A RAND NOTE

The Military in a Postcommunist Czechoslovakia

Thomas S. Szayna
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The Military in a Postcommunist Czechoslovakia

Thomas S. Szayna

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This Note examines the evolution of the Czechoslovak armed forces since the political changes in Czechoslovakia in late 1989. It concentrates on the evolution of civil-military relations in an attempt to gauge the extent of change in the roles and missions of the Czechoslovak military. Material in this document is based on a review of the indigenous military press and of nonmilitary media in translation, and on conversations with Czechoslovak civilian and military officials. The study was completed in September 1991. This Note is the second in a series of studies of East European militaries. The first dealt with the Polish military.

This Note was prepared as part of a larger project describing security policies of the emerging democracies in Eastern Europe that was undertaken for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy by RAND's National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center supported by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff. The research was conducted within RAND's International Economic Policy Program. This Note should be of interest to policymakers and scholars concerned with Eastern Europe, Western relations with Eastern Europe, and Soviet ties with the region.
SUMMARY

The Czechoslovak military has become a genuinely nonpartisan institution that operates on the basis of the democratic principles governing the state. Neither the Communist Party nor the USSR can claim any significant continued influence over the army. This has been the main achievement since the political changes in 1989. But a new, different problem has emerged since the ouster of the old regime, in that the military has been affected by the ethnic conflict that has shaken the very foundations of the Czechoslovak state. There are indications of extensive and growing ethnic mobilization among Slovak officers who call for the formation of two separate armies, Czech and Slovak. After witnessing the success of the Slovene militia in fighting the Yugoslav army to a standstill in June 1991, some in Slovakia have urged the formation of a similar force—a Home Guard. The calls for the formation of a separate Slovak military or a Slovak Home Guard amount respectively to a de facto dissolution or downgrading of the Czechoslovak federal military. In addition, the military continues to suffer from low prestige, a longstanding problem in Czechoslovakia that would probably take a decade to erase even in the best of circumstances.

The Czechoslovak military assumed a basically neutral stance during the ouster of the old regime in 1989. Sensitivities toward Soviet security concerns forced the new elite to proceed slowly in changing the outward orientation of Czechoslovak ground forces. Nevertheless, the military, led by a competent professional uniformed military, launched extensive internal changes by effectively disengaging the Communist Party from any formal role in the armed forces. Instruments of communist (and Soviet) control over the Czechoslovak military such as the political apparatus and military counterintelligence were dissolved, and their staffs underwent a detailed screening process directed by people who had been purged after 1968. All regular line officers also went through a screening process to ascertain their loyalty.

While the reforms were genuinely far-reaching, they continued in some respects to be examples of incremental change rather than a fundamental leap, a fact that failed to satisfy some of the new civilian officials as well as many younger officers. The elements disaffected with the pace of change began a campaign for more substantial reforms. The effort led to the appointment of a civilian defense minister in 1990.

The Defense Ministry quickly became a civilian-dominated and increasingly civilian-staffed institution, with a formal separation of powers between the operational-level command of the troops and the political-administrative leadership. A new military doctrine
established Czechoslovakia as a de facto neutral country, with a plan of territorial defense. Verification of the earlier screening process caused further organizational and personnel changes and coopted or marginalized the elements that had been pressing for a faster pace of reform. The problem of the military's low prestige continued, but that is a long-term issue with deep underlying causes.

The ethnic conflict that had resurfaced immediately following the political changes in 1989 spread to the military by late 1990. Militant Slovak ethnic nationalist organizations formed in the military, calling for the formation of two armies (Czech and Slovak). These groups are ethnically mobilized to such an extent that their views preclude any compromise. Elements within the Slovak government support these groups. In fact, a Slovak army is in effect being formed, helped unwittingly by some of the humanitarian provisions of the army's reform program (such as stationing conscripts closer to their home areas). The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the breakup of the USSR have provided some lessons for Slovak ethnic nationalists, who have used chauvinistic appeals to increase the sense of danger and the level of interethnic animosities in Slovakia, which in turn fuel the demands for a Slovak territorial militia.

In an indication of the advanced stage of ethnic conflict, all issues have become permeated by ethnic considerations. Issues such as the conversion of the armaments industry (located mainly in Slovakia), redeployment of forces, staffing, and military doctrine are increasingly viewed through the prism of ethnicity. The spreading of ethnic conflict throughout its ranks is the most serious problem currently facing the Czechoslovak military. As the continuance of a unitary Czechoslovak state looks ever more in doubt, a highly autonomous or independent Slovak state seems increasingly likely.

The Czechoslovak military has looked to the Western militaries as models for its own development. The Bundeswehr especially, but also the U.S. Army and the militaries of European neutrals and some other NATO countries have been closely scrutinized by Czechoslovak officials. There is a role for the United States in supporting the continued evolution of the Czechoslovak military. In the areas of enhancing the military's prestige, improving relations within the military, and assisting the further development of stable civil-military relations, the United States can play a useful role by providing expertise and advice. The insights of U.S. military psychologists may prove to be highly instructive, both in applying liberal democratic principles within the military and dealing with ethnic conflict (based on the extensive experience of the U.S. military in this area).

The United States can play a more substantial role in assisting the conversion process, which in turn could ameliorate some of the ethnic conflict and help create a more stable
international environment in the region. But U.S. policymakers also need to fully understand the complex domestic situation that may lead to future Czechoslovak arms sales, and they should thus be careful not to expect too much from the conversion process. Czechoslovakia is looking to the West for assistance in building its air defense system and for upgrading the technological level of its ground forces. There is a role for the United States in this area too, perhaps as part of a policy toward the de facto tripartite entente (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary). Finally, Czechoslovakia needs U.S. political support for its reintegration into Europe, a process that includes a security dimension.
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1. INTRODUCTION

The political revolutions in Eastern Europe in the fall of 1989 and the developments in the region since that time have severely cut or eliminated most Soviet sources of control over the militaries of their erstwhile East European allies. The extent of the change is enormous.

Following the end of World War II and the imposition of the Soviet political and economic model in Eastern Europe, the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) militaries developed as subordinate components of a system of military organization led and dominated by the USSR. Since the 1960s, the main trend in Soviet-East European military relations had been to ensure Soviet control over the East European armed forces and to harness these forces for Soviet external military ends. Now, the elaborate control structure built over 45 years has collapsed.

The Soviet control system was a vast network of parallel and mutually reinforcing institutions and procedures that penetrated to every level of the East European militaries.\(^1\) The ouster of communists from power in Eastern Europe, followed by the curtailment of Communist Party activities within the NSWP militaries, eliminated the most important Soviet control mechanism. The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact brought to an end a crucial vehicle of Soviet control over the NSWP militaries.

The process of lessening Soviet control over the NSWP militaries has differed somewhat in the various countries of the region, and indeed the process is still incomplete in some respects. A few aspects of at least latent Soviet influence will remain for some time. For example, since the NSWP militaries are outfitted almost exclusively with Soviet armaments, they rely on Soviet spare parts. Domestic production of Soviet armaments under license solves some but not all of the problem. Similarly, the legacy of over 40 years of Soviet domination over the NSWP militaries is likely to persist in an intellectual form; the exclusive training of the NSWP countries' officer corps in Soviet concepts of warfare will color any autonomous East European military thinking for some time. East European officers have begun to attend Western military academies, but the change in military thinking will be gradual and it will take many years. Nevertheless, the East European militaries are no longer usable for Soviet ends. If anything, the political leaderships in Poland,

Czechoslovakia, and Hungary view the USSR as the main potential adversary. In this sense, the East European militaries have been unharnessed from the USSR.

Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary have gone through similar processes of military reform. They have experienced similar problems, and, in recognition of the common tasks, the three countries are engaging in increasingly close collaboration that includes military cooperation. An evaluation of how far the three countries have gone in transforming their militaries will provide the background for any Western deliberations on ensuring that the process continues, and it will pinpoint some areas of possible Western assistance.

OBJECTIVE, APPROACH, AND ORGANIZATION

This Note aims to assess the changes in the roles and missions of the Czechoslovak military since the political changes in 1989. It examines the developments in declaratory doctrine and provides an analytical review of the evolution of civil-military relations and the reform of the military. Civil-military relations are central to any assessment of the Czechoslovak military, and they are stressed throughout this Note. As the new political elite extends its control over the national security agenda, it is steadily imposing on the military its perceptions of threat and the use of force. Military doctrine and force planning are thus being reshaped by the new political situation, and must be evaluated in that light.

The Note is based on a comprehensive reading of the Czechoslovak nonmilitary press in translation and a thorough review of the main military-political publications—the weekly Obrana Lidu, the monthly A Revue (successor to Lidova Armada), and the wide circulation magazine for soldiers, Vecko (successor to Ceskoslovensky Vojak)—published between November 1989 and July 1991. Most of the data consists of published interviews with civilian or military functionaries or their official statements. Secondary source analyses have been used in a peripheral role. The printed sources are supplemented by a series of interviews conducted by the author in May 1991 with a number of Czechoslovak military officers, civilian officials associated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, members of parliament, and academics. This Note is based on information available as of September 1991.

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2On April 20, 1990, the name of the country was changed to “Czech and Slovak Federal Republic.” The name Czechoslovakia is used throughout this study for reasons of convenience.

3Bulgaria’s process of military reform has been slower, while Romania is a different case altogether.

4All NSWP military press was modeled on the Soviet example. See A. Ross Johnson, The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: The Role of Military Journals, RAND, N-1514/3, December 1980. That study remains the only examination of the East European military press.
A section outlining the conceptual framework for the study precedes the main body of this Note. The framework provides an analytical lens for thinking about civil-military relations and about ethnic conflict—the two issues that have dominated the evolution of the Czechoslovak military since 1989. Following that are a section describing the state of the Czechoslovak military before the political changes and a section dealing with the role of the military during the transition itself.

The period from January 1990 to September 1991 is divided into two sections. The first period starts with the assumption of top state positions by the new elite in December 1989 and January 1990 and is marked by the uniformed military’s continued dominance of the Ministry of Defense. The radical disengagement of the military from politics was the main issue that dominated the evolution of the military during this phase. The second period began with the appointment of a civilian to the post of Minister of Defense in October 1990. During this stage, the disengagement of the military from politics gradually came to be overshadowed by the emergence of widespread ethnic conflict in the military.

In both periods, civil-military relations revolved around two issues: the civilian-sanctioned changing of Czechoslovak military doctrine toward territorial defense, and a comprehensive reform of the military. The former stemmed from the striving for full sovereignty and independence from the USSR by the new Czechoslovak government, while the latter was an integral component of the fundamental restructuring of the polity initiated by the new political elite, which in turn involved changing the military’s role in society. These issues are treated separately in Secs. 5 and 6.
2. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN COMMUNIST EASTERN EUROPE

Civil-military relations in the communist countries of Eastern Europe had been characterized by the subordination and partial cooption of the military to the Communist Party, with the civilian communist rulers expending great efforts to insure that the military was an integral part and a pillar of the regime against perceived external and internal opponents. The communists penetrated the militaries at all levels. Party membership and the officer corps overlapped substantially and was universal at the higher ranks. Indeed, the communists' use of the military as one of the tools to socialize the conscripts illustrates the communists' perception of the military as a mainstay of the regime.

In effect, through politicization, the communists tried to erase some of the institutional differences between the police and the military. By its nature, the police is a political institution that concerns itself with domestic order and with upholding the regime, but a modern military relies for its efficiency on being a nonpartisan state institution that transcends the political cleavages within a polity.\(^1\) Attempts to create an efficient military create a pull away from politicization and in favor of professionalization of the officer corps\(^2\) and increased autonomy of the military. Accordingly, as the officer corps of the East European militaries became more professional, they could not help but be affected by the conventional fundamental institutional imperative of any modern military—defense of the state, rather than a section of the society.\(^3\)

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\(^2\)As defined by Samuel P. Huntington, professionalism of the officer corps entails specific expertise, responsibility, and corporateness (*The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge [Massachusetts], London, Harvard University Press, 1957). The service ethic that is internalized by a professional soldier includes a strong commitment and a sense of responsibility to defend the state (and the society) from external threats.

\(^3\)In a major study of the Czechoslovak military, Condoleezza Rice argues that its allegiance had in fact been politicized, so the state orientation was no longer the major factor and the choice of its allegiance was narrowed to either the USSR or the Czechoslovak Communist Party. In effect, Rice narrows the choice to complete denationalization or full politicization. However, the evidence Rice marshals suggests just the opposite—that the military retained a state orientation; it was the party that went through different phases of intensity in terms of allegiance to the CPSU and the USSR as a whole. *The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army, 1948–1983; Uncertain Allegiance*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984. For a critique of Rice's argument, see Watts, "New-Type Socialist Armies."
Because of the conflicting pulls of professionalization and politicization, East European militaries were hybrid institutions; they were national in that (by the late 1950s) they exhibited substantial and growing professionalism and retained fundamental motivational orientation centered on the state rather than the party, but they also were Soviet-serving institutions that served as upholders of the communist regimes. The hybrid nature of the East European armed forces always made them uncertain tools of domestic repression, usable only in cases of last resort and then at risk to the regime.

The two-sided nature of the East European militaries was most visible at the officer corps level. Officers in line positions and in technologically intensive services were most professional because of the level of expertise required to master these positions. Professionalization was less evident among political or security officers.

The situation was more one-sided at the level of enlisted men. Because the East European communist militaries were staffed by conscripts, the motivation and reliability of draftees was always suspect, for a conscript military reflects the society. The predominantly anticommunist and anti-Soviet outlooks in Poland, Czechoslovakia (especially after 1968), and Hungary were reflected at the lower levels of East European militaries.

The militaries clearly do not seem to have been trusted by the communists as much as the police; the creation of many police formations in East European countries only reinforces the point about the communists' reluctance to use the military for domestic control. In fact, the political apparatuses and the counterintelligence organizations in the NSWP militaries served as the visible and the secret vehicles, respectively, for the communists to police the militaries and watch for any signs of political unreliability among line officers.

Although some Western analysts claimed that the East European militaries had been substantially politicized, actual politicization—as opposed to superficial—was small. Theoretical shortcomings began to erode the earlier outlooks, especially after empirical studies during the 1980s showed evidence of basic deficiencies in the politicization of East European militaries. Final confirmation that the state rather than regime remained the primary motivational orientation of the East European militaries came during the revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989, when the various militaries in the region proved to be largely state-oriented institutions that proved unwilling or unable to prop up the falling communist regimes.

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Some Czechoslovak Examples

Several aspects of the Czechoslovak case illustrate its fit into the overall scheme of civil-military relations in Eastern Europe. One, the trend toward professionalization and against party control of the military, occasionally became openly visible in Czechoslovakia. For example, in the mid-1960s there were calls against direct party control of the military emanating from the Klement Gottwald Military Political Academy (showing that even some political officers identified with the military's rather than the party's interests) and the Military Historical Institute.\(^5\) Two, the deliberations of the Czechoslovak military between 1963–1968 culminated in an independent national military doctrine that emphasized national over alliance interests. The very concept of such a doctrine was anathema to the Brezhnev leadership, and its emergence was one of the clearest proofs that the Czechoslovak military did not lose its basic state orientation.

Finally, post-1968 Czechoslovakia offered one of the foremost examples of the growth of internal security forces in lieu of, and at the expense of, the military. In the aftermath of the “Prague Spring,” the various security forces under the control of the Ministry of the Interior, combined with the communist hard-liners’ own private army, the People’s Militia, grew to such an extent that they probably came to rival the military.\(^6\) The growth of the internal security apparatus only reinforces the point that the regime preferred to have alternatives to using the military for domestic control. If the growth of the police apparatus was simply an indication of the level of insecurity of the regime and the regime did not distinguish greatly between police and the military, then it would have been rational to expect growth in both the military and the police. Yet the police grew proportionately much more than the military (which was barely rebuilt).

Such evidence suggests that the regime perceived the military as unsuitable and possibly untrustworthy for domestic policing duties. Through the system of political controls the regime kept a close eye on the top hierarchy of the military, but the reliability of many line officers and NCOs must have been suspect. The conscripts, kept under control through harsh discipline, also had limited reliability.

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THE TASKS OF REFORMING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN EAST EUROPE

When the new noncommunist officials came to power in Eastern Europe, the specific tasks they faced in restructuring civil-military relations revolved around the goal of eliminating the hybrid nature of the militaries by reestablishing the lines of formal authority within the militaries and getting rid of the informal, but sometimes dominant, channels of authority. Such a goal entails a whole new form of civil-military relations. The basic issue is the radical political disengagement of the military, for a close overlap between the officer corps and one political party is incompatible with a military's role in a democratic society. Even if Communist Party membership had been only a formality that carried little substance for many officers, the military had to be changed so that membership in any political party was irrelevant to professional advancement. Conversely, the Communist Party's monopoly on all matters relating to the state, including its defense, had to be curtailed so as to insure equal access to positions of state power to all political movements, with the access being apportioned and legitimized through elections.

The specific steps that reflected these goals (and which the new elite in Czechoslovakia began to implement) can be grouped into several categories: (1) severing all links between the Communist Party and the military; (2) abolishing the Communist Party's monopoly within the military; (3) establishing a meritocracy and prohibiting political criteria from being a factor in the functioning of the armed forces; (4) subordinating the military to parliamentary control; and (5) establishing formal channels to the legislature for articulating the military's institutional interests. Efforts to implement these tasks began concurrently with the political change.

Neither disengaging the military from politics and establishing it as a genuine state institution nor reestablishing a formalized command hierarchy implies the "democratization" of the military. A modern military is not democratic. It relies on clear channels of command and authority to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. As one theorist has put it:

The transition from authoritarian orders to competitive political democracy does not necessitate a revision of authority in military organisations. In democratic societies, these organisations, if they are to be combat-effective, must remain in substance authoritarian institutions, but with a somewhat greater reliance on persuasion of subordinates. Informal relationships within them need to be better adjusted to the libertarian democratic spirit, with the rule of law and

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human rights protection, irrespective of rank or position, as well as a measure of political and social tolerance, cultivated within military establishments.⁸

A move to circumscribe the normal lines of authority in the military can have debilitating long-term effects. It provides a channel that can be easily misused to settle personal scores or to enhance one's career. Even more ominously, it has the potential to politicize the military again if only the officers who agree with the current elite's political line are promoted to the top. Finally, the bypassing of normal channels of authority leads to confusion, inefficiency, lack of cohesion, and poor combat potential. Although the new political elites that came to power in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary seem to have understood the need for the military's political disengagement, they vary in their awareness of the inapplicability of democratization to the military, with Czechoslovakia probably the leading example among them of widespread pressure for “democratization” of the military.

ETHNIC CONFLICT

The open reemergence of ethnic conflict in Czechoslovakia can be better understood through reference to the larger patterns of ethnic conflict repeated in numerous other countries. While there is a good deal of dissension among social scientists regarding certain aspects of ethnic conflict,⁹ there is general agreement on a few basic characteristics common to all cases.

Ethnicity is a way of categorizing human beings. It is a concept based on a myth of collective ancestry that gives an innate character to the traits believed to be fundamental to the particular ethnic group. The belief in ascriptive notion of these traits leads to a feeling of affinity between members of an ethnic group, and the myth of collective ancestry makes the ethnic group psychologically the largest extension of the family.¹⁰ Ethnicity is usually associated with race, religion, or language, but it also includes a number of culturally induced group patterns of values and customs.

There is nothing inevitable about ethnic conflict in multiethnic societies. If several diverse ethnic groups can live in relative harmony in Singapore, there is no reason why they

⁹The main difference is between the modernization school that emphasizes rational choice theory and the social psychology approach that borrows from anthropology and sociology (for a discussion of some of the differences, see Saul Newman, "Does Modernization Breed Ethnic Political Conflict?" World Politics, Vol. 43, No. 3, April 1991, pp. 451–478). This Note leans toward the social psychology approach (best represented in Donald L. Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1985), though the patterns discussed here are generally subscribed to by both schools of thought.
can't in other countries. Serious ethnic conflict has origins in differences in status (economic, political, cultural, linguistic, etc.) between ethnic groups. Sometimes, the ethnic status differences are due to chance and a few small geographic advantages. Others are based on discriminatory policies. In either case, some ethnic groups in a multiethnic state come to be seen as backward (and usually not represented well in politically influential positions) while others come to be seen as advanced (and usually overrepresented among the elite). The differences in status become a cause of serious interethnic conflict when an ethnic group becomes mobilized and makes ethnic differences a political issue.

Mobilization occurs when an elite mobilizes the masses of a backward ethnic group by calling attention to their backward status and demanding from the central government compensatory measures designed to offset the superior position of another, relatively advanced ethnic group. While the mass sentiment to which the elites appeal is rooted in the psychological dimension, the specific motives for the elites' mobilizing appeals to the masses are usually related to economic causes.\(^{11}\) A cycle of increasingly divisive interethnic conflict begins as ethnic allegiances permeate through society, affecting the functioning of organizations unrelated to ethnic matters and giving ethnic conflict a pervasive quality.\(^{12}\) Economic, ecological, social, educational and many other issues that would normally not incite any ethnic feelings begin to be viewed from ethnically based perspectives, making the resolution of such issues more difficult and fueling further escalation of ethnic tensions. The struggle becomes one for status, which is determined not in any absolute manner but by its relation to other ethnic groups in the state, causing ethnic conflict to take on the form of a zero-sum game. All types of symbolic, and often minor, issues become central in the conflict. Language has no equal as a symbol of dominance, and demands for a single, official language in a multiethnic state amount to a demand for the codification of preeminence for one ethnic group. The economic sphere usually becomes the chief area of conflict because positions of economic power, besides bestowing status in their own right, have implications for the distribution of resources and thus have consequences on a whole range of other issues.

Although the conflict is waged in a variety of foci (economic, linguistic, educational, etc.), "the issue at bottom is predicated upon distinct group-identities and the question of the right of one of these people to rule the other."\(^{13}\) The conflict is a quest for dominance because that is where group status and social psychology meet. Since ethnic group status is relative,


ethnic groups "derive prestige and self-respect from the harmony between their norms and those which achieve dominance in the society."\textsuperscript{14} The conflict also evolves overtly. From initial demands for equality, as the sides become polarized, priority and then exclusivity become the goals of the backward ethnic group.

**The Czechoslovak Case**

The founding of the state of Czechoslovakia in 1918 brought together Czechs and Slovaks, two linguistically similar (West Slavic) ethnic groups, into one polity. The outward similarities hid some deep underlying differences. The Czech lands were the most industrialized portion of Austria-Hungary, while Slovakia was an overwhelmingly peasant society. The much higher education achievement levels in the Czech lands led to Czech domination of all aspects of life in Czechoslovakia. Organizationally, Czechoslovakia had no main ethnoterritorial divisions.

Following its destruction of the Czechoslovak state just before the beginning of World War II, Germany allowed Slovakia a semi-independent status. Although the Slovak state was discredited through its association with Hitler's Germany, its mere existence gave a boost to Slovak ethnic nationalism. A separate ethnoterritorial entity within a federal structure was set up in Slovakia after World War II, only to disappear during the early years of communist rule. Demands to establish a Slovak republic within the Czechoslovak federation dominated the ferment in Slovakia in the mid-1960s, culminating successfully with a two-republic federal setup that has been in place ever since.

