equality, fighting against militarism, arms races and threats of military power.”⁴³*

They also repeat their intention *“to support the reform of global organizations towards the strengthening of democracy, equality and readiness for action, to oppore the weakening and by passing the role of the UN, to restore the intensive process of the worldwide disarmament. In cooperation the international Left to strive for the dissolution of aggressive power blocks, to withdraw form NATO and, in the first phase, to half the membership of CR in that pact. To develop collective security within the framework of the UN and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to settle disputes by means of the UN Charter with emphasis on diplomatic and political means and the prevention of confrontation.”* As for the Czech Republic's Armed Forces, the KSCM merely stated that it was necessary *“to pay adequate attention to the defense of the country, to the CR armed forces, principally the Czech Army. To keep in mind the lawful functions of the armed forces, making their misuse for solving internal crisis situations impossible.”*

Quite unambiguous are the responses to the issues concerning the security of the Czech Republic, the characteristics and tasks of its Armed Forces, as defined in two essential documents: *“KSCM's Security policy”* and *“Military policy – an integral part of the KSCM's security policy”* developed, and in November 2000 released by the Expert Commission of the KSCM for security policy and the Expert Commission of the KSCM Central Committee for defense and military policy. In the first of the se, very detailed and

⁴² Jointly against the crisis (KSCM at the turn of millenium). In: Working drafts of documents for V. Congress of KSCM. Special number of Haló Noviny, September 1999, p.8.

⁴³ Program of restoration (<http://www.kscm.cz>)

voluminous documents, the KSCM submits its analysis of the security situation in the Czech Republic and presents its opinions on its complex solution. One of the key items of those documents is again the demand for the withdrawal of the Czech Republic from the security structures of the North Atlantic Alliance and the progressive dissolution of that organization.

The second, also very voluminous and exhausting document *“Military policy”* is more interesting. It pays attention to the armed forces and tends to reject the policy of the state in that domain. As for the opinions on the CR Armed Forces the KSCM requires combat-ready, universally supported armed forces of the Czech Republic whose main task would consist in defending the territory of the republic; it would not take part in NATO armed actions outside the Czech Republic’s territory.

The Party also opposes the issue of professionalization unambiguously: *“In current conditions generally guaranteeing capitalist developments, tendencies of transforming the armed forces into a reliable and effective powerful tool of ruling elite become evident. This goal is best served by building up fully professional armed forces and by the existence of an armed forces’ leadership socially and economically identified with the ruling elite and in full agreements with its policy and ideology. Full professionalization is currently limited by several factors – mainly by the economic potential of the state and necessarily by the long-term changes in the commanding staff. The positive features consist of high-quality training and readiness, in obtaining some practical professional experience mainly through employment abroad. The negative features involve high costs, mercenary pay and, connected to that, motivation for service, a high degree of ideological and political manipulation in favor of the ruling elite. ... Generally speaking, contemporary fully professionalized armed forces represent a serviceable body of armed power for the protection of the ruling régime and for participation in police-type operations. Their actual capability for ensuring the defense of the country is low. It limit greatly the participation of citizens (that portion of population that is capable of military service) in the defense of the country.”*⁴⁴

“Professionalization? It is too costly and it results in divorcing the armed forces from the population,” rejects this step on behalf of the communists their vice-chairman Miroslav Ransdorf.⁴⁵

Another reason for rejecting the professionalization of our armed forces is, according to the Communists, the allegation that in view of the geos strategic position of the Czech Republic, the successful defense of the country would be impossible for numerically reduced professional armed forces. As the KSCM alleges, the transition to professional armed forces would, in addition, require unbearable financial costs that

⁴⁴ Military policy – integral part of the security policy of KSCM (<http://www.kscm.cz>)

