



CENTER FOR SECURITY AND MILITARY STRATEGIC STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF DEFENSE IN BRNO



# SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

SECTORAL ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATION  
FOR THE ARMED FORCES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC 2019

RICHARD STOJAR ET AL.

# **Security Environment**

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FORCES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC 2019**

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## COLLECTIVE OF AUTHORS

Mgr. Richard Stojar, Ph.D.

Mgr. Vendula Divišová, Ph.D.

Mgr. Dominika Kosárová, Ph.D., M.A.

PhDr. Libor Frank, Ph.D.

Mgr. et Mgr. Jakub Fučík, Ph.D.

Ing. Antonín Novotný, Ph.D.

Ing. Jan Břeň, Ph.D.

Mgr. Miroslava Pavlíková

Mgr. Adam Potočňák

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Reviewers:

doc. Ing. Ivan Majchút, PhD., Department of Security and Defence, Academy of the Armed Forces of Gen. M. R. Štefánik in Liptovský Mikuláš

Department of Intelligence, FVL, University of Defence in Brno

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this analytical study is to evaluate the development of the security environment of the Czech Republic in 2019. The ambition of the Centre for Security and Military Strategic Studies - War School of the University of Defence in Brno (CBVSS-VŠ) is to provide an alternative view for the discussion dealing with the development of the security environment consequences, focused primarily on formulating and executing effective defence policy of the Czech Republic. The study is based primarily on materials prepared by CBVSS-VŠ, as well as on analytical materials prepared in countries which share the same or similar security environment and security interests. The study presents the results of a comparative analysis of available open sources and contains an evaluation of selected state and trans-national actors. For the purpose of the study, a sectoral analysis based on the principles of the Copenhagen School was used, describing the political, social, environmental, military and economic sectors. The text analyses the period of the past year 2019 and tries to capture the main events and trends in specific sectors with impact on the security environment and to identify the implications for defence policy and the armed forces. The outputs were discussed and verified at numerous expert meetings with members of the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, the Czech Armed Forces and representatives of the security community.

The results of the sectorial analysis are shown by figure no. X at the end of the study. Relevant threats identified in 2019 are aligned with the corresponding sectors, i.e. according to the nature of the protected value or the interest of the Czech Republic, which are endangered (e.g. the stability of the Euro-Atlantic area or the environment). At the same time, the threats are placed in homocentric circles reflecting the levels of their instrumentality: local - regional - global. Some of the challenges are manifest across multiple sectors and levels.



## **POLITICAL SECTOR**

In 2019, it is possible to identify several trends that threaten either the sovereignty of states, legitimacy of regimes, national identity or international order. As in 2018, this time the challenges fall into the following categories: political instability, threats to the unity of the European Union and NATO's credibility, changes in the distribution of power and influence in geopolitics, as well as withdrawal from international agreements that should prevent instability and arms race.

### **Political Instability in the World**

In 2019, several countries in different macro-regions of the world faced national instability, civil unrest and anti-government demonstrations. Of the European countries, it is necessary to highlight the demonstrations in neighbouring Poland, which were organized due to the concerns with the government restricting the independence of the judiciary. Protests took also place in the chronically unstable Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, but also in Latin America and the Far East.

The Middle East can be considered as one of the most politically unstable regions in 2019. In the autumn of 2019, protests erupted in Iraq, Lebanon and Iran, mainly related to the socio-economic situation in these countries. The protesters were protesting against corruption, unemployment, stagnant economy, or rising prices for fuel and some services, while also demanding changes in the government. In addition to national protests, tensions are rising in the Persian Gulf, where Saudi Arabia and Iran are vying for the position of a regional hegemon. In addition, there is a high concentration of failing states in the region, which often fail to provide citizens with basic goods and services, with the most critical situation currently in Yemen. The Middle East has long been facing destabilization, which is also linked to other threats such as radicalization, terrorism and threats to human security and subsequent migration.

Afghanistan is no exception in this regard, where protesters called for transparency and justice in the run-up to the presidential election in 2019. In the near future, stability in the country may be affected by talks between the United States and the Taliban, which continued in 2019 with the aim of ending the 18-year-old conflict and securing the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan. Although Donald Trump temporarily suspended talks in September and even called them "dead" in response to a Taliban attack in Kabul (in which an American soldier was killed), negotiations were resumed in December. The further development in Afghanistan (first and foremost its stability) as well as peace in the region will largely depend on the outcome of the US-Taliban talks and on the Taliban's ability to reach an agreement with the Afghan government.

The political, economic or security situation has long been unstable also in sub-Saharan Africa, including Mali, where Czech soldiers are serving in UN and EU missions. Protests against long-term ethnic violence erupted in the country in April 2019, with Mali facing several terrorist attacks by local militants during that year. Due to the long-term conflict and instability, the humanitarian situation in the country is deteriorating. In 2019, according to the UN, the number of inhabitants of Mali facing food insecurity multiplied and the number of internally displaced persons increased from 80,000 to 200,000.<sup>1</sup>

The Far East and Latin and Central America did not escape protests either. Demonstrations against the Chinese government erupted in Hong Kong as early as March 2019, while in December, India's residents also protested against a new citizenship law

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<sup>1</sup> Unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Mali revealed in new report. 12.12.2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/tzBHp>

that discriminates the Muslim naturalization. In Venezuela, the crisis escalated again after parliament declared the previous year's presidential election in January 2019 invalid and appointed its incumbent President Juan Guaidó as an interim president of Venezuela. This happened after Nicolas Maduro took office for the second time, while more than 50 countries, including the Czech Republic, recognized Guaidó as the President of Venezuela. However, Guaidó's powers are relatively weak and, despite support from the United States and EU countries, he has not achieved significant success in Venezuela, while Maduro continues to benefit from his military support. In addition to the political crisis, Venezuela is also facing an economic crisis, or even a humanitarian crisis. Instability also intensified in another country on the American continent, namely Mexico. Thousands of Mexico City residents have repeatedly protested against President Obrador and his government, which, protesters say, have destabilized the state. People protested mainly against the bad economic situation, lack of pharmaceuticals, but also against violence. For Mexico, 2019 was also the year when official statistics recorded the most homicides since 1997, when the first official record was made (a total of 34,582 murdered in one year, an average of 95 homicides per day).<sup>2</sup>

### Internal Challenges for the EU

Populistic, non-liberal and authoritarian tendencies persist in several countries of the European Union.<sup>3</sup> In its 2019 report, the Council of Europe accused Hungary of violating human rights.<sup>4</sup> In the October parliamentary elections in Poland, the ruling Law and Justice party confirmed its majority in the lower house, despite the European Commission suing Poland at the EU Court of Justice for its judicial reform (which it described as opposing the rule of law).<sup>5</sup> In November, the EU Court of Justice ruled that the reform could jeopardize the independence of judges and was contrary to EU law.<sup>6</sup> Populist, nationalist and far-right parties gained considerable support in the European elections, and in Italy, Poland, Hungary and France they even won a majority.<sup>7</sup> Also, the far-right People's Party Our Slovakia received representation in the European Parliament. The presence of several far-right, ultranationalist and Eurosceptic actors in the European Parliament may jeopardize the ability to reach consensus on certain specific issues on which these parties have a strong opinion.

In 2019, the European Union continued negotiations with the United Kingdom, which decided to withdraw from the EU after a referendum in 2016. The United Kingdom's resignation was scheduled for 29 May 2019, but the deadline was postponed twice due to insufficient support for the Brexit agreement in the British Parliament, as a result of which the British Prime Minister Theresa May resigned. The new Prime Minister Boris Johnson agreed with the EU on the third postponement of the Brexit date to 31 January 2020.

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<sup>2</sup> Mexico murder rate hits record high in 2019. 21.1.2020. Available from: <https://1url.cz/szBH4>

<sup>3</sup> Freedom House, Countries and territories. Available from: <https://1url.cz/jzBHR>

<sup>4</sup> HENRY, G. Council of Europe accuses Hungary of widespread rights abuses, 21.5.2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/hzBH3>

<sup>5</sup> BRZOZOWSKI, A. Poľská reforma súdnictva je podľa súdneho dvoru v rozpore s európskym právom, 25.6.2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/5zBHV>

<sup>6</sup> Polish rules on the retirement age for judges and prosecutors adopted in July 2017 are contrary to Union law. Available from: <https://1url.cz/AzBHK>; Rozsudok súdneho dvora, 5.11.2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/4zBHs>

<sup>7</sup> SCHULZ, F. How strong is right-wing populism after the European elections? 4.6.2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/qzBHD>; European elections results, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/SzBHh>

Thus, in 2019, the European Union faced populism, nationalism and authoritarian tendencies in some Member States, as well as the uncertainty associated with the issue of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU (hard Brexit).

