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The Evolution of Czechoslovak Defence Planning, 1918-1992

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ABSTRACT
Throughout its existence (1918–1992), Czechoslovakia had to fight to maintain its state sovereignty and independence. This struggle owed much to its geographical location in the heart of Europe, where the superpower interests of the main actors in global politics regularly clashed. As a rule, Czechoslovak operational plans did not reflect national interests. Nor did war plans, in many cases, correspond to real Czechoslovak economic and military capabilities, and the often offensive nature of such plans is somewhat surprising. On the other hand, the content of operational documents does reveal many features specific to Czechoslovakia – considerations regarding the shape of the state territory, the small depth of defence, and the factor of the German presence. Despite these strong foreign influences, Czechoslovak war plans still express a wealth of domestic military thought and military science.

Introduction

From the autumn of 1918, the Czechoslovak state faced enemies inside and outside the state's territory. As early as November and December, its newly emerging army had to occupy the Sudetenland, where the German population expressed a desire not to live in a country with a Slavic majority. In addition, the Seven-Day War with Poland over the border area of the Těšín region in January 1919 was a dispute not with its own population, but with an enemy sovereign state and its armed forces. In this situation, the decision making of the emerging Czechoslovak Armed Forces were not coordinated at the operational level by any well-thought-out war plan based on Czechoslovak military doctrine and strategy. They were guided by the *ad hoc* situation that arose here and the need to address it urgently. This became particularly evident

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after April 1919 in the war with Hungary.[1] The operational deployment of the Czechoslovak army did not have a consistent basis. The advance of the troops was governed by the interstate Czech-Romanian agreement and the order of the Ministry of National Defence (MNO) of 7 April 1919. On its basis, a line was to be occupied along the demarcation line east of the Danube. All this forced the unification and standardisation of the planning process, which was undertaken by France, the main Czechoslovak military ally. The nation-states formed after the First World War, such as Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Romania, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, sought to establish closer military-political contacts with victorious France and its army. Paris, therefore, sent military missions to their territories.[2]

Figure 1: Map of Czechoslovakia showing key cities and provinces. (Public Domain)

French influences on defence planning

The first Czechoslovak war plans arose within the operational department of the French Military Mission. Just after the birth of the republic, this department was simultaneously also the 3rd Department of the General Staff (GS) of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces. Following its establishment on 12 July 1919 the General Staff was headed by the French Colonel Henri Éduard Rozet.[3] In October 1920 Rozet moved

[1]The French Army Colonel Bujac, 'Operace r. 1919 proti maďarské republice sovětů', *Vojenské rozhledy* 4 (7–8) (1923) p. 321.

[2]R. Břach, *Generál Maurice PELLÉ: první náčelník hlavního štábu čs. branné moci,* (Praha: Ministerstvo obrany České republiky 2007), p. 55.

[3]R. Břach and J. Láník, *Dva roky bojů a organizační práce: československá armáda v letech 1918–1920,* (Praha: Ministerstvo obrany České republiky 2013), p. 117.

to the position of adviser to the head of the already mentioned operational department of the General Staff and, by virtue of his position, became the coordinator and mastermind of the first Czechoslovak war plans.[4] The reports drawn up under his supervision strongly reflected the still fresh experience of the First World War and reflected, too, the military-political and geographical specifics of the Czechoslovak state.[5] Although the French operational officers initially considered themselves to be 'mere' advisers to their Czechoslovak counterparts, they soon became the creators[6] of the Czech state's first war plans[7] thanks to their experience and influence. The basic structure of their texts was similar, containing two main, logically self-contained areas. The first of these dealt with covering and guarding the borders. This took the form of providing strategic cover for the period in which the framework army units were filled with mobilised men. After units had been concentrated, manoeuvres began, according to which they moved to their designated areas depending on the planned defence or attack.[8] Each plan then mostly addressed the following set of issues: firstly, the military-political aspects of the planned military operation in terms of the situation of the Czechoslovak Republic and its rivals; secondly, the assembly point area of the Czechoslovak army in terms of its dislocation; thirdly, upcoming military-political measures to start operational activities; fourthly, signalling for border guarding, concentration of mobilised units in Czechoslovak territory, and troops' rearward support; and finally, organisation of the command and control system in terms of grouping military units and their command posts, together with specification of the General Staff's tasks.

Czechoslovak war plans created in the ambit of the French Military Mission did not have a consistent formal arrangement and, indeed, differed from each other to no small extent. Their designation derived most often from identifying the main enemy, and they were coded accordingly. Plans of operations against Germany were designated 'A' (*Allemagne*) or 'N' (*Německo*), 'H' stood for Hungary (*Hongrie*) and 'P' for Poland. Sometimes, their designation was derived from the territory of the expected battlefield, as in the case of 'S' plans (*Slezsko*/Silesia), or from a politically defined enemy group in operational reports under 'B' (*Bolševici*/Bolsheviks). Their

[4]J. Fidler and V. Sluka, *Encyklopedie branné moci Republiky československé 1920–1938,* (Praha: Nakladatelství Libri 2006), p. 561.
[5]J. Bílek et al., *Vojenské dějiny Československa III. díl (1918–1939,)* (Praha: Naše vojsko 1987), p. 114.
[6] S. Polnar, 'Francouzská vojenská mise a počátky československého myšlení o válce', *Sborník prací Pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity, řada společenských věd* 33 (1) (2019) p. 15.
[7]R. Kalhous, *Budování armády,* (Praha: Melantrich 1936), p. 254.
[8]V. Galatík et al., *Vojenská strategie,* (Praha: Ministerstvo obrany České republiky – PIC MO 2008), p. 124.

authors described some of the planning documents as mere studies, with significant deviations from any formalised structure; they are more reminiscent of essays on critical strategic topics related to the Czechoslovak Republic's defence. In this case, political and doctrinal considerations prevailed, and the military-technical parts of plans were absent. In other words, they did not contain their own operational algorithm for deploying and developing troops in the field, along with more detailed forecasts of different variants of combat activity.