There have been clear Slovak feelings of being discriminated against throughout the history of the Czechoslovak state. The Slovaks have had a distinctly backward status in relation to the Czechs. Some of the Slovak ethnic assertiveness had been forced under the surface, notably during the lengthy Stalinist period in Czechoslovakia. The Slovak elite has found it easy to mobilize the masses ethnically, and since the 1960s there has been an undercurrent of Slovak ethnic favoritism that had been given a basis in the federal structure of the state.

According to the census in March 1991, the population of Czechoslovakia amounted to 15,567,666 people.\textsuperscript{15} Czechs and Slovaks together form about 80 percent of the population of Czechoslovakia, with Czechs numbering 8,426,070 (54.1 percent) and Slovaks 4,819,948 (31.0 percent). A large number of people gave their nationality as Moravian (1,360,155, or 8.7

\textsuperscript{14}Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, p. 217.

percent) and a few (45,223, or 0.3 percent) registered as Silesians, though previously the two “nationalities” were subsumed under the category of Czechs.

Significant numbers of other ethnic groups also inhabit the country, and they tend to be concentrated in Slovakia. There is a Magyar minority in Slovakia amounting to 566,741, or 10.8 percent of Slovakia’s population (the figure for all of Czechoslovakia is 586,884, or 3.8 percent). The numbers of some of the other non-Czech or Slovak ethnic groups are difficult to pinpoint because of previous nonrecognition or discrimination that has made the members of these ethnic groups wary of openly acknowledging their true ethnic identity. For example, 114,116 (or 0.7 percent) people declared their nationality as Romany (Gypsy), but the official federal estimate is 400,000, and Romany organizations claim that the true figure is 720,000. Similarly, Ruthenians and Ukrainians often had been lumped together and discriminated against in the past, and it is difficult to establish how many ethnically conscious Ruthenians claimed Slovak or Ukrainian nationality. 18,648 (0.1 percent) people claimed to be Ruthenian and 20,654 (0.1 percent) said they were Ukrainian, but most “Ukrainians” in Slovakia are probably Ruthenians, and the true figure for the Ruthenian-Ukrainian Eastern Slavs may be double the official figures.16 There are also a few pockets of Poles (61,542, or 0.4 percent, mainly in the Tesin region in Moravia) and Germans (53,418, or 0.3 percent). Again, the figures should not be taken at face value, for they are approximations (probably way off in the case of Romanies and Ruthenians), skewed by a long period of discriminatory policies.

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3. THE CZECHOSLOVAK MILITARY BEFORE 1989

THE IMAGE PROBLEM

The Czechoslovak military has faced some unique and fundamental problems not shared by other NSWP countries. Some of the difficulties stemmed from the more pronounced artificial nature of Czechoslovakia as a state and the strongly entrenched antimilitary outlooks prevalent especially in the Czech lands. All states are artificial in nature—in that a state is a body of people somewhat arbitrarily organized into a political-territorial unit—but a state consisting mainly of Czechs and Slovaks is a fairly recent (founded in 1918) and fragile creation with no historical precedent and one that (along with Yugoslavia) has so far failed to develop the internal cohesion common to other countries of Eastern Europe.¹

Antimilitary feelings in the Czech lands date back to the disappearance of the Bohemian state in the 17th century and the consequent negative association of the military with a foreign power. One of the reasons that the negative image has persisted is that there is no history of a Czechoslovak military defending the state; thus, today's Czechoslovak military cannot point to any one experience to form the core myth of it serving as the protector of Czechoslovak state sovereignty. The exploits of the Czechoslovak Legion during the Russian Civil War, a few Czech combat units' participation on both the Eastern and Western fronts, as well as guerrilla activity in Slovakia, during World War II cannot serve as substitutes for a battle in defense of the state.² Indeed, on the two occasions during the history of the Czechoslovak state when the army could have fought to protect Czechoslovakia's sovereignty (in 1938 against Germany and in 1968 against the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact forces), it did not fire a shot.

The prestige of the military seemed to go up in the immediate post-World War II era, as a democratic Czechoslovakia was reborn and the war provided a bitter lesson in defense awareness to the population. However, the consequent association of the military with the

¹Of course, the artificiality of the GDR as a state was even more transparent because of the successful, democratic, and ever-present German Federal Republic. The difference was that in the case of the GDR the pressure against the continuity of the state was of a centrifugal nature rather than the centrifugal pressures from within in the case of Czechoslovakia (and Yugoslavia). Any centrifugal pressures in the GDR were limited by the fact that only one major ethnic group inhabited its territory (the remnants of the indigenous Slavic people who inhabited the region, the Lusatian Sorbs, are quite small in number and are heavily Germanized).

²The military exploits of medieval and Renaissance-era Bohemia have no relevance to Slovaks and cannot serve as viable substitutes.
unpopular, communist, Soviet-imposed regime reversed the gains and only made a bad situation worse. Public opinion polls in Czechoslovakia have consistently shown the military to be seriously lacking in prestige. The negative stereotype of the military and a popular perception of it as something unnecessary is a distinct feature of post-World War II, and especially post-1968, Czechoslovakia.

THE Legacy OF 1968

The Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was a watershed event that shaped civil-military relations and the evolution of the Czechoslovak military for the two decades that followed. The invasion showed the one-sided nature of the Soviet-Czechoslovak “alliance” and the role of the Warsaw Pact as a tool serving Soviet interests, with a disastrous effect upon the morale of the Czechoslovak armed forces.

The Czechoslovak military was paralyzed until the mid-1970s by the purges within the officer corps, a massive voluntary outflow of junior officers, an inability to attract new recruits to officer schools, low morale, and a deep current of anti-Soviet feelings within the society that especially affected the conscripts. Following the restoration of party control over the military by party hard-liners, and as the Czechoslovak regime assumed the role of one of the most faithful Soviet allies in the Warsaw Pact, the armed forces were gradually built up and modernized. By the mid-1980s the Czechoslovak military was technically among the most capable of the East European armies, though that fact seems related more to the Czechoslovak military's mission as the first operational echelon in an offensive against NATO rather than any perception of high motivation or combat effectiveness on the part of the Czechoslovak conscripts.

The Czechoslovak military continued to be plagued by staffing problems throughout the “normalization” period (as the reassertion of strict communist orthodoxy under party leader Gustav Husak was euphemistically called). Attractive incentives failed to attract qualified applicants to officer schools. This was just as true in the 1980s as in the 1970s, despite the increasingly distant memory of the “Prague Spring” and the Soviet-led invasion.

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3Johnson, Dean, and Alexiev, East European Military Establishments, p. 135.
5Jan Obrman, “Military Schools Lack Applicants,” RFE, Czechoslovakia, Situation Report, No. 19, November 8, 1988, pp. 31–33. The depth of the problem was illustrated in June 1989 in a telling commentary in the Slovak communist daily. The main Czechoslovak military academies that train officers were said to still have had openings for students; the lack of applicants was remarkable in view of the severe competition for admission to universities that left many young people who were not
As military spokesmen widely admitted after the fall of the communist regime, the army had been forced to recruit officers from among "people without the necessary character traits and with an intellect that [fell] short of requirements."\(^6\)

Surveys in the 1970s and 1980s have shown that the Czechoslovak society reacted to "normalization" by withdrawing from politics and any unnecessary contact with the regime;\(^7\) the military, popularly perceived to be a part of the system of control and repression, was affected by the antiregime attitudes. Parallel to the low prestige of the military, and probably partially as a consequence of it, there was a rise in pacifism in Czechoslovakia. These feelings had always found more fertile ground in Czechoslovakia than in its East European neighbors, and they seemed to have grown in the 1980s.\(^8\) Unfavorable demographic trends in the 1980s only worsened the staffing problems.

THE INFLUENCE OF GORBACHEV

The accession of Gorbachev to the top Soviet leadership position inaugurated changes in Soviet-East European relations.\(^9\) These changes also extended to the security and military realm, for Soviet military policy changed greatly following Gorbachev's coming to power. Some basic assumptions inherent in Soviet military doctrine were reevaluated in 1985–1987.\(^10\) The new security concepts led to the Warsaw Pact announcement of a "defensive doctrine" in May 1987. The new doctrine recognized the prevention of war as having primacy over ideological considerations, and it formed the basis for a move toward a nonantagonistic relationship with NATO.

Before Gorbachev, Soviet domination of the Warsaw Pact limited the East Europeans' ability to independently formulate the political aspects of their national military doctrines. The military doctrines of the NSWP countries had to be subordinated to the Warsaw Pact doctrine and were virtually indistinguishable from it. In turn, the Warsaw Pact doctrine was admitted without the possibility of continuing their education. It would seem that many young people preferred not to obtain higher education at all rather than do so at a military academy. *Prauda* (Bratislava), June 27, 1989, translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report, East Europe* (FBIS-EEU), No. 127, July 5, 1989, p. 26.


the coalitional component of Soviet military doctrine; it was outlined by the Soviet leadership and served Soviet interests. Soviet plans were expressly offensive and they aimed for a rapid defeat of NATO forces and the seizure of Western Europe.

In terms of the actual mechanics of the implementation of the doctrine at the national level, the Czechoslovak General Staff planned the operations of Czechoslovak units, but the Czechoslovak objectives and the time allotted to seize them were assigned by the Soviets. Then, the plans prepared by the Czechoslovak General Staff were made available to the Soviet General Staff, who made any “corrections” needed to bring them into agreement with the plans of the Soviet units on the flanks of the Czechoslovak armed forces. In this way, the Soviets had full knowledge and control of the Czechoslovak military’s plans in case of conflict, but the Czechoslovak military had only a vague notion of Soviet plans. Several Soviet “liaison” officers assigned to each Czechoslovak army provided an additional check on the missions of the Czechoslovak units.\(^{11}\)

The announcement of a “defensive doctrine” did not mean an abrupt abandonment of the primacy of offensive concepts in Soviet military thinking. Only the initial period of war—in Soviet thinking, a critical stage during a conflict—was to be different. Before the 1987 announcement, the Soviets had been committed to an immediate offensive, an idea that in conjunction with preemption could be (and was seen in the West as) a purely offensive concept. East European militaries provided an important component of the forces for such an offensive. Under the new doctrine, the Soviets accepted the idea that their forces would conduct mainly defensive operations in the initial stage of the conflict. The new doctrine also rejected a strategic counteroffensive in order to achieve a victory (for it questioned the very concept of victory under conditions of threat of nuclear weapon use),\(^{12}\) but it is unclear how far this aspect of the doctrine was accepted by the Soviet military. The East European revolutions, among other factors, put into question even the already changed Soviet thinking, forcing the Soviet military to question the rationale for and the viability of a strategic offensive deep into enemy territory.

East European militaries could not be unaffected by such considerable Soviet shifts in military thinking before the political changes in the region in 1989. However, the various East European countries differed outwardly in their reaction and the pace of corresponding adjustment. Gorbachev’s wave of liberalization and the greater leeway for East Europeans in foreign policy and security matters resulted in almost immediate Polish and Hungarian

\(^{11}\)Author’s conversations with Czechoslovak military and civilian officials, Prague, May 1991.
discussions of more independent national military doctrines.\textsuperscript{13} The Warsaw Pact declaration in May 1987 legitimized and brought into the open these discussions, for an initial defensive stage in any potential conflict necessitated paying more attention to the internal aspects of the defense of Eastern Europe. The Warsaw Pact was still intact and coalition warfare was important, but there was a new, inward-looking direction.

The extent of national-oriented military thinking varied among the NSWP countries, and it seems to have been a function of a given NSWP regime's level of enthusiasm for the reforms ushered in by Gorbachev. In contrast to its northern and southern neighbors, the Czechoslovak military's outward reaction to the issue of a national doctrine was subdued. The inward-looking direction was still missing from Czechoslovak officials' statements regarding military matters, as Czechoslovak military spokesmen referred only to adjustments of national doctrine and force structure to the new coalition line.\textsuperscript{14}

The NSWP countries began in 1987 to reduce and restructure their military forces and to cut their military budgets. The announcement of limited Soviet troop withdrawals from Eastern Europe and overall Soviet troop cuts at the end of 1988 were concrete signs that the Brezhnev Doctrine was crumbling. The contrasting reactions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia to the announcement of Soviet troop withdrawals from the two countries show the different attitudes of the two regimes. In both countries, Soviet troop presence was associated with Soviet invasions. But in contrast to the favorable Hungarian reaction, the Czechoslovak regime's subdued response showed thinly disguised alarm, for the regime had been installed by Soviet troops and its repressive policies of the "normalization" period had kept it from gaining a measure of legitimacy like the one Kadar had achieved in Hungary. The withdrawal of some Soviet units was an important symbol of the new, hands-off Soviet approach to Eastern Europe that spelled an uncertain future for the regimes most clearly identified with the Brezhnev period, and the Czechoslovak regime was one of those.

The announcement of major cuts in the Soviet military was followed in January 1989 by the various East European countries' own announcements of troop cuts and military reforms. All of the programs followed the direction outlined by the Soviets—moving toward a smaller, more modern, and defensively oriented force—since the East Europeans were still guided by the "defensive" Warsaw Pact doctrine.


In comparison with the changes in Polish and Hungarian armed forces, Czechoslovak actions were fairly modest: scaling down the readiness levels of some formations, cutting back or transferring some soldiers from combat to construction tasks, and reorganizing combat units into less tank-heavy formations. Along with maverick Romania, Czechoslovakia was the only other NSWP member not to announce any cuts in the number of units. In any case, the Czechoslovak military did not attempt to conceal the fact that the principles of its program of military reform had been coordinated with other Warsaw Pact members. The emphasis on the continued role of the Warsaw Pact and coalition planning was much stronger than in the Polish and Hungarian armies. The Czechoslovak military followed the bloc-wide trends of less secrecy in military matters and of easing the brutality of life for conscripts (generally known as the "humanization" of military service), but it was among the followers rather than leaders in all of the bloc-wide military reform measures.

The few outward signs of more nationally oriented thinking on military matters concealed some serious changes under discussion within the Czechoslovak military. Since the new "defensive doctrine" entailed a corresponding national doctrine in each NSWP country, the Czechoslovak military also began to work out a more defensively oriented doctrine in 1988–1989. Apparently, the doctrine was being finalized by the Czechoslovak military when the old regime collapsed. Because of its common origins and guidelines, the doctrine shared many features with the Polish and Hungarian doctrines also being prepared at that time. It envisioned the defense of national territory through the destruction of the adversary's forces in an orthodox, Soviet-style positional defense that relied on a strong first echelon and in which the battle would be fought on Czechoslovak territory. Presumably, the initial draft allowed for the defensive stage to have been followed by a deep coalition counteroffensive. The proposed doctrine retained the Warsaw Pact as Czechoslovakia's security anchor, and it was expressly aimed at NATO. In retrospect the plans do not seem earth-shattering, but they do represent evidence of more nationally oriented military thinking in Czechoslovakia and they amounted to a change from the previous purely offensive orientation.

The political changes in Poland and Hungary in the summer of 1989 spelled the beginning of the end for the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. Until the revolutionary

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tide spread to Prague, however, Czechoslovak military spokesmen attempted to ignore the changes taking place in Czechoslovakia’s southern and northern neighbors. In a sign of reluctance to consider measures similar to the far-reaching changes of the military under discussion in Poland and Hungary, and in a seeming indication of the continued attention to the requirements placed by the Warsaw Pact on Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak minister of defense claimed in October 1989 that the Czechoslovak military could not be compared to the other Warsaw Pact militaries because the country bordered on a NATO state.  

The model of defense embraced by the Warsaw Pact until late 1989 (when events began to make it obsolete) still envisioned a deep counteroffensive. Spurred by the “defensive” Warsaw Pact doctrine, the various East European militaries were working out new national military doctrines, though they were doing so with different degrees of enthusiasm, and the orientations of the national doctrines clearly differed in emphasis. Then, a wave of revolutionary change brought new officials to power and placed the entire Warsaw Pact on its deathbed. The declared goal of the new governments to become integrated into what is now Western Europe—meaning initial neutrality and then cooperation with Western security structures—made much of the previous East European military thinking irrelevant.

All of the East European militaries seem to have been caught unprepared for a change of such magnitude. Months after the political shifts, they continued to think in terms of the Warsaw Pact, and they seem to have envisioned only gradual changes. At best, their focus was on greater independence within the Warsaw Pact and indigenous operational defensive doctrine. The Czechoslovak military was particularly slow in adjusting to changes even before the political revolutions because of the Brezhnevite leadership in charge and perhaps because of Czechoslovakia’s location on the “front line” against NATO that gave the country a special importance in Soviet planning.

4. THE MILITARY AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE OLD REGIME

The political revolution in Czechoslovakia was sudden and rapid, and it made use of lessons from other transitions that had already taken place, for the revolutionary tide reached Prague during the latter period of East European revolutions, when the days of communist regimes in Eastern Europe were clearly numbered. The entire initial transition period—the time during which the communist old guard occupying the highest state posts was replaced—lasted only a little over a month in Czechoslovakia. Yet already during that time, fundamental questions about Czechoslovakia's national security (Czechoslovak-Soviet relations, control of the Ministry of Defense) came up and set the stage for future developments.

The spark that brought about the collapse of the regime took the form of a violent crackdown on an officially sponsored rally that turned into an antiregime protest on November 17, 1989. A surge of protests followed the crackdown, so that within days the regime had to negotiate with a coalition of opposition groups that emerged—the Civic Forum in the Czech lands and the Public Against Violence in Slovakia. The whole issue was decided quickly, and on November 29, 1989, the Federal Assembly (Czechoslovak parliament) amended the constitution and abolished the "leading role of the Communist Party," clearing the way for a fundamental overhaul of the organization of the polity.

Despite several special investigative commissions since the political change, the Soviet role in the change of regimes in Czechoslovakia is still unclear, with circumstantial evidence pointing to some Soviet involvement. Certainly, the withdrawal of Soviet support from the Jakes regime played a crucial role in bringing about the change. Growing Soviet pressure for a reexamination of the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the widely publicized statement by a Soviet government spokesman in early November 1989—that Warsaw Pact membership, not an ideologically similar government, remained the only limit that Moscow still imposed on the East European countries—pulled the rug out from under the Jakes regime. It is also

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1 Until July 1990, the official name for the ministry was the Ministry of National Defense. The name was changed to simply Ministry of Defense as part of the greater sensitivity to ethnically correct terminology, for more than one "nation" inhabits Czechoslovakia. The term Ministry of Defense is used throughout this study for reasons of clarity and convenience.


clear that in behind-the-scenes negotiations, the Soviets made sure their basic security interests in Czechoslovakia would not be overturned overnight and that a coalition, rather than pure opposition, government would be formed. In an apparent parallel with the Polish example, Vaclav Havel's close adviser, Michal Kocab, negotiated directly with the Soviet ambassador in Prague. Kocab's frank discussions with the Soviet ambassador were probably an important reason for the peaceful transition, since the negotiations over the Czechoslovak communists' heads were an acknowledgment that the Soviets accepted the inevitability of a major reshuffling at the top in Czechoslovakia, thus eliminating the "Soviet bogey" trump card of the old guard.

The Czechoslovak military stayed on the sidelines, but it played an important political role during the days when demonstrations swept Prague and Bratislava. Allegations that the military had been preparing for a crackdown surfaced in a more concrete manner in 1990. Several investigative commissions have come up with evidence that some army units were in fact ready at a moment's notice to move into Prague and occupy communications centers. It is clear that some of the communist old guard seems to have been quite willing to use force to stay in power.

In the immediate aftermath of the initial demonstrations, and amidst rumors of higher combat readiness in some army units, several statements, including a speech by the defense minister, Milan Vaclavik, clearly put the military on the side of the party and against the opposition. Information that was published in mid-1990 indicated that on November 20, 1989, the army was ordered to stand by for immediate orders to move into Prague to assist internal security troops in putting down any demonstrations and in securing certain objectives. In addition, some local commanders, on their own initiative, reportedly distributed live ammunition to troops. Other reports indicate that in some garrisons, commanders attempted to prevent conscripts from finding out what was happening in the country by barring newspapers and television. Similar actions,

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motivated by the need to shelter the troops from the truth before using them for domestic repression, had been implemented before the Polish military was ordered to crack down on demonstrations in 1970. In addition, Vaclavik on several occasions publicly called for a halt to accusations of “traitor” and physical attacks on officers and their families. Because of the low prestige of the military and its close association in the public mind with the communist regime, the accusations may have had some truth to them, but they also form another parallel with the use of the military for domestic repression in Poland in 1981, when the officer corps was led to believe that Solidarity militants were physically threatening them and their families. The Czechoslovak communist regime capitulated without resorting to a showdown of force; if it had ordered a contest the internal security forces were to be the main tool, but some military personnel were also implicated.

Initially, the Civic Forum demanded a civilian defense minister. The demand went unheeded, as both of the cabinets proposed in early December 1989 (the first one, put together by Ladislav Adamec and composed mainly of communists, was rejected by the opposition) envisioned Vaclavik’s first deputy, then Chief of the General Staff, General Miroslav Vacek, for the post. The opposition accepted the second cabinet, formed by a Slovak communist, Marian Calfa (with a minority of communist ministers), thereby compromising on the demands concerning the defense minister. The refusal to name a civilian for the post was the one major opposition demand not met by Calfa. Although the opposition gave in on the issue, the question of civilian leadership of the Ministry of Defense was broached, and it only grew in importance as the new elite began to reshape the country. According to information that surfaced later, the defense minister had to have been a communist9 (presumably because of Soviet demands). Apparently, having an inexperienced civilian communist in charge of the Ministry of Defense made no sense to Civic Forum. They preferred to have a professional line officer like Vacek instead. Vacek was acceptable to the Civic Forum because of the difference in his public behavior from Vaclavik’s. The latter’s comments made him appear a staunch member of the old regime. In contrast, Vacek kept a low profile and made no inflammatory statements.

8Vaclavik’s speech to the Federal Assembly, Prague Domestic Service in Czech, November 29, 1989, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 229, November 30, 1989, pp. 24-25. Civic Forum leaders, Kocab and Vaclav Klaus, also were told of attacks on officers when they met the commander of the Western Military District, Major General Mojmir Zacharias. Prague CTK in English, November 30, 1989, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 229, November 30, 1989, p. 28.

9Interview with Kocab, Obrana Lidu, No. 22, June 2, 1990, p. 3.
Vacek assumed his new post on December 3, 1989, and soon guaranteed publicly that the military would not intervene in the political struggle under way.\footnote{Interview with Vacek, Prague Television Service in Czech, December 6, 1989, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 235, December 8, 1989, pp. 6–7.} The military’s claim of a passive nonpartisan role in politics actually expanded to an active nonpartisan role, for in the first days of December the military seized the weapons and ammunition of the People’s Militia.\footnote{Weapons had been seized by December 3, 1989. Pravda (Bratislava), December 23, 1989, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 2, January 3, 1990, p. 31.} Under Vacek’s command, the army took over the rest of the militia’s equipment, so that the militia was powerless by late December, when the Communist Party disbanded it. Thus, the army acted to safeguard the new government from any putsch attempt by the old guard using the militia as a vehicle. The action meant at least that the military under Vacek went along with the ouster of the old guard from the party (the leadership of the party was replaced with less tainted people in late November 1989).

