

Key Foreign Policy Issues in the Czech Republic, 1993-2002

**By Jim Peterson
Department of Political Science
Valdosta State University
Valdosta, Georgia**

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Introduction

Czech foreign policy makers in the period after the separation from Slovakia in 1993 dealt with a variety of challenging issues. Not only were the main issues challenging in terms of their newness after the end of the Cold War, but they were consequential for the historical fate of the new country. Leff (1997) argues that the nation experienced a triple revolution in the short space of four years between 1989 and 1993. Those revolutions included economic restructuring to capitalism, political transformation to democracy, and national separation from the Slovaks. All three of those revolutions had implications for foreign policy.

Economic restructuring meant an outreach to western countries and a corresponding de-emphasis on the East. The primary component of that outreach by the end of the decade was clearly admission to the European Union (EU). However, there were additional aspects as well. Investment by individual western companies was a must in terms of providing an immediate shot of adrenalin to the Czech economy. Both loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and membership in the newly formed World Trade Organization (WTO) were also essential aspects of that outreach. On the one hand, such economic changes pointed in a new direction for policy. On the other, they also addressed the problems that accompanied the collapse of communist era planning. Unemployment and price fluctuation were two such dilemmas.

Political transformation was also firmly linked to foreign policy. Democratization was a necessity for membership in both the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) and the EU. The maintenance of political stability and a good record on the heated topic of minority rights were also vital in the admission process to those organizations. At the same time, the new openness and pluralism that accompanied the growth of democracy meant that new domestic forces would play a role in foreign policy. They included public opinion and dialogue among the various political parties. These relatively new pressure points constituted a continuous factor in foreign policy. During the Cold War public opinion had mattered only occasionally, mainly during the Prague Spring of 1968. Four political parties had existed during communist times, but obviously only one had any significance or impact. Growth of both the principle of voluntarism and the number of non-profit organizations was part of the general process of democratization. Interactions with international organizations and other countries were helpful in cementing these concepts in the minds of the public.

National separation from the Slovaks had enormous consequences for foreign policy. For example, it changed the nature of the NATO admission process. The Czech Republic was on the fast track to admission and joined in 1999 along with Poland and Hungary. Discussions about accession to the EU experienced the same shift. The Czech Republic ranked near the top in terms of potential new members, while Slovakia proceeded at a more measured pace, mainly due to its domestic political situation. Foreign policy results emerged very quickly from these two sets of admissions

processes. Admission to NATO in 1999 led to involvement in the Kosovo operation the very same year and offers of substantive assistance during the battle against the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001-02. Prospects for EU admission quickened the pace of economic change but also led to considerable debate about the development of a Common Foreign and Security Policy within that framework. Czech involvement in both conflict and peacemaking in new areas were both realities and markers to the future. Had the breakup of the Czechoslovak state not occurred in 1993, these areas of foreign policy would no doubt have been somewhat different. Ethnic conflict and bickering between Czech and Slovak leaders would have slowed down admission to both NATO and the EU.

Economic Restructuring and Foreign Policy

Initially, in 1993 the Czech Republic was successful in gaining entry into the Council of Europe. This organization offered an entry point into discussions about other potential links to the West. Similarly, the breakup of the Czechoslovak state pulled the new country further west in a geographical sense. Indeed, the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991 had made the principal player from the East even more distant. Prior to 1991, Czechoslovakia had shared a border with the Soviet Union, and that fact had been one of the sources of Soviet willingness to invade during the Prague Spring of 1968. Communist Yugoslavia's lack of a border with the Soviet Union might have helped save it from such an invasion during its many decades of challenging the rule of Moscow within the alliance. By the middle of 1993, the Czech Republic was separated geographically from Russia by two other states, Slovakia and Ukraine.

In the four years between the 1989 fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia and the 1993 separation from the Slovakia, economic restructuring under the Klaus government was a major priority. Privatization and the use of vouchers placed formerly state-controlled industries in private hands. Job security yielded to the greater uncertainty connected with the free market. It became more likely that industries would rise and fall on their own merits. Artificial control of prices was no longer the norm. Further, discussions began about continued provision of free services in the health care and educational arena. Conversion to a capitalist economic system was increasingly linked to new prospects in foreign policy.

Gaining admission to the EU became a top priority as a result of these new geographic and economic developments. Very soon Brussels presented to the eastern countries its list of thirty-one chapters in the *acquis communautaire* process. Czech leaders began to meet regularly with EU bureaucrats in order to demonstrate progress towards meeting the criteria of each chapter. Periodically, often twice per year, the EU representatives came to the Czech Republic both to inspect that progress and to issue judgments about the relative rank of the nation on the list of EU prospects from that region. By the close of the 1990s, the Czech Republic ranked near the top of the prospective list of new members, and membership appeared likely by 2003 at the earliest. Czech involvement in the EU's PHARE and ERBD investment projects were of particular significance. Involvement in the wider EU market would multiply the steps

taken by the Czech government in conversion to capitalism. That engagement would also accelerate the domestic process of conversion.