### **NATO Cohesion**

In 2019, the North Atlantic Alliance faced several critical moments. One of the biggest blows to the Alliance's cohesion was the US's unilateral decision to withdraw from northern Syria without consulting its alliance partners, which allowed for a subsequent Turkish invasion of Syrian Kurdistan. The Turkish offensive was condemned by NATO member states and the French president said in connection with the events that NATO was mentally dead, which was agreed by Hungary. According to Macron, the US turned its back on the allies by withdrawing from Syria. According to him, Europe is on the "edge of the abyss" and therefore "must think of itself strategically as a geopolitical power".<sup>8</sup> France thus clearly questioned the NATO's role and stressed the need to build a common European defence capability. The question also arose as to what would happen if Turkey found itself in a position to activate Article 5 in the event that Syria responded by attacking Turkey.

At the same time, Turkey, a member of NATO, began to move closer to Russia, and the two countries agreed to execute joint patrols along the Turkish-Syrian border. In addition, before the invasion of Syria, Turkey bought the S-400 air defence system from Russia and began discussing with Russia the purchase of Russian SU-35 fighters, which NATO allies criticized for the incompatibility of the systems. Erdogan also threatened that unless NATO allies declared Kurdish YPG troops a terrorist organization, Turkey would block NATO's plans to defend Poland and the Baltics in the event of a Russian attack. The statement jeopardized NATO's credibility as a single pact committed to defending the eastern border against Russian aggression. NATO thus faces not only external enemies but also internal challenges arising from unilateral US negotiations, Turkey's aggressive behaviour in violation of the principles of international law, questioning of NATO's role by some member states and ambiguous attitudes to current threats, especially Russia. It is, therefore, a question of the extent to which the Alliance is united and how it would react in the event of a Russian aggression against NATO's eastern border. All of this jeopardizes the credibility of the Alliance's deterrence capability.

### **Redistribution of Power at the Global Level**

At the global level, the redistribution of power between the main players in the world order, the US, Russia and China, continues. While the US position as a credible partner is threatened by events such as the unilateral decision to withdraw from northern Syria, as well as the alleged abuse of power by US President Trump. In September, the House of Representatives, at the suggestion of its Speaker Nancy Pelosi, filed a constitutional indictment against President Trump for the abuse of office and obstruction of the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 elections. Donald Trump thus became the third president in US history to face an impeachment.

Both Russia and China continue to strengthen their global influence. With the American withdrawal from Syria, Russia got the upper hand and also benefits from the fact that Assad remained in power. In addition, Russia is involved in Libya, supporting General

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<sup>8</sup> YAR, L. Prežíva NATO klinickú smrť? Čo na to východné krídlo? 20.11.2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/ZzBHC>; Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead, 7.11.2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/XzBHZ>

Haftar, who leads the opposition to the internationally recognized government. In 2019, China faced international criticism for building so-called “re-education camps” in Xinjiang.<sup>9</sup> It has been criticized, in particular, by Turkey, the EU and the US, which have imposed visa restrictions on Chinese officials responsible for detention centres and blacklisted several companies. At the same time, however, states such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have sided with China, praising Beijing for its “human rights achievements” and “counterterrorism efforts” in Xinjiang. Despite international criticism, China continues to project its new Silk Road, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In March, Italy became the first of the G7 countries to join the BRI project, followed by Beijing signing a BRI Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation with several European countries, including Austria, Luxembourg and Switzerland. At the same time, there are signs of economic convergence between Russia and China. In April, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping called the two countries “good friends” and promised to work together to deepen the economic integration in Eurasia.<sup>10</sup> In June, they both confirmed that they wanted to build a “great Asian partnership” by linking the Eurasian Economic Union and the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative.

Russia and China use various influential activities to strengthen their influence, including the spread of disinformation (fake news). Already in the annual report for 2018, the Security Information Service (BIS) identified the dissemination of pro-Russian misinformation and China’s efforts to recruit collaborators among academics and state institutions as a threat to the Czech Republic.<sup>11</sup> The validity of this threat was proved in 2019, when several Chinese activities within the Czech academic environment were revealed.<sup>12</sup>

### **Weakened Legitimacy of International Agreements and Regimes**

One year after the US withdrew from the Iran’s Nuclear Program Agreement (known as the JCPOA), Iran announced its partial withdrawal from the treaty and made compliance with other commitments conditional on the conduct of the remaining signatories. In November, it gave the United Kingdom, France and Germany a third 60-day deadline to rescue the treaty, otherwise Iran would continue to reduce its nuclear obligations under the treaty.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> MAIZLAND, L. China’s Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang, 25.11.2019. Available from:

<https://1url.cz/QzBHU>

<sup>10</sup> JEONG-HO, L. China and Russia forge stronger Eurasian economic ties as Vladimir Putin gets behind Xi Jinping’s belt and road plan in face of US hostility, 26.4.2019. Available from:

<https://1url.cz/hzBHf>

<sup>11</sup> Annual Report of the Czech Security Information Service (BIS) for 2018. Available from:

<https://1url.cz/NMyNV>

<sup>12</sup> ZELENKA, J. Rektori Zima potvrdil, že s Čiňany jednal o finanční podpoře. 22.11.2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/azBHI>

<sup>13</sup> Iran to confirm next steps in withdrawal from nuclear deal, 5.1.2019. Available from:

<https://1url.cz/8zBHS>



Range Missile Disposal Treaty (INF Treaty) in February 2019, after accusing Russia of non-compliance. The decision entered into force in August 2019, because parties did not agree on another form of cooperation. Although both parties have long accused each other of violating it, Russia was formally given full responsibility for terminating the agreement.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, the US wants China to become a party to the new potential agreement. However, so far there is no indication, that a new agreement could be negotiated in the short term, either with Iran over its nuclear program or with Russia or China over medium- and short-range missiles. In addition, one of the principles of the legal international order was violated when Turkey launched a military offensive in northern Syria in October 2019.

### **Implications for the Armed Forces**

The continuing destabilization of the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa in particular, has an impact on the ACR, as this is an area where the ACR is directly involved in multinational operations under the auspices of NATO, the EU or the UN (Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Mali). NATO's (and ACR's) involvement in Afghanistan will depend on the development of the US-Taliban peace process, while further destabilization of the Middle East and sub-Saharan region could potentially lead to new challenges for the ACR. At the same time, it is in the interest of the Czech Republic and the Czech Armed Forces that NATO maintain its credibility and ability not only to operate in destabilized regions outside the NATO territory, but to be able to deter a potential attack on an Alliance member state. In case of a weakened Alliance unity and its determination to respond to a direct threat to the NATO territory, Russia could increase its pressure on the Alliance's eastern border, military engagement non-excluding. In such a case, the ACR must be prepared to fulfil the obligations arising from its membership in the North Atlantic Alliance. In this context, it is paramount to maintain NATO's coherence and to effectively address activities that could potentially jeopardize cohesion within the Alliance, including Russia's and China's information campaigns and lobbying activities. Last but not least, withdrawals from agreements that were the key to preventing arms races, whether globally (US and Russia) or regionally (Iran and potentially Saudi Arabia, or even Turkey), are exacerbating instability, signalling the worsening of the European and global security environment, and may lead to new potential challenges for the future (e.g. as a result of the denunciation of the INF, most European states could potentially find themselves within the reach of Russia's short- and medium-range nuclear weapons).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR**

There is a necessity to separate the scientific and political agenda in the field of environmental security. Therefore, special attention is paid to the current state of scientific knowledge, especially in the discipline of climatology on the one hand and rhetoric and the steps taken by political actors on the other. This chapter focuses primarily on the climate change, although the environmental sector is not limited to it, due to the fact that the climate change, led by global warming, will affect all other levels of environmental security (food, energy security, etc.).