The Havel-Vacek meeting on December 7, 1989, seemed to establish a modicum of trust between the two people, and it was an important step toward securing the army’s staying on the sidelines in the political struggle. In return for the army’s passivity, Civic Forum reassured the military, and of course, the Soviet Union, that it would respect Czechoslovakia’s Warsaw Pact obligations for the time being,\footnote{Prague CTK in English, December 7, 1989, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 235, December 8, 1989, p. 6.} a promise repeated on numerous occasions in December by both Havel and the new foreign minister, Jiri Dienstbier.\footnote{Dienstbier’s press conference, Rude Pravo, December 15, 1989, translated in JPRS-EER, No. 15, February 5, 1990, pp. 8–9.} For example, Havel stated in a television interview that Civic Forum was composed of realists who knew that they could not advance the cause of an undivided Europe “by any independent breaking from the Warsaw Pact, by a desire to achieve a kind of immediate and independent neutral status.”\footnote{Prague Television Service in Czech, December 11, 1989, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 239, December 14, 1989, pp. 35–36.} Although it was clear that the political changes had fundamentally altered Czechoslovak outlooks on international affairs, the new team’s promises to work for changes in the country’s international position within the bounds of existing institutions seem to have allayed the military’s greatest fears.

**Why Would the Military Have Intervened?**

There are several reasons why the military might have intervened, or at least assumed a more active role, in domestic affairs in November and December 1989. One reason relates...
to the basic fear among the officer corps that the new civilian state officials would immediately launch a widespread purge of the military as punishment for the army's role in upholding the previous regime (as happened in Argentina in 1983–1984). Such fears must have been on the minds of many officers. Another reason was the probable presence of officers in influential positions who genuinely identified with the old guard. Had the old guard put up more of a fight to retain rule, these “politicized” officers probably would have attempted to use some military units during a crackdown. However, the most substantial reason, and one that might have led the officer corps to unite in favor of intervention, relates to the military's institutional role as the final guarantor of the security of the state. In this sense, open talk from the Civic Forum about a rapid Czechoslovak withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact would have seemed irresponsible to the Czechoslovak military. Probably more than any other Czechoslovak institution, the military was sensitive to the Soviet reaction to such talk, a sensitivity that stemmed at least in part from the experience of 1968. Undoubtedly, the Czechoslovak military was closely attuned to the Soviet military's thinking, and it knew of the widely held view within the Soviet officer corps that the division of Europe into two antagonistic military blocs was a fundamental starting point for all deliberations regarding security and that the Warsaw Pact was a basic component of such a division. To a certain extent, such a view may also have been internalized by some of the Czechoslovak military, especially among the “politicized” officers.

In late 1989, Warsaw Pact membership was still the stated requirement for Soviet nonintervention, and although the credibility of any such intervention was quickly disappearing, no other NSWP country had yet exceeded that boundary. In the institutional sense, and regardless of whether a seemingly “politicized” officer like Vaclavik or a line officer like Vacek was in charge of the armed forces, the military may have felt that it would have been irresponsible to exceed those bounds. Such a move went against explicit Soviet declarations, it invited Soviet sanctions, and it might have pushed the military into an active political role.

The sensitivity of the Czechoslovak military to the Soviet reaction to any rapid change in the military balance on the East-West divide became evident on several occasions in December 1989. For example, one of the reasons that the military objected so strongly to a civilian being appointed as the defense minister was that such a figure supposedly would not have been taken seriously at the time by the Soviet military. During the debate over the appointment of the defense minister, Vacek remarked that a civilian was “not prepared for the requirements placed on the Czechoslovak People's Army as a front-echelon army of the
Warsaw Pact." The self-serving elements of such a statement (for continued military control of the Ministry of Defense allayed some officers' fears of immediate and extensive purges) are not inconsistent with a real security concern. The military's unease with proposals (that soon surfaced in the media) for shorter length of service for conscripts also stemmed in part from its perceived need to uphold Czechoslovakia's Warsaw Pact obligations regarding the size and the projected use of its military force. Again, the argument had self-serving aspects, but it also reflected a real fear of provoking the Soviets. Finally, in an editorial on the role of the Czechoslovak military following the political changes, A Revue wrote that the army's fundamental orientation in the future would be to continue to fulfill its tasks of defense of the society within the bounds of the Warsaw Pact. It would seem that the Czechoslovak military went along with the collapse of communism, but it did not see the security arrangements based on geopolitics to be immediately invalidated by the political changes. The former was a domestic matter, while the latter was related to the international power balance in the state system. The view might seem naive in retrospect, but fear of Soviet sanctions as well as a lack of comprehension of the immensity of the change was the reaction of all of the Warsaw Pact militaries.

The army leadership has claimed a neutral role in November and December 1989. Vacek has explained the initial preparations as precautionary measures motivated by the army's basic function of safeguarding the state and the fact that Havel was an unknown figure to the military in November 1989. In any event, the army leadership, represented by Vacek, demonstrated a good measure of an internalized professional military service ethic in that it did not act on its own to save the communist regime. In December 1989 some of the " politicized" officers tried to stir up the military against the new government, but Vacek claimed to have put an immediate end to such actions. However, the country's international security obligations remained in force, and the army took a stance by cautioning against going further than it thought feasible. The military also passed the test of loyalty as it obediently took orders from the new state authorities, despite full knowledge that the new elite was quite unsympathetic toward the armed forces. The change was

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cemented on January 2, 1990, with the formal accession of Havel to the presidency and the supreme command of the armed forces.

It is notable that communist party membership proved not to be the factor determining the allegiance of the officer corps. The fact that 82 percent of professional soldiers were party members\(^{20}\) did not prevent the army from acquiescing in the transition and, indeed, from playing a useful role in securing it. Some members of the new government seem to have recognized the superficiality of party membership in the military. According to Valtr Komarek, an economist who became a deputy premier in the Calfa government,

The politicization of the Army must not be underestimated, but basically they [the officers] are citizens who are put in uniforms and have children and families. Many young people who demonstrated in the days of November were sons and daughters of officers.\(^{21}\)

Komarek's reference to officers as citizens demonstrated an understanding of the continued primary allegiance of the military to the state. The viewpoint showed that at least some in the new government had quite sophisticated views of the military.


The army leadership under Vacek initiated far-reaching and multifaceted changes in the military. However, the process continued to be an example of incremental change rather than a fundamental leap. The mission of the armed forces changed to one of territorial defense, with little, if any, signs of preparation for offensive actions at even the operational level. Yet, successive versions of a new Czechoslovak military doctrine prepared by the army showed ever-decreasing but continued thinking in terms of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet concepts of warfare. The institutions of communist control of the military were cut back and transformed into structures with new functions, but they were staffed largely by holdovers from the previous institutions. Major changes in the military’s role in the society took place but failed to change the widely held perception that the military was a brutal institution having little in common with the society.

As the officials associated with the Civic Forum consolidated their positions at the top of the state apparatus, the military came under growing pressure. Publication of evidence that appeared to incriminate the military in the planning of a crackdown in November 1989 fueled charges that nothing had changed in the military. Vacek’s repeated guarantees that the army would not be used to hinder the process of democratization notwithstanding, the defense minister personally faced media charges of having uncertain dedication to the new system. Although Havel seemed to trust Vacek, promoting him to an Army General in May 1990, he recalled him from the post on October 17, 1990, after several weeks of intense criticism of Vacek specifically and the military in general in the media and in the parliament.

It appears that Vacek genuinely attempted to implement far-reaching reforms, and he won grudging acceptance and a degree of trust from many of the new state officials. His attempts went a long way, but they remained examples of incremental change and failed to satisfy public perceptions. Perhaps the military’s caution and decades of experience proved too hard to break. On the other hand, some of the forces associated with the Civic Forum had a deep animosity toward the army leadership. There is evidence of a determined campaign, waged from within and without the military by people who wanted faster changes, to oust Vacek and the top military leadership.

The prestige of the army remained low during this period, and the disclosures of army preparations in November 1989 only worsened it. Given its pacifist leanings and its many years of dissident status, the new elite had few favorable things to say about the military.
Havel's initial off-the-cuff denigrating remarks about the army and his publicly voiced opinion that he would prefer if Czechoslovakia had no military at all did not help. The professional officer corps was aware of the problem; no less a figure than Vacek candidly admitted that the army had a poor public image and that "many people downright hate the army." The military press devoted a great deal of attention to the image problem.

Vacek's level of frustration with the predominant negative views toward the military evolved concurrently with the growth of the visibility of such views over the course of 1990. He clearly was aware of such perceptions, bristling on one occasion about critics who questioned the wisdom of keeping an army and who kept reminding the military that it had not fired a shot since 1620 (the defeat at the Battle of White Mountain, which led to the disappearance of Bohemia as a state). Throughout his term as the minister of defense, Vacek publicly called for the acceptance of the military as a necessary state institution, pointing to the military's beneficial role at times of natural disasters and its role as a safeguard against a possibility of clashes motivated by ethnic nationalism in Eastern Europe in the future. His final plea came in a televised speech just after his dismissal by Havel:

If you, esteemed citizens, give me the opportunity to voice only one wish, then I ask you, if this is possible for you, to change gradually your attitude toward our Army, and if you cannot love it, then at least for the beginning, cast off the hostility.

All in all, the low prestige of the military and the disinclination of many of the new officials to trust it probably served the cause of military reform in Czechoslovakia, for these conditions made the military quite weak relative to the new civilian officials. In an opposite case, in Romania, the high prestige of the military (because of its role in ousting Ceausescu) complicated the new officials' plans for military reform. Thus, the fact that military reform went as smoothly as it did during much of 1990 may be due to the weakness of the Czechoslovak military.

The new officials secured a Soviet military withdrawal from Czechoslovakia in February 1990 (completed by the end of June 1991) and then set about curtailing the role of the Warsaw Pact. In June 1990, Czechoslovak officials prepared a far-reaching plan to

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transform the Pact into little more than a disarmament vehicle, though Soviet intransigence dislodged any hopes of reforming the Pact by the fall of 1990. Czechoslovak relations with the West began to develop extensively, so that by the summer of 1990 they included some agreements on military contacts with NATO armies. Some genuine cooperation on a variety of issues began between Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.

Domestically, the reform of the internal security apparatus, rather than the military, occupied the new officials for the first few months of 1990. The elections in June 1990 brought in a new, legitimate parliament and gave impetus for further reorganization of the polity. Czech-Slovak ethnic conflict reemerged immediately, with divisive debates on the name of the state, its coat of arms, and a host of other issues. Mutual accusations of economic subsidization—essentially opposition to central ministries' control over economic decisionmaking in an ethnically distinct region—established the ethnic issue as a dominant factor in economic reform. Debates over ethnic representation in federal structures of power, with qualifications replaced by ethnicity as the main criterion, reflected the permeative character of ethnic conflict. Preparation of a language law in Slovakia provoked an uproar among its smaller ethnic groups. The Czech-Slovak conflict became complicated and exploited by the rise of Moravian and Silesian assertiveness. Case studies show that ethnicity can be created overnight if an elite can persuade enough individuals of the existence of status differences, and that seems to have happened with the regionalist movement in Moravia and Silesia, with a territorial basis for mobilization. A separatist Moravian and Silesian organization demanded autonomy and a tripartite federation.

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS: THE INSTITUTIONAL BALANCE OF FORCES

The new officials' acceptance of a uniformed military minister of defense was a temporary concession, and Civic Forum spokesmen made no secret of the fact that they eventually hoped to place a civilian in the post. For the time being, Vacek's position as defense minister meant that the new civilian officials in the state apparatus had no direct control over the military and would have to rely on the military to carry out the reforms that the parliament or the president ordered. Nevertheless, they forced the military to accept an ever-increasing degree of accountability by their control of legislative and top executive bodies. Among the former, the Defense and Security Committees in both chambers of the Federal Assembly (led by Ladislav Lis from the Civic Forum) played a crucial part, while the
Office of the President and the State Defense Council were the main instruments among the latter.

The fundamental thrust of the changes was the transformation of the entire system of civil-military relations so that the constitutionally empowered state bodies in charge of security matters would take over the roles formally assigned to them and the Communist Party would lose its informal but actual control over these matters. Parliamentary control of the purse strings and the parliament's assertiveness of this right ensured at least the military's responsiveness if not its compliance. In order to force the military into changes, the new elite consistently brought up the idea of forming an independent General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces. The Inspectorate was to be subordinate to the parliament, and its task would be to oversee the changes in the military. In effect, the proposed Inspectorate would circumvent the Ministry of Defense in terms of oversight and inspection functions.

Organized pressure for change in the military sprang up outside and within the military and it grew in strength as the permanence of the change became clear. An opposition group within the military, the Military Forum (Vojenske Forum), formed spontaneously shortly after the demonstrations in Prague on November 17, 1989. Originally, Military Forum consisted of groups of soldiers organized within military units to support the political changes. These soldiers assisted Civic Forum in distributing truthful information from Prague throughout the country, thereby countering the regime falsifications in some military units. The group, made up of junior officers and enlisted personnel, aimed for a rapid reform of the military, including the "complete" depoliticization of the army and the reduction in the army's large central bureaucracy. The group also came out in favor of reduced length of compulsory service and other popularly espoused demands. In a sign that must have been ominous to the higher ranks within the military, Military Forum called for the replacement of discredited officers associated with the old regime and the establishment of an independent General Inspectorate that would implement the changes, bypassing the regular channels of command in the military. Since any professional soldier who had been a Communist Party member could be labeled as "discredited," the proposals amounted to a call

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5Two of Havel's friends became his close advisers on matters relating to security. Jiri Krizan dealt with issues affecting the military and the police and Alexandr (Sasa) Vondra dealt with foreign affairs.
6The old guard on the State Defense Council was officially replaced on February 9, 1990. For its composition, see Prague CTK in English, February 9, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 29, February 12, 1990, p. 20.
7For the military's criticism of the General Inspectorate, see A Revue, No. 9, 1990, pp. 13–15.
8Prague CTK in English, December 13, 1989, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 2, January 3, 1990, pp. 31–32.
for a massive purge of the officer corps that could have left only a few junior officers remaining. If anything, Military Forum's demands demonstrated a deep gap between the higher and the lower ranks in the military. The gap had been a longstanding one, but the formation of the Military Forum brought it out into the open.

Another group that sprang up in mid-December 1989 was the Military Revival Association (Sdruzeni Vojenska Obroda, or SVO for its Czech acronym). Composed of civilian and career military personnel who had been purged from the army following the crushing of the "Prague Spring," its aims included a rehabilitation of personnel affected by the post-1968 purges, an investigation of some officers' actions in November 1989, and full constitutional control over the army. The first demand was met quickly, for in late December 1989 the military announced its intention to rehabilitate all personnel expelled from the army as a result of the post-1968 purges. Vacek appeared at the SVO's first meeting and soon gained a measure of confidence from the group. SVO played an important role in recommending reforms. It remained separate from the army and acted as a watchdog of the military. While often critical of the army, it worked with the army leadership. In an indication of the importance of SVO to the army's reforms, the chairman of SVO, Reserve Colonel Josef Nemec, was promoted to the rank of Major General in early October 1990.

In January 1990 two trade unions for soldiers were set up in the Czechoslovak military: Union of Professional Soldiers (Svaz Vojaku z Povolani) and the Young Servicemen's Association (Svaz Vojenske Mladeze) for conscripts. In addition, the civilian employees formed their own union. At first the unions showed a few signs of political activism in favor of changes, but soon they proclaimed an apolitical nature, claiming that they were formed simply to protect soldiers' basic rights.

Finally, the Military Commission of the Civic Forum Coordinating Center (Vojenska Komise KCOF, or VKKCOF) took to keeping an eye on the military. The VKKCOF was

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9For some grievances expressed by Military Forum members, see Obrana Lidi, No. 2, January 13, 1990, p. 10.
10For a full list of demands, see A Revue, No. 2, 1990, pp. 9–10.
14For views of three representatives about the purposes of the organization, see interview with Colonel Jan Novak, Major Ladislav Bak, and Lieutenant Libor Petricek, Vecko, No. 4, 1991, p. 6.
external to the military and its members seemed to share a skepticism, if not distrust, of the army.

The Military Forum continued to be active, though seldom heard of outside of the military during the first few months of 1990. Vacek seemed to grow frustrated with the group, accusing it of insubordination, and he moved to eradicate it in mid-1990. In turn, as disaffection with the process of reform in the military grew, some of the Military Forum's activists established a more radical group, the Free Legion (Svobodna Legie). The Free Legion was founded in June 1990. Shortly thereafter, the leader of the group, Lieutenant Colonel Jaroslav Praus, was investigated by the military procuracy for actions allegedly resulting in the demoralization of a unit.\textsuperscript{16} Once Praus was cleared of the charges, the Free Legion was officially registered by the authorities on July 31, 1990,\textsuperscript{16} though the group's official founding congress took place on September 8, 1990. The organization was set up by a group of career soldiers, conscripts, and civilian army employees in order to push for quick and far-reaching overhaul of the military. Members of the Free Legion had never belonged to the Communist Party. The founding congress of the Free Legion was attended by 40 delegates from 36 military units,\textsuperscript{17} though the group claimed 5,500 members at that time.\textsuperscript{18} The Legion's specific goals included the discharge of former political officers, dissolution of "unnecessary" organs (a reference to the successor body to the Military Political Administration (MPA) and military counterintelligence), a reduction in salaries of senior administrative officers, and an increase in the salaries of civilian employees of the army, warrant officers, and junior officers in combat units.\textsuperscript{19} The Legion's members explained the necessity of forming such a body because of what they perceived as other groups' ineffectiveness in effecting radical changes within the military. According to Free Legion spokesmen, SVO had been co-opted to the army leadership, Union of Professional Soldiers ceased all serious oppositional activity to the military command,\textsuperscript{20} and VKKCOF was ineffective because of its supposed lack of accurate information.

\textsuperscript{15}Respekt, September 5, 1990, translated in JPRS-EER, No. 149, October 30, 1990, pp. 10–11.
\textsuperscript{20}In 1991, the chairman of the Free Legion accused the Union of Professional Soldiers of being staffed by ex-political functionaries. Interview with Colonel Jaroslav Praus, Vecko, No. 4, 1991, pp. 4–5.
Apparently, Vacek had held several meetings with representatives of the Free Legion before the group was formally registered. The last meeting resulted in mutual accusations and name calling, and Vacek thereafter refused to meet the Legion's representatives. The information on the military's preparations for a November 1989 crackdown that was published in mid-1990 and fueled the controversy about quickening the pace of military reform came in part from officers associated with the Free Legion.21

The Free Legion was an intra-military body that was formed to oppose the army's existing leadership by bypassing the regular channels of authority. As the Legion's representatives acknowledged, the organization was formed because the grievances and reservations of many junior personnel about the reform process were not being addressed. The group was part of a growing political force that called for the complete "cleansing" from the government of communists or ex-communists (including Calfa and Dubcek). The radical calls led to SVO's criticism of groups such as the Free Legion, calling them "pseudorevolutionary movements [with] extreme views."22

MILITARY DOCTRINE

The new civilian authorities refused to accept the more defensive and nationally oriented military doctrine that was presented to them soon after the collapse of the old regime. The coalitional orientation inherent in it was unacceptable to Civic Forum.23 It was not that more defensive orientation of the doctrine was faulty; it simply did not go far enough. The new officials objected to some of the provisions contained in the doctrine and requested changes in it.24 Apparently, the military agreed to work out a new doctrine that would be in accord with a new constitution.25

Although the new doctrine was not approved, some of its defensive aspects, already in the process of being implemented since 1989, continued to be put into force. The military continued to adjust its structure and equipment in a way that seemed to point to an

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21VKKCOF first published evidence of army preparations for a crackdown, but the information was probably supplied by Free Legion members. Only military officers would have had access to such documents. During the last acrimonious meeting between Vacek and the Free Legion, a representative of the Legion threatened to expose compromising information about Vacek (interview with Vacek, Smena, September 15, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 186, September 25, 1990, p. 20). Free Legion members published additional information following VKKCOF disclosures.


23Interview with Civic Forum member, Vaclav Klaus, Obrana Lidu, No. 14, April 6, 1991, p. 2.


increasingly defensive character of Czechoslovak operational planning. The main steps included troop cuts, restructuring of mechanized and armored units into less tank-heavy formations, and the phasing out of a great deal of obsolete equipment, especially tanks. The fall of the old regime either quickened the pace of these measures or led to their more rapid initiation.

At the Vienna Seminar on Military Doctrine in January 1990, the then Chief of the General Staff, General Anton Slimak, announced a one-third cut in "resources" allotted to the forces previously earmarked largely for operational duty outside Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, in a step that demonstrated a distinct shift in Czechoslovak military planning, future large-scale exercises were eliminated, and the plans to call up 90,000 reservists for participation in exercises that had been scheduled for 1990 were shelved.26 These were far-reaching shifts that implied an abandonment of training necessary for offensive operations. Such moves were underlined by top civilian officials' comments during the spring of 1990 that indicated a rejection of virtually any role for Czechoslovak units outside of Czechoslovak territory.27

Military cooperation between Soviet and Czechoslovak armed forces continued as the two militaries engaged in joint maneuvers (code-named "Druzba-1990") in northern Bohemia during the first days of March 1990. Such exercises had been conducted annually, and military spokesmen emphasized that the maneuvers had been planned for a year and that Havel had approved them in January 1990. Nevertheless, the maneuvers provoked a domestic uproar28 and embarrassed Czechoslovak officials, for neither Poland nor Hungary engaged in such displays of close military cooperation with the USSR by that time. Czechoslovak spokesmen stressed that the exercises were commanded by a Czechoslovak general, and reportedly the maneuvers had been scaled down from 25,000 to a total of some 7000 soldiers—including a "symbolic" participation of about 1000 soldiers from the Group of Central Forces.29 Nevertheless, the exercises showed that the military continued to act as an

27 Comments by Havel, Prague CTK in English, May 7, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 89, May 8, 1990, p. 11.
28 For examples of negative statements by several groups, see Prague Domestic Service in Czech, February 28, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 41, March 1, 1990, p. 17. For Vacek's reply to questions from members of parliament regarding the maneuvers, see Prague CTK in English, May 3, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 87, May 4, 1990, p. 20.
active member of the Warsaw Pact, and they implied that Czechoslovak planning may have turned defensive but it remained tied to alliance commitments.

The new officials were clearly uncomfortable with the close military ties with the USSR and the anti-NATO orientation of the Czechoslovak military, but they seemed to feel that time was not yet ripe to question such fundamental issues in Warsaw Pact doctrine and in Soviet-Czechoslovak relations. But by May 1990 there was a shift in Czechoslovak thinking even on these issues. Shortly before the Moscow meeting of the Warsaw Pact in June 1990, the Czechoslovak State Defense Council, at a meeting chaired by Calfa and attended by Havel, instructed Vacek to draft a military doctrine that would not be directed against any specific enemy, a clear reference to an abandonment of any anti-NATO orientation and a breaking away from the Warsaw Pact. The move stemmed from the decision to formulate a new security policy and to construct a new system of national defense. At the same time, in a clear break with Czechoslovakia’s previous security policy, all decisions of the Military Commission for Defense, a body attached to the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party that had formulated Czechoslovakia’s military policy, were suspended. A plan of territorial defense against a potential threat from any direction is an aspect of many neutrals’ declaratory military policy if not of their actual military planning. The Czechoslovak decision to move to such a configuration downgraded and put a question mark over the relevance of the Warsaw Pact and coalition warfare to Czechoslovak military planning. The State Defense Council decision foreshadowed the Czechoslovak proposals for the downgrading of the Warsaw Pact in June 1990.