Western investments would accompany EU membership, but to a certain extent they also preceded it. For example, in 1994 the German automobile company Volkswagen bought majority control of the old Czech mega-company Skoda. While the agreement did guarantee the Germans majority control, it also provided the Czechs with a veto over future policy decisions (Leff, 1997). Similarly, Air France took over the Prague Airport Ruzyně and made it into a modern facility. Early in the twenty-first century the American company Motorola began construction of a factory in Moravia in the Beskydy Mountains. Much news accompanied the buy-out of several well known breweries, including Pilsner Urquell, by South African enterprises. Certainly, one by-product of this western industrial and financial involvement would be the rapid infusion of western techniques and know-how in managing an economy on capitalist principles. The result would be acceleration of domestic economic restructuring.

The outreach of the changing Czech economy was not confined exclusively to its European neighborhood. For instance, in the mid-1990s the Czech Republic became a member of UNESCO. In that capacity they took a particular interest in the plight of the ravaged nations that had emerged from the old Yugoslavia. This activity led to membership as well in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In fact, the Czechs were the first from the Central European region to gain membership in that organization. One contribution that Czech leaders made within the OECD was assistance in closing GATT'S Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. As GATT negotiations gave way to the formal establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the ripple effect of Czech contributions continued to expand. In spite of the formidable challenges and overload of new obligations, the Czechs did not ignore third world concerns and suffering. In that regard, they opened in 1993 a Czech Administrative Center. Through its doors passed Czech managers and banking industry leaders as they considered potential investments in individual third world countries (Had, March, 1993). Linkages between the Czech Republic and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) enhanced their reputation for reliability. In August 1994, the nation was the first post-communist state to pay off its initial IMF loan (Leff, 1997). Again, involvement with the larger universe of capitalist economies outside the immediate geographic region paid dividends in terms of domestic economic change.

In sum, the revolution of 1989 combined with the loss of Slovakia in 1993 to generate a rapid rate of economic change. Conversion to capitalist economic principles was inevitable after the 1989 events, but the process received a number of important stimuli. Interest in joining NATO and the drive for EU membership mandated that the nation meet specific criteria in terms of capitalist development. Investments by western firms outside the nation led to collaborative efforts in which Czech managers could more fully see the capitalist system in action. Involvement in the economic projects of a number of global organizations lifted Czech horizons in a positive way. All of this offered a powerful economic antidote to the much more restricted COMECON framework that was characteristic of the Cold War.

Political Transformation and Foreign Policy

Political developments paralleled those in the economic realm. Just as the 1989 revolution opened the door for transition to a capitalist economy, so it also paved the way for democratization of the political system. In similar fashion, the anticipated membership in NATO and the EU was accompanied by acceleration of democratization as well as of movement to the free market economy. In particular, after the 1993 breakup the contrast between the Czech Republic and Slovakia in terms of meeting the criteria of democratization was a noticeable one. As the political system experienced major change, it also became necessary for political leaders to take into account a new burst of popular pressures from society. Clashing of groups and opinions became as characteristic of foreign policy as it was of domestic policy. Political parties disagreed vigorously about foreign policy. Since the Czech Republic is a landlocked country, it was not possible to conclude, as many have about the United States, that politics no longer stops at the water's edge. However, domestic Czech politics definitely radiated across many borders and nations.

The key themes of democratization involved the emergence of a genuine political party system. In fact, this reality was one of the reasons for the collapse of Czechoslovakia in 1993. During the previous four years, political parties had sprung up within the Czech Lands and within Slovakia. However, none had crossed the divide between the two units and included persons from both regions. That reality, complicated by paralyzing rules of the game, made bargaining over selection of the President unfruitful. The developments of 1993 made it possible for the Czech system by itself to make its electoral choices in a more clean-cut way. Peaceful rotation in office is often mentioned as one of the hallmarks of a democracy, and the Czech Republic has experienced that in its brief nine years as a nation. The leadership of the Civic Democratic Party under Václav Klaus yielded after the 1998 elections to management by Miloš Zeman and the Social Democrats. The narrowness of the election necessitated a gentlemen's agreement with the Civic Democrats. While the ride has been a rocky one, the stability of the system has been unquestioned. Thereby, the prospects for admission to both NATO and the EU have been enhanced.