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<sup>14</sup> NATO and the INF Treaty, 2.8.2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/OzBHQ>; DURKALEC, J. European security without the INF Treaty, 30.9.2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/izBHX>

## Scientific Agenda

In 2019, international organizations (most prominently the UN and WMO) published several expert studies on the current state of the climate. These were either periodic reports monitoring selected indicators of climate change, or special reports devoted to a longer time period or a comprehensive study of a selected area of the climate change. Special reports were also issued with a vision to hold the UN Extraordinary Climate Summit in September 2019 and 2020 as the first milestone for reviewing the implementation of the Paris Agreement and making new commitments.<sup>15</sup>

### *Global Average Temperature*

The temperature of the Earth's surface (average temperature of the Earth's surface and oceans) in 2019 was 0.98 °C higher compared to the average temperatures in the 30-year period 1951-1980.<sup>16</sup> The last five years (2015-2019) also ranked among the five warmest years recorded in the history of measurement (of the global average temperature)<sup>17</sup> with an increase of 1.1 °C ( $\pm 0.1$  °C) compared to the pre-industrial period, and about 0.2 °C compared to the previous five-year period.<sup>18</sup> July 2019 was historically the warmest month since the beginning of the measurement - this also applies independently to the territory of the Czech Republic.<sup>19</sup>

In the pan-European context, we can talk about the increase rate of the average annual air temperature by 0.3 °C per decade over the period 1961-2018.<sup>20</sup> In the Czech Republic, the average temperature increased by 2 °C compared to 1961, with the greatest warming occurring in January, July and August (by more than 2.5 °C). Overall, the Czech Republic has warmed twice as fast as the global average. This trend is directly related to less snow, heat waves and more severe drought due to higher evaporation in the summer months.<sup>21</sup> A study of the AS CR from 2019 concluded that in the Czech Republic a further increase in warming of 1 °C in the period 2021-2040 is most likely, with an average increase of 2 °C by the end of the century. If we do not succeed in reducing greenhouse gases emissions, the minimum warming by the end of the century will be 3 °C.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Jedná se například o tyto zprávy: *The Global Climate in 2015-2019* (WMO), *Climate Change and Land* (IPCC), *Climate action and support trends* (UNFCCC / United Nations Climate Change Secretariat), *The Heat Is On: Taking Stock of Global Climate Ambition / NDC Global Outlook Report 2019* (UNDP), *United In Science. High-level synthesis report of latest climate science information convened by the Science Advisory Group of the UN Climate Action Summit 2019* (WMO).

<sup>16</sup> NASA. *Facts: Global Temperature*, Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet, 2020. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Ozo70>.

<sup>17</sup> WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION. *WMO Provisional Statement on the State of the Global Climate in 2019*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/czo7S>.

<sup>18</sup> WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION. *The Global Climate in 2015-2019*, 2019. s. 3, 5. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Gzo7g>.

<sup>19</sup> NOAA. *Assessing the Global Climate in July 2019: July was the warmest month on record for the globe*, 2019. Available from: <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/news/global-climate-201907>

KUKLIŠ, Libor. Léto 2019 bylo v ČR nejteplejší od začátku měření, *Magazín Gnosis*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Zzo7l>.

<sup>20</sup> ŠTĚPÁNEK, Petr et al. *Očekávané klimatické podmínky v České republice část I. Změna základních parametrů*, AVČR, Ústav výzkumu globální změny, 2019, s. 10. Available from: <https://1url.cz/ozMLD>.

<sup>21</sup> FAKTA O KLIMATU. *Průměrná roční teplota v ČR*, 2020. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Gzo7l>.

<sup>22</sup> ŠTĚPÁNEK, ref. 21, s. 5.

## Concentrations of Greenhouse Gases in the Atmosphere

At the end of 2019, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere reached a new record value of 412.44 parts per million.<sup>23</sup> The concentration of other greenhouse gases (especially methane and nitrous oxide) also continued to increase. The difference between “where we are likely to go” and “where we need to be” in line with the commitments of the Paris Agreement (the so-called “emissions gap”) is addressed in the UN Emissions Gap Report 2019. The report clearly states that the countries have failed to stop increasing the greenhouse gas emissions together, which requires “deeper and faster reductions”. Greenhouse gas emissions have risen at a rate of 1.5% per year over the past decade, and there are no indications that these emissions should peak and begin to decline in the coming years.<sup>24</sup>

**Table No. 1:** Developments over the last five years

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Global average temperature	0,90	1,02 <sup>25</sup>	0,92	0,85	0,98
CO2 concentration (as of December)	402.51	405.14	407.49	409.75	412.44

### *Ocean level, temperature and pH*

In 2019, the ocean level continued to rise. As of November 2019, it was 95.7 mm ( $\pm$  4 mm)<sup>26</sup> higher than in 1993.<sup>27</sup> In 2014-2019, the growth rate of the average global ocean level increased to 5 mm per year, while since 1993, the average level rise has been 3.2 mm per year.<sup>28</sup> The heat of the oceans measured in joules also reached new record values in 2019 (319 zettajoules at a depth of up to 700 meters, 136 zettajoules at a depth of 700-2000 meters).<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the acidity of the oceans is increasing due to the reaction of salt sea water and carbon dioxide, which poses a risk to the conservation of sea ecosystems.

### *Area of sea ice and ice sheets*

The area of sea ice has reached its record low values. The minimum area of Arctic sea ice in August 2019 was the second lowest recorded value in the history of measurements.<sup>30</sup> By 2019, its area each September declined at a rate of 12.85% per decade compared

<sup>23</sup> NASA. *Facts: Carbon Dioxide*, Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet, 2020. Available from: <https://1url.cz/uzo7J>.

<sup>24</sup> UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). *Emissions Gap Report 2019*, Executive summary, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/zzo7u>.

<sup>25</sup> The average global temperature in 2016 was significantly affected by the occurrence of the meteorological phenomenon El Niño. WMO. WMO Provisional Statement, ref. 18.

<sup>26</sup> NASA. *Facts: Sea Level*, Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet, 2020. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Dzo7U>.

<sup>27</sup> Start of recording values from altimetry with high accuracy.

<sup>28</sup> WMO, *The Global Climate in 2015-2019*, ref. 19., s. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Carbon Brief. *State of the climate: Heat across Earth's surface and oceans mark early 2019*, 2020. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Czo7e>.

<sup>30</sup> NASA. *2019 Arctic Sea Ice Minimum Tied for Second Lowest on Record*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Ozo7Q>.

to the average in the period 1981-2010.<sup>31</sup> The melting of ice sheets (Antarctica and Greenland) continues.<sup>32</sup>

## Political Agenda

The most discussed topic of the 2019 politics were the international negotiations on countries' commitments to reduce emissions under the Paris Agreement. This was particularly the case with the outlook to 2020, when countries were supposed to make new commitments to keep global warming at 2 °C by the end of the century and as close to 1.5 °C as possible. An extraordinary UN climate summit was held in New York in September (Climate Action Summit). Although more than 60 countries have committed themselves to achieving climate neutrality by 2050, they have failed to force the biggest polluters to make significant commitments. This included the European Union, where it has been blocked by four countries, including the Czech Republic.<sup>33</sup> In November, according to the legal requirements of the Paris Agreement, the US informed the UN of its intention to withdraw from the agreement (so far, it has done so informally), while the withdrawal process will be completed on November 4, 2020.<sup>34</sup>

In December, the regular 25th United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP 25) took place in Madrid. The aim of the event was to reach an agreement within the international community on key issues of reducing emissions, trading in emission allowances or financial assistance to developing countries to combat climate change. However, the conference participants did not agree on the main topics.<sup>35</sup> EU countries finally agreed on climate neutrality by 2050 at the EU summit in Brussels in December (the so-called New Green Agreement). At the same time, the Czech Republic negotiated the possibility of including nuclear energy as a clean source replacing fossil fuels and Poland has an exception that it is not bound by the agreement yet.<sup>36</sup> In 2019, the United Kingdom and Ireland were the first countries in the world to declare a state of climate emergency.<sup>37</sup> These steps were influenced by protests in both countries. Protests to force governments to "save the climate" were a global issue in 2019, with strong involvement of young people. The most publicized were the strikes of schoolchildren accompanied by protests in the streets - the so-called Fridays for Future, with the Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg as its face. In addition to the protests, there were also coercive actions based on the principle of civil disobedience (e.g. the Extinction Rebellion movement).

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<sup>31</sup> NASA. *Facts: Arctic Sea Ice Minimum*, Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet, 2020. Available from: <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/arctic-sea-ice/>.

<sup>32</sup> See eg. MEYER, Robinson. *Greenland Is Falling Apart*, Defense One, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Ozo7W>.

<sup>33</sup> ČT24. *EU se shodla na klimatické neutralitě do roku 2050. Česko prosadilo zmínku o jádru*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/jzLGg>.

<sup>34</sup> WEMER, David A. *Trump abandons US climate leadership with pact withdrawal*, Atlantic Council, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/gzo7i>.

<sup>35</sup> ČT24. *Klimatický summit OSN v Madridu vyvanul bez výsledku. Frustrace aktivistů přerostla v protesty*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/gzo7N>.

<sup>36</sup> ČT24. *EU se shodla na klimatické neutralitě do roku 2050. Česko prosadilo zmínku o jádru*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/jzLGg>.

<sup>37</sup> BBC. *UK Parliament declares climate change emergency*, 1. 5. 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/3MTmC>.

DEVANE, Michelle. *Ireland declares climate emergency: 'Things will deteriorate rapidly unless we move very swiftly'*, *Independent.ie*, 10. 5. 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/izo7H>.