In effect, by the spring of 1990, Czechoslovak officials had decided to abandon the facade of military planning entailed by membership in the Warsaw Pact. Czechoslovakia’s anti-NATO orientation had not been credible for several months already, but it was kept up seemingly for fear of provoking the Soviets.

Following the elections, the civilian leadership gave the military until the fall of 1990 to prepare the new military doctrine. The government expected a draft constitution to be ready by that time and the issue of the Warsaw Pact to have been resolved one way or another so that the Czechoslovak military would be subordinate de jure only to national command. As set out in the guidelines by the highest civilian authorities, the new doctrine was to provide “an appropriate defensive capability against any possible aggressor.”

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30 Prague CTK in English, May 22, 1990, as reported by FBIS-EEU, No. 100, May 23, 1990, p. 15.
civilian authorities also linked the new doctrine to the future shape of the military as a smaller, highly trained professional force that would have the organizational structure suitable for defensive tasks and whose deployment would show the nonthreatening nature of the military. In this sense, the doctrine, along with plans to gradually switch over to a volunteer professional army, formed the basic components of an ambitious Czechoslovak blueprint for the evolution of the armed forces through the year 2005.

The military seems to have had a draft of the doctrine ready in July 1990, and it was submitted to the parliament for discussion in early October 1990. The doctrine subordinated the military fully to the national leadership, envisioned an exclusively defensive orientation, and planned for operations only on Czechoslovak territory. The Czechoslovak military perceived regional conflicts as the main (though not the only) threat in the future. According to military spokesmen, the small Czechoslovak military potential necessitated dependence on allies to insure Czechoslovakia's security. In a seeming allusion to a looser version of the Warsaw Pact, the doctrine stipulated that allies were to be sought out on the basis of collective security rather than a bloc approach. Czechoslovak armed forces were to form a part of the defensively oriented military forces designed to guarantee collective security.

In short, the Czechoslovak military proposed a doctrine of territorial defense that, outwardly at least, was akin to those of some European neutrals; it took great care to demonstrate its strictly defensive planning and on paper showed no specific expectation of the direction of attack. The doctrine prepared by the military met the guidelines set out by the civilians, but its terminology and implicit conceptual underpinnings bore some resemblance to the doctrine prepared by the military when the old regime collapsed. Finally, the situation in Europe had changed greatly in the space of the few months in the summer of 1990. For all these reasons, the doctrine was another case of not going far enough.

Apparently, the distrust of the military among the Civic Forum was strong enough in the summer of 1990 that a group of members of parliament from the Civic Forum prepared

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34Comments by Vacek, Prague CTK in English, October 5, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 197, October 11, 1990, p. 20.
36For a ridicule of the doctrine as a throwback to the communist days, see Respekt, August 14, 1990, translated in JPRS-EER, No. 148, October 26, 1990, pp. 20–21.
their own draft of a military doctrine, for they felt the military's doctrine was backward looking and showed too much influence of Soviet thinking. Both drafts seemed to have been discussed in the parliament. Interestingly enough, Vacek claimed to have asked the representatives of various political parties and movements (referring most of all to the Civic Forum) in the spring of 1990 to cooperate with the Defense Ministry in the drafting of the doctrine and to have received no response. If true, then Vacek at least seems to have understood the necessity for a consensus between civilians and the military on the basic security policy of the state. He even expressly commented that it was not the military's right to draw up the doctrine but to provide expertise to the civilians formulating a security policy.

The main outlines of the doctrine had several significant technical implications for the military, foremost, changing the army's organizational structure, weapons, and training and altering the physical disposition of the armed forces. The military was already well along toward achieving some of these goals, for their implementation had started under the communist regime. Despite a lack of agreement over the specific wording of the doctrine, these main directions continued to be implemented or were initiated. In terms of structure, the less tank-heavy divisional structure reduced units' available firepower without affecting mobility, thus making the Czechoslovak armed forces lighter and reducing their offensive potential. Defensive capabilities remained strong because the force remained suitable for ambushes and rapid deployment to counter enemy thrusts. In terms of weapons, military spokesmen acknowledged that due to budget cuts, the army had stopped new weapons procurement. However, the military apparently planned to modify the existing weapons systems so as to make them more suitable for defensive tasks. Finally, large-scale training exercises (necessary to prepare for offensive operations at the operational level) were abandoned by the spring of 1990.

The physical redeployment of forces entailed by the doctrine was one of the main points of the Czechoslovak blueprint for changing the military, "Plan 2005." In 1990, the Czechoslovak army was still overwhelmingly concentrated in Bohemia, a legacy of its previous offensive mission. The military envisioned an even distribution of the armed forces throughout Czechoslovak territory. The forces were to be gradually relocated to the bases being vacated by Soviet troops leaving Slovakia. Before the redeployment began, however, it became caught up in ethnic conflict and led to difficulties in Czechoslovak-Hungarian relations.

In early 1990, Hungarian officials disassociated themselves from the 1920 Treaty of Trianon that, in the aftermath of World War I, broke up the old Austro-Hungarian empire, reduced Hungary to a core, and left millions of Magyars outside of Hungarian borders. The issue has become a major grievance in postcommunist Hungary. The distancing from the Treaty of Trianon has important implications, for the present Slovak-Hungarian border stems from that treaty. Notwithstanding Hungarian comments about respecting international borders (and Hungary's declaration that it did accept the 1946 Paris peace treaty, which reaffirmed the territorial provisions of the Treaty of Trianon), the Slovak leadership reacted to the Hungarian statements with an outcry and charges of irredentism. The problem was accentuated by Slovak measures that had the effect of discriminating against the Magyar minority (such as the Slovak language law), which in turn provoked Hungarian officials' remarks in defense of the Magyars, further straining Slovak-Hungarian relations and leading to charges of Hungarian interference in Slovak domestic matters.

The Magyar minority in Slovakia is largely concentrated along the Hungarian-Slovak border in southern Slovakia. A real problem emerged in the summer of 1990 when, as part of its own similar program of redeployment of troops, Hungary deployed some of its forces in northern Hungary. Amidst rumors of hostile Hungarian deployments along the Slovak border, a Hungarian-Czechoslovak diplomatic row ensued when the Slovak premier, Vladimir Meciar (who demonstrated clear ethnic nationalist tendencies), publicly accused Hungary of sending intelligence agents to Magyar-inhabited southern Slovakia and of promoting anti-Slovak opposition in the region. Meciar also advocated a more rapid

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redeployment of Czechoslovak armed forces to Slovakia, citing Hungarian and Ukrainian territorial ambitions, and called for equal security for Slovaks and Czechs. The situation was complicated because the Magyar minority in Slovakia was negatively disposed toward the stationing of troops in their region, perceiving the transfer as a show of force designed to intimidate. Meciar's calls placed the military in a difficult situation, for the army was reluctant to become drawn directly into an ethnic conflict with an international dimension.

The issue became important enough that Vacek met the Hungarian minister of defense, Lajos Fur, to prevent any further escalation of tensions. The two ministers agreed to exchange information on redeployment of troops and to hold regular meetings on troop exercises and movements. The issue did not go away, though, and Slovak officials continued to call on the military for greater protection of Slovakia's southern border. Apparently, some Czechoslovak troop transfers had begun by September 1990, with top military officials taking pains to emphasize that the redeployment had nothing to do with reinforcing the border region. The whole incident demonstrated the growing pervasiveness of the ethnic conflict and the increasing difficulty of implementing seemingly simple measures once they began to be viewed from an ethnic perspective.

MILITARY REFORM: POLITICAL ASPECTS

Personnel Changes

The military introduced a yearlong multistage program of competence testing for all professional soldiers, a daunting task since there were some 60,000 professional soldiers in the Czechoslovak military. The testing involved screening commissions that judged a

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45 Meciar was referring to comments from some fringe elements within Rukh (the Ukrainian independent political movement) that called for the "return" of the Presov region of Slovakia (as well as some easternmost parts of Poland) that were inhabited by Ruthenians and Ukrainians. News conference with Meciar, Narodna Obroda, August 22, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 168, August 29, 1990, pp. 22–25.

46 Initially, the army attempted to sidestep the issue by claiming that the overall redeployment blueprint had not yet been approved by the government. Interview with Vacek, Prace, September 13, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 187, September 26, 1990, pp. 13–14; interview with the then Commander of the Eastern Military District, General Andrejčák, Narodna Obroda, August 21, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 170, August 31, 1990, pp. 8–9.


soldier's "moral disposition, expert knowledge, health, and prescribed education for the held position."\textsuperscript{51} According to Vacek, initially the military was left to itself so much that Vacek received no guidelines from the new government on the specifics of the screening process.\textsuperscript{52} Consequently, the process reflected his vision of what was needed.

The screening process was divided into three stages, with the composition of screening commissions varying according to the stage. The intention was to start with the screening of those occupying the highest posts and then move on down through the ranks. The first stage lasted from January through June 1990. The screening commission was chaired by Vacek, General Tomecek (the newly appointed director of the President's Military Office), and Havel's adviser on military matters, Jiri Krizan.\textsuperscript{53} Apparently, representatives of SVO participated directly as members of specific commissions. Vacek also claimed to have invited political parties and movements (implying Civic Forum) to send representatives to participate in the work of the commissions, but there were no takers on his offer.\textsuperscript{54}

During the first stage, all generals as well as any other officers appointed directly by the president faced a screening commission. All deputy ministers of defense, chiefs of military academies, and commanders of military districts, as well as all generals and officers appointed by Vacek since he assumed the post of minister (these included Army and division commanders and Ministry of Defense Administration chiefs) were also tested. In addition, commanders of the political apparatus down to the regimental level underwent testing. Altogether, nearly 5000 soldiers were evaluated in the first stage of the screening process, with about 20 percent of cases not approved.\textsuperscript{55}

The second stage lasted from July through September 1990 and involved all officers appointed by military district commanders (regimental commanders and some divisional posts). The third stage was to have lasted from October until the end of 1990, whereby all remaining professional soldiers would be tested.

The screenings, along with a variety of other reasons, caused sweeping personnel changes in the Czechoslovak officer corps during 1990. The screening process weeded out a large portion of the senior military leadership. Many officers refused to take the new oath that the process required and left the military. Others left because they had wanted to leave

\textsuperscript{52}Vacek's comments to the Federal Assembly, Prague CTK in English, October 1, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 193, October 4, 1990, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{54}Interview with Vacek, Narodna Obroda, October 3, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 199, October 15, 1990, pp. 18–19.
for a long time and now could finally do it without risking sanctions (previously, a voluntary request to leave the army was treated as a sign of political unreliability and usually brought on punitive measures against the officer and his family). Still others left because they were dissatisfied with the pace of the reform of the military. For whatever reason, there was a substantial outflow of officers from the military and a massive turnover at the top; according to Vacek, all high positions at the Ministry of Defense changed hands during January and February 1990.56

By September 1, 1990, 9380 professional soldiers, or 15.3 percent of the overall number of career soldiers, had left the military.57 Eighty-seven out of 157 generals had left,58 with the cuts at the general officer level concentrated in the army; the air force was barely affected (this is in line with the theoretical positions outlined in Sec. 2, since officers in the most technologically intensive services were least prone to politicization).59 A majority (51.6 percent) of professional soldiers left the service of their own volition. Another one-fourth (23.6 percent) refused to sign the new oath. About one-fifth (18.5 percent) retired (though it is impossible to say whether this figure includes some forced retirements), while a few (3.8 percent) were dismissed for incompetence and still others (1.9 percent) left for health reasons.60 A pattern emerged in that the professional soldiers who left the military were either young (some 70 percent of those who left were under 30 years old) or old (approximately 2000 soldiers over the age of 55 applied for a discharge).

On the other hand, the number of officers (purged mainly after 1968) being rehabilitated and reactivated did not approach anything near the number of officers leaving the military. Of 9206 appeals for rehabilitation lodged by early September 1990, fewer than 4000 had been dealt with, and only 679 of these soldiers were serving in the military again.61

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57 Figures given by deputy defense minister Antonin Rasek, Prague CTK in English, September 5, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 175, September 10, 1990, p. 23. The overwhelming majority of career soldiers (8729) were officers or warrant officers (figures given by Vacek, Prague Domestic Service in Czech, September 10, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 178, September 13, 1990, p. 16). The figure climbed to over 9700 officers and warrant officers by October 1, 1990 (figure presented by Vacek to the Federal Assembly, Rude Pravo, October 4, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 198, October 12, 1990, pp. 17–18).
59 According to a Czechoslovak source, out of 40 air force generals who underwent the screenings, only two did not pass. Respekt, September 18, 1990, translated in JPRS-EER, No. 149, October 30, 1990, pp. 9–10.
60 Figures given by Rasek, Prague CTK in English, September 5, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 175, September 10, 1990, p. 23.
The relatively small number understates somewhat the significance of the rehabilitations, for presumably these were not junior but mid-level officers who went back into the military at an even higher rank.

The outflow of young officers was a worrying trend in that it caused staffing problems at many positions usually filled by junior officers and thus disrupted the functioning of the military. According to Vacek, only 75.5 percent of command positions (unspecified further) were filled. The groups pressing for faster changes in the military (Free Legion, VKKCOF) used the outflow of junior officers in support of their own ends by putting the issue in terms of young officers' disaffection with the alleged slow pace of reform of the military. Indeed, it was the screening process as it was devised by Vacek that was on trial.

Soon after the elections, the VKKCOF issued a statement criticizing the slow pace of the changes in the military and the alleged continued heavy presence of communists in influential positions. The statement also renewed the call for the formation of a General Inspectorate Office that would inform the public about the "true" situation in the military based on soldiers' complaints to the office. In such a formulation, the Inspectorate was a channel for circumventing the normal hierarchy within the military. One day following the publication of the statement, Havel came out in support of the proposed Inspectorate as well as for a greater oversight role for the Defense and Security Committee of the Federal Assembly.

The VKKCOF based its recommendations on the evidence of the army's preparations for a crackdown in November 1989 to prop up the old regime. According to Ludek Stodulka, the chairman of VKKCOF, many of the officers who had been promoted rapidly in the early 1970s and those who actively prepared to put down the demonstrations in November 1989 still retained some of the highest posts in the military. VKKCOF formulated its accusations and recommendations for dealing with the problem on the basis of comments it received from disaffected young officers who were voluntarily leaving the military because of disappointment over changes that they perceived to be insufficient and cosmetic.

The allegation that many line officers who had gone over to greater combat readiness in November 1989 passed the screening process and continued to serve in the military was probably true, for the orders to go on a higher alert status were carried out by local

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commanders (though some must have done so with misgivings). The issue became politically embarrassing, even though it was not particularly relevant; the time of decision that would have distinguished true old guard supporters would have come if the actual order to intervene had been issued. Then, it is likely that many officers would have ignored the orders, refused to obey them, committed suicide, etc. In any event, in a situation of great instability around the country’s borders, limited information, and domestic upheaval, it is not unusual for a military to be placed on a higher alert status.

Blaming the officers for carrying out the initial preparations appears excessive and counterproductive in terms of keeping the military as a cohesive force. The whole officer corps, and especially its upper ranks, stood accused of siding with the regime on the basis of the principle of collective guilt (by association). Vacek stood personally accused of signing some of the orders for units to prepare for anti-riot action. Yet Vacek himself is an excellent example that such preparations did not necessarily mean unswerving loyalty to the old regime. He tried to steer a neutral (and indeed pro-Civic Forum) course once he became defense minister, and then launched immediate and far-ranging reforms within the military, often with little direct prodding from the government.

The whole issue has some parallels to the situation faced by German Wehrmacht officers after World War II. It is the unenviable position of professional military men to remain in their jobs despite a change in regimes. Accordingly, highly skilled, patriotic, and professional officers remained in the German military after 1933 despite Hitler’s destruction of Germany’s short-lived experiment in democracy (the Weimar Republic). Certainly not all of the German officers who stayed were Nazis (some later even lost their lives after failing to assassinate Hitler in 1944), but, especially after the Nazis penetrated the military, all of them cooperated (at least indirectly) in keeping a repressive regime in power, executing the orders it issued. And yet, as the composition of the Bundeswehr in the 1950s (with its ex-Wehrmacht officers) shows, their presence did not detract from the German military’s ability to function as a legitimate institution in a democratic state. In the Czechoslovak case, the military too had propped up the communist regime, but that did not necessarily mean that the superficial and forced membership of the officer corps in the Communist Party would somehow prevent its transformation into an institution that would respect the democratic order. Calls for expulsion of all officers who had been communists amounted to a blueprint for the decapitation of the Czechoslovak military, for party membership was compulsory at the higher ranks, only slightly less so at middle ranks, and expected even at lower ranks.

Vacek faced intense questioning on the screening issue in the parliament in the fall of 1990, with the basic line advanced by the members being that not enough officers had been
sacked. He refused to cancel the results of the screening tests carried out,66 though he even compromised on that point by agreeing to reconsider individual cases if evidence to warrant it was provided. Vacek seems to have understood the dangers inherent in the calls for radical purges being made under the guise of “democratization” of the army. For example, he stated that democratization “is in some ways a contradiction to the needed centralism in the Army,” and while answering VKKCOF’s charges, he argued that the “dissatisfaction of a soldier cannot be simply blamed on the bad or malicious intention of the commanders.”67 Similarly, he came out against the formation of a General Inspectorate with broad powers, calling it a restriction on president’s power and suggesting instead a strengthening of the parliamentary Defense and Security Committees’ powers.68 Vacek seems to have expected a massive purge (and a consequent breakdown of the military’s institutional cohesion) following the formation of a General Inspectorate, and he offered to resign in favor of a civilian who would enjoy greater public trust in order to prevent the formation of such a body.69 In August 1990 he was forced to accept the fact that the General Inspectorate was going to be set up, but he continued to argue against any such body becoming permanent.

The Political Apparatus

On December 5, 1989, in accordance with the elimination of the constitutional clause that guaranteed the communists’ political power, Vacek launched the process of depoliticization of the Czechoslovak armed forces; all references to the “leading role” of the Communist Party were deleted from military regulations, including the military oath, and “Mr.” replaced “comrade” as a form of address between soldiers. Ideological instruction in the armed forces went by the wayside, and only professional criteria were to be used to select and evaluate personnel.70 On December 15, 1989, Vacek announced that all party activity in the military was abolished. The provision called for the dissolution of the Main Political

70Prague CTK in English, December 6, 1989, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 240, p. 27.
Administration (MPA) and the party apparatus within the military, as well as the closing of the Military Political Academy. An Administration of Education and Culture, open to noncommunists, superseded the MPA. The new Administration's stated goals were to provide psychological counseling and to enhance the patriotic education of soldiers. The organization was to be akin to the psychological departments within Western militaries.\(^{71}\)

Antonín Rasek, an officer sacked after the Soviet invasion in 1968, was appointed a deputy defense minister and placed in charge of the Administration of Education and Culture. The chief of the MPA, as well as other heads of the political apparatus, were released from service altogether.\(^{72}\)

Czechoslovak military spokesmen took pains to emphasize that the new body was quite a departure from the MPA. Nevertheless, a good measure of continuity was hard to dismiss. The military's plans called for a screening process of the political officers that was expected to cut the number of political workers by one third.\(^{73}\) According to Vacek, the average age of the officers allowed to stay was 34; the stated rationale for their retention was that they were highly educated and relatively unainted (they had not been involved in the purges in the military that followed the Soviet-led invasion in 1968).\(^{74}\)

Political bodies within the military were phased out in January 1990,\(^{75}\) but there continued to be a sense of haste and some confusion about the elimination of the party apparatus. Political instruction seems to have ended one day and "patriotic" education to have replaced it the next, often taught by the same personnel, a development that led to some cynicism regarding the extent of changes. Besides personnel shortages, the quick pace of changes probably did not allow for a careful elaboration of the tasks of the new Administration.

The goal of creating an apolitical military led to a far-reaching prohibition on political activity by all active military personnel. Following some last-minute additions by the

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\(^{71}\) The main institution that had once trained political officers, the Klement Gottwald Military Political Academy, was renamed the Advanced Military School of Pedagogy on December 29, 1989. Its old purpose defunct, the school was given the task of training the future "educational" officers. Apparently, in the first few months of 1990, the school underwent far-reaching changes in terms of faculty and curriculum, with courses in Marxism replaced by social science courses. Interview with Colonel Professor Jaroslav Erněker, from the Advanced Military School of Pedagogy, A Revue, No. 4, 1990, pp. 9–10.


\(^{74}\) Interview with Vacek, Prague Domestic Service in Czech, April 5, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 71, April 12, 1990, p. 8.

\(^{75}\) Primary Communist Party organizations and the political apparatus were abolished at the Antonín Zapotocky Academy (the main Czechoslovak center of military science research) in early January 1990. Rude Pravo, January 9, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 9, January 12, 1990, p. 22.
parliament to the new law on military service, on March 15, 1990, Vacek ordered all soldiers to cease political activity and resign membership in any political party. The order also prohibited visits to membership meetings and the payment of membership dues to any political party. Soldiers could still run for public office, but once elected they would have to leave the military. A few days later, the parliament banned soldiers' participation in trade unions, although in a compromise reached later the two unions that had been formed in January 1990 stayed on as "civic" associations.

The retention of the majority of former political workers in the military and the creation of what looked suspiciously like an MPA in a new form became two of the foremost issues of contention between the top military officials and their increasingly vocal critics. The VKKCOF statement in June 1990 specifically objected to the continued presence of most of the former political workers in the Administration of Education and Culture. Stodulka also charged that former high political officers were present and sometimes even chaired the screening commissions of officers. Finally, Stodulka rejected the idea that only professional competence rather than "civic aptitude" (implying sympathies with the direction of the evolution of the polity engineered by the new officials) should be the sole criterion for a successful evaluation of an officer by the screening commission. Such calls were mild in comparison with the Free Legion's accusations, who charged Vacek with protecting former political workers and of being personally ill-disposed toward the whole reform process.

By Vacek's account, in November 1989 the staff of the political apparatus in the Czechoslovak military consisted of 3164 men. Apparently, quite a few of the political officers chose not to face the screening committees and left the military by way of refusing to sign the new military oath. Most of the supporters of the old regime probably identified themselves in this fashion.

The screening process was more elaborate with respect to the former political workers than to line officers. All members of the staff of the Administration of Education and Culture (that is, virtually all of those erstwhile MPA staff who remained in the military) were tested during the first stage of screening (January–June 1990). Those who failed to pass the screening process were discharged from service or transferred to a lower position or another field. According to figures presented by Vacek to the parliament, as of early October 1990,

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78 Figure presented by Vacek to the Federal Assembly, Rade Pravo, October 4, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, October 12, 1990, pp. 17–18.
1523 former political workers continued to serve in the military, most of them in the Administration of Education and Culture. The commissions screening the former political workers were made up of people either from SVO or chosen by SVO members, so as to ensure objectivity. Thus, ironically, many of the officers purged after 1968 had the chance to assess the former political workers (in addition, the Administration of Education and Culture itself was headed by an officer purged after 1968).