The presidency of Václav Havel since the revolution has been one of the important continuities that has also contributed to system stability. His disagreements with Klaus and Zeman are both well known and well publicized. At the same time, his charismatic, symbolic presence has reminded Czech citizens of the hard fought nature of their democratic achievements. His leadership of the dissident community, his catalytic role in Charter '77, and his orchestration of the anti-communist revolution of 1989 have given him impeccable democratic credentials. He has also survived several elections, and so there has been a choice. The Czech Presidency has been an indirectly elected one, by the legislature, but it has been a competitive one.

Majority-minority relations have also been part of the democratic test and criteria for the nation. This question is important for NATO and especially for potential EU

membership. With the separation from Slovakia, the longstanding conflict between Czechs and Slovaks has given way to the issue of other minorities. A principal issue has been the relationship with the Roma. A number of well-publicized incidents have raised questions about both Czech attitudes and policies toward the Roma. For instance, the erection of a wall by Czechs in Ústí nad Labem in 1999 became a foreign policy incident as well as a temporary setback to pursuit of EU membership. It was clear that the wall was intended to prevent Czechs from having to view the Roma population as well as life-style. In general, it has been very difficult to ascertain either what the percentage of the Roma population was or what the commitment of the Czechs was to education of this minority group. Efforts of the Roma to emigrate to northern European countries or even to North America raised international questions as well. During 2001 the United Kingdom sent personnel to Ruzyne Airport in Prague on several occasions to screen persons of that ethnicity prior to their flights to London. While Czech authorities and citizens were critical of the British policy, the question of the life of the Roma within the Czech Republic remained on the table.

A related matter was the high number of immigrants flooding into or through the Czech Republic after 1993. For example, in 1994 there were 100,000 foreign citizens in the Czech Republic. In the same year 15,000 illegal immigrants were detained by authorities. A full ninety per cent of those detainees had left former communist countries in the Balkans. It was clear that many of those asylum seekers were actually heading to Germany, where economic prospects were even rosier than they were in the Czech Republic. As long as the immigrants moved on to Germany, they were not principally a Czech problem. However, the German government complicated the situation in 1993 through passage of a new immigration law. That law stated that asylum seekers could not enter Germany as long as they were in a safe country that protected human rights. The Czech Republic was such a country. In the same year the Czechs and Germans made an agreement that partially solved the problem. Germany would return such individuals to the Czech Republic. However, the Germans would simultaneously compensate the Czechs for absorbing these new inhabitants (Leff, 1997). This law relieved the economic stress for the Czechs but also intensified Czech resentment against the outsiders who had multiplied to such high numbers.

The emergence of public opinion on foreign policy questions was a new factor that was part of the democratization process. In general, the public was supportive of the new linkages with western institutions. However, there were some differences that were significant. Public opinion polls demonstrated universally high support for membership in the EU. However, before 1999 support for entry into NATO was less impressive. Events of 1999 made some difference. In that year the Czech Republic actually entered NATO. As noted above, the Kosovo bombing campaign took place in the spring of the same year. Such proximity to the wars in the Balkans made Czechs somewhat more likely to think positively about NATO entry (Leff, 1997).

There were also a number of unique efforts to build citizen support for certain foreign policy institutions. One abiding problem was the negative set of Czech attitudes about the role of the military. This resentment of the military is understandable in light

of the long years of the Soviet military presence after 1968. The Soviet military was not confined to isolated bases outside Czech communities, as is often the case in the United States. To the contrary, the Soviet military installations were scattered throughout the Czech cities. Citizens inevitably walked by these institutions during their daily activities and resentment naturally increased. Also, after 1989 the Soviet military left a catastrophe in many Czech communities. The barracks and other facilities were in terrible condition, and individual Soviet units had taken anything of value from those locations. They even took electrical sockets back to Russia. One effort to build more positive Czech attitudes about the military took place in South Bohemia. A citizen group called SAS was formed in 1997. The aim of the group was to demonstrate that the Czech military was a natural instrument in a democratic state rather than merely an instrument of power. The SAS established links to schools and universities with the objective of cultivating a more positive attitude about the Czech military. They set up conferences and also consulted specialists from other nations. In fact, one result of this activity was creation of special ties between the city of Český Krumlov in the Czech Republic and Miami Beach in America. Exchange of ideas about the role of the military could lead to more informed Czech perspectives about the value of a strong defense capability in light of new threats (Vondrouš, 2002).

Balabán (2002) reports that the Ministry of Defense was much involved in this challenge as well. The entry into NATO in 1999 led to much discussion about what a security community entailed and would be like. In fact, the Ministry desired to develop a security community within the Czech Republic. Such a community would spark a deepened societal consciousness of collective responsibility for security. As much as possible, the Ministry sought to link this concept of a security community with the broader governmental commitment to create and further nurture a civil society. Cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would broaden the basis for support of this vital component of a more involved and committed foreign policy.