⁴⁵ GAZDÍK, J.: For the professional armed forces, the politics’ agreement is necessary. Mladá fronta DNES, 1999-05-20 (<http://www.newton.cz>)

would be approximately 2 or 3 times higher than current defense expenditure. In view of these expenses and economic possibilities of the country, full professionalization could not be achieved before 2010—2015.⁴⁶ Another argument is the alienation between the armed forces and society and the generally low state of readiness of society for the defense of the country. *“The main reason why the KSCM – besides professional and financial reasons – rejects fully professional armed forces is the possibility of their misuse. Only a naive individual manipulated by the media believes that our soldiers abroad, namely in the Balkans, defend the interest of the Czech nation. The professional armed forces may be used (in accord with current legislation) for police-type actions. The KSCM therefore considers that the best option is to build up semiprofessional Armed Forces objectively linking the full professionalization of specialized units on the one hand with the principle of general compulsory military service on the other. Together with the economic criteria this solution creates conditions for the optimum proportion of military professionals and conscripts. The Party agrees with such numbers of the Armed Forces that would satisfy the country’s real defence needs which – small and fully professional armed forces would not able to fulfil.”*

“Defining the relationship of the KSCM to the CR’s Armed Forces and other armed units will – even in the future – involve social-political, ideological, psychological and historical points of view and will consider the place, role, composition and relation of the population to the armed forces. The KSCM will apply a differentiated approach to members of the armed force members in depending on specific situations. It regards the Armed Forces of the CR for the armed power of a capitalist state and therefore. Continue to have its reservations in this regard”⁴⁷.

Four-Party Coalition

The four-party coalition is a coalition and integration grouping that has arisen as a response to internal political development after the parliamentary elections in 1998. It combines the following political parties: Christian-democratic union – Czechoslovak people’s party (KDU-ČSL), Union of Liberty (US), Civic democratic alliance (ODA) and the extra – parliamentary Democratic union (DEU).

The degree of mutual integration of these parties and the future of the Four-party coalition as a united political subject has not been clear up to now. And owing to its current early phase of development, the Four-party coalition’s posture as a whole to military professionalization and defense in general is not yet sufficiently evident. Its program documents rather deal with social, economic etc, issues while the issue of external security is not regarded – as a priority, non that the Czech Republic has joined NATO.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Military policy – integral part of the security policy of KSCM (<http://www.kscm.cz>)

⁴⁷ Military policy – integral part of the security policy of KSCM (<http://www.kscm.cz>)

⁴⁸ See, for instance, the Declaration “Jointly for change” 2000-09-29 (<http://www.4koalice.cz>)

It can be assumed that the resulting opinion of the Four-Party Coalition will either issue from the ideas of the Union of Liberty, Civic Democratic Alliance and Democratic Union that jointly support the full professionalization of the armed forces or it will stem from the conviction of the Christian-Democratic Union that is in favor of keeping a certain form of compulsory military service (though to a smaller extent and with some changes).

Christian-Democratic Union – Czechoslovak Popular Party⁴⁹ (KDU-CSL)

The Christian-Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party, which was constituted into its current shape in 1992, belonged at the start of the nineties to those political groupings that supported the policy of collective security, military neutrality⁵⁰ and that made Europe and a world free of wars and armed forces its general goal. However, because the conditions for global disarmament did not exist, the Party considered the building-up of the armed forces and the development of the military doctrine indispensable for this country too. In its election material in 1992, KDU-CSL takes the armed forces for the main guarantor of national independence and, along with ODS it is the only significant party ready to consider the future possibility of professional armed forces. In its *“Guide to KDU-CSL policy”* it is stated: *“The armed forces have to be built up as far as possible on a professional basis. Their size, technical equipment, and professionalism are limited by the possibilities of the state budget.”* Nevertheless, *“until the armed forces are fully professionalized, we cannot abolish general compulsory military service. But also in future every citizen must have the right to refuse service in the armed forces for reasons of conscience. Legislation must prevent the misuse of that right.”*

The views of KDU-CSL in 1992 also reflect the progressive transformation of opinion on the geo-strategic security base of Czechoslovakia - from the model of neutrality within the framework of an Europe-wide collective security organization to the progressive rapprochement with western security structures. This change in the party's opinions is also accompanied by the conviction that establishing a complex external safety system is indispensable: *“Because of our geopolitical conditions and historical experience with security guarantees, we support a system of defence shared by the armed forces and the civil defense that must be an integral component of the European security system of Atlantic cooperation, combined with bilateral treaties and guarantees that are politically anchored within the framework of CSCE. We want to join the Atlantic community because we regard it as the basic guarantee of our external security.”*⁵¹

⁴⁹ KDU-CSL took part in the coalition governments up to the half 1998 and in principle up to the end of 1997 it continuously managed the sector of defense.