Such texts included, for example, *Plan A* from May 1920. This was primarily a set of strategic considerations. According to *Plan A*, Rozet expected armed conflict between Germany and Czechoslovakia – aimed at restoring Berlin's military-political potential – only in the distant future, when German remilitarisation was expected. The main issue was considered to be the need for an effective alliance, as Prague could not seriously contemplate a successful solitary war against a much stronger neighbour. Contemplations anticipated the active defence of Bohemia and a fighting retreat in Moravia and Slovakia only under conditions of a decentralised war industry and military organisation. To slow the German advance, the plan proposed creating defensive zones and permanent fortifications in sensitive areas that would hold back enemy columns. These columns would be attacked during the defence by a mobilised Czechoslovak manoeuvre army transported by trains and cars.

The French Military Mission's operational plans, containing a complete military-technical section, very often had an unusually broad information context. Specifically, they emphasised the political background of the future conflict, along with the reasons for Czechoslovakia's participation in it. We can also read into them the reflections of French officers on the geopolitical value of Czechoslovak territory for an armed conflict. The first study of an invasion by Czechoslovak troops from the Cheb area towards Bayreuth, which the 3rd Department of the Mission dated as early as 25 May 25 1919, had clear political motivation.[9] This somewhat unrealistically planned operation was based on France's interest in intervening militarily against Germany if it refused to accept the peace accord negotiated at the Paris Peace Conference (18 to 21 January 1920). A Czechoslovak division of two brigades was to set out from the Cheb area to occupy the town of Bayreuth in northern Bavaria.

The plan for this operation had nothing to do with defending the territory but was motivated by France's wider interests from a pan-European context. From the point of view of general geopolitical considerations, both 'B' plans are highly telling. The first contained a set of measures in the event of a Soviet offensive against Poland and

[9]R. Břach, *Francouzská vojenská mise v Československu 1919–1939, sv. 4,* (Praha: Vojenský historický ústav 2009), doc. no. 1, pp. 205–207.

Romania and emerged in January 1921.[10] The plan saw Carpathian Ruthenia as a 'pendant' of Czechoslovakia, immediately threatened by the potential advance of Soviet troops. This territory was considered difficult to defend due to its great distance from the Prague centre and its poor communication links with other parts of the republic. The second version of the 'B' plan, from 1 March 1921, modelled a plan to defend Carpathian Ruthenia in the case that the Soviet army would attack the Polish Armed Forces in Galicia and the Romanian Army in Bukovina.[11] The French planners then arrived at a general assessment of the situation, i.e. that the defence of this part of the Czechoslovak Republic faced extraordinary difficulties due to its elongated shape, the territory's insufficient depth, and the isolation of individual valleys separated by mountains. The influence of the members of the French Military Mission on the first Czechoslovak war plans was absolutely fundamental. This is also true of their operational component in terms of the transformation of Paris's military-political interests in Central Europe. Formally, this was expressed by the fact that, from the end of May 1919 to the end of 1925, the mission in Czechoslovakia operated as a command mission.[12]

Defence planning and the threat of Nazism

During the Locarno conference in October 1925 the head of the 3rd Department of the General Staff, Colonel V. B. Luža, prepared Operational Plan II directed against German aggression and its variant II-A, allowing for a military conflict with Horthy's Hungary.[13] At the turn of 1925, Czechoslovakia was not yet directly militarily endangered; however, the gradual weakening of its position and importance on the European superpower chessboard had begun.[14] Plan II against Germany, approved in December 1925, was therefore primarily defensive in nature, but provided for offensive activities in selected essential directions. The planners divided Czechoslovak territory into the main northern battlefield, including the Czech lands, and the secondary (southern) battlefield, i.e., the territory of Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia. Three armies were planned to be deployed against Germany on the main

[10]R. Břach, *Francouzská vojenská mise v Československu 1919–1939, sv. 4,* (Praha: Vojenský historický ústav 2009), doc. no. 21, pp. 268–273.

[11]R. Břach, *Francouzská vojenská mise v Československu 1919–1939, sv. 4,* (Praha: Vojenský historický ústav 2009), doc. no. 22, pp. 274–279.

[12]R. Břach, 'Závěrečná zpráva generála Fauchera z 15. prosince 1938 o francouzské vojenské misi v Československu', *Historie a vojenství* 57 (3) (2008) p. 71.

[13]A. Maskalík, *Elita armády: československá vojenská generalita 1918–1992,* (Bánská Bystrice: HWSK 2012), p. 386; J. Malypetr and F. Soukup and J. Kapras, *Armáda a národ,* (Praha: Nakladatelství L. Mazáč 1938), p. 307.