A related dimension of citizen involvement was creation of the spirit of volunteerism and the growth of the non-profit section. While most discussion has centered on the importance of these sectors in solving a variety of domestic problems, there is also a foreign policy connection. The year 2001 was considered in the Czech Republic to be the "International Year of Volunteers." It was hoped that participation by Czechs in international non-profit organizations would intensify domestic action based on the principle of volunteerism. Thus, Czechs took part more extensively in United Nations' voluntary activities, in observing the Peace Corps, and in work with Doctors Without Borders. Other involvements included the Society for Development of European Volunteers, the Red Cross, and the Argentine-based White Helmets (MZV, 2002). In addition to the above-noted domestic contributions of these activities, Czechs would increasingly be known as a giving people and as a country with a broader capacity for international contributions.

It is also important to look at the main principles of the key political parties in order to comprehend better the nature of the internal debate over foreign policy. This

debate, when coupled with examination of election outcomes, can enhance understanding of an additional link between democratization and foreign policy.

The Klaus Era (1993-97) was one in which the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) was the principal force in the government, with its leader Václav Klaus as Prime Minister. In general, the Klaus government favored all of the steps connected with the return to Europe. The break-up of the Czechoslovak state put the Ukraine and Russia further away geographically from the Czech Republic. Thus, the Czechs as early as 1994 joined the P4P, and stressed closer links to Poland. In one sense security was somewhat greater after 1993 because there were no longer any hostile border states (Szayna, 1999). However, the Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) in opposition reacted against this unidirectional movement towards Western Europe. They preferred reliance on traditional ties to the other three Visegrad countries in the immediate neighborhood. Those other three, in addition to the Czech Republic, included Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary. During the 1997-98 period, in which the caretaker government under former Finance Minister Josef Tošovský served in the leadership capacity, the views of the ODS began to shift. With the elections scheduled for 1998, Klaus and the ODS began to reflect popular interest in protecting Czech interests during the movement into NATO and the EU. For example, they favored a referendum prior to EU entry during the election campaign itself. They also did not want to make concessions during the EU entry process on vital issues flowing out of the consequences of World War II. For instance, they did not want to yield to German pressure to cancel the Beneš decrees that had resulted in the expulsion of Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia right after the end of that war (Mareš, January, 1999).

Analysis of political party positions during the 1998 elections is very revealing in terms of the issues and debates that circulated throughout the Czech Republic in the years that followed the election. The ČSSD ended up technically in power, with Miloš Zeman as Prime Minister, but they lacked a legislative majority. A "Gentlemen's Agreement" with the ODS was necessary in order for that government to survive. Very quickly four smaller parties formed a "Four Party Coalition" to register even a third point of view. The Communist Party was vigorous and quite unreformed in its views. Thus, there was the possibility for a rich and at times acrimonious debate over foreign policy. This was especially true in light of the paramount importance of membership in both NATO and the EU for the Czech nation.

For the ČSSD there was less emphasis on hardheaded defense of national interests and more of a focus on living standards and rights of citizens within the country. This link to public opinion led them to endorse the idea of a referendum prior to entry into either the EU or NATO. Czech sovereignty loomed more significant for them than extension of Czech national interests into the region. There also was a humanitarian component to their view of Czech relations with the outside world. Such a focus led them to upgrade the importance of North-South relations and a role for the UN. The Czechs should have a say when human rights were jeopardized in any part of the world. While they endorsed EU membership, they thought of it in terms of sparking the Czech economy. While they favored NATO entry, they expressed grave concerns

about future location of nuclear weapons on Czech territory. They were also quite sensitive to Russian concerns about expansion east of the military alliance. For the ČSSD the WEU and OSCE were very important, and the immediate neighborhood, including Slovakia, should not be ignored (Durr, 2000).

During the 1998 election, the ODS gave a somewhat more realpolitik cast to its statements on foreign policy. National interests rather than humanitarian concerns were the top priority. NATO membership could bring increased security for the nation as well as trade and technological benefits. The latter would promote development of the free market, a priority for Klaus since the early 1990s. National economic interests were of paramount importance, while crusades connected with globalization and human rights were to be carefully examined. Increased Czech exports through membership in international organizations were the desired outcome. Thus, the party said less about broader international organizations that could pull the Czech nation beyond the orbit of its national interests (Durr, 2000).