In the Czech environment, it is possible to mention the measures adopted within the amendment to the Water Act, including the establishment of commissions at the regional and state level. These could, for example, prohibit permitted water withdrawals during droughts. The amendment also makes possible to declare states of droughts, water shortages and crises.<sup>38</sup> The city districts of Prague 6 and Prague 7 have declared a state of climate emergency.<sup>39</sup>

### Risks Associated with the Climate Change

Considering the scientific knowledge on climate change and the temporary inability of countries to collectively reverse this trend, we can expect an increase in the negative impacts associated with global warming. From the point of view of national security, the greatest risk is posed by sudden incidents associated with natural disasters as well as creeping disasters, which culminate after a long period of gradual deterioration of the situation (e.g. drought). In the first category, several devastating climatic phenomena were recorded in 2019, the often extreme intensity and destruction of which (not necessarily the occurrence) could also have been influenced by anthropogenic climate change. These include tropical cyclones (the most devastating one was Idai in the south-western Indian Ocean, which caused huge damage in Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Madagascar), fires (Siberia, Australia, Alaska, Canada, Greenland)<sup>40</sup> and floods (e.g. Italy, India, East African region).

In the case of creeping disasters, water scarcity and drought pose the greatest risk, both of which are partly related to reduced rainfall in some regions and higher water evaporation due to warming. Water scarcity and prolonged and repeated droughts have resulted in the depopulation of large rural areas in most African countries (especially the Sahel) and part of the MENA countries (including Iran). Declining agricultural production is leading to the relocation of the unskilled rural population to cities, increasing social and economic tensions and deteriorating security. Competition for fertile and sufficiently irrigated land leads to armed conflicts (Mali).<sup>41</sup> Severe water shortages hit India last year due to the drying up of groundwater and surface water, and this condition was further exacerbated by a wave of extreme heat. Dozens of Indian cities may be completely depleting groundwater supplies by 2020. Already in June 2019, the city of Chennai started to declare the so-called “day zero”, i.e. the day when water supplies are depleted, and the city is completely dependent on external resources. There are fears of “climate apartheid”, where only the richest will have access to basic resources, including water.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> SEZNAM ZPRÁVY. *Vláda schválila novelu zřizující komise pro sucho. Omezit mohou odběry vody*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/3zo72>.; PSP ČR. *Sněmovní tisk 556/0, část č. 1/6. Novela z. o vodách (vodní zákon) - EU*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Qzo7q>.

<sup>39</sup> CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION. *Climate emergency declarations in 1,482 jurisdictions and local governments cover 820 million citizens*, 2020. Available from: <https://1url.cz/7zo7E>.

<sup>40</sup> Compare: ECMWF. *Unusual Arctic wildfire activity continues into August*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/nzo7B>.

<sup>41</sup> Compare: Wrathall, David J. et al. *Water stress and human migration: a global, georeferenced review of empirical research*, Rome: FAO, 2018. Available from: <http://www.fao.org/3/i8867en/i8867EN.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> ČT24. *Vysušená Indie žizní. Chybí voda na mytí i vaření, podle odborníků jsou v ohrožení stamiliony lidí*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Dzo7p>.; ČT24. *Den, kdy došla voda. Vyprahlé indické město zásobuje vlak, lidé často panikaří*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/5MI4X>.



Overall, about a quarter of the planet's population suffers from water scarcity.<sup>43</sup> This problem is also topical for the Czech Republic, where the risk of more frequent and longer periods of drought increases, mainly due to stagnation of precipitation (not a statistically significant decrease) in combination with evaporation due to higher air temperatures.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, there is an increased risk that the soil on the surface will become water-repellent during a long period of high temperatures and the absence of precipitation, which contributes to the effects of flash floods.

The risk of geopolitical rivalry in the Arctic is increasing, as new trade routes and fossil fuel resources stored in the area with unresolved territorial demands are gradually becoming more accessible due to warming and the associated melting of ice. The extraction of these resources poses an additional risk associated with their consumption and thus increasing warming. However, the benefits of extracting fossil fuel resources will largely depend on the development of the stock price of these fuels.

### **Climate Change Related Opportunities**

The climate change and the related need to reduce dependence on fossil fuels is an opportunity to increase the energy security of countries by the transition to renewables, and for the armed forces this means the associated increase in operational efficiency.<sup>45</sup> By gradually moving to more sustainable farming and food industries, it is possible to reduce the risks posed by the climate change in developing countries and, in the long term, to mitigate inequalities and reduce the number of people suffering from lack of basic resources.

### **Implications for the Armed Forces**

From the point of view of the armed forces, the greatest risk in the Czech Republic is the emergence of natural disasters, which will require the involvement of the Czech Armed Forces in the assistance operations of the Integrated Rescue System of the Czech Republic. According to scientists' estimates, the risk of floods has increased. While the number of days with precipitation above 1 mm will be at the same level, the number of days with precipitation above 10 and 20 mm (and from the middle of the century even above 50 mm) will grow in the Czech Republic.<sup>46</sup> The ACR may assist in operations fighting epidemic or pandemic, to which temperature changes may contribute in some cases. These activities on their own territory represent an opportunity to further improve the image of the army among the public, and thus to increase the support for its goals.

The above-mentioned trends further contribute to the risk of the emergence of migration crisis and the escalation of armed conflicts, in the resolution of which the ACR may participate. At the same time, joint action to mitigate or/and adapt to the effects of climate change can be a topic for the Alliance, which will serve as a unifying factor that

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<sup>43</sup> ČT24. *Sucho může v budoucnu stát za propadem tuzemské ekonomiky o 1,6 procenta, varují čeští vědci*, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/hzo7G>.

<sup>44</sup> ŠTĚPÁNEK, Petr et al. ref. 21., s. 5.

<sup>45</sup> See previous study from 2019. DIVIŠOVÁ, Vendula, KOSÁROVÁ, Dominika, STOJAR, Richard, FRANK, Libor, NOVOTNÝ, Antonín. *Bezpečnostní prostředí: Sektorová analýza a implikace pro ozbrojené síly ČR 2018*. [studie]. Brno: Univerzita obrany, 2019, 22 s. ISBN 978-80-7582-093-8.

<sup>46</sup> ŠTĚPÁNEK, Petr et al. ref. 21., s. 5.

strengthens the Alliance's centre of gravity - its cohesion. The use of this opportunity will largely depend on the outcome of the US presidential election in 2020.<sup>47</sup>

In the area of deployment, Czech units will have to ensure the appropriate supply of basic resources, especially water. Water scarcity is a breeding ground for extremism in Mali, for example. Increasing pressure on local resources due to the deployment of foreign troops or rising prices due to higher demand could seriously damage relations with the local population (e.g. Iraq, Mali).<sup>48</sup> Conversely, helping to put in place appropriate procedures and facilities to make efficient extraction and use of scarce resources could strengthen cooperation and support from the locals.

In the field of energy, the so far partial transfer of the ACR towards renewable resources offers the opportunity to increase its operational efficiency and reduce its footprint on the battlefield, following the example of foreign armies. This effort will also support the reduction of the energy intensity of the day-to-day functioning of the armed forces and contribute to the fulfilment of the Czech Republic's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement.

## SOCIETAL SECTOR

At the heart of the social sector, and thus the potentially endangered value, is the identity of society, which can be understood as the "self-concept of communities and individuals who see themselves as members of given societies"<sup>49</sup>. The main threats to the preservation of national (or other) identities are: (a) migration, which changes the composition of the population and thus the identity of the host country; (b) competition of identities either at the horizontal level (cultural and linguistic influence of the neighbouring community is perceived as a threat to the local way of life) or vertical due to separatism or transnational integration (e.g. the EU influence); and (c) population decline (typically demographic development in the country).

### Migration

In the course of 2019, 141,741 people arrived in Europe illegally (according to the Frontex statistics), about half of them via the Eastern Mediterranean route, which recorded an increase of almost 50% year-on-year. In terms of countries of origin, Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq (by sea) and Turkey, Syria and Iraq (by land) were the most represented ones. On the other hand, the smallest number of people arrived via the Central Mediterranean route and the number of illegal migrants arriving in Europe via the Western Mediterranean route decreased significantly.<sup>50</sup> A total of 708,369 people applied for international protection in EU countries, most of them from Syria, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Iraq and Colombia.<sup>51</sup> As of 31 December 2019, the Czech Republic registered a total of 595,881 persons of foreign nationality, while the share of individuals with temporary and

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<sup>47</sup> AL-MARASHI, Ibrahim. *The Case for a Climate Alliance Treaty Organization*, Pacific Council, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Nzo7Z>.

<sup>48</sup> GIVETASH, Linda. *Militaries go green, rethink operations in face of climate change*, *NBC News*, 27. 4. 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/ozo7L>.

<sup>49</sup> BUZAN, Barry, Ole WAEVER a Jaap de WILDE. *Bezpečnost: nový rámeček pro analýzu*. Brno: Centrum strategických studií, 2005, s. 139. ISBN 80-903333-6-2.

<sup>50</sup> FRONTEX. *FLASH REPORT - Irregular migration into EU at lowest level since 2013, 2020*. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Fzo7F>.