[14]P. S. Wandycz, *The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances, 1926-1936: French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from Locarno to the Remilitarisation of the Rhineland,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1988), p. 29.

battlefield. At the same time, military security against a possible Hungarian attack was considered. The core of Czechoslovak forces was to be located in Central Bohemia, so they could intervene in endangered directions as soon as possible. The Operational Plan II-A then contained an offensive variant with the aim of penetrating as deeply as possible into Hungarian territory to meet the Yugoslav and Romanian armies. In summary, operational document II and its variant II-A formed the basis for war planning until 1933. They served as a starting point for assembly plans against Nazi Germany in the second half of the 1930s. At the turn of 1927, Plan III was created, again focused on Germany, with Hungary, Austria, and the Soviet Union still considered secondary opponents. Eight divisions, twelve brigades, and most artillery were expected to be deployed against Germany on the main battlefield. The goal of the defence against Germany was to maintain the integrity of the Czech part of the state by covering the borders. The main Czechoslovak forces were to concentrate at assembly points north of the Rakovník-Prague-Hradec Králové line.[15] Operational document III underwent further modification in November 1929, in the event of a conflict with Hungary under the designation III-A, the essence of the latter being a rapid offensive of about 50 km into Hungarian territory with the aim of occupying critical industrial areas and paralysing arms production.[16]

In 1933, the Military Office of the President of the Republic, the Ministry of National Defence, the General Staff and provincial military headquarters prepared a large number of documents for the Supreme National Defence Council (SNDC). These were seen as an initial directive for developing a comprehensive operational plan. In the contemporary understanding of the time, the war plan became a general document based on legislative measures the aim of which can be characterised as universal preparation of the Czechoslovak state for waging war.[17] The war plan included, in general, measures for building up the armed forces and the tasks of the state in its economic, diplomatic and political preparation for armed conflict. The war plan was not a comprehensive and final document, but rather a framework guide for the coordination of war efforts by SNDC. Its concretisation was to take place according to the development of the war situation.[18] The written form of operational documents III and III-A was very simple. On maps at a scale of 1:200,000, a line-up of border-guarding and covering units was plotted according to the proposals of individual provincial military commanders. One page of the text (at most) contained instructions

[15]K. Straka and T. Kykal, *Československá armáda v letech budování a stabilizace 1918–193,2* (Praha: Ministerstvo obrany České republiky 2013), p. 134.
[16]P. Pech and J. Anger, 'Plány použití buržoazní čs. armády v letech 1918–1938 (I)', *Historie a vojenství* 34 (4) (1985) pp. 52–53.
[17]J. Anger and P. Pech, 'Plány použití buržoazní čs. armády v letech 1918–1938 (II)', *Historie a vojenství* 34 (5) (1985) p. 77.
[18]Ibid., p. 78.

for deploying units in the assembly area. The war plans did not even specify the intention to use the air force or other types of weapons in operation.[19] The primary strategic idea in creating these studies became a variant of parallel military conflict between the Czechoslovak Republic and Germany, Hungary, and Austria in a pan-European war, in a joint action with France, the Little Entente and Poland. Only in the early 1930s was Nazi Germany seen in defensive planning terms to be the dominant and most dangerous enemy.[20]

Preparations for war and Munich 1938

Based on a comprehensive analysis, the Czechoslovak Armed Forces' General Staff concluded in early 1934 that Germany was the decisive security threat to the Czechoslovak Republic. This logically brought about a decrease in the intensity of defence preparations focused on Hungary and Austria. Operational planning began to express the principle of so-called strategic defence, based on the coalition ties of the Czechoslovak state. At the same time, the planners in the General Staff realistically assumed that maintaining the western half of the republic, and within it especially the 'Czech square' with the capital Prague in the middle, was not possible in the long run due to growing German military potential. Therefore, a strategic fighting retreat towards the east to delay was planned with a simultaneous transfer of combat activity to Austrian territory. However, this was based on the assumption of the entry of German troops into Austria.[21] In an internationally isolated encounter between Czechoslovakia and Germany lasting more than three weeks[22], the state was considered to be in danger of defeat due to the significantly greater military strength of Hitler's Wehrmacht and the strength of the Nazi war economy. Czechoslovak war preparations and plans therefore consistently envisaged a coalition form of conflict, with the absence of a French and allied commitment creating an insoluble military situation for Czechoslovakia.[23]

After 1935, the war plans under the General Staff's auspices took on the nature of the underlying military-political documents, which the SNDC were using as a tool for

[19]J. Fetka, *Československá válečná armáda 1918–1939: K vydání připravil Pavel Šrámek,* (Praha: Mladá fronta 2015), pp. 28–29.

[20]M. Koldinská and I. Šedivý, Ivan, *Válka a armáda v českých dějinách: sociohistorické črty,* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 2008), p. 47.

[21]K. Straka, *Československá armáda, pilíř obrany státu z let 1932–1939,* (Praha: Ministerstvo obrany České republiky - AVIS 2007), p. 34.

[22]V. Kural and F. Vašek, *Hitlerova odložená válka za zničení ČSR,* (Praha: Academia 2008), p. 157.

[23]The Military History Archive (hereinafter MHA) Prague, Compendium 'Military Intelligence', File MI 36/I, The Military Situation Within the Time Period of Munich (Culmination of Tension Between Czechoslovakia and Germany), Secret, p. 1.

political, economic, technical and psychological preparation for war. Contrary to deep-rooted ideas, however, from the military-technical point of view there was no single text, but several documents. The basic organisation of the units and their wartime support was determined by the 1st Department of the General Staff according to the financial, material and human resources of the army and the state.

The assembly plan had intelligence, operational and material-transport components kept separately in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Departments of the General Staff. They were updated according to changes in the mobilisation plan, whereas the operational component was considered the master one. The material-transport component fully respected the operational intention and determined the mobilisation and assembly movements of the Czechoslovak armed forces accordingly. It also dealt with logistical support at the time and place of the planned deployment of troops. Of course, the war plans and their form were also influenced by the progress in fortification work after 1935 and the reorganisation of the peacekeeping and warfighting army. The army was preparing itself both for a stubborn defence and strategic manoeuvre. Therefore, it functionally divided into those units providing border security and cover, and units of the manoeuvre army. The new wartime organisation further manifested itself by inserting a corps-level of command between the army and the division.[24] As a result, the operational capabilities of the Czechoslovak armed forces increased sharply, having partially broken free from the constraints of French defensive doctrine.