Some of the smaller political parties also had clear and at times strong views on foreign policy in the 1998 election campaign. Expectedly, the Communist Party (KSČM) possessed very definite ideas about the foreign policy questions of the day. They rejected the idea of entry into NATO, for membership in the alliance would lead to domination by the United States and Germany, would be expensive, would limit national sovereignty, and would result in a de-emphasis on traditional ties to the East. They did favor EU entry, but such a move needed to be coupled with an emphasis on equity and the use of a referendum. The Christian Democratic Union-Czech People's Party (KDU-ČSL) favored both entry into NATO and membership in the EU, but they suggested creation of a new organization that would link those two organizations, the WEU, the UN, and the OSCE. The Freedom Union (US) had a particular interest in anchoring new organizational memberships in public opinion. For them, promotion of foreign policy discussions at the regional and local level was an important objective. In that sense, the Europe of the Regions within the EU was quite attractive. On the extreme right the Republicans possessed quite negative views about the strengthening tie to Germany. From their perspective, it would be better to spend money on education and health care than it would be to spend on increased defense projects. They were also very critical on the use of the Sudeten German issue by Germany as a potential device for rejecting Czech entry into either of the two organizations (Durr, 2000). While the principal debate took place between the ČSSD and the ODS, the attitudes of these smaller parties helped to broaden the range of concerns expressed within the nation on the main foreign policy issues of the election campaign.

Following the election and the advent to power of the ČSSD, foreign policy questions continued to increase in importance. NATO membership for the Czech Republic became a reality in 1999, and the Gotenburg Summit of 2001 resulted in a fairly firm commitment of EU membership by 2003. The Zeman government ironed out the technical details connected with entry into NATO and made important contributions to the NATO mission in Kosovo in 1999. They were able to firm up ties with Slovakia, a longstanding plank in their platform, for reasons that lie outside the Czech state. The

Slovak nationalist leader Vladimír Mečiar fell from power and Miloš Dzurinda replaced him as Prime Minister. This made fruitful discussions between the two nations much more likely. In particular, they anticipated progress on the critical issue of division of former federal property, and the two nations signed a compromise document on that issue on November 24, 1999. As expected, the ČSSR sought to upgrade the Czech role in the OSCE. In addition to concern about individual rights, Zeman also expressed the hope to utilize that organization in the service of minority rights. There was also limited progress with Germany on the issue of the Beneš Decrees and the Sudeten Germans. Zeman conceded that the Beneš Decrees no longer applied in October, 1999, and the Germans promised that relations between the two states would no longer be hung up on the past (Kotyk, January, 2000). In power the ČSSD was able to promote some of its longstanding goals, but on other issues its leader had to incorporate perspectives of the smaller parties as well. This no doubt was necessary due to the closeness of the election and the narrowness of the Zeman mandate.

Some of the key foreign policy events of the 1999-2001 period led to heated arguments among some of the political parties. For instance, the ČSSD had to deal on a nearly continuous basis with protestors against the operation of the Temelin nuclear reactor. The Communist Party pushed them with some force on that issue. At the same time, the ODS expressed often the interests of exile groups and took up the rallying cry of working to obtain for them dual citizenship rights (Politika v České republice, January, 1999). Czech participation in the Kosovo bombing also resulted in vigorous debates. Some within the ČSSD criticized the party's endorsement of the mission. The Communist Party organized a demonstration in Prague against the NATO action, while the Freedom Union proclaimed that the bombing campaign violated international law (Politika v České republice, February, 1999). In early 2001 the temporary incarceration of two Czech citizens by the Castro regime in Cuba brought strong party views to the surface, especially from the smaller parties. For example, the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA) was critical of Cuba but also argued that the Czech Republic should put distance between itself and those wanting to continue the sanctions against Cuba. The Republicans complained about the amount of money that was being spent on diplomatic missions to free Pilip and Bubeník. The Communist Party was more critical of the two Czechs caught in Cuba and worried about future damage to Czech-Cuban relations. Finally, some of the smaller parties in Moravia (MDS) and Silesia/Moravia (HSMS) began to see the Europe of the Regions of the EU as a vehicle for enhancing their own national rights with the Czech state (Politika v České republice, January, 2001). They, however, are small parties with a limited influence.

In conclusion, transformation of the state into a democracy had a number of significant foreign policy linkages. Prospects for NATO and EU membership raised the stakes for creation of a stable, workable democracy. Open elections, rotation in office, and attention to minority rights issues constituted some of those important democratic features. Further, public pressures penetrated into the making of foreign policy. A number of these key factors included public opinion, non-profit groups, and political parties with clashing viewpoints. Czech foreign policy is, therefore, an inextricable part of its new democratic ethos.

National Separation from the Slovaks and Foreign Policy

Separation from Slovakia led to intense activity on a number of new foreign policy fronts. First and foremost, they included efforts to underpin the national security of the new, smaller, Czech state. Attention shifted from an emphasis on the Western European Union (WEU), to the campaign for NATO membership, to consideration of the role of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU. Second, a number of separate foreign policy challenges emerged and challenged the leadership to discover a constructive response. Some of those key challenges included both the controversy with Austria over the Temelin Plant and a conflict with Germany over the Beneš Decrees. In addition, Czechs began to involve themselves more fully in international organizations such as the UN, OSCE, and Visegrad. Thus, the foreign policy agenda of the new republic was a crowded one.