MVČR. *Čtvrtletní zpráva o migraci - IV. 2019*, Odbor azylové a migrační politiky, 2020, s. 4-7. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Szo7R>.

<sup>51</sup> MVČR. *Situace na migračních trasách 2019, 2020*. Available from: <https://1url.cz/nzo7a>.

permanent residence is balanced. Ukrainians (24.4%), Slovaks (20.4%) and Vietnamese (10.4%) account for the largest shares of this number. The Russians, Poles and Germans follow. In 2019, 1,921 people applied for international protection in the country, the largest numbers of applicants being from Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia, Vietnam and Kazakhstan. This is a 12.9% increase in total compared to the previous year, which, however, according to the Ministry of Interior, is caused by an increase in purposefully submitted applications by Armenians. More than half of foreigners (50.7%) with a temporary stay in the Czech Republic came to the country for work, while 16.8% for family reunification, 6.8% for study and 6.3% for business.<sup>52</sup>

The 2016 National Security Audit assessed security threats resulting from migration; mainly its illegal form due to the increase in armed conflicts in the world and insufficient integration of legal migrants residing in the Czech Republic.<sup>53</sup> A survey of public opinion on the reception of refugees in May 2019 showed that 84% of respondents perceived refugees as a threat to European security and 72% to the security in the Czech Republic. In relation to refugees from countries affected by a military conflict, 63% of respondents oppose their admission (a decrease of 5% compared to 2018), only 2% agree with their admission and settlement in the Czech Republic, while 31% of respondents agree with their admission until they can return to their countries of origin (an increase of 7%). 81% were against the reception of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa (of which 54% said no), and a total of 15% were in favour of receiving them.<sup>54</sup>

The way in which the media report on these phenomena, undoubtedly, also has an impact on the significantly negative attitudes of Czech citizens towards refugees and migration in general. In 2019, studies on this topic were prepared by researchers at Masaryk University on behalf of People in Need. They found that the Czech media were depersonalizing the topic, the topic was associated with negative phenomena (relativization and criminalization of migration) and at the same time the issue was often presented in a tabloid manner in order to get readers' attention and politicized. The largest increase in migration reports could be observed during the election period.<sup>55</sup>

If we look at the electoral preferences of the SPD party, which is the one of the parliamentary parties that built its profile on the topic migration, we can observe a decline. In November 2019, the party's preference was at 9.1%, while in December it reached the lowest level (5.6%) since February 2016 (3.6%). STEM researchers attribute the fact to the relatively uneventful political situation, where "SPD apparently did not have a strong protest topic". However, we cannot ignore the fact that the negative attitude towards migration is also significant on the Czech political scene among the coalition or the so-called traditional parties, and therefore the protest potential of the SPD is currently significantly limited.

## Rivalry of Identities

In addition to the national identity, the independent Czech state has also profiled itself as a supranational identity, which was significantly shaped by the Czech Republic's

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<sup>52</sup> MVČR. Čtvrtletní zpráva o migraci - IV. 2019, s. 2-3.

<sup>53</sup> MVČR. *Audit národní bezpečnosti*, Praha: 2016. Available from: <https://1url.cz/etEas>.

<sup>54</sup> CVVM. *Postoj české veřejnosti k přijímání uprchlíků - květen 2019*, Tisková zpráva, Sociologický ústav AVČR, 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Gzo7V>.

<sup>55</sup> POSPĚCH, Pavel a JUREČKOVÁ, Adéla. *Migrace bez migrantů: Mediální obraz migrace a jejích aktérů v České republice*. Praha: Člověk v tísni, 2019.

accession to the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union. We can clearly speak of the pro-Western orientation of the Czech Republic's foreign policy after 1989.

NATO membership has had stable support among the citizens of the Czech Republic, oscillating around 60% (approximately since 2002). In a January 2019 survey, 58% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the NATO membership (of which 18% were "definitely satisfied", the rest "rather").<sup>56</sup> 22% are dissatisfied (of which 7% are "definitely"). Overall, the share of dissatisfied people has decreased in the last five years (with a maximum of 28% in 2017 and a minimum of 19% in 2018).<sup>57</sup> Our membership in NATO is supported more by men (62%) than women (54%). There is an interesting discrepancy among citizens between the support of the opinion that "NATO membership is a guarantee of the Czech Republic's independence" (45%) and "NATO membership is a form of subordination of the Czech Republic to foreign powers" (45%). 54% agree with the opinion that NATO ensures peace and security in the Czech Republic (compared to 37% with the opposite opinion) and that it does so in Europe, 63% of respondents (compared to 25%). On the contrary, on the issue of self-defence of the state, another survey found that 51% of people agreed that it is "unnecessary to think about the defence of the state, because great powers decide for a small country like ours". However, the share of this opinion has been continuously decreasing since 2012 (65%).<sup>58</sup>

In April 2019, 37% of respondents were satisfied with the EU membership (only 6% were "definitely satisfied") and 26% were dissatisfied (9% were definitely dissatisfied), while a significant part did not opt for any of the options. Since 2010, this is the highest level of satisfaction with the EU membership. It is interesting that 57% of respondents believed that the EU membership meant ensuring greater military security in the Czech Republic compared to 30% of persons who disagreed with the statement, while there was an increase in the share of those who agreed.<sup>59</sup> In another survey examining Czechs' trust in international institutions, 52% (of which 7% definitely) citizens trust the EU and 44% do not (14% definitely). At the same time, the individual EU institutions enjoy lower confidence, with a trust-to-distrust ratio of 36% to 48% for the European Parliament and 35% to 45% for the European Commission.<sup>60</sup> Eventually, the UN enjoy the trust of 63% of respondents, compared to 27% who perceive this organization negatively. Support for all these organizations is higher, especially among younger age groups, people with higher education and those who declare a good standard of living.<sup>61</sup>

A significant topic in recent years has been the question of the cohesion of Czech society, and thus the question of the unity of national identity. In 2019, the sociological research "Divided by Freedom: Czech Society after 30 Years" was conducted, examining on a sample of more than 4,000 respondents the division of Czech society into classes

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<sup>56</sup> In another survey in April 2019, 61% of NATO citizens expressed confidence, and 31% did not trust the Alliance. CVVM. *Důvěra v evropské a mezinárodní instituce - duben 2019*, 2019.

Available from: <https://1url.cz/Fzo7k>.

<sup>57</sup> CVVM. *Občané o členství České republiky v NATO - leden 2019*, Sociologický ústav AVČR, 2019.

Available from: <https://1url.cz/3Mpl0>.

<sup>58</sup> CVVM. *Postoje českých občanů k obraně ČR - leden 2019*, Sociologický ústav AVČR, 2019.

Available from: <https://1url.cz/Qzo7s>.

<sup>59</sup> CVVM. *Názory veřejnosti na členství České republiky v Evropské unii - duben 2019*, 2019.

Available from: <https://1url.cz/Dzo7T>.

<sup>60</sup> CVVM. *Důvěra v evropské a mezinárodní instituce - duben 2019*, ref. 60.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

according to the economic, social and cultural capital of their members<sup>62</sup> and how Czech society is divided by attitudes towards pre-selected 18 thematic areas. Belonging to one of the six classes partially conditions the individual's attitudes to a number of social issues. Important in this regard is the finding that members of the lower and middle classes feel much more (comparing to the upper two) that they do not have the opportunity to express themselves openly about problems in society. In important issues of trust, the lowest interpersonal trust (measured as a trust in the honesty of the people) is evident among the destitute class (the worst-ranked group) and the traditional working class, while only the emerging cosmopolitan class has achieved positive values. Similarly, trust in power (courts, police) and political institutions reaches the lowest values among members of the lowest classes.<sup>63</sup>

Of the 18 topics examined, society is divided only in attitudes towards three of them: inequality, perception of development after 1989 and direction towards the future, and partly migration. On a number of other topics, the authors of the study believe that they are not "diverse enough to be a major obstacle to dialogue between groups in society", although certain patterns can be seen in the discrepancies between the two highest classes (generally more liberal views) and the destitute class. For example, only 4% of the population turn to the East,<sup>64</sup> the perception of "the Czech Republic as a bridge between the worlds or another Switzerland" is more likely than the East × West dichotomy and a massive questioning of the pro-Western orientation. Even the topic of migration (with a gradually declining public interest) divides us only partially, while 72% of the public perceives immigrants as a threat to "our" way of life, and only *the emerging cosmopolitan class* visibly differs from this dominant view.<sup>65</sup>

The authors emphasize that the goal of democratic societies is not even to seek consensus, but only dialogue. They question the fact that Czech society is divided, when this perception is caused by media presentation, i.e. "how the topics are discussed and how they are presented as emotional black and white poles".<sup>66</sup> Undoubtedly, disinformation activities, which are part of the influential activities of foreign actors, as well as the influence of local alternative media, significantly contribute to this fact.