In the years 1936 to 1938, all this was reflected in specific passages of the new assembly plans, with serial numbers IV and V.[25] The fourth variant still provided for the possibility of Czechoslovakia being simultaneously attacked by Germany and Hungary. Only three infantry divisions were planned to fight Hungarian troops because the plan assumed help from the Little Entente allies, Romania, and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Plan V already showed a high degree of harmonisation with the applicable military legislation since it was based on calling up the three youngest years, the so-called first reserve and the necessary specialists. They were to join in a coordinated manner the border guard units in the main defensive position. [26] The assembly plan VI, valid from 15 February 15 1938, envisaged, despite calculating on the help of the allies, that the army would lead an isolated struggle against German superiority for two months according to the principle: '*The better the fortifications, the smaller the Czechoslovak army retreat and the smaller the threat of its encirclement and*

[24]Act No. 320/1936 Coll. of 18 December 1936 on the Change of the Administrative Scope of Military Units, as amended.
[25]M. John, *Září 1938. II. díl*, *Možnosti obrany Československa,* (Brno: Bonus A 1997), pp. 401–402.
[26]Provisions of § 22 of the Conscription Act of the Czechoslovak Republic No. 193/1920 Coll. of 19 March 1920, as amended.

destruction.'[27] The operational document moved the Czechoslovak defence to Lower Austria in anticipation of the Wehrmacht crossing the German-Austrian border. The assembly plan VI assigned the role of specific 'bait' to the 1st Army in Bohemia, which was to slow down the enemy's advance so that the Czechoslovak armed forces could mobilise, evacuate and carry out destructive work. In the case of unsustainable pressure from the German army, there was to be a retreat, a shortening of the front line, and taking up a defensive line in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands with support from the North Moravian heavy fortifications. If Moravia could not be held, it was planned to take up another defensive line in the Little Carpathians, Javorníky and Beskid Mountains.

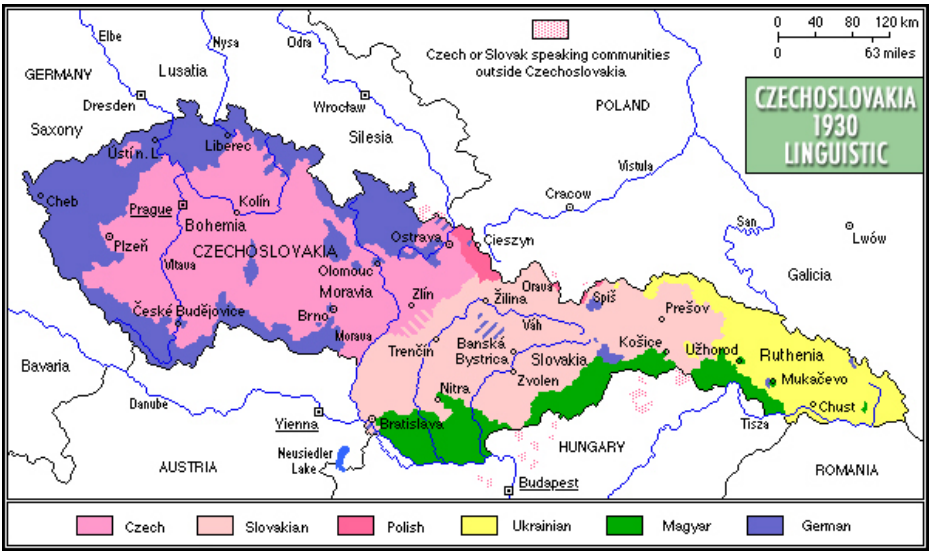

Figure 2: Simplified map of languages spoken across Czechoslovakia (Map by Mariusz Paździora, CC BY 3.0)

As a result of the Anschluss of Austria with Germany, a modified version of the assembly plan VI-A came into force from April 1938, and this changed the composition of border security units and strengthened the number of reserve units in South Moravia.[28] From 15 July 1938, the assembly plan VII, which controlled the Czechoslovak army's operational line-up during the Munich crisis, applied. The basic

[27]J. Anger and P. Pech, 'Plány použití buržoazní čs. armády v letech 1918–1938 (III)', *Historie a vojenství* 34 (6) (1985) pp. 74–75.

[28]P. Šrámek, 'Nástupový plán československé armády v září 1938', A. Binar et al., *Ozbrojené síly a československý stát,* (Brno: Univerzita obrany 2020), p. 74.

philosophy was that of its predecessors. Still, at the same time, planners projected into it an even distribution of forces, inserting units into the gaps in light fortification, strengthening the most endangered stretches of defence, and specifying the areas of concentration for the of the manoeuvre army.[29] Within this plan, the General Staff realistically counted on the German army's efforts to achieve victory within ten days by rapidly traversing the republic in the area around Brno and encircling the core Czechoslovak forces in Bohemia. This would prevent attempts to take up defence in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands or make a strategic retreat to Slovakia. Therefore, Assembly plan VII provided for a time-limited defence of the Czech square only for the purposes of rapid mobilisation, assembly movements, and orderly evacuation. The dramatic turn of events in summer and early autumn of 1938 brought its provisions to life early and put them to the test. Based on the fear that riots among the German population on the Czechoslovak border would become an excuse for a military attack, the Head of the General Staff asked General Ludvík Krejčí to declare 'Plan C' under § 22 of the Defence Act. This happened on the night of 13 September 1938. The president and the government only agreed to call up reservists-specialists (120,000 men). The number of Czechoslovak armed forces then reached more than 380,000 men.[30]