Creation of the WEU occurred in 1948 with the signing of the Brussels Treaty. However, in the following year NATO placed the WEU under its jurisdictional umbrella (Bednář, 1999). The WEU emerged with some significance in the 1950s after the collapse of the European Defense Community (EDC). Suspicion about West German participation in the EDC had led to its defeat, and thus the WEU became a tool in the early Cold War for factoring in both West Germany and Italy to European defense planning. However, the entry of the United Kingdom into the EU in 1973 began the process of the organization's decline. In 1984 the Rome Declaration underlined the importance of the WEU in an effort to bring it back to life (Nikodém, 1999). Several years later the WEU made some contributions to the UN victory in the Persian Gulf War (Bednář, 1999). While the WEU could have possessed equally strong ties to the EU and to NATO, poor communications between the EU and WEU in the early 1990s led to the stronger tie between NATO and WEU (Bretherton and Vogler, 1999).

By 1994 the WEU was of significance to the integrating efforts of both the EU and NATO. The Maastricht Accord of 1991 imputed to the WEU a role in promoting the process of European integration in a way that would assist Europe in taking responsibility for its own affairs. It was with the development of the agreements at Maastricht that the WEU for the first time was assigned a tangible role (Emerson, 1998). Following Maastricht, the WEU invited other EU and NATO nations to join (Bednář, 1999). At the same time, many hoped that the WEU would create a platform for political consensus within NATO and also concrete support for the functional unity of NATO (Pezl, May, 1994). During the following year, 1992, the important Petersburg Declaration was passed. That Declaration set up a WEU Planning Cell and also alerted members to the need to make military units available. Many hoped that the WEU could be the European "pillar" of NATO as well as the military organization of the EU (Bednář, 1999). As late as 1996-97 there were expectations that the WEU would be an appropriate tool for providing force in support of defensive operations, humanitarian missions, and peace operations. There was even talk of expansion of the membership of the organization (Khol, April, 2000).

However, declining interest in the organization soon set in. Central European states took more of an interest in joining the EU and NATO than they did in hooking up with the WEU. In reality, by the late 1990s no one expected much from the WEU given the growing importance of the other two organizations (Khol, April, 2000). In spite of the growing doubts throughout the 1990s, The WEU continued to be part of the discussions that involved the Czech Republic. For example, in October 2000 the Czech Republic joined the WEU's armament group (WEAG). It was hoped that this step would enable the nation's defense industry to compete on an equal basis with other European arms producers (RFE/RL, October 31, 2000). While the Czech Republic was able to take part in WEU Council meetings, the nation could not block decisions made by a consensus of the regular members (Šedivý, 1999). Further, the Czech Republic could take part in planning any WEU operations that utilized NATO assets as well as the WEU satellite center.

At the same time, by the late 1990s discussions within the Czech Republic about admission to NATO dominated conversations about the WEU. Admission to NATO in 1999 brought new obligations for the Czech Republic. There was a need to prepare defense legislation and proposals in order to begin the process of meeting NATO standards. A need to address changed personnel requirements was also important. The military began to develop courses about the changing role of the military for all ranks. Training in the use of radar was upgraded in importance. The Czech Republic would have to build a crisis command center that would facilitate the rapid sharing of information between NATO and the Czech Republic. Further, a new system of logistic security was a necessity. New organizations and structures for the military forces were a future need. In addition, the Czechs would have to build a system of command and control that paralleled the systems in other NATO nations. In fact, standardization across many areas of the military profession would become a pressure very soon. Besides the military component, there was also the important arena of non-military defense of the country. Moravia and Northern Bohemia had already begun to erect structures for civilian emergency planning, but these efforts had to be expanded to the entire nation (Svěrák, February, 1999). All of these new efforts after 1999 would demand much from a nation and people that were struggling with the dislocations that characterized the early post-communist era.

Immediately, NATO had an opportunity to use its expanded membership base to carry out the Kosovo operation in the spring of 1999. However, problems soon emerged, and a principal one was the asymmetry of the war (Pick, 2000). America provided eighty per cent of the bombs dropped on Kosovo as well as ninety per cent of the weapons. U.S. airplanes were the only ones that could operate in all weather. These figures are rooted in a broader defense imbalance between Europe and America in the post-Cold War period. Lowered defense budgets in that decade resulted in a situation in which All European members of NATO contributed approximately two-thirds of what the United States did to defense. Within the Czech Republic the Ministry of Defense did respond, and a blueprint for change existed by 2001. In terms of defense capabilities, the areas needing a rapid upgrade were maneuverability of units, logistical strength, appropriate placement of weaponry and personnel, ability to resist over a long

period, and information command and control. Further, the Ministry drew up a list of four principles that would guide Czech participation in NATO. They included continued involvement of the two North American powers in defense of Europe, reliance on NATO as the main guarantor of European security, subordination of the CFSP of the EU to the framework of NATO, and guaranteed access to NATO capabilities in all EU defense and security missions (Novotný, 2002).