It seems that Rasek and Vacek had intended for the Administration of Education and Culture to be closely supervised by civilians. For that purpose, a civilian was to be a deputy head of each section within the new organization. Apparently, the military had asked the various political parties to recommend lawyers, psychologists, and sociologists for these positions. Nevertheless, candidates failed to materialize despite the offer of high salaries, a development probably due to the military's low prestige and the public's distrust.

It seems that SVO members took up some of the civilian positions in the Administration of Education and Culture; for example, Rasek's assistants were from SVO, and the curriculum used by the Administration of Education and Culture was put together by civilians who had been purged after 1968. According to Rasek, the curriculum stressed "the education for democracy, patriotism, and humanism." The apparatus of the Administration of Education and Culture was considerably smaller than that of the old MPA. Five "educational" personnel were assigned to each regiment, with the "educational" section head subordinate to the commanding line officer. An "educational" worker was assigned to each battalion, supplemented by "trustees" in smaller units who were nominated by an organization such as SVO. According to Rasek, the system was modeled on similar support services in the Bundeswehr. Because of a shortage of qualified personnel, only about one-

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85Contacts stemming from the West German-Czechoslovak agreement on military cooperation provided considerable insights for the Czechoslovak military, and many of the reform measures were distinctly modeled on the Bundeswehr. Rasek himself had visited West German military educational establishments on several occasions (his stated purpose for a visit to the Hamburg Staff College was to
third of the posts at the battalion level had been staffed by October 1990. Inexperienced young personnel staffed many of the posts that were filled (since most of the former political workers who stayed were under 35, and a good many were considerably under that age).

The issue of the fate of former political officers and the role of the Administration of Education and Culture is highly significant, for if the charges made by Vacek's critics were true, then a nascent fifth column of former communist policemen of the military was being nurtured in the Czechoslovak army, putting in doubt the issue of the new officials' control of the military and the army's reliability in times of crisis. Under closer examination, the picture of the screening process in the military and the continued presence of former political workers in the army does not seem as one-sided as the Free Legion or VKKCOF presented.

There are various considerations to keep in mind about the former political workers. For example, it had been the practice in the Czechoslovak (and other NSWP) militaries that an especially able line officer would be asked to work as a political officer for a period of a few years (some officers declined such offers, but in doing so they jeopardized their career advancement). In such cases, the officers were probably no more pro-old guard than other line officers. Regime supporters may have predominated within the political apparatus, but that does not mean there were not those among the political officers who had mixed feelings toward the regime and who had supported the political changes in 1989. In fact, evidence (from Czechoslovakia in 1968 as well as other cases) suggests that political officers often adopted outlooks similar to those of line officers regarding limiting political influence within the military. If a principle can be said to apply here, then many more political officers were co-opted to watch out for the military's institutional interests than line officers were co-opted to watch out for the party's interests.

Vacek pursued a two-sided policy with respect to the political apparatus. The top leadership of MPA was purged, but the screening process was meant to make the choice to keep or let go mid- and lower-level political workers on the basis of individual circumstances. The screening process fit in with Havel's declaration that the principle of collective guilt would not be applied in identifying collaborators with the old regime (even in the security apparatus or the military). In any case, the screening process affected only those political workers who chose to remain in the military. The decision to individually determine who

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87Hamburg DPA, August 30, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 174, September 7, 1990, p. 10. In addition, the Czechoslovak military press gave extensive coverage to the Western armies during 1990, with the Bundeswehr seemingly singled out for special attention. See, for example, A Reue, No. 11, 1990, pp. 30–31.
among those officers who wanted to stay in the military actually could stay was designed to retain officers deemed useful and suitable. Since the political apparatus in the military was a section staffed by some intelligent officers genuinely skilled in communication, all of whom possessed higher education (and they had studied much more than Marxism), Vacek seems to have felt that it would have been too great a loss to let go so many educated officers. As military officials stressed, it was more cost-effective to retrain a bright young former political officer than to train someone in the military from the ground up. Such a line of thinking is politically problematic, for it underestimates the level of distrust among the conscripts toward the former political officers. Even if such officers were retrained, the stigma of their past position would probably make the troops unlikely to look to them for "motivational" support.

Available evidence suggests that the Free Legion's charges were exaggerated, though that does not necessarily imply that members of the Free Legion did not believe in the allegations they made. The accusations may have stemmed from genuine enthusiasm for the process of transforming the country away from communism and the younger officers' desire to contribute to a process they felt was being stymied or mishandled by senior officers. Vacek accused the Free Legion of being composed of young, ambitious commanders striving for popularity.87 Such a view imparts less noble causes to the Free Legion's members and also seems inaccurate. For one, this is a standard argument in any generational intramilitary conflict. Whenever younger officers push for reform, the older, more senior officers can accuse them of opportunism. In any case, Vacek had to keep in mind the overall interests of the military as an institution. His perspective was longer-term and more comprehensive. There is no indication that Vacek actually tried to shelter the former political officers on any other ground than desiring to have the best available manpower and to avoid the principle of collective guilt.

Military Counterintelligence

According to Vacek, the military counterintelligence organization (Vojenska Kontrarozvedka, or VKR for its Czech acronym) had been under the dual jurisdiction of the Ministries of Defense and Interior,88 though the link with the former seems to have been purely pro forma—the actual control of the VKR was exercised by the Ministry of Interior.

The VKR was officially transferred to the sole control of the Defense Ministry on January 4, 1990. Much confusion surrounded its transfer and consequent reorganization.

It seems that the VKR’s official transfer to the Defense Ministry delayed its screening process, as it avoided the screening commissions in the Ministry of the Interior and the military was slow to deal with VKR. There were reports that for several months following the transfer, VKR agents did not answer to military authorities and continued to have a good deal of leeway in the army. According to a newly appointed deputy minister of the interior, in early 1990, the VKR was the only “consolidated and functioning” counterintelligence agency in Czechoslovakia. The one notable change in the military counterintelligence was the withdrawal of Soviet “advisers” from the VKR in March 1990.

A smaller, revamped military counterintelligence organization was supposed to have been activated on April 1, 1990, but there seem to have been delays in starting the new organization. The slow pace of change of the VKR led to discussions about the extent of reorganization of military counterintelligence between Vacek and the Defense and Security Committees of the Federal Assembly.

Despite the delays, on July 1, 1990, a Military Security Administration began to be formed, led by Major General Pavol Gavlas (apparently a line officer with no previous experience in counterintelligence). The new organization was to consist of a restructured military counterintelligence organization, renamed Military Defense Intelligence (Vojenske Obranne Zpravodajstvi, or VOZ for its Czech acronym), and a completely new military police organization (Vojenske Policie). The latter consisted of several detachments—the regular military police, military transport police, military prison police, and criminal military police. All links between VOZ and the internal security apparatus were said to have been severed. In an interview, Gavlas emphasized that the functions of VOZ were to be strictly limited to ensuring adherence to security guidelines and to combating the activities of foreign intelligence agencies in the Czechoslovak military, rather than keeping tabs on soldiers’ political beliefs.

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89 Ibid.
92 Author’s conversations with Czechoslovak officials, Prague, May 1991.
According to Gavlas, all VKR members had gone through the screening process by the end of 1990, with representatives from SVO and Civic Forum being represented on the screening commissions.\footnote{Interview with Gavlas, \textit{Sobodne Slovo}, July 12, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 139, July 19, 1990, p. 17.} Apparently, a total of only ten people comprised the screening commissions—five from SVO and five from Civic Forum (though there was some uncertainty about the Civic Forum's actual involvement).\footnote{\textit{Respekt}, August 14, 1990, translated in JPRS-EER, No. 148, October 26, 1990, pp. 17-19.} According to later reports, some 28 percent of military counterintelligence officers (including virtually all senior staff members) did not pass the screening.\footnote{The figure of 28 percent was given by Gavlas and Dobrovsky: interview with Gavlas, \textit{A Revue}, No. 12, 1990, pp. 10-11; interview with then Defense Minister Lubos Dobrovsky, \textit{Mlada Fronta Dnes}, October 30, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 215, November 6, 1990, p. 11. Vacek gave a figure of 16 percent in early October 1990, probably by mistake; comments by Vacek to Federal Assembly, Prague CTK in English, October 1, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 193, October 4, 1990, p. 20.} The total staff of military counterintelligence amounted to 827 in early October 1990.\footnote{Interview with Dobrovsky, \textit{Mlada Fronta Dnes}, October 30, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 215, November 6, 1990, p. 11.} The rather high number was to be further reduced by 40-50 percent by January 1, 1991, when the new administration was to become fully operational.\footnote{In June 1990, Gavlas announced that the staff of the new organization would be reduced to about 40 percent of the strength of VKR. \textit{Interview with Gavlas, Sobodne Slovo}, July 12, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 139, July 19, 1990, p. 17.}

Reform of military counterintelligence became an important point of controversy regarding Vacek's leadership as pressure on the military increased in the summer of 1990. VKKCOF charged that the only change in VKR was that it was transferred from the Ministry of Interior to the Defense Ministry, thereby avoiding the screening process altogether.\footnote{Comments by Stodulka, \textit{Mlada Fronta}, July 9, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 134, July 12, 1990, pp. 24-25. On the other hand, there also appeared a call to avoid sweeping purges of VKR; \textit{A Revue}, No. 5, 1990, p. 39.} The calls for the complete abolition of a military counterintelligence organization as an unnecessary relic of the past led to interesting allegations by Vacek of increased KGB (as well as Western) intelligence activity in the Czechoslovak military, as he defended the need for military counterintelligence.\footnote{Comments by Vacek to the Federal Assembly, \textit{Rude Pravo}, October 4, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 198, October 12, 1990, pp. 17-18.}

For whatever reason, the reform of VKR lagged behind the reorganization of other bodies within the military. VKR agents had acted as the party's secret policemen, and their ties with the Soviet military were probably the strongest of any organization operating within the military. Retention of so many of them could not have been acceptable in the new circumstances in Czechoslovakia.
MILITARY REFORM: DEMILITARIZATION

Military Service

Under the communist regime, a conscript's tour of duty extended for 24 months. As in the other Warsaw Pact countries, and especially the USSR, an informal hierarchy prevailed among the inductees, with second-year conscripts often engaging in brutal and humiliating hazing practices against first-year inductees. Combined with a lack of leave time, constant drills, political indoctrination, and no religious freedoms, a conscript's tour of duty bore a good deal of resemblance to a prison term. Conscientious objector status did not exist, and the only form of noncombat unit service entailed work in construction units, where conditions tended to be even worse. There was a widespread awareness of such a situation, and military service was feared and despised.

Following the collapse of the old regime, there were expectations of rapid changes toward easing the conditions of life for conscripts. Demonstrations demanding a shorter tour of duty, provisions for alternative service, and a host of other related demands (such as the abolition of compulsory military studies at universities) swept the country in December 1989 and January 1990. Protests included hunger strikes and acts of disobedience in some army units. The popular pressure forced the government into quick action.

The parliament approved a new law on military service on March 14, 1990. Many of the provisions of the new law had been announced earlier, but the law codified them in one package. In sections relating to the draft, the law reduced a conscript's tour of duty to 18 months, provided for alternative service, and limited the use of soldiers in the economy to times of natural catastrophes. It also made a conscript's life much more bearable by providing one month of vacation, allowing religious freedoms, and other assorted rights.

The new law specified that the military was to be used only against outside aggression or a direct attack against the constitutional system, thus removing the previous law's provisions for allowing an internal security role for the military by naming it the protector of socialism in Czechoslovakia. The phasing out of construction troops altogether, announced by Vacek in January 1990 but codified in the new law, represented another change from the

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104 About a month before the political change, the old regime had announced a vague intention to shorten basic military service from 24 to 18 months. The new government implemented the proposal. Jan Obrman, "CPCS Proposes Cutting Length of Mandatory Military Service," RFE, *Czechoslovakia, Situation Report*, No. 22, October 27, 1989, pp. 25–28.

105 For a more detailed evaluation of the law, see Obrman, "Changes in the Armed Forces."
communist use of the armed forces. The army's other functions in support of the economy ceased in the fall of 1990.

The pervasive presence and attempted glorification of the military in the society began to be cut, with the elimination of military parades and abolition of pre-military training (including compulsory defense education training in schools), eliminating the need for a number of organizations associated with the military (such as Svazarm, Association for Cooperation with the Army, the Czechoslovak counterpart of the Soviet DOSAAF, the Voluntary Association for Cooperation with the Army, Air Force, and Navy) and throwing them into confusion. Some military spokesmen found the action to be excessive, and the army tried to salvage something out of the situation by supporting newly established organizations that promoted certain forms of pre-military training. Finally, the military began to lose some of its secretiveness. A few modest steps in this direction had been taken under the old regime, but in the spring of 1990 the military published a booklet that gave the location of military units, listed the army's weapons, and made public the military's budget. Only items directly related to the military's readiness were to remain classified. These steps were often ridiculed and treated as inadequate by the Czechoslovak media, but they certainly began a change from the old patterns.

The law on military service marked a whole new approach to the relationship between the society and the military. Its internal functions abolished, the military was left to concentrate on preparations for one mission only: the defense of the state from outside aggression. The moves adopted in Czechoslovakia marked a radical departure from the Soviet model of military-society relations.

The "Plan 2005," announced in June 1990, envisions the Czechoslovak military becoming a substantially smaller, mainly professional force. The plan proposes three stages. Its aspects relating to increasing the ratio of professional soldiers were based heavily on the experience of Western militaries, especially the Bundeswehr. The first stage, lasting from 1990 through 1993, envisions massive reductions in manpower and weapons. Cuts of some

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108 The booklet was entitled *The Czechoslovak Army—Facts*. Prague CTK in English, April 11, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 71, April 12, 1990, pp. 8–9.
109 For a longer description of what was to be classified, see the interview with Colonel Josef Ocaňas, head of the Defense Ministry's Consultative Center, *Prace*, March 24, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 64, April 3, 1990, pp. 23–24.
60,000 soldiers (to a level of 140,000) and reductions in main weapon categories (tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery) of 40–60 percent are synchronized with the conventional arms control agreements. The cuts formed a major rationale for a further reduction in the length of compulsory service and the implementation of a gradual switch to a volunteer professional military. The immediate cuts are to be followed in the second stage (1994–1997) by a further reduction of compulsory service to 12 months (in 1993–1994) that will allow for scaling back the military’s manpower by another 40,000. Consequently, there is to be an increase in the ratio of professional soldiers from 30 percent (in 1990) to 50 percent by 1995 and 60 percent by 1997. By year 2000, when the military is to be in the third stage of its reform, 75 percent of the military’s manpower needs are to be met by professionals, with only a militia-type system of basic compulsory service lasting three to five months.\footnote{Vacek gave the example of Switzerland as a model that Czechoslovakia would like to emulate. Interview with Vacek, Prace, September 13, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 187, September 26, 1990, pp. 13–14.}

Apparently, Vacek and the top military leadership had doubts about the applicability of a switch to a fully professional military in Czechoslovakia.\footnote{Interview with Vacek, Verejnost, September 3, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 178, September 13, 1990, pp. 16–19.} The cost of such a force figured as the main reason, but some of their doubts may also have stemmed from the knowledge of the low prestige of the military and their probable fears that the army might not be able to attract enough applicants. Another reason, evident in Vacek’s comments, suggested a way of thinking that implicitly elevated quantity over quality and showed attachment to a belief in a traditional linear battlefield (perhaps indicating the continued influence of basic tenets of Soviet military science). For example, in a discussion of a possible scenario for an armed conflict in the year 2000, Vacek used the hypothetical case of a 50,000-strong Czechoslovak professional army as insufficient if a conflict were to break out.\footnote{Interview with Vacek, Prace, September 13, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 187, September 26, 1990, pp. 13–14.} In his view, reserves would be needed. Such a view is questionable, for, depending on the adversary, it could be argued that a highly trained, mobile, technologically advanced 50,000-man force would be sufficient on a nonlinear battlefield with the Czechoslovak military engaged in a defensive battle. A large, poorly equipped reserve force possessing only rudimentary training and low mobility may be more of a liability than an asset in those conditions.
The "Plan 2005" has an aspect that is potentially explosive in that one of its humanitarian provisions allows conscripts to serve near their home area by 1993–1994. Given the redeployment of Czechoslovak forces throughout the country, such a plan has the potential of creating a largely Slovak army in Slovakia and a mostly Czech military in the Czech lands. In a situation of a worsening ethnic conflict, this is a blueprint that may aid the breakup of Czechoslovakia.

By the fall of 1990, the military faced a serious problem of manpower that stemmed partly from the implementation of the law on military service. The law’s provisions for a conscript to opt out of the military in favor of civilian service before entering as well as while serving in the military created havoc within the army. The law, as well as a whole spate of internal measures within the military designed to "humanize" a conscript’s tour of duty, had the effect of lowering the overall level of discipline. The option of leaving the military reduced the potential sanctions against conscripts, and many draftees seem to have refused orders or taken other liberties with military discipline.

So many draftees opted out of the military that by early September 1990, 13,855 conscripts (some 6 percent of the overall strength of the military) had applied for alternative service. The outflow of junior officers and the massive opting among conscripts for alternative service led to Vacek’s acknowledgment in early October 1990 that the army was short 40,000 soldiers. By some accounts, only 40 percent of mid-level command positions were filled. According to senior military commanders, the problem led to reduced combat readiness and a lowered standard of training. In October 1990, Vacek asked the parliament to change the provisions of the law so as to allow draftees to choose alternative service only before entering the military.

Given the low prestige of the military and the widely known and feared conditions of life for draftees, it is hardly surprising that a large number of young men opted out of the military. Moreover, the law providing for alternative service did not specify whose

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118For example, see Vacek’s comments to the Federal Assembly, Rude Pravo, October 4, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 198, October 12, 1990, pp. 17–18.
responsibility it was to make sure that those who applied for alternative service actually registered to do so with an appropriate civilian establishment. In effect, the law provided a loophole to evade any kind of compulsory service, and that is how it was treated. Out of the 11,029 draftees already released from service by September 1990, only 700 had actually began to work in some kind of a civilian establishment.\textsuperscript{120} There were moves to strengthen enforcement provisions of the law in the fall of 1990, but by that time the damage had been done.

Vacek accused the Free Legion of fomenting the exodus of conscripts by actively persuading conscripts undergoing basic training to opt for civilian service.\textsuperscript{121} If the allegations are true, and they do seem to fit into the Free Legion's pattern of action, then the army leadership became a target of a campaign by some junior officers to hinder the functioning of the army, embarrass the senior officers, and make military reform a political issue.\textsuperscript{122} It is also another sign of the huge gap between senior and junior officers that has serious implications for the cohesion of the Czechoslovak military.

The Military and the Economy

The new officials' proposals to scale back on weapons production touched upon the role of the military in society, Czechoslovak foreign and security policies, and Czech-Slovak relations. Czechoslovakia has had an extensive armaments industry, specializing especially in tanks and aircraft, and the country has been an important arms supplier on the international arms market. The communist regime had supplied arms to unstable countries in Asia and Africa. Some of those arms found their way to various terrorist movements (the sale of massive amounts of SEMTEX plastic explosives to Libya was perhaps the best known example of the freewheeling Czechoslovak policy on this issue). In an attempt to change Czechoslovakia's international image, Foreign Minister Dienstbier announced in January 1990 the stopping of all arms sales to other countries.\textsuperscript{123} Czechoslovak officials also announced the intention to rapidly convert the arms industry to civilian production. The

\textsuperscript{120} Figures given by Vacek, Bratislava Domestic Service in Slovak, September 10, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 178, September 13, 1990, pp. 15–16.

\textsuperscript{121} Interview with Vacek, Smena, September 15, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 186, September 25, 1990, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{122} According to senior military officials, a huge majority of conscripts opting out of the military did so while already in the military. Since the details of the law were not widely known during the spring 1990 draft, the exodus may have been due simply to information filtering through to the draftees about their rights. However, if the Free Legion took to actively promoting more widespread knowledge of the law, then that in itself, while not illegal, amounted to a campaign to affect negatively the functioning of the military. Vacek alleged that the Free Legion took a far more active role.

abrupt turnaround was part of the initial idealistic Czechoslovak foreign policy. However, such a change would have had a far-reaching and disruptive effect on the country's economy and foreign trade, and the intention proved embarrassingly unworkable in the short run. In February and March 1990, Czechoslovak officials modified their stance by speaking only of a halt in arms exports to areas of tension, though even this approach proved to be difficult to meet. Some reports indicated that Czechoslovak ties with clients such as Libya persisted with little change.

The communist regime had built many armaments plants in Slovakia, for reasons of developing that part of the state as well as for strategic reasons of having the plants away from the border of the "strategic enemy" (West Germany). The lack of balance was such that in 1987 (the high point of Czechoslovakia's armaments output), 60.8 percent of Czechoslovak weapons were produced in Slovakia and only 39.2 percent in the Czech lands (even though the distribution of industrial output between the Czech lands and Slovakia was just about the inverse of the distribution of armaments output). The concentration of the arms industry in Slovakia became a problem with the new government's plans to phase out arms exports and to convert military to civilian production, for it meant correspondingly greater economic dislocations in Slovakia than in the Czech lands. According to Lieutenant General Jaroslav Kovacik, the military's chief of armaments production, 120,000-150,000 workers in Slovakia were to be affected by the changes in arms production policies. Moreover, the federal government only planned to assist 13 of 111 factories engaged in weapons production during their conversion process. The planned complete phase-out of tank production in 1990 mainly affected Slovakia, and it led to strikes and protests among the workers in several of the biggest factories.

Given the number of employees affected and the changing nature of the political system toward accountability of officials to popular wishes, top Slovak political figures had to

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come to the defense of the arms industry. The issue quickly developed an ethnic dimension that soon came to overshadow the actual economic issue (a development common to states undergoing an acute ethnic conflict).

If anything, the future of the Czechoslovak arms industry began to look even bleaker by mid-1990, for a variety of reasons. One, the bottom had dropped out of the domestic market as the Czechoslovak military's budget was cut again. Furthermore, there was no hope of the domestic demand picking up. The arms control agreement then being negotiated in Vienna was expected to cause massive cuts just for Czechoslovakia to meet the new ceilings on weapons, while the new doctrine specified further restructuring toward a lighter force. Both aspects boded ill for the Czechoslovak tank factories.

Two, external demand also dropped substantially. One of Czechoslovakia's main arms customers, the GDR, folded altogether and cancelled its arms purchases contracts. The other Warsaw Pact countries (including the USSR) also reduced or stopped their purchases. In terms of contracts with non-European developing countries, the market declined because of the reduction in international tensions. In addition, the Czechoslovak arms industry received bad publicity as a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Iraq had been one of the major arms purchasers from Czechoslovakia, and the invasion (besides leading to an arms embargo) demonstrated the unsavory character and poor international reputation of some of the Czechoslovak arms industry's clients and led to further calls for a greater selectivity in weapons sales.