⁵⁰ Political parties in the Czech republic, joining NATO and security risks, In: Czech Republic in the security architecture of Europe, 1st Ed. Z. Kříž, Prague, Ministerstvo obrany České republiky – AVIS 1998, p. 42

⁵¹ BRZEK, A.: Armáda. (Armed Forces), In: Guide through the policy of KDU-CSL. Red. A. Janečková, 1992, p. 42

From the program of the Christian-democratic union – Czechoslovak People's Party released before the elections in 1966 follows that the solution of the external security of the Czech republic consists in the integration of our country in NATO. Related to that is also the transformation of the armed forces and KDU-CS, proposes to build-up semiprofessional armed forces. The program states: *“The completion of the process of building-up semiprofessional, small, but effective and well-trained armed forces of high-quality that respect the democratic principles of the civilian management and control, human rights, and the citizens' responsibility for the defense of the country, is the precondition of the full membership of the Czech Republic in the North Atlantic Alliance. We need military professionals of high professional and moral qualities, whose service for society will be correspondingly appreciated, to be the backbone and foundation of those armed forces.”*⁵² The party, nevertheless, supports the maintenance of modified form of the compulsory military service: *“The role of citizens passing through military compulsory service must remain essential in the future. We want to create such conditions in the armed forces that the time is used effectively and that duration of service could increasingly be reduced.”* Defense is, in the KDU-CSL's opinion, consensus of all citizens and organizations. The Armed Forces of the Czech republic are able to fulfil their tasks only with the support, help and cooperation of all citizens of the Czech republic who love liberty and think democratically. The building-up and improvement of the armed forces is a manifestation of citizens' responsibility and will to defend the liberty of the state.

The call for building up small semiprofessional armed forces also appears in the material *“Christian policy for the 21st century”* of 1997. There the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic, whose task consists in protecting sovereignty and territorial integrity of our state against external danger and in assisting in the elimination of consequences of natural and other disasters, are described as an important pillar of our security.⁵³

The basic election program of 1998 is – as for the issue of defense – very modest. It just states that the party wants to continue in supporting the process of integration into NATO and EU, and in transforming and upgrading the armed forces.⁵⁴ More detailed information is included in the *“Guide to the policy of KDU-CSL”* released in the same year, which assumes that *“the maintenance of security of the state requires, on the one hand, the building-up and maintenance of adequately sized armed forces and, on the other hand, the establishment of effective links with our allies,”*⁵⁵ The CR's Armed Forces are conceived as the basic pillar of the external security of the Czech republic. The previous requirement of KDU-CSL is reaffirmed: *“We want them to be built up as*

⁵² Poll program 1996, (<http://www.kdu.cz>)

⁵³ Political parties in the Czech Republic, Joining NATO and security risks, In.: Czech republic in the security architecture of Europe. 1.Ed. Z. Kříž, Prague, Ministry of Defense – AVIS 1998, p. 42

⁵⁴ Poll program (<http://www.kdu.cz>)

⁵⁵ Guide through the policy of KDU-CSL – Detailed poll program 1998 (<http://www.kdu.cz>), p. 10

semiprofessional. While keeping compulsory military service, military professionals of high professional and moral qualities whose exceptional duty will also be correspondingly appreciated, must be the backbone of the CR Armed Forces.” As this documents states, the KDU-CSL also supports the positive changes in the CR Armed Forces, which are carried out in accord with the Concept of Building up the Armed Forces. It will strive for their completion particularly in the systems of command, control and training, in adapting the material and armament of the CR Armed forces to the armament of NATO members countries, in building up or upgrading the infrastructure. The People’s Party nevertheless, reject full professionalization, because they are convinced of the high financial costs of that process.⁵⁶ *“This is one of the possible models that has to be discussed and seriously analyzed,”* says the Party’s economic expert Miroslav Kalousek.⁵⁷