The decisive moment for describing the implementation of the assembly plan VII was the announcement of general mobilisation on 23 September 1938. On this day, the Czechoslovak Republic entered a state of defence emergency, and during the mobilisation process the Czechoslovak army went from a peace to a war footing. According to the mobilisation plans, the reserve bodies of the peacetime units built up units to war numbers, and in reality doubled existing units. Thus, the Czechoslovak warfighting army achieved the organisational structure that had come into force on 15 February 1938, based on the mobilisation plan effective until 15 February 1939.[31] However, the real situation in September did not correlate in detail with the plan.[32] In this regard, the decisive role fell upon the main headquarters under the code name 'PALACKÝ' (GS), which commanded the rapidly emerging warfighting armed forces. Initially, it was based in Prague-Klánovice, from where it moved to the Vyškov area on

[29]M. John, *Září 1938. II. díl, Možnosti obrany Československa,* (Brno: Bonus A 1997), p. 407.
[30]P. Šrámek, 'Československá armáda na podzim 1938', *Mnichov 1938: sedmdesát let poté: sborník textů,* (Praha: CEP 2008), pp. 108–109.
[31]R. Sander, 'Válečná československá armáda v září roku 1938', *Historie a vojenství* 44 (6) (1995) p. 44: MHA Bratislava, Special Collection of Military Historical Works, SC VI. A-833. MND to the ref. number 0053507 OMS 1955, Report on the Army of the Pre-Munich Republic, p. 51.
[32]J. Fiedler, V. Francev and E. Stehlík, 'Mobilizovaná československá armáda – iluze a realita', *Historie a vojenství* 45 (2) (1996) p. 167.

26 September.[33] The day before, while still in Klánovice, the General Staff, directed by General Ludvík Krejčí, issued two key operational documents in the form of an order and an instruction, in which they specified the implementation of the general assembly plan.

Based on a report written by the Head of the 2nd Department of the General Staff (Intelligence), the Commander-in-Chief ordered the implementation of variant XIII of assembly plan VII with partial changes.[34] The order's addressees were the commanders of the 1st Army (Bohemia), 2nd Army (northern Moravia), 3rd Army (Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia) and the 4th Army (southern Moravia). These changes aimed at strengthening the defence of Liberec and southern Bohemia. An acute danger of a German break into the main defensive position was expected in these directions. However, according to the content of same intelligence report, General Krejčí did not consider it necessary to change the instructions for the defence of the northern and southern sections of the border as a whole. The relevant senior commanders received the document's versions. The order determining variant XIII put an end to those items of the assembly plan that were inconsistent with it, which only confirms the view of the plan's framework character and generality. In general, variant XIII was based on the scenario of the March Anschluss of Austria and assumed a German effort to occupy the Czech borderland. It was grounded in transferring some divisions from the Moravian central reserve to endangered directions in Bohemia[35]. On the same day, 25 September 1938, at 10:00 pm, the Commander-in-Chief issued a personal and secret instruction for the operating armies' commanders, which set out further details of the operational situation.[36] The 1st Army was given the combat task of guarding the Aš salient, the Ohře River valley and the Klatovy fortifications against enemy actions in case they penetrated the main defensive position in the Šumava Mountains. The 2nd Army commander had to secure his western flank from a possible attack led from the Kladsko salient. The task of the 4th Army was quite obvious due to the incomplete fortifications on the southern Moravian border. Its commander was given the task of intensifying fortification works on the defensive positions I and II of border-guarding units and received an order to use the available civilian population to complete the work. The 3rd Army devoted its main effort to strengthening the Bratislava bridgehead. In his orders the Commander-in-Chief instructed all army commanders to move their

[33]P. Minařík and P. Šrámek, 'Několik poznámek k mobilizované československé armádě v září 1938', *Historie a vojenství* 45 (3) (1996) p. 140.
[34]P. Minařík and P. Šrámek, 'Dokumenty československé armády z podzimu 1938: rozkazy hlavního velitelství od 24. do 28. září', *Historie a vojenství* 45 (5) (1996) p. 87.
[35]P. Šrámek, *Ve stínu Mnichova: z historie československé armády 1932–1939,* (Praha: Mladá fronta 2008), p. 82.
[36]L. Krejčí, *Já se generálem nenarodil: z písemností hlavního velitele čs. armády nejen o roce 1938,* (Praha: Codyprint 2018), pp. 184–185.

troops in the event of pressure from the attacker so as to to support the defence of the endangered area, even at the expense of other sections of the front line.

Thanks to the mobilisation, approximately 1,127,000 soldiers joined the Czechoslovak army, and its total number rose to approximately 1,500,000 men. They served in 42 divisions, 55 combat squadrons, and the Danube river flotilla. This powerful force had 2,500 artillery pieces, 1,000 anti-tank guns, 348 tanks, 900 mortars, 568 combat aircraft and 36,000 motor vehicles, 190,000 horses and 32,000 wagons.[37] It is not the purpose of the present study to evaluate all the international-political or moral aspects of the events surrounding the Munich Agreement of 30 September 1938. The occupation of the Czechoslovak borderland that took place in the Czech lands from 1 to 10 October 1938, and in Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia in November of the same year, resulted in a humiliating demobilisation of the Czechoslovak armed forces. This was accompanied by numerous restrictions and redeployments, with only about 139,500 men returning to the peacetime organisation from the mobilised army.[38] Even in this context, it is necessary to appreciate Czechoslovakian operators and planners' foresight. In the summer of 1938, they supplemented assembly plan VII with variant VIII, which assumed the loss of Czechoslovak border areas without disrupting its defence system. However, events were already irresistibly heading towards the March occupation of the next year, and thus the demise of Czechoslovakia as a sovereign state. This was the swan song for the assembly plans of the Czechoslovak army of the 1930s not only in a symbolic, but also in a physical sense. During tense moments on 14 and 15 March 1939, the plans were destroyed at the behest of the Head of the General Staff, along with other classified intelligence and operational documentation.[39] However, the fight for the renewal of the Czechoslovak Republic was just beginning.