The total negative effect on Czechoslovakia's arms industry is illustrated by the breakdown of its clients by destination. In 1987, the end users of Czechoslovak armaments were: Czechoslovak military, 31.7 percent; Warsaw Pact countries (mainly USSR), 51.7 percent; developing countries, 16.6 percent. There was an enormous shrinkage of the market in all three categories.

In another indication of the growing pervasiveness of the ethnic conflict, the issue of displacements in the armaments industry led to mutual Czech-Slovak recriminations in the

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130For example, the Slovak Premier Milan Číč met representatives of one arms plant in February 1990, and the overall tone of the Slovak media was unmistakably in favor of the employees rather than the federal government. Pravda (Bratislava), February 19, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 37, February 23, 1990, pp. 11–12.

131The true military budget, published for the first time in June 1990, amounted to 31.18 billion korunas in 1990 (10.3 percent of the budget was appropriated to arms purchases). The drop in the military's budget was the second in a row (the budget amounted to 35.062 billion korunas in 1989). Hospodarske Noviny (weekly economic supplement), July 3, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 133, July 11, p. 19.


press about the level of support the Slovak arms factories should receive from the federal government. The domestic problems entailed by the cutback of armaments production (economic and ethnic) also led to the continuation of the policy of arms exports, proclamations by Havel and Dienstbier notwithstanding.

The senior military leadership must have been uncomfortable with the rapidly disappearing Czechoslovak arms production potential. The army's clout in the economy was being reduced, and the country was turning toward an increasingly neutral stance militarily while growing more and more dependent on outside arms suppliers. Vacek lamented that the Czechoslovak army was already lagging behind in technology and noted the short-term prospect of the situation becoming worse. The army's interests matched those of the research institutes and the design and production enterprises, but other than Vacek's promising more civilian-related research by some military research institutes, the military kept a low profile on the issue of conversion, seemingly resigned to the policies adopted by the civilian authorities.

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135* Ohrn, "Arms Trading Continues."


Full-scale reform of the military went into high gear with the appointment of a civilian defense minister in October 1990. By the summer of 1991, the military clearly had become a genuine state institution under the full control of elected bodies. The Ministry of Defense has been restructured, and there is a separation of powers between the civilians in charge of the political machinery of the ministry and the military in actual operational command of the troops. The mission of the armed forces has been specifically established as defensive safeguarding of state sovereignty from external threats, codified in a new military doctrine. Former institutions of communist control, changed once under Vacek, received another, closer look, with the result of a complete restructuring of military counterintelligence. A significant portion of the society still holds the military in poor esteem, but such views can only be changed gradually over a number of years.

As groups that had pressed for faster changes were either coopted or relegated to the fringes, a new issue appeared—the spread of ethnic conflict to the military. Militantly disposed organizations of Slovak officers, supported by some within the Slovak government, launched an effort to form two separate armies in Czechoslovakia. Such a development would in effect break up the Czechoslovak state. Czechoslovak federal officials seem powerless to stop the movement, and indeed, some of the Defense Ministry's plans seem to play into the hands of Slovak ethnic nationalists. Although senior Defense Ministry officials claim that ethnic conflict has not spread in any significant manner to the military, there is reason to doubt such pronouncements.

The new defense minister, Lubos Dobrovsky, had a history of oppositional activity against the communist regime, including being one of the first members of Charter 77. Following the political changes, he served in the Foreign Ministry, where he negotiated the Soviet troop withdrawal from Czechoslovakia. Dobrovsky assumed his new post with a perception that the army's prestige would improve if it had a period of stability and a break from the constant attacks upon it in the media. Polls in October 1990 indicated continued distrust of the military, with 30 percent of respondents neither supporting nor trusting the army. Twenty-five percent of respondents felt that the army's existence was unnecessary. Such views caused the civilians in charge of the Ministry of Defense to defend the military and explain its role in a manner reminiscent of Vacek. The officials in charge (both military

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1 Figures given by Rasek, Prague CTK in English, October 31, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 213, November 2, 1990, pp. 18–19.
and civilian) seem to realize the reasons for the problem, and the military press has devoted much coverage to the issue and ways of solving it. A section on contacts with the public was set up at the Ministry of Defense to try to bridge the gap between the military and society. Nevertheless the problem persists, and Dobrovsky has described it well:

The army continues to be suspected of being good for nothing and of depriving the state budget of funds for nothing. And the conscripts regard it as an obstacle in their lives.  

A poll of conscripts in the spring of 1991 showed that “army officer” ranked 43rd out of 50 professions. As democratization proceeds in Czechoslovakia and as the population begins to look at the military as a national institution serving the state, some of the antimilitary feelings will probably diminish. Already, polls have shown an increase in the number of people expressing trust in the military. However, the problem continues, and it may take a decade to bring the public trust of the military up to a level comparable with those in Western Europe.

The domestic context for the development of civil-military relations was the further growth of ethnic conflict, the start of a far-reaching economic reform, and the breakup of the original anticommunist coalitions formed in November 1989. Civic Forum and Public Against Violence dissolved into various splinter groups, so that by early 1991 there were a large number of parties on the Czechoslovak political scene. At the federal level, a program of economic reform, designed to switch the country to a market-based economy, began in January 1991. The most important issue was the evolution of ethnic conflict, which by the spring of 1991 threatened the survival of the state. Virtually every issue has taken on an ethnic aspect. Economic reform has become entangled in Czech-Slovak relations, with each measure scrutinized as to whether Slovakia or the Czech lands would profit from it. The Slovak language law, passed in October 1990, sparked demonstrations and protests from a host of smaller ethnic groups inhabiting Slovakia, and it led to antagonistic ethnic relations in some of the smaller towns in Slovakia, as well as continuing Hungarian concern for the well-being of the Magyars living in Slovakia. The Slovak leader, Meciar, was replaced in April 1991 in a move that gave rise to hopes of less strained Czech-Slovak relations. However, since his ouster, Meciar has become the most popular figure in Slovakia. His

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2For a good explanation of the problem, see A Revue, No. 1, 1991, pp. 7-8.
4A Revue, No. 4, 1991, pp. 4-5.
populist and ethnic nationalist slogans have found a good deal of support. Mobilization in Moravia and Silesia evolved in the same direction. By spring 1991, polls showed that a majority of Moravians and Silesians supported autonomy for the region, and an increasing number believed that Moravians and Silesians were a different “nation.” The various accusations of economic exploitation by Bohemia have become evident in Moravia and Silesia. As of September 1991, the future of a Czechoslovak state remains uncertain because of disagreements over the constitution and the setup of the state.

The international context was provided by the rupture in Soviet-Czechoslovak relations, an increasingly closer cooperation with NATO countries, and informal but close coordination of a whole range of policies between Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Soviet foot-dragging in dissolving the Warsaw Pact military structures and its crackdown in the Baltic republics in January 1991, as well as a huge drop in economic relations and trade because of the switch to hard currency accounting, led to a breakdown in Soviet-Czechoslovak relations. Negotiations between the two countries about a new bilateral treaty were at an impasse because of Soviet insistence on a security clause. In the aftermath of the attempted putsch in Moscow and the consequent collapse of communism in the USSR, this obstacle disappeared. Whether the issue will reemerge in the future depends on events in Moscow, which are difficult to predict as of September 1991. However, there seems little justification for any close Soviet-Czechoslovak relations in the security realm from the Czechoslovak viewpoint. Concurrently with the rupture in relations with the USSR, Czechoslovak ties with NATO increased greatly, and Czechoslovak officers have begun to study at Western military academies. Since early 1991, Czechoslovak officials have openly acknowledged that they would like NATO to become the backbone of a future CSCE security framework. Czechoslovak cooperation with Poland and Hungary has evolved from coordination of policies with regard to the Warsaw Pact to a trilateral entente, based on bilateral military agreements between all three states.

MILITARY DOCTRINE

The parliament approved a draft military doctrine in March 1991, though its final acceptance is dependent on the new Czechoslovak constitution. There were lengthy parliamentary discussions about the doctrine, but most of the questions concerned minor points; the document's basic principles had wide support. The doctrine incorporated the

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ideas of the draft doctrines proposed by the military and the group of parliament members in October 1990.\footnote{The doctrine was discussed in November 1990, and it was submitted for elaboration again in January 1991. \textit{Lidov\=a Demokracie}, November 9, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 221, November 15, 1990, pp. 20–21.}

The doctrine formalized the principle of territorial defense for Czechoslovakia. It specifically did not define any enemies and it stipulated equal protection for the entire territory of the state on the basis of sufficient defense.\footnote{Prague CTK in English, January 29, 1991, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 20, January 30, 1991, p. 15.} It envisioned strictly defensive tasks and missions for the army.\footnote{Interview with Dobrovsky, \textit{Verejnost}, January 29, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 27, February 8, 1991, pp. 16–18.} The doctrine also indicated the empty nature of the Warsaw Pact at that time, for it said nothing about coalition warfare (though the military structures of the Warsaw Pact officially still existed at the time the draft was submitted for discussion in the parliament). In a commentary on the doctrine, Dobrovsky added that Czechoslovakia's status of not being a member of any alliance did not mean a lack of "friendly contacts" with other armies, for which he singled out the Polish and Hungarian armies as examples.\footnote{These remarks came at a time when Polish-Czechoslovak and Czechoslovak-Hungarian agreements on military cooperation were being finalized or already signed, respectively. Ibid.} This is a subtle difference from his comments only a month earlier, when he claimed that the army would rely purely on its own resources and would in no way cooperate directly with any other army.\footnote{Comments by Dobrovsky, Prague CTK in English, January 9, 1991, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 7, January 10, 1991, pp. 22–23.}

The doctrine had two main implications. It codified the principle of defensive restructuring of the armed forces and the redeployment of the military throughout the country embodied in the "Plan 2005." Both had been ongoing already, but the acceptance of the draft doctrine provided legislative backing and gave them greater impetus. Earlier limited redeployment gave way to a full-scale movement of units in April and May 1991.\footnote{Prague CTK in English, May 29, 1991, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 104, May 30, 1991, p. 9.} The planned redeployment of Czechoslovak forces envisions three regional commands (West, Central, and East, for Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, and Slovakia, respectively) that will control a total of seven army corps. Air force and air defense units are also to be redeployed, but they will remain under federal command. The guiding principle behind the redeployment of air forces is the protection of industrial and political centers, troop concentrations, and other high-value targets.\footnote{Martin Mamula, "Czechoslovak Air Force Restructures and Redeploys," \textit{Jane's Intelligence Review}, Vol. 3, No. 6, June 1991, pp. 262–263.} Some 36 to 39 percent of Czechoslovak troops...
are to be stationed in Slovakia. They are to include an air defense division and two army divisions (one tank and one mechanized) in place by October 31, 1991. The plan envisions the redeployment to be completed by the end of 1993.

Czechoslovak officials have repeatedly emphasized that they have no plans against any specific enemy forces. However, the military has worked out plans to repel aggressors' forces. Like any military, the Czechoslovak army has operational plans for defense. Such plans, to be of any value, must take into account the equipment and basic tenets of military strategy used by potential aggressors. This implies that the Czechoslovak military has prepared contingency plans for combating an aggressive force coming from the USSR. Conclusive proof of such plans came during the attempted putsch in Moscow in August 1991. According to Dobrovsky, the Czechoslovak military acted on the basis of plans drawn up in March 1991 to safeguard the Soviet-Czechoslovak border.

In terms of more defensive structures, Czechoslovak officials plan to keep some weapons (notably aircraft) at levels below those allowed under arms control limits. There is also a possibility that Czechoslovak units will move toward a brigade structure. Apparently, the General Staff has been working out the details of such a change.

The issue of redeployment assumed a sudden urgency in late 1990 in the face of widespread fears of a massive wave of Soviet refugees, and it soon became hindered by limited funds available to the military. In addition, ethnic conflict further complicated the whole issue. Expectations of a massive influx of Soviet refugees due to the liberalization of Soviet emigration laws spread throughout Europe, but the fears were especially strong in the countries bordering the USSR. The Slovak Interior Ministry formed a crisis team in order to safeguard the Soviet-Czechoslovak border in October 1990, and the border was strengthened with additional border guards in November 1990.

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14Prague CTK in English, January 29, 1991, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 20, January 30, 1991, p. 15. Until 1990, two category III, i.e., cadre strength, tank divisions were stationed in Slovakia. There was no separate air defense force for Slovakia.


18The strengthening of the border guards even gave rise to some groundless rumors that Czechoslovakia was preparing fortifications along the border with the USSR. Narodna Obroda, December 3, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 236, December 7, 1990, p. 19; Prague CTK in English, December 11, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 242, December 17, 1990, pp. 33–34; Prague CTK in English, January 24, 1991, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 16, January 24, 1991, p. 21.
collaboration with Poland and Hungary in protecting the three countries' borders with the USSR.\textsuperscript{19}

Slovak officials made redeployment an issue in Czech-Slovak ethnic conflict by playing upon the fears of a massive influx of Soviet refugees and by calling attention to the then still quite small Czechoslovak military presence in Slovakia. An ethnically motivated riot in a Soviet army unit stationed near the Czechoslovak-Soviet border sharpened these fears.\textsuperscript{20} Meciar openly exploited the fears about refugees by accusing the federal government of delaying redeployment and thereby not fulfilling properly its role in planning the defense of the state. The charges were false, for in response to the fears of a wave of refugees, the military moved up plans for redeployment by one year.\textsuperscript{21} Meciar came out in favor of deploying the troops specifically in East Slovakia, justifying it on the basis of a "strategic threat."\textsuperscript{22} Such calls brought a sharp response in the Soviet media.\textsuperscript{23} Fears about the defense of eastern Slovakia resurfaced in strength during the Moscow putsch attempt.\textsuperscript{24}

A complication of the redeployment plans arose with the parliament's cutting of the Ministry of Defense's budget again for 1991. The budget of 26.5 billion korunas (slashed from the 28 billion korunas proposed by the government) caused Dobrovsky to warn that the army would not be able to fulfill its assigned tasks.\textsuperscript{25} In April 1991, Ministry of Defense officials claimed they could not proceed with the plans unless the parliament provided additional funds for the army.\textsuperscript{26} The lack of funds apparently resulted in some delays of the troop movements.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{19}Prague CTK in English, November 21, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 227, November 26, 1990, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{25}Defense Ministry officials even remarked that if further cuts were enacted, then it would make sense to contemplate the army's dissolution. Zemedelske Noviny, December 15, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 245, December 20, 1990, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{27}The budget problems have caused some resentment among the military, with open complaints by the military surfacing in the media over the extremely low flight training time for fighter pilots—50
Two other minor ethnic problems also involved the redeployment plans. Given the fears of a Soviet refugee influx, the problem of how the Magyar minority in Slovakia would perceive the redeployment no longer seemed as salient, but it did not go away entirely. Dobrovsy used the occasion of meeting the Hungarian ambassador to underline that the movement was not designed against the Magyars in Slovakia. Finally, some officials from Moravia and Silesia expressed fears that the Moravian and Silesian portion of the Czechoslovak border with Poland would be insufficiently protected. The fears may have been an expression of some longstanding animosities in the region toward Poland and some assumed Polish territorial ambitions toward Czech Silesia.

There is bound to be further exploitation of the redeployment issue as part of the ethnic conflict. One, the redeployment plans may be altered because of Slovak pressure to station more forces in East Slovakia. Fears of a wave of refugees may be one reason, but another rationale may be the fears of territorial ambitions by a potential semi-independent Ukraine against Slovakia. Some ethnic nationalist fringe elements in the Ukraine have made no secret of such ambitions, and the situation in the Ukraine (especially West Ukraine) is far from stable. Even the possibility of a civil war in the Ukraine cannot be ruled out. One potential way that armed conflict may spill over from the Ukraine into Slovakia is that the large, geographically concentrated Ruthenian/Ukrainian minority in East Slovakia may become ethnically mobilized with the help of ethnic nationalist calls from the Ruthenians in the Transcarpathian oblast in the Ukraine. The founding of the Society of Carpathian Ruthenians in Uzhgorod in February 1990 and its calls for an autonomous Carpathian Ruthenian autonomous oblast are signs of ethnic assertiveness that may lead to cross-border contacts that could become problematic. Possibly in connection with potential destabilization in East Slovakia, Meciar discussed guarantees of borders between the Ukraine and Slovakia during his trip to the Ukraine in March 1991, and federal officials do

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30 Ukrainian ethnic nationalists have been quite negative toward Ruthenian ethnic assertiveness. In a potential future semi-independent Ukraine, this could become a problem. For an example of Ukrainian perceptions of Ruthenian ethnic stirrings, see Literaturna Ukraina, January 17, 1991, translated in JPRS, Soviet Union, Political Affairs, No. 27, May 16, 1991, pp. 69–74.
not discount the possibilities of Ukrainian irredentist claims. The problem may also be reversed, in that some Czechoslovak fringe groups on the right have called for the “return” of Ruthenia to Czechoslovakia (the territory had been a part of Czechoslovakia in the interwar period). The right-wing groups have become stronger over the course of 1991, and their irredentist claims—even if shared by few Czechs or Slovaks—may add to the atmosphere of conflict and insecurity.

Two, budgetary problems may cause further delays in redeployment. If that indeed happens, then Slovak ethnic nationalist spokesmen are bound to exploit the issue on ethnic grounds for political gain. Finally, if the present close Czechoslovak cooperation with Poland and Hungary breaks down or shows signs of serious strain, then the stationing of forces in Moravia and Silesia and South Slovakia, respectively, also may become an ethnically significant issue.

**MILITARY REFORM: POLITICAL ASPECTS**

**Personnel Changes**

Dobrovsky assumed the office of defense minister amidst fears of a far-reaching purge that would virtually clear out the entire upper ranks of the officer corps, since Vacek’s recall seemed tied to his refusal to purge enough officers. Both Havel and Dobrovsky immediately allayed those fears by coming out in favor of promoting some younger officers but rejecting any precipitous purges. Establishing an air of objectivity, Dobrovsky acted on both of the main issues in contention—the campaign against the top military leadership by the radical groups, and the presence of discredited officers in the military. His first order was to suspend the activities of the Free Legion and to have the organization’s activities against the army investigated by the federal investigative service, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Democracy. He also suspended some of the Free Legion members from their posts in the military. In his initial comments, Dobrovsky outlined his idea of the role of an army in a democratic state by debunking some of the views held by proponents of the

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34 For example, see interview with Havel, Prague Domestic Service in Czech, October 21, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 204, October 22, 1990, pp. 8–9.
35 Comments with Dobrovsky, Prague CTK in English, October 24, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 211, October 31, 1990, p. 35.
"democratization" of the army. In his view, the army would keep its authoritarian structure but would be subordinate in all ways to the institutions of a democratic state.  

On the other hand, Dobrovsky also stopped the screening process and asked the Federal Assembly to set up a group of its members to verify the results. He stipulated new criteria for the retention of officers: they were to be based on an evaluation of a given officer's ethical background (a probable reference to an officer's conduct in November 1989 and any evidence of corruption) as well as his professional qualifications. The changed criteria met a crucial demand of some of the groups attacking the military.

The verification of results of the screening commissions carried out by the Defense and Security Committee of the Federal Assembly and Dobrovsky's office lasted until April 1991, but it did not turn up any serious problems. According to Dobrovsky, results of screenings (carried out to the level of regimental commanders) led to no further dismissals from the military. The verification process did result in the reshuffling of positions at the General Staff. It also showed evidence of "one-sided" political thinking among the generals as well as a high standard of military expertise and loyalty to the defense of the state (such findings support the theoretical positions outlined in Sec. 2 of this study).

The results of the verification were unacceptable to some in the parliament. In April 1991, a member known for his outspoken views against the army called (in a 23-page document) for further changes in the staffing of high-ranking military posts. Although Dobrovsky rejected such claims, calling the document a series of "errors and inaccuracies," the very appearance of the charges shows that the issue will not die for some time.

The changes resulting from the verification of the screenings, and possibly from pressure in the parliament, are still ongoing as this Note is being written. So far, they have included the reassignment of the Chief of the General Staff, General Slimak, and the promotion of Major General Karel Pezl to the post, as well as a number of other high-level

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changes.\textsuperscript{41} Slimak had been accused of ordering in March 1990 the destruction of documents that implicated the military in planning for a crackdown in November 1989. As Deputy Jan Solc, a member of parliament instrumental in the verification process, has stated, an extensive investigation of 23 most senior Czechoslovak generals concluded that eight of them would leave their posts, though they were to stay in the military and their skills were to be utilized in less sensitive positions.\textsuperscript{42} According to Solc, the final report showed that the "Czechoslovak Army is creative, obedient, and guarantees the minister's decisions."\textsuperscript{43}

The verification process also failed to uncover any major problems regarding the former political workers. At least the initial figures provided by Rasek in late November 1990 on the number of political workers in the Administration of Education and Culture were similar to figures presented by Vacek in early October 1990.\textsuperscript{44} Since SVO supervised the screening of former political workers, there is little reason to believe that any major shortcomings existed. In any event, the issue seems to have ceased to be a politically important topic. In the future, the proposed law on screening almost all colonels and generals prior to employment in the Ministry of Defense (which contains strict rules on the provision of evidence regarding possible previous service to the communist regime)\textsuperscript{45} should eliminate the main sources of speculation and distrust that were responsible for so much of the controversy in 1990.

The Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Democracy issued a report seemingly vindicating the Free Legion of the charge of extremism, so on October 30, 1990, Dobrovsky cancelled his order suspending the group and reinstated its members in the military.\textsuperscript{46} The Free Legion continued to press for the ouster of some of the former communist officers. Openly at odds with Dobrovsky, who called the Free Legion an elitist organization aiming to repoliticize the military in another way,\textsuperscript{47} the group became increasingly marginalized and turned more radical. In an open letter to Havel, it accused

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46}Prague CTK in English, October 30, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 212, November 1, 1990, p. 8.
unspecified members of Civic Forum of betraying the revolution, calling some of Havel's advisors incompetent, and repeating earlier allegations that its members were being spied upon by the plainclothes federal investigative services.\textsuperscript{48}

As of September 1991, the group has largely faded from the spotlight, though it is still active. Ethnic conflict within the military and the country as a whole has become a more salient issue than the removal of former communists from the army. In addition, the creation of an Office of the General Inspectorate that is to answer only to the parliament was finally approved in April 1991. The body has had difficulties in establishing itself (due to squabbling in the parliament along the Czech and Slovak lines, the parliament initially rejected all four proposed candidates for the post of General Inspector), but if it does eventually begin to function, it will probably further ease any residual fears about the extent of reform in the military. None of this means that certain individuals associated previously with the Free Legion, and supported by a few members of parliament, still do not try to push for further changes in the military.\textsuperscript{49} Nevertheless, the situation has become more stable, the groups that had pressed for the "cleansing" of the army have been largely relegated to nuisance status, and even some members of parliament who still believe that the reform of the military is incomplete do not see the situation as posing a danger to the new order.\textsuperscript{50}

**Military Counterintelligence**

On October 26, 1990, Dobrovsky suspended the activity of the recently formed VOZ.\textsuperscript{51} He stated that all VOZ members (virtually all of whom had belonged to VKR) were to undergo a more detailed screening process, similar to that conducted in the State Security Corps (the administration that had been in charge of intelligence and counterintelligence within the Ministry of Interior). He also ruled out any future employment of former VKR members in VOZ, even those who would pass the new screening process.\textsuperscript{52}


\textsuperscript{51}Prague CTK in English, October 29, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 210, October 30, 1990, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{52}Comments by Dobrovsky, Mlada Fronta Dnes, October 30, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 215, November 6, 1990, p. 11.
In making the stipulations, Dobrovsky met an important demand of the groups pressing for greater reorganization of the army, for he recognized VKR's essential secret police nature and the inappropriateness of treating former VKR members like the rest of the military. The previous joint subordination of VKR to the Defense and Interior ministries was a fig leaf, and the official transfer of VKR to the Defense Ministry's sole control did not mean that the staff of VKR somehow and suddenly had forgotten their past. Through a web of informers, the function of VKR field staff had been to keep track of any negative comments or jokes made by officers about the regime, to watch for any signs of religious convictions, to keep informed about any potentially "subversive" contacts with intellectuals, etc.  