***Union of Liberty*⁵⁸ (US)**

At the beginning of 1997, a new political party called the Union of Liberty arose from the ODS’ wing which was dissatisfied with the policy of the Klaus’ leadership. Its representatives followed – the ODS’ program as far as security was concerned. The Union of Liberty unambiguously supported the Czech republic joining NATO. It expressed its support of the Euro-Atlantic alliance in its political program *“Liberty and order: Gate to the 3rd millenium”*⁵⁹.

In its *“Political program”* of February 1998 the Union of Liberty does not mention the problems of defense and armed forces at all and it does it only in its *“Union of Liberty’s election program for the elections to the Chamber of Deputies.”* It states there that a precondition of the Czech republic’s prosperity is its full membership in the European Union and the most extensive possible collaboration with the neighboring countries. In the US’ opinion, external security *“can only be assured by armed forces ready to solve not only classic combat situations, but also able to respond to new kinds of threats and, at the same time, to take part in rescue and humanitarian operations. Only such armed forces will assure our full membership of the North Atlantic alliance”*. This is why *“it is indispensable to ensure adequate social and material support of soldiers and last but not least, restore the armed forces’ prestige in Czech society. The*

⁵⁶ Popular Party’s M.P. – former deputy minister of defense Miroslav Kalousek:”Such (professional) armed forces would be undoubtedly more expensive than the current model.”

The Czechs will see their professional armed forces, but not immediately. Lidové noviny. 1999-06-18 (<http://www.lidovky.cz>)

⁵⁷ GAZDÍK,J.: For the professional armed forces the agreement of politicians is necessary. Mladá fronta DNES, 1999 – 05-20 (<http://www.newton.cz>)

⁵⁸ US had occupied in the short-term, so called Tošovský’s government - which arose after the disintegration of the right coalition in 1998 – the office of Minister of Defense.

⁵⁹ Political parties in the Czech republic, joining NATO and security risks, In: Czech republic in the security architecture of Europe. 1st Ed. Z. Kříž. Prague, Ministry of Defense of the Czech republic – AVIS 1998, p. 42

*Armed Forces must be conceived as public service and as such they should enjoy general respect. It requires increasing transparency in the armed forces and a clearly defined status of the military as a 'citizen dressing uniform'. From the long-term point of view, we consider useful to professionalize the armed forces."*⁶⁰ The Union of Liberty also wants – among others – *"to ensure high professional and moral standards of members of the armed forces, full compatibility of our armed forces with those of NATO countries, to implement modern technologies, information systems and other infrastructures, utilizable in the peacetime periods for civilian purposes.. This is why it will support the accelerated development of our own security doctrine defining our national security strategy, effectively motivating the armed forces' career system, preparatory steps leading to professionalization, investment in the modern technologies and qualified personnel, and the participation of the Armed Forces in the solution of natural disasters. It will support the largest possible transparency in the armed forces starting from the principle that – everything that is not secret, must be published, utilization of NATO member countries experience in training and participation of the Czech republic in international peace-keeping operations."*

The statements of leading representatives of the party are also unambiguous. Its vice-chairman Vladimír Mlynář, for instance, said : *"Modern and more and more complicated weapons cannot be operated by conscripts trained in crash courses,"*⁶¹ or the ex-Minister of Defense Michal Lobkowicz: *"My answer to the question whether professional armed forces should be built up in the Czech republic in the foreseeable future is 'Yes'. Our party, the Union of Liberty, support the professionalization of the Armed Forces. It is true that we consider cogent some arguments against professionalization, but even so we are convinced that arguments in favor of full professionalization are more convincing. The Czech republic needs relatively not very big, but instead mobile and combat-ready armed forces....So, the right solution – in my opinion – is progressive professionalization of the armed forces, which is the concept that the Union of Liberty has taken as one of the basic pillars of its program in the field of external security."*⁶²