By the early 1990s the EU began to outline plans for its own defense structure, one that would be independent of the North Atlantic nations that so dominated NATO. For example, they created their own Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 1990, a year that followed the revolutionary events of anti-communist victories in Central Europe. However, the newly created machinery was unable to play any role in the Persian Gulf War in 1991 and did little during the disintegration of Yugoslavia (Khol, April, 2000). A second step in the process of developing defense muscle power for the EU occurred in 1993 with the Treaty of Maastricht. This Treaty resulted in the addition of permanent officials from the EU Council Secretariat as well as fifteen diplomats from each Foreign Ministry to the CFSP (Bretherton and Vogler, 1999).

In early 2001 the Czech Foreign Minister (Kavan, January, 2001) made a persuasive case for the natural harmony between the objectives of the CFSP and the national interests of the Czech Republic. For him the current spirit of cooperation in Europe was a needed antidote to the suffering of the Czechoslovak nation during the twentieth century. The Czech Republic would gain both assistance in its multi-pronged process of development and also the opportunity to contribute to regional problem solving. He did not envision participation in European and Atlantic structures as a threat to Czech national interests. In particular, the December 2000 Nice Summit generated organizational changes in EU institutions that would continue to break down the artificial barriers that divided Europe during the Cold War. Growing European strength would simultaneously contribute to an increase in Czech capabilities. States like the Czech Republic needed a respite from pressure by Brussels and looked forward to a pleasant, calming integration process after the summer 2001 Goteborg Summit (Telička, 2001).

In concrete terms the Czech Republic made certain commitments to the CFSP process through its National Program in the year 2000. The Program stated a readiness to adopt the CFSP Acquis. In the previous year the Czech Republic had increased the number of staff members working in the Department for Political Relations with the EU. These individuals had assigned responsibilities for CFSP issues within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Further, they created an Associated European Correspondent Unit to ensure open communication and dialogue with the EU (National Program, 2000). At that point the Czech Republic had already for one year been participating in the regular meetings of the CFSP and some of its associate structures (National Program, 1999). All of these activities combined with the positive attitude of foreign policy leaders to offer hope for both a smooth transition into and full participation in the CFSP processes and policies.

A number of tough foreign policy controversies with neighboring countries demanded Czech foreign policy responses. Opening of the Temelin nuclear reactor provoked a sharp response from neighboring Austria. Many public demonstrations took place at the Czech border and also in other locations. Some Austrian political leaders entered the fray as well. Continued shutdowns and technical problems with the facility compounded these complaints. On December 12, 2000, the two nations signed the Melk Protocol to deal with this threat to their relations. That Protocol set up a “hot information” link to provide information in an emergency as rapidly as possible. The Czechs needed to provide information about any emergencies or fire-related problems within twenty-four hours. In addition, they had to provide key information about and “event” to the Austrians within seventy-two hours (Protocol, 2000). In spite of this agreement, breakdowns and protests continued into 2002.

If the Temelin controversy was one rooted in the most modern technology, the problem with Germany over the Beneš Decrees had much deeper historical roots. The Beneš London Government in Exile had published the Decrees in the 1940-45 period. They constituted the legal rationale for the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia after 1945. Germany called for repeal of those Decrees in the 1990s. Fearing a thicket of complicated ensuing problems, the Czechs resisted such repeal. In particular, the Czechs feared demands by German citizens for expropriation of former lands and compensation by the government. In 1997 both nations signed a Czech-German Agreement on the matter. That Agreement stated that the Beneš Decrees would not create legal and political problems in the future. Further, the law would not permit any expropriation of Czech territory without compensation by the courts. From the Czech perspective, the Decrees continued to be part of the fabric of Czech Law, but their effectiveness was extinguished (MZV, 2002). As in the case of Temelin, the Agreement did not prevent tough political combat that continued into early 2002.

Czech foreign policy horizons widened with deepened participation in international and regional organizations. For instance, The Czech Republic became a non-permanent member of the Security Council of the UN in 1994-95. In that leadership capacity, the nation sent troops to Croatia and also took part in the initial IFOR operation in Bosnia (Žumár, November, 1997). This UN role also encouraged them to provide direct assistance in order to resolve conflicts in Georgia, Iraq, and Rwanda.