A huge majority of former VKR members simply lacked the qualifications for genuine counterintelligence work, for VKR had acted not as military counterintelligence (in a Western army's sense of the word), but as the regime's secret police force of the military. By foreclosing any employment for such people in a future military counterintelligence organization, Dobrovsky attempted to establish credibility for the new institution.

A skeleton of a reorganized VOZ appears to have been in place by December 1990, with a staff of 80 people. The organization was subordinated directly to the Minister of Defense. At the time, Dobrovsky envisioned VOZ to grow to a staff of 180. In addition, the formation of a military police force was accelerated. Such a force had become urgently needed because of an apparent partial breakdown of army discipline and the resulting spread of theft and criminal behavior in some units. To deal with the problem, an embryo military police force had been quickly established, though the organization (with a staff of about 1000) did not become fully operational until April 26, 1991. The full staff is to amount to 1114 men.

It seems that despite Dobrovsky's initial comments to the contrary, some former VKR members were allowed to serve in a reorganized VOZ. According to Colonel Jan Duchek,
appointed head of VOZ in February 1991, 70 former VKR members (6.5 percent of VKR strength in 1989) stayed on.\textsuperscript{59} That initially projected figure proved to be too low to enable the smooth functioning of the new organization, and 117 former VKR members (10.8 percent of VKR strength in 1989) ended up being retained.\textsuperscript{60} It is still unclear whether the figure includes the overall number of former VKR members who remained in the military or just those who stayed on in VOZ or even in the Military Security Administration (the overall department that also includes the military police). According to Lieutenant Colonel Milos Liska of the military police, mostly those former VKR members who had been "educated in law, and who were not connected with political education in the Army"\textsuperscript{61} stayed on, while the leading posts within VOZ were filled by SVO members.

Duchek has emphasized that the reorganized VOZ acts only as a counterintelligence information service, gathering information on terrorist activities and serious breaches of security. Duchek has claimed that VOZ may undertake activities beyond Czechoslovak borders, but these are to be carried out under special circumstances rather than on a normal basis.\textsuperscript{62}

The very fact that a few former VKR members actually survived the new screening process is notable, for the second screening appears to have been quite rigorous. Deputy Jan Solc (a high-ranking member of the parliamentary Defense and Security Committee and a member of the commission that reinvestigated former VKR members) indicated that the commission amassed considerable evidence on each person being investigated, with ethical considerations being the most important criteria for a positive evaluation.\textsuperscript{63} The commission was composed of people quite unsympathetic to the old military counterintelligence, and it seems to have been strict about giving passing marks to any former VKR personnel. The continued service of such individuals does not necessarily indicate an incomplete depoliticization of such an important branch of the army, for there were some VKR personnel who dealt with real issues of internal security, such as desertion or protection of weapons. These people continued to be useful. Although the issue of employing former VKR personnel


\textsuperscript{60}Author's conversations with Czechoslovak civilian and military officials, Prague, May 1991.


\textsuperscript{62}Comments by Duchek, Prague CTK in English, June 12, 1991, as reported in JPRS-EEU, No. 88, June 20, 1991, p. 19.

ceased to be politically prominent by late 1990, it continued to be a source of contention, in
the context of the overall continued service by “discredited” personnel.

The Ethnic Dimension

The spread of direct ethnic conflict to the military was launched on October 30, 1990,
when the newspaper of the Slovak National Party (a militant pro-independence group)
published an article calling on Slovaks in the military to establish the Association of Slovak
Soldiers (Asociace Slovenskych Vojakov, or ASV for its Slovak acronym). The article
openly called for the formation of two armies in Czechoslovakia. There was immediate
stirring among some Slovak officers in response, and on January 17, 1991, a group of
Slovak soldiers officially registered ASV. The group’s stated goals evidenced a clear and far-
reaching degree of ethnic mobilization. ASV accused Czechs of blocking career paths of
Slovak officers and of having punished Slovak soldiers for nationalist sentiments. While
paying lip service to the continuation of the joint armed forces, ASV also proclaimed the basic
impossibility of any statewide organization’s acting in favor of Slovak interests. Instead,
ASV implied that any statewide institutions could only serve Czech interests. Such views
are signs of a far-reaching perception of status differences and discrimination, and they
represent calls for exclusiveness.

ASV accusations included the charge that the army has been assimilating (meaning
“denationalizing” Slovaks by turning them into Czechs) 3500 Slovak inductees annually
(400,000, or one-twelfth of the Slovak population since World War II), and that it forces
Slovaks to use a foreign language (Czech) in what is supposedly their own military. These
expressions come close to indicating a rejection of a state composed of Czechs and Slovaks,
for any statewide institution is seen as inherently “denationalizing.” In other examples of
such a view, the chairman of ASV has equated discrimination with “Czechoslovakism,”
while one officer and ASV member accused Dobrovsky of demagoguery and of espousing
“Czechoslovakism,” which he equated with fascism. The complaints about language have

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64 The article in Slovensky Narod (Slovak Nation) was entitled “Slovaks, Do You Want to
Remain Vassals?” Lidove Noviny, November 8, 1990, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 222, November 16,
1990, p. 23.
65 Dobrovsky mentioned in mid-December 1990 that a group of soldiers was trying to establish a
Union of Slovak Officers. Interview with Dobrovsky, Mlada Fronta Dnes, December 13, 1990,
66 Excerpts from the ASV statement were published in Narodna Obroda, February 9, 1991,
68 Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Peter Rastislav Socha, Vecko, No. 4, 1991, p. 5.
no easy answer. Czech and Slovak are mutually intelligible, so the problem is simply one of status, not of a basic lack of understanding because of extreme differences in languages (as is the case in the Soviet military between the Muslims and Slavs).\footnote{The Soviet military is probably the most acute recent case of ethnic conflict hindering the functioning of the armed forces. For a longer treatment of the topic, see Thomas S. Szayna, \textit{The Ethnic Factor in the Soviet Armed Forces: The Muslim Dimension}, RAND, R-4002-A, 1991.}

One of the demands ASV formulated, and which was picked up by the Slovak media, was to make public the number of Slovaks in the officer corps. This is another indication of ethnic conflict, and it shows how ethnicity is supplanting (indeed, displacing) professional skills and qualifications as the criterion for advancement within the military. In other words, ethnicity has assumed an ascriptive function and is increasingly taken to imply a whole range of views and values. Dobrovsky seems to have recognized the dangers inherent in the calls for what amounted to an informal, ethnically mobilized Slovak army within the Czechoslovak armed forces. However, given the Czechoslovak government’s dedication to adhere to rights of assembly and speech, and its policy of allowing self-determination while urging the continuation of a federal setup, Dobrovsky could do little more than to put ASV in the same category as the Free Legion and acknowledge his frustration and helplessness.\footnote{His frustration was evident in an interview with a Slovak paper soon after ASV’s formation; interview with Dobrovsky, \textit{Verejnost}, January 29, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 27, February 8, 1991, pp. 16–18. Comments by Dobrovsky, Prague CTK in English, January 31, 1991, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 22, February 1, 1991, pp. 13–14; \textit{Mlada Fronta Dnes}, February 7, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 30, February 13, 1991, p. 26.}

The calls to publish data on the ethnic composition of the Czechoslovak military led to officials’ complying with the demands. According to Rasek, three of four deputy defense ministers were Slovaks, as were 32 percent of generals, 22 percent of the heads of ministry administrations and their deputies, 30 percent of military attachés, and 45 percent of commanders of military districts, their deputies, and heads of administrations and departments (including air force and air defense forces).\footnote{Interview with Rasek, \textit{Narodna Obroda}, April 2, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 66, April 5, 1991, pp. 18–19.} Apparently, 34.7 percent of career soldiers were Slovaks.

While the figures showed a fair if not favorable ethnic breakdown for the Slovaks, they did not satisfy Slovak ethnic nationalists. Slovak press delved deeper into the numbers to ascertain the breakdown, alleging discrimination at some levels of the Ministry of Defense.\footnote{\textit{Narodna Obroda}, May 14, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 98, May 21, 1991, pp. 11–12.} This was to be expected, for it is a typical pattern for a polity undergoing ethnic conflict, since all issues become permeated and eclipsed by ethnicity. Believing that any statewide
institution must be discriminatory, ethnic nationalists look until they find evidence that correlates with their perceptions.

Other ASV demands included the setting up of an independent military college in Slovakia. The demand was interesting, for a majority of Czechoslovak military educational institutions were already located in Slovakia and staffed mainly by Slovaks. What the calls show is a distrust of any federal, statewide institution, for nothing less than institutions set up by Slovak ethnic nationalists are seen as “objective.”

By the spring of 1991, Slovak media spoke openly of a need to solve the Slovak “national problem” in the armed forces. Even earlier, ASV called for changing the military doctrine in the “interest of implementing just national demands.” In a vivid example of such a view, one ASV member has called the newly approved military doctrine unitarian, therefore Czech-dominated, and a betrayal of Slovak interests. The perception inherent in ASV’s views is evident in its commentary on Dobrovsky’s accusations against it:

Statements made by various Czech circles, which traditionally impede every organization of a national character if they cannot control and influence it from Prague, make our activity political. It is possible to perceive the establishment of the ASV as the first step toward eradicating conditions for the indiscriminate denationalizing of Slovaks in connection with their Army service.

Moreover, ASV has had contacts with the Slovak government, and Slovak officials have defended ASV. In fact, the chairman of ASV is an adviser to the Slovak National Democratic Movement (SNDH), a strongly ethnic nationalist political group. In an interview with Obrana Lidu, Frantisek Javorsky, chairman of the military and security committee of the Slovak National Council, spoke of ASV as having legitimate aims and as being composed of highly skilled officers who have sincere views and who have helped the Slovak government with their expertise on security matters. The Slovak Prime Minister, Jan Carnogursky, has defended ASV in an interview with the main army weekly. Officials from the Slovak National Party have portrayed ASV as an organization that will bring the army and the

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78 Interview with Captain Peter Svec, Obrana Lidu, No. 14, April 6, 1991, p. 6.
79 Interview with Javorsky, Obrana Lidu, No. 21, May 25, 1991, p. 3.
80 Interview with Carnogursky, Obrana Lidu, No. 34, August 24, 1991.
society closer,\textsuperscript{81} while other ethnic nationalist political groups have also pressed for the formation of a Slovak army.\textsuperscript{82}

Another Slovak grouping within the military, the Stefanik Legion (Stefanikove Legie), named for a Slovak national figure who was one of the founders of the Czechoslovak state in 1918, was formed in April 1991.\textsuperscript{83} Its spokesman claimed that the group had representatives on every military base in Slovakia.\textsuperscript{84} The Stefanik Legion's program has many similarities to that of ASV (and the group is usually lumped together with ASV by Ministry of Defense officials), except that it does not advocate a separate Slovak army. Instead, it is an organization that unites ethnic nationalism (in a milder form than ASV's) with political views akin to the Free Legion. For example, it questions the continued presence of former political and VKR workers in the military. There has been some cooperation between the Free Legion and the Stefanik Legion. ASV has taken a conspiratorial view of the Stefanik Legion, claiming that the group was organized by federal officials in an attempt to draw strength away from ASV.\textsuperscript{85} The two groups may cooperate in the future because of their similar views on some ethnic issues. Some early contacts between ASV and the Free Legion did not work out because of ASV's ethnically based agenda.

Besides strengthening ASV's calls for the formation of a separate Slovak army, the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the summer of 1991 provided some clear lessons for ethnic nationalists in Slovakia.\textsuperscript{86} Seemingly spurred by the example of the Slovenian territorial militia's success in fighting the Yugoslav federal army to a standstill, calls for the formation of a similar force emerged in Slovakia. What is significant is that the deputy chairman of the Slovak National Council, Jan Klepac, made the call for the clearing of the way to form a Slovak Home Guard. The announcement showed not just that militants had become powerful within the single-goal Slovak ethnic nationalist movements, but also that the issue had been favored by members of most Slovak political groupings in Slovakia. The measure almost passed in the initial vote in July 1991 by the Slovak National Council, with 47 deputies for, and 53 against it.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{81}Interview with Jan Slota (Slovak National Party), \textit{Obrana Lida}, No. 20, May 18, 1991, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{84}Interview with Lieutenant Stefan Hamran, Vecko, No. 4, 1991, pp. 5–6.
\textsuperscript{85}Interview with Socha, Vecko, No. 4, 1991, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{86}For a manifesto from one ASV member, alluding to the fighting in Slovenia, see Slovensky Dennik, July 29, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 149, August 2, 1991, pp. 16–17.
The formation of a Slovak Home Guard makes little sense from any federal security viewpoint. Supporters of the formation of the Home Guard justified the force as needed in times of natural disasters, and they alluded to its usefulness as an additional measure of security in a time of instability in the USSR and potential Hungarian territorial ambitions against Slovakia. In reality, civil defense units as well as legally sanctioned use of the federal military seem more than sufficient to deal with any natural disasters, while a light militia force could do little to stop a limited armed incursion by Soviet, Ukrainian, or Hungarian military units. Similarly, a militia force such as the proposed Home Guard could do little against a massive refugee inflow, for that would be a task for the border guards and the police. Instead, the calls for the formation of a Slovak Home Guard have a clear secessionist goal. The Home Guard would be a purely Slovak military force already in place if and when Slovakia were to proclaim independence. This seems to be a clear attempt to apply the Slovenian example to Slovakia. The Czechoslovak federal government would then be confronted with a sizable military operation if it tried to occupy Slovakia by force. Under such conditions, the Home Guard would also attract Slovak soldiers from the federal army, for some of them would undoubtedly defect. Thus, calls for the formation of a Slovak Home Guard amounted to the establishment of a nucleus of a Slovak military—a development that moved Slovakia further along on the path to secession.

Not surprisingly, Havel and Dobrovsky came out against the formation of a Slovak Home Guard, while Meciar openly embraced the idea. Several Slovak officials were more cautious in supporting the Slovak Home Guard idea, but both Carnogursky and the Slovak minister of the interior, Ladislav Pittner, used the opportunity to launch some nasty personal attacks on Dobrovsky. Also not surprisingly, the ASV chairman quickly endorsed the idea, suggesting that the Home Guard be controlled not by federal authorities but by the Military and Security Committee of the Slovak National Council (which seems to be sympathetic to ASV). In addition, he linked the formation of the Home Guard with the alleged deliberately slow pace of redeployment of Czechoslovak army units to Slovakia, the

insufficient defense capability supposedly existing in Slovakia, and the alleged transfer of obsolete armaments to Slovakia while the more modern equipment remained in the Czech lands. None of these accusations seem to be true, but they do indicate the high level of distrust of any non-Slovak institutions and the perception that Slovakia is consistently discriminated against by the Czechs.

In an attempt to shore up support for the formation of the Home Guard, the ASV chairman engaged in some chauvinistic accusations seemingly aimed at increasing the level of interethnic animosities and raising the sense of danger and xenophobia among Slovaks. In a July 1991 statement that received much publicity in the Slovak and Hungarian media, the ASV chairman claimed that Magyars in southern Slovakia were preparing for armed action with weapons smuggled in from Israel. The accusation was so incredible that he was soon forced to say that the weapons were actually Soviet-made (sold by withdrawing Soviet soldiers), in agreement with comments made by Pittner, but the claim of Magyars arming themselves stood, and the charges seem to indicate an attempt to exploit the anti-Jewish and anti-Hungarian sentiments in Slovakia in favor of furthering support for the Slovak Home Guard. The putsch attempt in Moscow provided more ammunition to the advocates of the formation of the Home Guard, and the issue is unlikely to go away.

The initial federal reaction to the ethnic nationalist ferment spreading to the military realm had been to deny its existence. Havel spoke out in favor of a united, federal military, and Rasek claimed that an overwhelming majority of Czechoslovak officers shared the view of the continued need for a single military. In addition, Rasek denied that Slovak conscripts had shown any signs of ethnic assertiveness.

The rosy situation painted by Rasek was not true in early 1991, and it has certainly been shown to be untrue by the summer of 1991. For example, Slovak officers serving in the

Czechoslovak army have been reported to have been present and vocal at some of the ethnic nationalist rallies in Bratislava, referring to Czechs as unwanted older brothers whose advice is neither wanted nor needed.\textsuperscript{98} The formation of ASV has led to some bitter exchanges and name calling in the military press between Czech and Slovak officers.\textsuperscript{99}

Ethnic conflict in the Czechoslovak military is likely to become much worse. Given the intensity of ethnic conflict within Czechoslovakia, more and more ethnically mobilized draftees will enter the military, for it has been repeatedly shown that a conscript military reflects the society. The conscripts will be mobilized further in the military by ASV or Stefanik Legion activists. Nor does the principle of stationing conscripts closer to their home areas help. If Czechoslovakia survives as a unitary state with one federal army, then by 1993 (following the completion of redeployment), most units in Slovakia will be composed largely of ethnically mobilized Slovaks, possibly led by officers espousing similar leanings. Czech officers in units stationed in Slovakia will face greater hostility from their mainly Slovak soldiers, and, if they have families, their children will have to attend Slovak schools. It is very likely that many Czech officers will ask to be transferred to the Czech lands, leaving in place a largely Slovak military. Even before that time, the issue of a Slovak Home Guard is likely to come up again, and as ethnic conflict worsens, the approval of such a force is likely. The actual formation of a Slovak Home Guard will probably destroy the federal setup that may still exist in Czechoslovakia, for it will bring things to a head. Conflicts are bound to ensue between a Slovak-controlled force and the federal military over stationing and areas of responsibility. A de facto Slovak army that will come about by 1993 will probably lead to a similar situation. In such a case it is possible that the federal authorities may try to reestablish, perhaps by force, their control over Slovakia. Although initially the use of force may be minimal and undertaken in order to safeguard some of the ethnic minorities inhabiting Slovakia, there may be a quick escalation of the conflict leading to full-fledged fighting, as has happened in Slovenia. There are numerous parallels between Slovakia and Slovenia, including the mountainous terrain in both regions.

There is also the potential for armed Hungarian involvement. As Hungarian officials have claimed, their recognition that many Magyar-inhabited areas—Voivodina, southern Slovakia—were detached from Hungary was contingent on those territories being a part of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, respectively. If those states were to splinter and give rise to new Serbian and Slovak states, Hungarian spokesmen seem to reserve the right not to recognize the incorporation of the ethnically Magyar territories into the new states. In other

\textsuperscript{98}Obrana Lidu, No. 14, April 6, 1991, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{99}See the letters by Czech officers in Obrana Lidu, No. 18, May 4, 1991, p. 7.
words, in the view of Hungarian officials, the Treaty of Trianon will no longer be applicable if the original signatory states cease to exist. Such an interpretation is subject to serious questioning on the grounds that in international law borders are binding on successor states; but that may not deter a Hungarian government adhering to such an interpretation, especially in a case with Magyars subjected to far-reaching discriminatory practices in Slovakia. Then a move toward involvement would be widely supported in Hungary. Thus there is the specter of a potential Czech-Slovak conflict becoming militarized, with a possible Hungarian intervention. In any event, an independent Slovakia will probably adopt discriminatory policies against its minor ethnic groups that are bound to provoke some Hungarian efforts (diplomatic at first) to safeguard the Magyars living there.

MILITARY REFORM: DEMILITARIZATION

Military Service

The appointment of a civilian to head the Defense Ministry began the movement toward a greater presence of civilians within the ministry. Among his initial actions, Dobrovsky reassigned three uniformed military deputy defense ministers and filled one of the posts with a civilian. He brought in other civilians as his advisers.

These changes initiated a larger process of emulating the separation of responsibilities in Western democratic countries between the Defense Ministry and the actual field command of the troops, with the operational command under the Chief of the General Staff (General Pezl). According to a Czechoslovak general, the connection between the two sides remains very close, but in terms of routine actions, the two components operate separately. By April 1991, the ministry itself was reorganized. The conceptual (planning) administration, the secretariat, and four other administrations (inspectorate, the military courts, health administration, and personnel administration) are subordinate directly to the minister. Other sections are headed by deputy defense ministers: strategic management, which is scheduled to include a section on scientific and technological development (General Andrejcak) and the department for humanitarian and social affairs (Rasek). The last-mentioned department has several sections and departments and is led by civilians. The sections are social management; legal services; higher military education and physical

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culture; Military Institute for Sociological Research; Military History Institute; and the Army Institute of Culture. The reorganization of the structure of the Ministry of Defense put an end to the accusations of a lack of any fundamental changes at the ministry.

Principles of “Plan 2005” remained unchanged. The gradual switch to a professional, volunteer military appeared to be on track, with the important exception of cutting military service to less than 12 months in the future. The Chief of the General Staff, Major General Pezl, has commented that he envisioned the 12-month term of basic service for conscripts to be in place for two decades. It is not clear whether the statement represents an officially approved change or whether it is a personal opinion in line with the continued opposition by the top of the military hierarchy to the abandonment of the conscript model.

The reductions in personnel proceeded at a pace faster than envisioned because of the voluntary departure of many officers and the massive opting for alternative service by conscripts. Soon after being appointed, Dobrovsky called on the junior officers who left the service in 1990 to return. Apparently, not many took him up on the offer, and a substantial number of command posts in smaller military units continued to be unfilled by an officer. After numerous appeals by Dobrovsky, in September 1991 the parliament began debating a new law on alternative service. The draft of the new law places a 30-day limit on the time allowed for a conscript to choose alternative service and provide reasons for it. If adopted, the law is bound to reduce the hemorrhaging from the army because it will eliminate the earlier provisions by which a conscript could opt out of service even after he assumed duty. A Soviet source has claimed a catastrophic drop in the number of applicants to Czechoslovak military schools, with only 8.9 percent of required applications submitted by December 1990, but the figure seems to be an exaggeration, for the shrinking Czechoslovak military needs fewer officers and the expenses for military education are to be slashed drastically anyway. Although the military was supposed to have some 185,000

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105 Comments by Dobrovsky, Prague CTK in English, November 5, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 217, November 8, 1990, p. 21.
soldiers, the actual number had dropped to less than 150,000 by November 1990,\textsuperscript{110} making the achievement of the planned 135,000–145,000 level by 1993 fairly certain. Indeed, since the parliament is expected to shorten the length of compulsory service to 12 months in mid-1992, the Czechoslovak army may not be able to meet even those levels.