⁶⁰ Union of Liberty's poll program – Elections to the Parliament Chamber of Deputies 1998. (<http://www.unie.cz>)

⁶¹ GAZDÍK, J.: For the professional armed forces the agreement of politicians is necessary. Mladá fronta DNES, 1999 – 05-20 (<http://www.newton.cz>)

⁶² Should the professional armed forces be implemented in the CR? Lidové noviny, 1999-03-06 (<http://www.lidovky.cz>).

Civic Democratic Alliance⁶³ (ODA)

“Program for all who were born for liberty” of the Civic Democratic Alliance of 1992 deals with the field of defense and external security only marginally. It supports the effort of the Czechoslovak Federal Republic to take part in the development of new security structures in Europe and for keeping the US presence in Europe. The ODA considered the armed forces to be a guarantee of the sufficient weight of Czechoslovakia in the international community. The party’s program at that time also expressed the view that “the armed forces must be able to deter any potential aggressor , to defend the inviolability and territorial integrity of the state and to provide effective aid to the population during natural disasters. Owing to the geopolitical situation of the state our armed forces are only able to accomplish their tasks in the conditions of the closest linkage of the CFR with NATO and the tightest collaboration with the military structures of the neighboring countries, mainly Poland and Hungary. The ODA will enforce the progressive building-up of the armed forces with increasing number of professionals, as for as economic conditions permit.”⁶⁴

In 1996, the Civic Democratic Alliance in its election program *“Going ahead towards a free society – a contract for the future”* states that, *“the world is not a safe place and therefore we must spend a portion of our resources for ensuring our own security.”⁶⁵* As a means towards this end, the ODA considered – i.a., joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and – for the Czech Armed Force, *“accelerated professionalization of the selected units of rapid deployment.”*

In 1997—1998 the, Civic Democratic Alliance disintegrate internally and for a time period it was inactive. It did not participate in last parliamentary elections to the Chamber of Deputies. The progressive revival and consolidation of the party occurred as late as 1999 also because of the forration of the Four-party coalition.

At present, ODA support the idea of fully professionalized Armed forces which it also confirmed in its declaration of May 2000: *“Taking into account the new conditions of the CR Armed Forces, mainly tasks resulting from the CR joining the North Atlantic Alliance, participation of the CR Armed Forces in international peace keeping operations, increasing technical, qualification and professional requirement linked to the use of modern combat materiel, decreasing number of recruits, and the economic burden which the Armed Forces composed of a great number of conscripts represent, the ODA considers it vital to prepare legislative and technical conditions for abolishing the compulsory military surface and building up small, fully professional armed forces*

⁶³ ODA was for a long time a component of right coalition governments up to 1998. At present time, it occupies the post of chairman of the Committee for foreign affairs, defense and security of the CR Parliament Senate

⁶⁴ Program for everyone who has born for liberty. Civic Democratic Alliance 1992. p. 15

⁶⁵ Poll program of ODA *“Going ahead on the way to liberty – Treaty for the future”* (<http://www.oda.cz>), p.4

by 2007 at the latest. It expresses its will to prepare – in cooperation with other Four-party Coalition parties and with other democratic parties sharing this purpose – a White Book on CR defense including necessary legislation proposals that make the by 30th June 2001. It proposes to introduce voluntary national service for all adult citizens due, and appeals for nation-wide discussion about the form, extent and methods of evaluating modern voluntary national service as a substitute for the compulsory military service.”⁶⁶

Democratic Union⁶⁷ (DEU)