Defence plans and Czechoslovak London exile

The centre of the foreign Czechoslovak resistance was located in London between 1940 and 1945 as a part of a temporary state establishment under the leadership of Dr Edvard Beneš. Its goal at both a political and military level was clear: to restore the Czechoslovak Republic within its pre-Munich borders. The military structures of the resistance were gathered within the framework of the Ministry of National Defence. Also concentrated here were theoretical considerations of war. From the Czechoslovakian military experts' perspective came an entirely new impetus to start thinking about irregular forms of combat, specifically guerrilla or petty warfare. This form of combat activity was expected from domestic resistance organisations in the

[37]J. Anger, *Mnichov 1938* (Praha: Nakladatelství Svoboda 1988), pp. 143–144.
[38]R. Sander, 'Válečná československá armáda v září 1938 (dokončení)', *Historie a vojenství* 45 (1) (1996) p. 59.
[39]V. Sluka, 'Československá armáda v datech III (1935 – 1939)', *Historie a vojenství* 45 (1) (1996) pp. 120–121.

protectorate, which were to disrupt the German war efforts through intelligence activities, sabotage, diversionary actions, and propaganda. And at an opportune moment, they were to unleash a nationwide armed uprising. The military doctrine and strategic thinking of pre-war Czechoslovakia did not anticipate these new forms of armed struggle.

The concept of irregular war was unfamiliar within established Czechoslovak military doctrine, and no pre-war defence plans provided for the possibility of launching this form of warfare.[40] The Czechoslovak armed forces did not carry out preparations for guerrilla warfare, or diversion, and sabotage in the enemy's rear. It seems odd that they had no technical, material or training basis for such activities, because, in the 1920s, Czechoslovak military experts had considered this form of warfare in response to the expected strategies of Germany and the Sudeten German minority in the Czechoslovak borderland.[41] Such strategies could not have come as a surprise: it was for these cases that the State Defence Guard was established.[42]

However, of all the Second World War participants, the United Kingdom found itself at the forefront in developing the concept of irregular warfare. In 1940, the British created the Special Operations Executive (SOE) as an effective tool for implementing this form of warfare.[43] The fact that the SOE was subordinate to the Ministry of Economic Warfare spoke volumes about the concepts that lay behind SOE's inception. The Minister of Economic Warfare, Hugh Dalton, said that this new way of waging war would be better executed under civilian management than under a purely military one. [44]

From the foreign based Czechoslovak resistance, the British expected above all the destabilisation of German military, political and economic power in Central Europe. The intelligence group under General František Moravec[45] (1895–1966) at the London based Ministry of National Defence (MND) complied with these efforts and arranged aid for the domestic resistance to be delivered by air. The culmination of their

[40]J. Šolc, *Podpalte Československo! kapitoly z historie československého zahraničního a domácího odboje (1939–1945),* (Praha: Naše vojsko 2005), p. 24.
[41]F. Vejmelka, 'Zajištění hranic a kryt. (Studie.)', *Vojenské rozhledy* 6 (6) (1925) p. 267.
[42]Act No. 270/1936 Coll. Of 23 October 1936 on the State Defence Guard, as amended.
[43]J. Šolc, *Přijdeme za svítání: diverze v neregulérní válce československého odboje v letech 1939–1945,* (Praha: Naše vojsko 2005), p. 11.
[44]M. Tillotson, *SOE and The Resistance: As told in The Times Obituaries,* (London: Bloomsbury 2011), p. 1.
[45]MHA Prague, Compendium Military Personal Files, Military Personal File of František Moravec, born 1895, the Counterfoil No. 9. D.

activities was the well-known May 1942 attempt on the life of Reinhard Heydrich, the Deputy Reich Protector and a high-ranking Nazi official. With regards to conceptual thinking, the British initiatives were mainly taken up by a study group formed at the 1st Section of the II Department of the London MND between June 1941 and January 1943. At that time, they were incorporated into the Staff for the Armed Forces Build-up (SAFB). It was here that planning of an uprising on Czechoslovak territory and providing assistance to the domestic resistance was concentrated. František Moravec then assessed the domestic conditions for carrying out an anti-German uprising as follows. He characterised Bohemia and Moravia's possibilities as extremely unfavourable, mainly because they lay in the middle of Europe locked between the hostile areas of Germany and Hungary. In 1943, when he formulated his views, the Czech-Moravian area was very far from the front lines, and its accessibility by air was complicated.[46] Besides, he characterised the protectorate's borders as impenetrable. Transporting people, equipment, and material to this area by air and land was difficult. Also, the importance which the occupiers attached to the Czech lands made it hard to start an armed uprising. This territory was considered a weapons manufacturing base for the Third Reich and was therefore of paramount importance to their waging war, and this resulted in the presence of a locally very rigid security regime.

These general conditions for the domestic space persisted for almost the entire war. They changed only at the very end of the Second World War. The study group at the London MND drew upon them as early as the beginning of August 1941, when they formulated their initial plans for an uprising's organisational structure.[47] The basic principle was formulated quite clearly: an armed uprising was to rely on the domestic population and their determination to break the occupying regime. The foreign resistance saw its role as providing organisational guidelines and military assistance (especially aircraft and paratroopers) with the necessary weapons and military equipment. During the first days, commanding military and civilian officials were to be transported to the home country. The specific time for the start of the action was agreed, in the planners' minds, to coincide with the final phase of the war, the position and movement of front lines, and possible anti-German uprisings in the surrounding countries. However, each variant assumed that the then foreign based political and military headquarters should be moved from London to as close as possible to the fighting forces in domestic territory. In terms of command structures, the study group assigned leadership to former officers and soldiers of the Czechoslovak army.