## Population Decline

In 2019, the population of the Czech Republic increased by 44,139 to 10.69 million, however, due to the birth and mortality rates, the entire increase was provided by migration.<sup>67</sup> According to current projections, in the long run perspective the number of children born will no longer exceed current values. The number of inhabitants of the Czech Republic (based on the birth rate, mortality and migration) will increase to 10.784 million by 2029 and afterwards it will gradually decline until the end of the century. Moreover, the declared growth in this medium (most likely) variant of the projection can

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<sup>62</sup> These are the Secured Middle Class, the Emerging Cosmopolitan Class, the Traditional Working Class, the Local Ties Class, the Endangered Class, and the Distressed Class (ranked sequentially from the highest to the lowest class).

<sup>63</sup> PROKOP, Daniel et al. *Rozdělení svobodou: Česká společnost po 30 letech*, Český rozhlas, 2019. ISBN 978-80-88286-08-0. Available from: <https://www.irozhlas.cz/rozdeleni-svobodou>.

<sup>64</sup> The research clearly shows that "we are a society determined to go to the East, we are not sure above all whether we want (and if at all possible) to go our own way."

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> ČT24. *V Česku žije už téměř 10,7 milionu lidí. Za nárůstem stojí migrace*, 2020. Available from: <https://1url.cz/rzo7j>.



be achieved only with the help of migration from abroad.<sup>68</sup> According to current projections, the birth rate will decrease, the number of people at working age will decrease with the fastest decline in the population aged 15-64 in the period 2038-2044, while the centre of gravity will gradually shift to older age groups and the share of seniors (persons over the age of 65) in the population will thus increase by up to 52% by 2050 compared to 2017. According to the Czech Statistical Office, in order to reverse the above trends, “an incomparably higher supply of people from abroad would be needed than before”.<sup>69</sup>

#### Implications for the Armed Forces

Migration itself does not pose a threat to the national security of the Czech Republic yet, although it is subjectively perceived by the public as such. In terms of demographic development, on the other hand, it represents an opportunity to prevent population decline and related labour shortages, while slowing down the aging of the population, which would place greater financial demands on the health and social care system at the expense of other sectors. These trends already present a challenge for the military in terms of recruiting new soldiers. However, the targeted use of migration encounters dominant public opposition, therefore, it would be necessary to change the way, in which this phenomenon is publicly presented. It is also possible to consider more extensive help to different cultures in the environment of the armed forces, which in the future could be a suitable place for the integration of foreigners.

At present, the pro-western direction of the Czech Republic is not endangered in favour of the eastern one. The risk is rather the search for a third way, which could follow the example of Poland or Hungary, when the Visegrad Four group already shows a certain autonomous way of acting within the EU. Although the NATO membership has had high support so far (with a growing tendency), there are significant discrepancies (see above) in whether the membership of the Czech Republic is a guarantee of the country's independence or, conversely, a way of submitting to foreign powers. The ACR thus faces the challenge of making the membership in NATO and the individual activities connected with it understandable to the inhabitants in order to gain higher public support. It is necessary to focus on groups that express statistically lower support for the army or power institutions - women, the elderly and those with lower education, as well as members of the lowest social classes.

### MILITARY SECTOR

The long-term conflicts that erupted and escalated in the course of the previous period were of the greatest importance in the military sector in 2019. These regional conflicts were of varying intensity, but there was no major shift in the efforts to resolve them in military manner, nor was there a significant dominance of any of the actors involved. Perhaps only in the case of the Afghan conflict we can talk about a significant progress in the search for a political solution. Rivalry between the two global powers, the US and the PRC, showed similar dynamics as in the previous years in the military sector.

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<sup>68</sup> ŠTYGLEROVÁ, Terezie. Bez migrace nás bude méně, *Statistika a my*, 02/2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Wzo7d>.

<sup>69</sup> KURKIN, Roman. Počty narozených dětí by již neměly překročit současné hodnoty, *Statistika a my*, 02/2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/6zo74>. NĚMEČKOVÁ, Martina. Lidí v produktivním věku bude ubývat, *Statistika a my*, 02/2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/9zo7D>. ŠTYGLEROVÁ, Terezie. Do poloviny století bude o polovinu více seniorů, *Statistika a my*, 02/2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/Gzo7h>.

The domestic conflict in Afghanistan continues to receive a great deal of attention. This national conflict, with significant external involvement, is of a long-term nature and none of the actors are able to achieve their goals through military means. Human losses are comparable on both sides, but without external support, the government forces would probably not be able to face the armed opposition in the long run. Insurgent formations continue to maintain control over large parts of the Afghan territory and are able to operate effectively also beyond them. The participating actors are thus aware that the so-called “deadlock of the conflict” has already been reached and it must be taken into account when trying to find a solution. In 2019, negotiations between representatives of the American diplomacy and the armed opposition made significant progress. The interests of these two hitherto antagonistic parties have probably been somewhat closer in recent years because of the emergence of a new actor, the so-called Islamic State of Khorasan, and its hostile activities in the country. However, the current Afghan government has not been adequately involved in these negotiations. This may become a source of complications in the future, definitely for reaching a mutually accepted non-military solution and implementing the agreements. The current Afghan government continues to be a very problematic partner for its foreign partners and allies. Efforts to Afghanize the conflict, with only very limited external support for the government forces, have run into significant shortcomings in the Afghan military and security forces in recent years. Government forces have suffered significant losses in recent years, highlighting the limits of their capabilities and the need for a significant investment in personnel and logistic support. Maintaining at least the status quo thus requires ever-increasing costs, which, however, would still have to be borne by external actors. However, after 18 years of conflict, their strategic patience has been significantly weakened, also in view of the declining domestic political support for deployment of foreign forces in Afghan societies. Given the growing polarization of the Afghan governmental and political structures, the downturn of legitimacy of the Afghan government in the eyes of the Afghan society, as well as low willingness of external actors to support the uncooperative government in the ongoing conflict can be expected. In response to the development in Afghanistan, the Czech government adopted a decision on a different configuration of the Afghan mission and its form of involvement, or on the gradual withdrawal of elements of the ACR and the phasing out of the current Czech military presence.

In 2019, it was possible to observe a short-term escalation of the conflict between the nuclear powers of India and Pakistan (conflict of interests over Kashmir). In February, there was a major terrorist attack in Indian Kashmir, killing forty members of the Indian security forces. In retaliation, the Indian government launched airstrikes on the alleged base of the terrorist Islamist organization, Jishi Muhammad, in neighbouring Pakistan. The Pakistani government denied the existence of terrorist bases on its territory, claiming Indian attacks had killed several civilians. Pakistan’s air defence was also successfully deployed against the Indian Air Force, announcing the downing of two Indian fighter jets over its territory. Although the conflict was short-lived, as it was soon dampened by international mediation, after a long period of relative peace it pointed out the possibility of an armed confrontation between these two large military powers with nuclear capabilities.

In Syria, further strengthening of government forces and steady weakening of armed opposition formations, especially the so-called democratic opposition and Islamist groups, could be observed in 2019. Opposition forces lost control over a number of strategically important sites, and their complete defeat was probably prevented only by the active and significant involvement of Turkey, one of the dominant external actors in the conflict. With the involvement of its own military forces and the material support of the

opposition, Turkey repeatedly stopped the efforts of government troops to gain Irbil, the centre of anti-government resistance, even at the cost of deteriorating bilateral relations with the Russian Federation. However, in pursuing its own security and strategic interests, Turkey also executed several controversial operations, which were criticized by its alliance partners. In this context, some Turkish activities could also be described as an act of aggression against the neighbouring Syrian state. The Turkish military took advantage of the withdrawal of US troops from northern Syria, which served as a de facto shield for the Syrian-Kurdish armed opposition against regional power competitors, including the government and Turkey. The withdrawal of the limited US contingent was then interpreted by the Kurdish side as a betrayal and abandonment of the current loyal US ally in the fight against the Islamic State. Due to the strong Kurdish diaspora and pro-Kurdish sympathies in Western Europe, this narrative also influenced the European society and its views on the conflict there. Turkish troops pushed the Kurdish military formation YPG out of a part of its territory. Also, ethnic cleansing of the existing indigenous (as well as newly settled) Kurdish population took place during the war, followed by the replacement with an Arab population siding with the Syrian anti-government forces and cooperating with the Turkish side. Overall, 2019 did not bring about a decisive dominance by any of the warring parties in this conflict. It only confirmed the trend of the increasing importance of external actors and their dominance over indigenous Syrian actors.

The growing importance and significant negative effects on the regional stability can be attributed to the long-running conflict in Yemen. This conflict, reflecting the long-standing latent tensions in the Yemeni society, was initially national in nature. However, with strong external support from Iran for the Yemeni rebels, the Shiite Houthi, and the involvement of a Sunni coalition led by Saudi Arabia in combat operations, the Yemeni conflict has taken on the character of a regional confrontation with an increasing intensity. The long-term war confrontation here has led to one of the greatest humanitarian crises today.