The parliament passed a whole range of measures designed to make disciplinary measures in the army less harsh and to eradicate some of the hazing practices.\textsuperscript{111} Service for recruits was made considerably easier, so as to remove some of the stigma and fear popularly associated with a conscript’s tour of duty.

Top political and military officials reaffirmed their intention to stick with the provision of “Plan 2005” to station conscripts closer to their home areas in the future,\textsuperscript{112} despite the spreading of ethnic conflict in the military. Some Slovak officials have called for a faster implementation of the “closer to home” stationing principles, claiming it will save funds quickly.\textsuperscript{113} Slovak officers also have made such demands.\textsuperscript{114} For political reasons, the provision on different stationing principles would be extremely difficult to change, and any attempt to do so might be counterproductive. Presumably, the only option that may prevent a situation of de facto two different armies from arising would be a much more rapid pace of change toward a smaller volunteer military. Such a move might enable the military to at least control ethnic conflict in the army, though even that is questionable. Slovak officials might raise objections on the grounds that a small military would not guarantee Slovak security, given the instability in the USSR.

The Military and the Economy

Political reforms that devolved power from the center to the republics resulted in the Slovak government bucking the federal government’s policy on conversion of armaments plants in Slovakia. Claiming unacceptable social and economic disruptions, the Slovak

\textsuperscript{110}\textsuperscript{Comments by Dobrovska, Prague CTK in English, November 5, 1990, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 217, November 8, 1990, p. 21. The actual as opposed to projected figures for troop numbers were given in a Defense Ministry briefing; Bratislava Domestic Service in Slovak, March 13, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 50, March 14, 1991, p. 12. As of January 1, 1991, the Czechoslovak armed forces had 90 percent of planned career soldiers, and 70 percent of conscripts (67 percent in the ground forces). Figures given by Rasek, Prague CTK in English, March 13, 1991, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 51, March 15, 1991, p. 26.}


\textsuperscript{112}\textsuperscript{For example, see comments by Havel, Bratislava Domestic Service, March 14, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 51, March 15, 1991, pp. 15–16.}

\textsuperscript{113}\textsuperscript{Interview with Slota, Obrana Lidu, No. 20, May 18, 1991, p. 3.}

\textsuperscript{114}\textsuperscript{Obrana Lidu, No. 14, April 6, 1991, p. 3.}
government decided on January 8, 1991, to slow down the conversion program. The step was widely supported in Slovakia. In an indication of the pervasiveness of ethnic conflict, some of the media comments that accompanied the expressions of support even indicated suspicions that the conversion program was some sort of Czech plot against the Slovaks.\textsuperscript{115} A barrage of increasingly strident claims and counterclaims on the issue followed in the Czech and Slovak media.

As expressed by the then Slovak deputy prime minister, Jan Carnogursky, the reason for the decision was simple—the Slovak government would have had to deal with the dissatisfaction of 60,000 unemployed people.\textsuperscript{116} In a polity where unemployment had been unheard of, the population expected the government to provide jobs, and as the population finally received the right to vote in elections with a genuine choice, no government could have taken any other course of action and hoped to survive. If the Slovak government had not taken the decision, it would have been voted out of office in the next election. On the other hand, the Slovak government strengthened its political base as a result of its decision on conversion, for in light of the widespread Slovak perception of Czech arrogance the decision amounted to standing up for "national rights." Finally, there was genuine hardship involved because the budget did not provide many funds for ameliorating the negative consequences of conversion.

From the standpoint of the federal government, the program of conversion made full sense. The armaments industry had catered to either Warsaw Pact countries or Soviet clients in the developing countries. In the case of the former, no meaningful currency was exchanged, whereas in the case of the latter, much of the sales were on credit that had not been repaid. The industry's products were not competitive with Western armaments on the world market, and the market had shrunk anyway. Finally, stopping arms sales improved the badly tarnished image of Czechoslovakia as a supplier of arms to fanatics and terrorists.

The switch to hard currency trade with the USSR at the beginning of 1991 led to the Soviet cancellation of a multitude of contracts. There was also the problem of where to find the money needed to scrap the large numbers of tanks and vehicles that Czechoslovakia was

\textsuperscript{115}For example, a Slovak journalist wondered whether the federal policy to break up ZTS Martin (the main armaments enterprise) was "just a decision of dilettantes or whether something else is behind it, something that only the future will bring to light." \textit{Pravda} (Bratislava), January 9, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 12, January 17, 1990, p. 19. For some of the media commentary, see \textit{Narodna Obroda}, January 9, 1991, and \textit{Verejnost}, January 10, 1991, all translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 12, January 17, 1991, p. 19–20.

obliged to eliminate by the Paris CFE treaty.\textsuperscript{117} With limited, heavily subsidized armaments production in Slovakia continuing,\textsuperscript{118} and with an enormous stock of surplus tanks that was cheaper to sell than to destroy, Czechoslovak officials began to look again into arms exports. In an ironic twist, given his comments just over a year earlier, Havel stated in April 1991 that Czechoslovak tanks can be exported if they already have been manufactured or are nearing completion and if a country is found where they can be exported without any political risks.\textsuperscript{119} In early May 1991, Czechoslovakia agreed to sell tanks to Syria and Iran. Czechoslovak officials attempted to explain the sale by claiming that the tanks had been manufactured prior to the ban on further tank sales (Iran was to receive T-54 and T-55 tanks that were to be scrapped because of arms control limits; Syria was to receive T-72s that had been manufactured recently), but the truth was that as of summer 1991, limited production of tanks continued and the problem of what to do with them had grown worse.\textsuperscript{120} The sale brought a U.S. protest and a sharp Israeli denunciation, but it found support in the Slovak media. The deal with Iran (signed in October 1990) fell through when the federal Ministry of Foreign Trade refused to grant the export license,\textsuperscript{121} but the sale to Syria was approved, with Czechoslovak officials claiming that the action was a one-time deal and that funds from the sale were to be used to help the conversion process. Other sales to rather shadowy clients will probably follow. Officials in charge of the defense industry have remarked that “Algeria and some Latin American countries” were also interested in purchasing Czechoslovak weapons.\textsuperscript{122} A report in the summer of 1991 claimed that negotiations with Cuba and North Korea were still going on despite the federal Foreign Ministry ban on arms sales to these countries.\textsuperscript{123}


\textsuperscript{118}The shrinkage in Czechoslovak arms output has been enormous, with the projected output in 1991 amounting to about 10 percent of its 1987 production. Figures given by Vladimir Dlouhy, Czechoslovak economics minister, Prague CTK in English, May 30, 1991, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 107, June 4, 1991, pp. 12–13.

\textsuperscript{119}Comments by Havel, Prague CTK in English, April 29, 1991, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 83, April 30, 1991, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{120}Although enterprise officials initially denied that production of tanks at ZTS Martin continued, and instead claimed that the T-72s were from “stock” at the factory (Rude Pravo, March 29, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 69, April 10, 1991, p. 19), later information showed that T-72s continued to be manufactured at Martin following the Slovak government’s decision to slow down on conversion (comments by the director of ZTS Martin, Jan Segla, Lidove Noviny, July 10, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU, No. 135, July 15, 1991, p. 13).


More controversy ensued in August 1991 when parts of Czechoslovak tanks were
discovered to have been sent to by then civil-war-torn Yugoslavia.124 Supposedly, the tanks
were en route to Pakistan or India but fell into Croatian hands.125 Other reports indicate
that small arms also had been delivered to Croatia in November 1990.126 A more respectable
client, Thailand, has expressed interest in military purchases from Czechoslovakia,127 but
that is an anomaly. Czechoslovakia's traditional clients have remained the backbone of its
arms exports. This fact is embarrassing to Czechoslovak officials, who prefer not to state the
countries by name128 (Libya and Syria, for example), but the opportunities for new markets
seem so limited that, as long as Czechoslovakia sells weapons, it has little choice in the
matter.

The conflict over arms sales shows the interconnectedness of political, social, economic,
and ethnic problems in postcommunist Czechoslovakia and how these problems can affect
foreign policy. The location of arms plants in Slovakia caused the Slovak government to play
an active role in formulating a Czechoslovak foreign policy (in a way that ran counter to the
declarations of federal officials), and it forced the federal government to modify its policies in
a manner that ran counter to Czechoslovakia's interests.129

There is no denying that Slovakia was more hard hit than the Czech lands because of
the decline of arms sales and the conversion process. Whereas in 1987 Czechoslovak
armaments output was distributed along the lines of 39 to 61 percent in favor of Slovakia,
with the overall output at 29,298 million korunas (in constant prices), in 1990 the overall
output fell by over one half to 15,107 million korunas, with a distribution of 49.7 percent in
the Czech lands and 50.3 percent in Slovakia.130 The relative drop in Slovakia was much
greater. However, the entire issue of the Czechoslovak arms industry has become so
permeated by ethnic conflict that the economic dimension does not even seem to be the most
important anymore. In a familiar pattern of ethnic conflict, the Slovak media have referred

p. 15.
p. 13.
127Prague CTK in English, September 11, 1991, as reported in FBIS-EEU, No. 179, September
128Interview with the director of the Federal Foreign Trade Ministry department supervising
the export of military materials, Stefan Glezgo, Mlada Fronta Dnes, September 13, 1991, translated in
129The pressure by armaments plants officials on the Foreign Ministry was evident during the
negotiations with Iran; Prague Domestic Service in Czech, March 11, 1991, translated in FBIS-EEU,
p. 25.
to the "national character" of the resolution of the conversion issue;\textsuperscript{131} when government officials provide data on federal subsidies broken down by figures for Slovak and for Czech enterprises\textsuperscript{132} the Slovak media examine the numbers for evidence of discrimination that it feels must be present. The continued delaying tactics used by the Slovak government to block the passage of a strict version of a law on arms sales\textsuperscript{133} seems to continue to have a good deal of support in Slovakia. Indeed, one of the leaders of the Public Against Violence has become quite unpopular in Slovakia because of his stance against the arms sales to Syria and Iran.\textsuperscript{134}

Dobrovsky and other officials have commented that they see no possibility of modernization of Czechoslovak army's equipment until 1994.\textsuperscript{135} The army, faced with costs of redeployment, growing personnel costs because of the switch to a more professional-staffed force, and the ever-shrinking budget for the military, is neither interested in nor capable of supporting the domestic arms industry in any significant manner. However, since the collapse of the export market has made the Czechoslovak military the most important single customer for armaments manufactured in Czechoslovakia (the share of the Czechoslovak military's purchases in the domestic market rose from 22.4 percent in 1987 to 47.7 percent in 1990), the federal government appropriated in May 1991 a special fund of 50,000 million korunas to subsidize continued purchases of arms for the Czechoslovak military (in effect, an add-on to the military budget), but this seems to be a short-term stopgap measure.\textsuperscript{136}

Czechoslovak officials plan for a much smaller arms industry in the future, focusing on specific market niches and attempting to secure economies of scale through exports. The equipment that will stay in production will be mainly light and supplementary in nature, such as jet trainers, radars and radiotechnical equipment, and small arms and ammunition.\textsuperscript{137} In late 1990, Dobrovsky still claimed that tanks and armored personnel


carriers also would be produced domestically for the Czechoslovak military, though they were to be outfitted with more modern (presumably Western) electronics.\textsuperscript{138} By the summer of 1991, Dobrovsky stated that there "was no future for tanks."\textsuperscript{139} Whether for reasons of a move to a lighter force or the experience of the war against Iraq in 1991 that showed the inferiority of T-72s to their Western counterparts, Czechoslovak tank manufacturing in the future now seems destined to be minimal or stopped altogether. The production of some armaments that were previously sold mainly to the USSR, such as missiles and range-finding equipment for rocket launchers, already has been stopped.\textsuperscript{140}

There is some evidence that officials in the armaments industry have tried to protect some Czechoslovak research and development capabilities. The media publicity in spring 1991 regarding the—false—claims that the Czechoslovak TAMARA radar system was able to detect stealth aircraft was perhaps one such attempt. The chief of the Czechoslovak army's Armament Procurement Administration also has portrayed the need to keep R&D resources intact by claiming the need for independent assessment of the weapons to be purchased abroad.\textsuperscript{141} The financial squeeze may result in greater efficiency and competitiveness of the armaments industry in the region, as Czechoslovak cooperation with Hungary and Poland in this area has grown. According to Dobrovsky, there is to be much greater coordination between the three countries in terms of modernizing their forces in what seems to be the most cost-effective manner.\textsuperscript{142}

There may be modifications to the Czechoslovak plans for the development of the armaments industry because of the ethnic conflict, which may lead to retaining a larger industrial capacity in armaments than currently expected. Even ethnic nationalist leaders such as Meciar agree that conversion of the armaments plants should be carried out,\textsuperscript{143} but they want the process to be slower and jobs safeguarded—a difficult if not impossible plan in a switch to a market-based economy.

Since "Plan 2005" envisions a move to a much smaller military that emphasizes quality over quantity, the military expects to purchase some armaments from abroad, with

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Interview with Meciar, \textit{Obrana Litu}, No. 18, May 5, 1991, p. 5.
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the criterion being the latest available technology (implying Western sources).\textsuperscript{144} Air defense is the top priority, and as the Czechoslovak air defense system is built, this may be one of the first areas of Czechoslovak interest in major Western weapons purchases. Of course, “Plan 2005” may be overly ambitious in terms of setting out a series of goals that will take a good deal of funds to achieve—funds that Czechoslovakia does not seem to have.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PLANNING

The preceding discussion of the evolution of civil-military relations in Czechoslovakia since late 1989 shows that the overall direction of Czechoslovak military policy has changed radically in all respects. An assessment of the extent of actual changes in Czechoslovak military planning is not as clear. Evaluating actual operational and tactical level discussions is the best way to judge a given military's view of its missions, for the weapons an army possesses and the military's own plans for the employment of troops (as shown by the tasks for which it trains its soldiers) are the best indicators of that military's capabilities and plans.\(^1\) However, substantial discussions of aspects of military science have been absent from the Czechoslovak military-political press (for that is not the purpose of such publications), and Czechoslovak professional military publications have been unavailable publicly.

Professional military publications put out by the General Staff and the commands of Ground Forces and Air and Air Defense Forces, as well as the publications of Czechoslovak military educational establishments\(^2\) serve as forums for intramilitary discussions on tactical and operational military matters. These publications provide the best reflection of Czechoslovak military thinking.

Despite the lack of publicly available sources, it is possible to draw some conclusions regarding Czechoslovak military thinking, based on the main currents of Czechoslovak security policy. It is clear that the military as an institution is accountable to and controlled by the civilians in charge of the government. This fact has implications for the military's planning. Most important, the threat perception of the new political elite is now shared by the Ministry of Defense.

There has been a fundamental realignment of defense plans away from their anti-NATO orientation and toward the defense of Czechoslovakia against the USSR. The new doctrine codified these changes and provided the impetus for the redeployment of forces to meet the new threat perception. Czechoslovakia has established close military ties with Germany, it cooperates with Austria on a number of security issues, and it is linked with Poland and Hungary through bilateral agreements on military cooperation that amount to a de facto entente that can only be aimed at the USSR. In fact, during the Moscow putsch,

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\(^2\)The main center of Czechoslovak military science research is the Military Academy in Brno. There are also several officers' colleges for training soldiers from specific branches, such as armor or artillery.
Dobrovsky alluded that the three countries coordinated their military response to the potential threat from the USSR. Prior to the Moscow putsch attempt, Soviet-Czechoslovak military cooperation had broken down and overall ties between the two countries had ruptured. Thus, of all the states that border Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union is the only one with which Czechoslovak military relations are poor. In the aftermath of the collapse of communism in the USSR, ties will probably improve, but military relations are likely to remain distant and strained.

Czechoslovak officials proclaim that the new defense doctrine is not aimed at any one country, but such comments are intended not to offend Soviet sensitivities; in fact, the only potential military threat Czechoslovak officials perceive is from the USSR. Slovak officials have been less diplomatic and have spoken openly of the threat to Slovakia from the USSR (in the form of a massive refugee “invasion,” low-intensity conflict, border war based on irredentist claims by a successor state, etc.). Perhaps the best indication of Czechoslovak fears emerged during the Moscow putsch attempt, when Czechoslovak officials openly spoke of the threat to Czechoslovakia from the east as well as from Soviet troops in Germany. The steps taken included some intelligence cooperation with NATO and a doubling of the border guards on the Soviet border as well as higher readiness status for the army’s mobile rapid deployment force.

There is little rationale for the Czechoslovak military to look for closer ties with the USSR. The armaments industries in Poland and Czechoslovakia provide a source of most spare parts needed by the Czechoslovak military. Budget problems mean that upgrading existing Czechoslovak weapons with Western components is the most effective way of increasing combat effectiveness. In the larger sense, Czechoslovakia’s overall foreign policy goal of integration into what is now Western Europe also implies membership in Western security structures, and Czechoslovak (and Polish and Hungarian) officials would prefer to speed up the integration by achieving compatibility in training and armaments with the West. Any moves to establish closer military relations with the USSR would be counterproductive to Czechoslovakia’s long-term goals.

Hostile references to NATO in the Czechoslovak military-political press ceased by the spring of 1990. A similar development took place in the Polish military-political press, and,

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as a companion study has shown, the Polish military began to plan almost exclusively against a potential Soviet military threat at about that time. If the Polish example can serve as a model, then it is likely that the Czechoslovak military also began a similar shift in strategic planning sometime in 1990. At the latest, such a change had occurred after Dobrovsky's appointment as head of the Ministry of Defense.

Functionally, the Czechoslovak military is rapidly becoming unsuitable for offensive operations at higher than a tactical level. Its weapons and structure of forces point to a fundamental change in missions from just two years ago. The Czechoslovak army's armored strength has been cut drastically as a result of arms control agreements. The force has retained its mobility, but its potential for massed firepower has been reduced greatly. The deployment of forces is defensive in orientation, for there is no concentration of forces. If the Czechoslovak military does adopt a brigade structure, the possible model will be the German "home defense" brigades. Current redeployment and future stationing principles make such a transition likely. There has been no evidence that any action outside of Czechoslovak territory is contemplated or envisioned for the armed forces. All the changes in the armed forces have been accompanied by numerous comments by Czechoslovak military officials that training exercises emphasize defensive tasks.

The influence of several decades of training exclusively in Soviet concepts of warfare has shaped Czechoslovak officers' views on combat, and it is bound to persist for some time. In actual operations, this amounts to a reliance on engineer-heavy, deep-echeloned defense. There is a seeming discrepancy between such an outlook and the changes in the structure of the Czechoslovak armed forces. As the Czechoslovak military continues its switch to a much lighter and smaller force, mobile nonlinear defense becomes a more appropriate and credible mission for it. A shift to a nonlinear defense would entail a major departure from the way the Czechoslovak officer corps previously viewed combat operations; it is unclear whether they are ready for such a major change in thinking. Czechoslovak officers have begun to study at Western military academies (especially in Germany but also in France, Britain, and the United States), but significant change will probably be seen only in the long term.

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6Szyna, The Military in a Postcommunist Poland.

7The only notable elaboration of different concepts of warfare and their applicability to the Czechoslovak military that this study has uncovered has been a discussion of a dispersed battle of attrition that has some similarities to concepts of defense common to European neutrals, such as Switzerland. Tvorba, April 24, 1991, translated in JPRS-EER, No. 82, June 13, 1991, pp. 29–31.
8. CONCLUSIONS

The Czechoslovak military has become a genuinely nonpartisan institution that operates on the basis of the democratic principles governing the state. Neither the Communist Party nor the USSR can claim any significant continued influence over the military. This has been the military's main achievement since the political changes in 1989. But a new, different problem has emerged since the ouster of the old regime, in that the military has been affected by the ethnic conflict that has shaken the very foundations of the Czechoslovak state. There are indications of extensive and growing ethnic mobilization among Slovak officers who call for the formation of two separate armies, Czech and Slovak. The military also continues to suffer from low prestige, a longstanding problem in Czechoslovakia.

It is clear that any possible use of the Czechoslovak military for Soviet external ends had ceased in 1990. If anything, the most likely potential threat to Czechoslovakia is from the USSR (possibly as spillover of low-intensity conflict), and the Czechoslovak military has prepared plans to deal with such a threat. The mission of the military, codified in a doctrine of territorial defense common to European neutrals, is purely defensive. The Czechoslovak army's projected manpower levels, organization, and weapons will make it unsuitable for any offensive missions even at the operational level. For reasons beyond its control (such as the large outflow of junior officers and a huge number of conscripts opting out for alternative service), the army is already well on its way toward its projected smaller size.

The role of the military within the society has changed from potential vehicle of domestic repression and upholder of the communist regime to that of civilian-directed institution charged with safeguarding state sovereignty. Provisions for the military's role in protecting the regime have been abolished. As the military undergoes a gradual shift toward a much smaller, mostly professional force, the switch may lead to an improvement in the military's image in the society, for compulsory service requirements are to be minimal in the future.

The most pressing problem is the ethnic issue. There is no way to avoid it in a conscript-based army, for such a force reflects the society. The increasingly divisive Czech-Slovak ethnic conflict has spread to the military. The military's own plans—to station conscripts closer to their home areas and to redeploy forces so that they are distributed equally throughout the state—unwittingly play into the hands of Slovak ethnic nationalists and will result in a de facto Slovak army in Slovakia. The potential creation of a Slovak
Home Guard, spurred by the example of Slovenia and Croatia as Yugoslavia unraveled in the summer of 1991, may bring the issue to a head even faster.

A more autonomous and assertive Slovakia has become a certainty. While Slovakia may keep some form of association with the Czech lands, the ties will probably be minimal. The concentration of the Czechoslovak armaments industry in Slovakia, combined with the presence there of several smaller ethnic groups that have become mobilized partly in response to Slovak ethnic assertiveness, make full or partial sovereignty for Slovakia a potentially explosive issue that is certain to have wide repercussions in the region. Hungary and perhaps Ukraine are bound to become involved in the evolving situation in Slovakia.

The Czechoslovak military has looked to the Western militaries as models for its own development. The Bundeswehr especially, but also the U.S. Army and the militaries of European neutrals and some other NATO countries have been closely scrutinized by Czechoslovak officials. There is a role for the United States in supporting the continued evolution of the Czechoslovak military. In the areas of enhancing the military's prestige, improving relations within the military, and assisting the further development of stable civil-military relations, the United States can play a useful role by providing expertise and advice. The insights of U.S. military psychologists may prove to be highly instructive, both in applying liberal democratic principles within the military and in dealing with ethnic conflict (based on the extensive experience of the U.S. military in this area).

The United States can play a more substantial role in assisting the conversion process, which in turn could ameliorate some of the ethnic conflict and help create a more stable international environment in the region. But U.S. policymakers also need to fully understand the complex domestic situation that may lead to future Czechoslovak arms sales, and thus they should be careful not to expect too much from the conversion process. Czechoslovakia is looking to the West for assistance in building its air defense system and for upgrading the technological level of its ground forces. There is a role for the United States in this area too, perhaps as part of a policy toward the de facto tripartite entente (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary). Finally, Czechoslovakia needs U.S. political support for its reintegration into Europe, a process that includes a security dimension.