[46]F. Moravec, 'Partyzánská válka', *Vojenské rozhledy* 3 (2) (1943) p. 11.

[47]MHA Prague, Fund of Central Public Security Administration, sign. MND – Study Group, the ref. number 20014-Secret Study Group. The Preparation of a Revolutionary Organisation in Czechoslovakia. London, 5 August 1941.

In January 1942, the London based MND study group drew up a comprehensive planning document which discussed preparations for the domestic uprising, including organisational matters.[48] This was no longer just a plan of irregular war actions, but an important proposal of a mobilising nature based on the Czechoslovak Republic's military legislation. The proposal divided the planned action into three phases. In the first phase, armed actions were to break out throughout pre-Munich Czechoslovakia on the initiative of Czechs, Slovaks and Carpathian Ruthenians. The second phase was mobilisation, and the resulting military units were to occupy the entire territory of the republic, including areas inhabited by Germans and Hungarians. The occupation of some regions beyond the Czechoslovak Republic's original borders was also planned, if this step could improve the strategic conditions for the state's defence. The third phase of the uprising was similar to the second phase, because additional troops were to be mobilised with the aim of creating a Czechoslovak armed forces' peacekeeping organisation. The eventual occupation of parts of Germany and Hungary was also planned. There were no clear dividing lines between the periods, rather individual phases could permeate one another or take place simultaneously.

In their deliberations, the London planners relied on the organisational structure of the German Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia as the central part of the Czechoslovak Republic, and specified for it plans for the uprising, the subsequent occupation and securing of state borders, and the formation of a provisional army. The organisation and command were to be based on political districts with their relevant municipalities, with several political districts forming a group with common tactical tasks. The higher unit was the area in which several groups were to combine based on a communication link. The organising of the uprising was given a solid framework by the already mentioned occupation and securing of the Czechoslovak state borders. Great emphasis was placed on the psychological moment of surprise when foreign territories that were strategically advantageous for the Czechoslovak Republic were to be occupied, and at a time when the Allies had not yet made a final decision on the post-war peace settlement. The state border's closure was planned so that German occupiers could not export state, public or private property, or documents from protectorate offices. This step also aimed at preventing war criminals from fleeing abroad.

Experts in the study group relied on Czechoslovak defence legislation in organising the uprising. They, therefore, proceeded from Beneš's idea of state and legal continuity with the pre-Munich Czechoslovakia. These notions presupposed that the Munich Pact and the March 1939 occupation had no basis in international law. Under this concept,

[48]MHA Prague, Fund of Central Public Security Administration, sign. Study Group MND-London. The Proposal of Preparatory Work for the Domestic Revolution and Organisation of Military Forces. January 1942. Number of Sheets: Dossier.

Czechoslovakia continued de jure, including legal regulations that regulated its defence issues. In this respect, the annexes to the plan as of January 1942 can be considered particularly instructive. The legal structure of the mobilisation and build-up of the army under the conditions of the uprising took the following outlines. By decree of the President of the Republic, a partial mobilisation of members of the Czechoslovak armed forces was to be announced under the Defence Act of 1920.[49] The plan subsequently assumed that the Czechoslovak government, by its decree, would put the entire state on a defence emergency footing under the State Defence Act of 1936.[50] The Minister of National Defence would then execute the presidential mobilisation decree using a regulation and specify the conditions for partial mobilisation. Failure to obey the call-up notice was punishable within the meaning of the relevant provisions of the Defence Act.[51] Based on the above facts, we can appreciate the invention of the London study group members, who included in the plan of uprising the possibility of using all armed units in the Protectorate to restore state power, public order, and security, and as soon as possible.

Broadly speaking, these plans were well thought through and doctrinally beneficial. However, whether or not the uprising would take place and in what form depended on how the war would take shape, but conditions did not stabilise in a form corresponding to that assumed at the beginning of 1942. To understand the thinking of the London MND, draft plans for the uprising of autumn 1944 have survived, and they take into account the experience of the Warsaw uprising and the Slovak National Uprising (SNU) [52]. Two uprisings against the German occupiers had occurred in August of the same year. Czechoslovak soldiers concluded that if armed revolt was to make any sense at all, it had to be carried out in the rear of German-occupied territory and make a significant contribution to the collapse of the eastern front. At the end of 1944 it was the overall situation on the eastern front and the intentions of the Soviet High Command that would decide when to start the insurgency.

The irregular war and nationwide uprising eventually took place on Czechoslovak territory in a significantly different way to that planned by the London study group specialists. Perhaps most telling is the activity of the Office of the Government

[49]Provisions of § 3 of Act No. 193/1920 Coll. of 19 March 1920 (Defence Act of the Czechoslovak Republic), as amended.
[50]Provisions of § 57 of Act No. 131/1936 Coll. of 13 May 1936 on the Defence of the State, as amended.
[51]Provisions of § 50 of Act No. 193/1920 Coll. of 19 March 1920 (Defence Act of the Czechoslovak Republic), as amended.
[52]MHA Prague, Compendium 'Military Intelligence', Archive Box No. 1, document No. 31 Organisation of the Uprising in Bohemia and Moravia – The Preparation for Battle Operations + the Map, the ref. number 156-taj.5.1944.

Delegate for the Liberated Territories of Dr František Němec (1944–1945).[53] As a representative of the London exiles and the renewed Czechoslovak state administration, he quarrelled with both the insurgent Slovak National Council and the Soviets. They ignored him and subsequently expelled him from the territory of liberated Carpathian Ruthenia. The Liberated Territories Command, headed by General Antonín Hasal, working within the Office, in the end fulfilled almost nothing that the London planners had devised. The mobilisation of Czechoslovak citizens announced in Carpathian Ruthenia failed completely thanks to Soviet propaganda.[54] However, all these obstacles in no way diminish the planning efforts of the exiled MND, which, under British influence, broadened the horizons of Czechoslovak operational considerations.