As in the Syrian conflict, in Yemen it is possible to observe the power confrontation of regional external actors and the changing intensity of military action. Although this conflict has been going on for five years in the geographically remote peripheral area of the Arabian Peninsula, it has been able to generate a significant number of refugees and potentially cause a direct military confrontation between regional powers - Iran and Saudi Arabia. Iran's hybrid engagement in the conflict in recent years has been limited to material support for its local Shiite proxy allies. In mid-September 2019, however, there was an unprecedented military action attributed directly to the Iranian actors. There was a large-scale air strike on Saudi Arabian oil infrastructure using 18 drones and 7 guided missiles of Iranian origin. The strike highlighted the relatively high vulnerability of Saudi Arabian oil fields to similar attacks and the unexpected capabilities of the Yemeni insurgents, Houthis (or their Iranian allies) to carry out offensive actions of a similar type on Saudi Arabian territory, not yet directly affected by the conflict. With relatively limited resources, temporary stoppage of an approximately half of the average daily Saudi oil production, or five percent of global supply was inflicted. It illustrates the growing possibilities of non-state actors (or hybrid state actors) and the growing trend of proliferation of unmanned aerial vehicles usable for air strikes against very distant targets. The conflict, which is one of the most visible manifestations of the regional Shiite-Sunni rivalry, is also significantly affected by the US involvement there, resp. their strong support for the Saudi side. This involvement is a factor that may lead to an escalation of the conflict and motivate Iran to give more support to the Shiite actors.

Large area of the Sahel, stretching across the African continent, was the scene of a number of conflicts in 2019 as well. Although there are no military operations

of higher intensity comparable to, for example, the conflicts in Syria or Libya, the intensity of terrorist and guerrilla attacks has been increasing as well as the territory affected by them and the impact on the local population. In 2019, the terrorist attacks claimed 4,000 lives from civilians and security forces. Due to the vastness of the Sahel and varied local conditions, it is not possible to determine general trends here. Terrorist activities in some western regions show a similar intensity as in previous years (Mali, Niger), in some, on the contrary, a significant increase can be observed. For example, Burkina Faso reported only 80 victims of terrorist attacks in 2016, but the number of victims in 2019 rose to 1,800. In the Sahel, European states have a relatively strong military involvement, especially with regard to France's traditional ties and interests. The French forces have 5,000 troops here, which is currently the most significant French expeditionary operation. Some concerns are raised by the European allies because of American considerations assuming a reduction in the current military presence in the Sahel and the associated limitation of the logistical support provided to European forces operating there. In many European countries, the region is receiving considerable attention. Increasing violence, escalation of local conflicts and regional instability, according to some, could generate large waves of refugees and make the Sahel a significant source of migration to the European continent.

Given the Czech Republic's commitment, the situation in Mali, where the economic and security situation is deteriorating and accompanied by civil unrest, is particularly accentuated. In the western regions of Mali, protests against the foreign military presence took place in 2018 and 2019, and the intensity of the activities of Islamist groups increased. In 2019, a complex attack on the EUTM training centre was carried out for the first time, and the operational area of Islamist groups expanded to the western regions of the state. In central Mali, ethnic violence has escalated in the last two years, caused by the general erosion of the state power, which is no longer able to resolve conflicts there. In some regions, ethnic and Islamist radicalism are linked, leading to a further escalation of armed violence. Ethnic non-Islamist militias usually fight among themselves, they attack the civilian population, while trying to avoid confrontation with state security forces and international forces. In contrast, state security forces and international forces are attacked almost exclusively by Islamist groups. In Mali, an example of an environmentally motivated conflict can also be seen. Limited water and soil resources lead to a violent confrontation of agricultural and pastoral tribes. This factor leads to the growth of conflict potential and enables further growth and spread of religious radicalism.

In the Mediterranean, especially Libya has witnessed a complex national conflict since the controversial intervention of the North Atlantic Alliance in 2011, involving a number of local and external actors. The territory of the former Libyan state is significantly fragmented and the legitimate so-called Government of National Accord controls only a small part of the state territory. This Libyan government is, in fact, only one of five local actors and does not have the capacity to become an all-Libyan authority without significant external support. Due to its geographical proximity, France, Germany and Italy in particular, are seeking to stabilize Libya, but their support is limited. Some external actors present in the conflict support competing formations, although they officially recognize the Government of National Accord as the legitimate representative of the state. This is most pronounced in the case of support provided by the Russian Federation to General Haftar's troops, which control the eastern part of Libya. In addition to Syria, Libya has become the main area for the activities of the Russian forces outside the European continent. The Russian side supplies the opposition formation mentioned above, the so-called Libyan National Army, both with military equipment and human personnel, mostly through private military companies. In 2019, General Haftar's troops launched

several offensive operations, during which, with the help of Russian support, they achieved partial success and gained control over another territory at the expense of the government forces. At the end of 2019, another external actor entered the conflict, namely Turkey, which signed a cooperation agreement with the government in November. Turkish support consists of the supply of military equipment and the direct action of Turkish troops. Turkish activities in the Libyan conflict, like the Russian ones, are subject to strong criticism. Concerns about the expansion of Turkish power into the Central Mediterranean have already been expressed by a number of regional authorities, including NATO / EU member states. In the event of an escalation of the conflict, as in the case of Syria, there is also a risk of a direct clash between Russian and Turkish troops, and thus a possible undesirable military confrontation between a member of the North Atlantic Alliance and the Russian Federation.

The frozen conflict in eastern Ukraine continues to be observed in Europe, causing tense relations between NATO / EU and the Russian Federation. As in the previous year, during 2019 the situation was relatively stable, although by default and relatively often there were a number of armed incidents and confrontations of opposing parties on the demarcation line. In all cases, however, these were incidents of local significance without a major impact on the actors involved. The domestic political changes in Ukraine, combined with the personnel change in the leadership of the state, have brought about a certain easing of the current Ukrainian approach to separatist entities and their Russian protector, still, rather at a declarative level only. The new president, Zelenskyy achieved a media-grateful exchange of a group of prisoners and declared his intention to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the foreseeable future. In October, Zelenskyy said that Ukraine would grant special status to insurgent zones in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions in an effort to resolve the situation. However, the implementation of Minsk agreements and the variant that Ukraine will accept the so-called Steinmeier formula by doing so, has led to strong criticism by the domestic opposition, to the protests and to a decline in Zelenskyy's popularity among the public. Moreover, as further negotiations have shown, the interpretation of the Steinmeier formula differs significantly on the Ukrainian and Russian sides, and reaching a compromise on this issue will be very difficult, if not unrealistic. The Ukrainian side did not resign on achieving the territorial integrity of 2013, and similarly the position of the Russian side on the issue of the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula has remained unchanged. However, given the power potential of both actors, the current situation does not have a plausible military solution. Unless there is a significant breakthrough in the political dialogue between the two main parties, protracted and latent regional conflict can be expected, similar to other unresolved conflicts in the post-Soviet space.

### **Implications for the Armed Forces**

It is possible to continue to observe the trend of growing defence spending in most NATO member states, which is conditioned by the effort to sustain the credibility of current and future allied ties. The gravity of possible expeditionary operations of the ACR will shift from Afghanistan to Africa (Mali), where the demand for units with counter-insurgent experience or at least the ability to operate in this environment will increase. One of the priorities of the EUTM training mission is to prepare the Malian armed forces for insurgent activities. At the same time, the frequency of civil unrests in western Mali has increased and the local population may not perceive the presence of international troops as positively as in the previous period.

The geographically closest armed conflict, which could have significant effects on the Czech Republic in the event of a larger escalation, continues in eastern Ukraine, but with very low intensity. Its solution lies at the political, not military, level. In the context of



EU / NATO relations with the Russian Federation, deployment in the Baltic States was a priority in 2019, in order to deter a potential Russian threat. So, it can still be assumed that the Baltic will be the main part of the ACR interest in this regard as well.

## **ECONOMIC SECTOR**

From an economic point of view, 2019 can be described as a period of growing uncertainty. Most forecasts for this year assumed a slowdown in the world economy, which also foreshadowed real developments in world markets. The economic growth is expected to be the worst in a decade, i.e. since the financial crisis in 2009. Among the most frequently cited reasons was the increase in uncertainty among investors due to growing tensions in national trade policies. As in the previous year, the trade war between the US and the PRC dominated the economic sector. The trade war between these global leaders began to escalate again in the second half of the year, when the US administration introduced new tariffs on Chinese imports into the United States. As expected, the PRC also responded by imposing customs measures on US products and devaluing its currency in order to mitigate the effects of the customs burden on its exports. Then there was a certain relaxation of tensions in the mutual trade and the trade war did not escalate. However, fears of further negative developments and a possible escalation of tension in trade between the world's largest economies persisted until the end of 2019.