This political party was founded in 1994, but it did not impinge on the public's consciousness until recently in connection with the formation of the Four-party coalition. After its constituent congress, it released its program declaration *“In pursuit of restoration: Not only prosperity, but also morality and law”* in which, among others, it expresses its opinion on foreign and defense policy. That part was taken over in the long-term and permanently valid program of 1995. As the program states, the Democratic Union regards as a priority – in the incorporation of our country into the European defense system. *“For that purpose, it is indispensable to promptly transform our armed forces into a professional body, reduce the number of soldiers to the absolutely precise level for joining NATO, exclude all officers under influenced by the totalitarian régime, and carry out the modernization the defense systems compatible with the NATO armed forces.”*⁶⁸ The Democratic Union expects that the professionalization of the armed forces will result in the transformation of the Ministry of Defense and the substitution of the commanding staff with the officers more loyal to the democratic system. In the DEU's political program it is stated that: *“The essential transformation of the Ministry of Defense and of the armed forces is inevitable. It is no longer admissible that the top management of the armed forces consists of officers trained in the former USSR and, therefore, linked up with former components of KGB. Building up new units and, at the same time, correspondingly dissolving the existing and inconvenient ones seems to be the most suitable method, Our defense doctrine has to be unambiguously oriented towards collaboration with NATO. The system of military education has to be re-built in cooperation with experts of the armed forces of NATO states. It is paradoxical that officers educated in the communist way are sent to military schools in the USA and countries of Western Europe. Those officers then shield themselves with being graduates of those schools despite of having been protagonists of the totalitarian armed forces trained for intervening against their own citizens. This must no longer be tolerated because it endangers the country's defense capability”*.

⁶⁶ ODA suggests to cancel the compulsory military service. 2000-05-16 (<http://www.oda.cz>)

⁶⁷ DEU – in view of its poll results -has not occupied any constitutional post related to the defense.

⁶⁸ DEU political program. (<http://www.deu.cz>)

Opinions of citizens – and voters

At present, the Czech public is not aware of an serious external threat to the Czech republic and, therefore, the problems of the armed forces and defense policy are overshadowed economic, social, and ecological themes perceived by the public as much more urgent. Nevertheless, people follow events in the armed forces and also fond their opinions with respect to professionalization.

For instance, the report of the Institute for investigating public opinion of August 2000 states that 32% of citizens would welcome professional armed forces, i.e. without conscripts. 37% of respondents support an increased share of professionals and a reduction in the number of conscripts would also be represented in them. Only 22% of responders would support the status quo. It can be deduced that nearly 70% of citizens would look for more professionalized with a smaller or nil share of conscripts.⁶⁹

The opinion in favor the professionalized armed forces is particularly shared by the youngest respondents – up to 19 years (41%), while among the 60 years and older this opinion received less support (19%). The support for fully professional armed forces in reases in relation to education levels. In the group of the least educated, 29% were in favor, in the group of higher education without leaving examination – 32%, with leaving examination and university-level education – 37%. As for party identification, the support of professionalization is as follows: US – 44%, ODS – 38%, KDU-CSL – 29%, CSSD – 27%, KSCM – 20%.

As the results of the investigation performed by the Institute October 2000 states, 50% (namely 43% “rather yes or less” and 7% “definitely yes”)of citizens trust in the armed forces, 39% (29 % „more or less“ and 10%) of respondents its do not.⁷⁰ This result indicates the end of the ascending level of trust that the armed forces enjoyed since October 1996 (at that time, not more than 28 % of citizens confided in the armed forces and 58 % did not).

As for age groups, young people – up to 19 years – trust less in the armed forces (50% – cf. with the support for professionalization in this age category!), the older middle aged generation between 45 and 59—(61%) trusts more. Trust in the armed forces is around 60% for must politically orientated people, excepting potential voters of KSČM (53%).⁷¹

As report of the institute of August 2000 states, 46%of citizens agreed with the claim that our armed forces were well trained (30% disagreed). 28% of them agreed with

⁶⁹ MIŠOVIČ, J.: Opinions on the investment into the armed forces and their professionalization [Research report], Prague, Institute of Public Opinion Research 2000, 2 p.