The Organization of Security and Cooperation Europe (OSCE) also received increased Czech attention. In 1998 the Czechs became the Coordinator of Roma relations within the OSCE’s Secretariat. In the following year they involved themselves in the activities of that organization in Bosnia, Chechnya, Georgia, Croatia, Kosovo, and Nagorno-Karabakh (Matejka, January, 2000). Sharing of information within the organization improved with certain decisions at the Istanbul Summit of 1999. That Summit made the decision to create a database of information that could be used in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-crisis renewal. It was anticipated that any nation could move its own specialists to crisis areas much more rapidly (MZV,

2002). Given the geographic position of the Czech Republic in the center of Europe, it was likely that the Czechs might serve as the crossroads of such an enterprise.

Within its own region Czech participation in the Visegrad Group wavered throughout the decade. The organization formed in 1991 and included Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland (Leff, 1997). Four important meetings took place in that period of the early 1990s, and Visegrad was an important communications link with both NATO and the EU. After the breakup of the Czechoslovak state, the regional organization was quiescent for several years (MZV, 2002). There may have been a fear that too active involvement in the Visegrad Group might have delayed entry into the EU. With the defeat of the Mečiar Government in Slovakia, the Visegrad concept became a more vital one. A summit of premiers took place in Budapest in 1999, and a key issue of concern was assistance to Slovakia as it now was able to pursue both NATO and EU membership with greater confidence.

In sum, a mix of new challenges hit the new Czech state after separation from Slovakia in 1993. The foremost challenge was establishment of its own security in the center of Europe. At different times, the WEU, NATO, and the EU's CFSP served as the hoped for framework for such security. Probably all three are so intertwined that it will not be necessary for the Czechs to choose just one option. This is particularly the case with NATO and the CFSP. Not all new challenges were tied to security and defense. Two of the most controversial areas of foreign policy activity entailed the fallout with Austria over the problems with Temelin and the reemergence with force of the old issue of the Sudeten Germans. Fortunately, new organizational involvements in the UN, OSCE and Visegrad served to provide additional forums for discussion of such dilemmas.

Conclusion

Economic restructuring into a capitalist system, political transformation into a democracy, and separation from Slovakia constituted three major revolutions in the short space of a decade. Having considered their basic elements one-by-one, it is now important to reflect on their connections. The concluding thesis is that achievement of all three revolutions was necessary for the Czech Republic to arrive at the point that it had by early 2002. At that point, the country had been a member of NATO for nearly three years and had probably less than a two-year wait for EU membership. Accomplishments in all three revolutions accounted for that high status.

Restructuring of the economy in the direction of a free market was a vital step towards EU membership, in light of that organization's original economic rationale. Economic changes also made the Czech Republic more attractive to NATO, since the Czech capacity to make a larger budgetary contribution in the defense area would be enhanced. At the same time, the Slovak situation served as a reminder that political democratization was equally important. Economic changes alone would not have been enough to enable the Czechs to be on the verge of integration into wider European structures. Further, had the Czechs stayed connected with Slovakia in a federal nation-

state, the progress of the Czechs would have been compromised by Slovakia's domestic situation.

Political democratization was immediate after the events of November 1989. Emergence of a competitive political party system was apparent by the elections of 1990, and the brooding figure of Václav Havel provided a veneer of stability and continuity during times of difficult political discussions. However, foot-dragging on privatization of the economy would not have made the Czech Republic nearly as attractive to the EU. Prime Minister Klaus' decision to inject the economy with "shock therapy" was painful in the short run but pushed the Czech Republic to the top of potential EU new members. Poland serves as a contrasting example, in which early economic reforms were moderated by election results that brought some of the old left-wing forces into power. Poland's status was thus lower than that of the Czech's with respect to EU entry. Again, continuation of the tie to Slovakia would have made the Czech case more difficult to interpret and more problematic. In fact, lack of democratization in Slovakia under Mečiar would not have been the only problem. Had the two states remained together, political paralysis would have been standard operating procedure.

Finally, separation from Slovakia without the other two revolutions would have put the Czechs in a totally different category. Czechs would have been in a better situation in the sense that their economy would have been stronger without the Slovak component. However the absence of a free market and democracy would have placed the Czech Republic into a more isolated situation. Belarus separated from Russia, and so did Uzbekistan. However, their continued reliance on political authoritarianism and state-directed economic planning made them into problematic nations. A variety of international organizations such as OSCE direct a barrage of criticism against Belarus. In spite of Uzbekistan's contributions to the war in Afghanistan, continued foreign assistance from the United States depends on their new commitment to democracy.

In the end, the Czech Republic made the best of the three revolutions. Commitment to economic restructuring was an intentional one made by the Klaus government. Devotion to genuine democratic institutions was both intentional and inevitable once Havel became President. Separation from Slovakia was neither intentional nor inevitable. It resulted from the unworkable election procedures established for the Czechoslovak state in 1989 as well as from the posturing of individual political leaders. However, the break between Czechs and Slovaks accelerated Czech progress in the other two revolutionary areas. Intention combined with accident to produce high achievement in the eyes of the world.

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