For EU countries, dependence on international trade is an important factor, and the rise of American and Chinese protectionism, therefore, has negative effects on the development in Europe. One of the consequences of this development was the slowdown in the European GDP growth in the second half of 2019. The declining dynamics of the global trade also affected the economic core of the EU and the Czech Republic's key partner in the economic sector, Germany. In 2019, the German economy was confronted with weaker global demand, which had a negative impact on German exports and industrial production. Fears of a possible recession began to accentuate in Germany more often than in the past. The government's efforts to curb the economic downturn by introducing stimulus measures for the German economy were not very successful, but this is, among other things, a reflection of domestic political developments in Germany and the weakening of the position of existing political hegemony. The further development of the German economy will also be fundamentally influenced by the political decisions of 2019, if implemented. Under strong and growing pressure from the environmentalist movement, extensive commitments to reduce emissions have been declared. The expected widespread transition to renewable energy sources and the so-called green economy entails the need for a major transformation of the German economy. This process of drastic transformation of German industry will require enormous costs and may even lead to a loss of its current competitiveness in global markets. The economic sector in Germany is thus fundamentally confronted with the political and environmental sectors, which will have significant impacts on the economic development throughout the European Union. The EU as a whole also committed itself to very ambitious plans to achieve carbon neutrality by the middle of the 21st century, which may pose a significant problem for economically less powerful countries in the future. The European Union's intention may have positive effects on the regional environmental sector, but at the same time, can be extremely negative for the economic development and overall EU performance and global position.

Another factor that influenced the economic development in Europe was the Brexit. Due to chaotic developments in the United Kingdom, the threat of the so-called hard Brexit seemed relatively real until the end of the year, and contributed to growing uncertainty among European investors. The departure of the British economy from the EU is

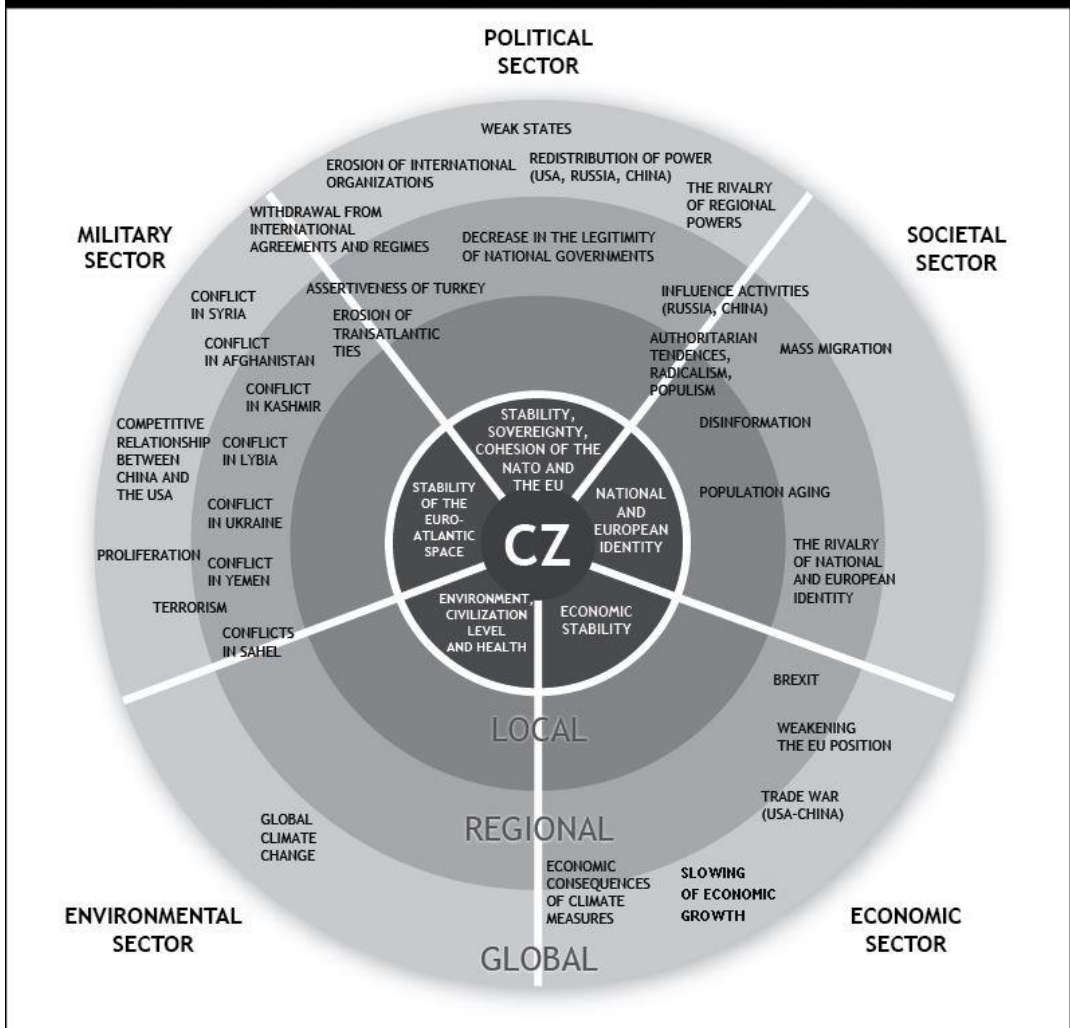
undoubtedly one of the fundamental processes that will be reflected in the global economic sector. Until Brexit, the European Union represented the largest common market in the world, which together with a comparable market in the US represented almost half of the global economy. This partial fragmentation of the European Economic Area is likely to weaken the current position of both the EU and the United Kingdom not only in relation to the United States, but also to other strong economies, the PRC in particular.

In the EU itself, the projection of different interests and approaches can be observed in the economic sector, which also contributes to the weakening of the EU's position vis-à-vis global partners and competitors. This can be illustrated, for example, by the efforts of some EU member states to introduce the so-called digital tax, reflecting the growing economic importance of virtual space and need for proper taxation. The initiator of these efforts was France, whose intention to tax the activities of American corporations operating in this sector led the United States to threaten to retaliate against French exports. A similar intention was declared in 2019 by the Czech Republic, which also did not find compliance and understanding of the American side. Czech supporters of strong transatlantic ties criticized similar intentions as a manifestation of allied disloyalty, completely useless and doomed trade confrontation with the US. Another problematic issue in 2019 was the energy security question, or the construction of the Nordstream 2 gas pipeline, respectively. Some northern and eastern European countries, as well as the US, continued to express concerns that the commissioning of the gas pipeline would increase Germany's / EU's unwanted dependence on the Russian Federation and will lead to further economic and political weakening of Ukraine. The Nordstream 2 project divided the closely cooperating Franco-German tandem, however, Germany, as the presumed main customer, does not intend to resign from its implementation. The Czech Republic, for which this project represents an opportunity to strengthen the transit potential and could even have some positive economic impacts, does not rank among the open supporters of Nordstream 2 with regard to its V4 partners. Nordstream 2 does not seem to pose a threat to the EU's energy security or a substantial strengthening of Russian influence from a political or economic point of view. Restrictions on some existing routes are still a very sensitive issue for some transit states, including the members of the Visegrad Group, as a shortfall in revenue from transit fees may weaken these economies.

### **Implications for the Armed Forces**

Economic developments in 2019 indicated that the economic growth or the maintenance of the current prosperity may not be permanent or long-term, and cooling of the economy in the global environment cannot be ruled out. Economic stagnation or a weakening economy would also significantly affect the Czech pro-export economy. A more significant decline in the state revenues would certainly bring lower willingness of public, and consequently of political elites, to allocate proper financial resources for defence purposes. In relation to the declared ambition to reach 2% of the state's GDP for defence by 2024, there was no significant shift in 2019. On the contrary, some comments from political authorities have cast doubt on their real commitments. For this reason, the priority for the Czech Armed Forces is to finalize the ongoing acquisition processes, focusing on the implementation of the most fundamental and necessary ones for maintaining or strengthening its existing capabilities.

# SECTORAL ANALYSIS OF THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT 2019



Sectoral Analysis of the Security Environment 2019.

Security Environment. Sectoral Analysis and Implications for the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic 2019

**Authors:**

[Mgr. Richard Stojar, Ph.D.](#) (supervisor)

[Mgr. Vendula Divišová, Ph.D.](#)

[Mgr. Dominika Kosárová, Ph.D., M.A.](#)

[PhDr. Libor Frank, Ph.D.](#)

[Mgr. et Mgr. Jakub Fučík, Ph.D.](#)

[Ing. Antonín Novotný, Ph.D.](#)

[Ing. Jan Břeň, Ph.D.](#)

Mgr. Miroslava Pavlíková

[Mgr. Adam Potočňák](#)

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