⁷⁰ JELÍNEK, V.” How the citizens trust in some institutions of public life [Research report], Prague, Institute of Public Opinion Research 2000 p.1

⁷¹ MIŠOVIČ, J.” Evaluation of the Czech armed forces [Research report], Prague, Institute of Public Opinion Research 2000 p.1

the statement that the armed forces had a good morale and discipline (52% disagreed) and not more than 16% of respondents thought that they were well equipped (60% disagreed).⁷²

As for military professionals, the public most appreciates their professional qualification (54% of positive answers), their physical condition is approved by 44% of respondents. 38% of responders expressed the view that professional supporters had a positive attitude to the democratic order. About a quarter to two fifths complain about insufficient information. The public has least information about the attitude of military professionals to our democratic development. More than 40% of them were not able to express their opinion about this issue.⁷³ That is because of the principle of democratic control of the armed forces.

In this connection the confrontation of it is interesting to compare the political preferences of the military.⁷⁴ With the preferences of the remaining population. During the elections to the Chamber of Deputies in 1998 the members of armed forces supported the following political parties and programs (the first data between brackets indicates how many percent of the armed forces members preferred the established political party, while the second data indicate the nation-wide preferences of that party):⁷⁵ CSSD (39,5%: 32,3%), ODS (17,4 : 27,7%, KSCM (10,8 % to 11,0 %). KDU-CSL (5,5% : 9,0 %), US (7,6 % : 8,6 %). Very alarming – were the preferences given to the extremist Association for the Republic – Republican party of Czechoslovakia⁷⁶ that nationally got 3,9% of votes, but 17,4 % of the armed forces member voted in its favour.⁷⁷

Opinions about the armed forces, trust in them and the measure of support or rejection of professionalization on the part of public are influenced to a great extent by the citizen's experience, transmitted stereotypes and access to relevant information. In the survey the investigation by the IOMI of July 2000, 21% of citizens gave a positive answer to the question: "*Do you think you have enough information about our armed forces?*", while 79 % of them answered negatively. The same question was put in 1993: the share of positive answers was 20%. It means that the level of information of the public about the CR armed forces has remained practically at the same level in the

⁷² Ibidem p.2

⁷³ Ibidem, p.3

⁷⁴ The armed forces must bear as politically neutral. In the lines of the law, political parties and political movements may not be founded in the armed forces neither their organizational cells and movements may operate there.

⁷⁵ DÜRR, J.: and coll.: Elections'98 – pre-election situation, programs, results. Ed. Šaradín. 1st ed. Brno, Supplement 2000, p. 114.

⁷⁶ In this connection, it is interesting to realize that SPR-RSČ already at the beginning of the nineties enforced the shortening of the compulsory military service to 6 months and, as one of the first political parties, it took as his goal to build up the fully professional armed forces.

⁷⁷ DÜRR, J.: and coll.: Elections'98 – pre-election situation, programs, results. Ed. Šaradín. 1st ed. Brno, Supplement 2000, p. 133.

course of the last 7 years.⁷⁸ Therefore, it is possible to deduce that the citizens form their opinions on the basis of secondary sources and they do not have access to information that would allow them evaluate the given issues objectively.

Conclusion

In the first half of nineties, nearly all political parties, unlike elsewhere Europe where the sector of defense is subject of careful attention, paid very little or only superficial attention to the sector of defense. This situation arose because of the international situation, and principally because of problems of domestic policy that had arisen as a consequence of the complicated social, economic, and political transformation of the country after 1989.⁷⁹

A certain revival of the political parties' interest in defense policy appeared principally in connection with the process of the Czech Republic's integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The theme of professionalization as such has been more expressively discussed during the last two years, although the political parties had already presented their views. Most political parties – excepting the KSCM – began to endorse a higher share of professionals in the armed forces and this tendency has gradually involved into support for fully professionalized armed forces.

At present time, fully professionalized armed forces are supported by the Civic Democratic Party, Union of Liberty, Civic Democratic Alliance, and Democratic Union. A higher share of professionals in the armed forces but with keeping compulsory military service is endorsed by the Christian-Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's party and the Czech social-democratic party. The last two parties are in favor of that compromise because they are convinced that a full professionalization of the armed forces would required excessive costs for the time being, but from the long-term point of view they would not exclude full professionalization.

The only important political party that in principle insists on keeping general military compulsory service is the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. According to recent program documents, it is merely disposed to accept the professionalization of selected special units, but it unambiguously refuses the principle of professional armed forces for ideological reasons. However it must be stated here, that the KSCM and ODS, although they stand in opposite ideological positions, are the only parties that have a very detailed defense policy program and a concretely elaborated idea on the future character and tasks of the Czech Armed Forces.

⁷⁸ MIŠOVIČ, J." Evaluation of the Czech armed forces [Research report], Prague, Institute of Public Opinion Research 2000 p.1

⁷⁹ See, for instance, KMENTA, J." Only those parties that had to do so had taken care of the armed forces Mladá fronta DNES, 1996-03-20, p.4

The key moment for the further evolution of professionalization will undoubtedly be the elections in 2002. It is expected that the advocates of further professionalization of the armed forces will get a strong representation in the parliament. But which options of professionalization (whether full or just wider one) and upon what conditions will depend on the political parties ability to negotiate. ⁸⁰ 2010 is the term is endorsed by both, ODS and CSSD. Petr Nečas (ODS) admits that ODS can enforce radical changes from the position of government. Therefore, if an eight-year period is necessary for the transition to the professional armed forces – and ODS is planning it for 2010, his scenario counts with the victory of his party in 2002. *“However, without political consensus our plans are unrealistic”* admits Nečas, *“In case the decision to change the character of our armed forces is taken, such a process will be long-term, effectively in horizon that exceeds 8 to 10 years. Building up fully professionalized armed forces in the CR within a shorter time horizon is impossible from the point of view of our material and human resources.”* ⁸¹ The social democrats endorse – as Minister of Defense Vetchý says – armed forces with compulsory military service. *“Besides the formation of reserves, we conceive that also as part of a civilian supervision of the armed forces,”* he says. And he adds that his vision is in force up to 2010. *“Then many things can change – we do not refuse the discussion on professional armed forces”*. ⁸² Also the Chief of General Staff Jiří Šedivý should like to see the Czech Armed forces to be professional in 2010. ⁸³

In conclusion, it is possible to state that most probably the question of the armed forces’ professionalization will definitely be solved only after the elections in 2002 that probably will instal a political configuration. It remains to be seen whether the issue of professionalization will emerge from the shadow of economic, social and integrating issues and whether it can become more interesting for the political parties, their voters and the Czech public in general.

⁸⁰ The political parties that would like to enforce a partial or full professionalization of the Armed forces will be obliged to either get a sufficient number of mandates or they will have to convince the partners from other political parties to support their intention.

The professionalization of the armed forces will have to be legislatively attended through amending or approving a series of laws, principally through amending and substituting the Law of range of the compulsory service and the military administration authorities No. 218/199 Sb. In the practice it would mean that the political parties that will strive for enforcing some of the variants of professionalization will be obliged to get the consent of a clear majority of the present representatives in both chambers, which may require as many as 101 deputies and 41 senators (providing all deputies and senators take part in the vote-taking). In case that the legislative arrangement will require even an amendment of the Constitutional Law of April 22, 1998 of the Czech republic’s security, the proposers would have to succeed in getting as many as 120 deputies and 49 (or less according to the number of the present ones) senators.

⁸¹ NEČAS, P.: Professional armed forces: positives and negatives. Military review, 1999, p. No.2 (<http://www.army.cz/vti/voroz/299.htm>)

⁸² GAZDÍK, J.: For the armed forces’ professionalization, consent of politicians is necessary. Mladá fronta DNES, 1999-05-20 (<http://www.newton.cz>)

⁸³ The Czechs will see the professional armed forces, but not immediately. Lidové noviny, 1999-06-18 (<http://www.lidovky.cz>)

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