The Cold War and the Sovietisation of Post-War Plans

Two fundamental facts influenced Czechoslovak war planning after the Second World War. Firstly, the beginning of the nuclear era, and secondly, geopolitical fluctuation between East and West in the years 1945 to 1948, that culminated in events in Prague in February 1948 and the incorporation of Czechoslovakia within the USSR's sphere of influence.[55]

The Soviet leader, Stalin, purposefully created a system of states allied to the USSR to act as a buffer zone with the western states.[56] They were fearful of the large Soviet army, given the then small size of the armies of the European states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.[57] However, Stalin remained afraid of an open confrontation with the United States and its European allies. On the other hand, goaded by his own suspicions he modernised the already massive ground forces of the

[53]K. Schelle, *Československé dějiny státu a práva v dokumentech VI. díl: období nesvobody (1939–1945),* (Brno: Masarykova univerzita 1993), p. 248.

[54]F. Hanzlík, 'Působení vládní delegace a Velitelství osvobozeného území na Zakarpatské Ukrajině – představy a realita', *Československá armáda 1939–1945 (plány a skutečnost): příspěvky z mezinárodní konference 22–23 října 2002,* (Praha: Ministerstvo obrany České republiky - AVIS 2003), p. 208.

[55]F. Sauer, *Atomic Anxiety: Deterrence, Taboo and the Non-Use of U. S. Nuclear Weapons*, (Basingstoke: Pallgrave Macmillan 2016), p.1; K. McDermott, *Communist Czechoslovakia, 1945–1989: A Political and Social History,* (Basingstoke: Pallgrave Macmillan 2015), p. 21.

[56]B. Kendallová, *Studená válka: nový pohled na konflikt mezi Západem a Východem,* (Praha: Euromedia Group 2018), p. 35.

[57]J. Hoffenaar, 'Problémy s hlavní obrannou linií v hlavním sektoru NATO počátkem 50. let', *Historie a vojenství* 52 (3–4) (2003) p. 655.

Eastern Bloc.[58] In August 1949 the USSR ended Washington's nuclear monopoly. Soviet war planning after 1945 was based on these circumstances, along with experience gained from Second World War operations. For Czechoslovak operational experts, such planning was the exemplar of how to plan and carry out a large-scale offensive campaign.[59] Within Cold War operational planning, there was only one significant modification, i.e. the idea of creating breakthroughs using nuclear weapons and the massive use of air power.[60] Soviet strategists had been adapting their war plans to incorporate the use of nuclear weapons since the mid-1950s. The Soviet Field Regulations of 1955 assumed their use both against strategic targets in the deep hinterland of the European theatre of war and at the tactical level on the battlefield.

However, the war plans authored by the Operational Department, later the Operational Administration of the Czechoslovakian General Staff, did not consider nuclear attack until 1957. Between 1951 and 1953, operational guidelines and plans with the code designations OREL, PĚST, SOKOL and HVĚZDA were created. The latter two documents, drawn up before the Warsaw Pact had been established, were presented to the Soviet General Staff in February 1952, which actively intervened in their final form before even the Czechoslovak Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces (and President of the Czechoslovak Republic) Klement Gottwald approved them in September 1952.[61] It was, therefore, impossible to talk about any independent creative work by Czechoslovak planners. These operational documents contained no, or only brief, military-political justification of their origin, while the military-technical and organisational component was predominant. This was especially true of the OREL war plan from the beginning of February 1951, which stated that in the event of a potential attack by Western armies against the USSR, Czechoslovak territory would not represent a strategic direction for them. OREL therefore primarily dealt with defensive plans and positions to take up when covering the country against attack. In such an attack, a fierce defence was envisaged by units within the defensive zone, so that the mobilisation and concentration of the Czechoslovak army could take place. Should the enemy break through, counter-strikes would restore the integrity of the defence.[62] The absence of a Czechoslovak capability to deploy nuclear weapons in this period is understandable, as Stalin underestimated the role of nuclear weapons during this period, because they were not yet operationally deployable.

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[58]J. Fučík, *Stín jaderné války nad Evropou: ke strategii vojenských bloků, operačním plánům a úloze Československé lidové armády na středoevropském válčišti v letech 1945–1968,* (Praha: Mladá fronta 2010), p. 122.
[59]J. Ťokan, 'Plánování útočné operace armády', *Vojenská mysl* 2 (2) (1952) p. 14.
[60]K. Štěpánek and P. Minařík, *Československá lidová armáda na Rýnu* (Praha: Naše vojsko 2007), p. 39.
[61]Ibid., pp. 100–101.
[62]Ibid., pp. 100–101.

At the turn of 1957, the war plan ZÁSTAVA brought a new approach in a defensive (Z 1) and offensive (Z 2) variant, which had to be pre-negotiated in Moscow. These variants also took into account the abolition of command levels of the rifle corps. ZÁSTAVA's operational intent already counted upon the deployment of nuclear weapons, both in the defence variant, in the case of an offensive by NATO states, and conversely, also during a Soviet attack on NATO. However, even the offensive variant Z 2 cannot be considered as a transition to offensive planning. According to the Soviet General Staff's explicit recommendation, it was an operational document for concentrating troops and regrouping them to a starting position for a strike in the direction of Pilsen and Nuremberg; all this while using Soviet nuclear weapons. The subsequent course of the offensive campaign was not specified at that time.[63] When activating the ZÁSTAVA plan, the Czechoslovak People's Army was to be commanded by the Commander-in-Chief of the United Armed Forces: a body of the Soviet-controlled Warsaw Pact, despite the fact that the military structures of the Pact were only just being formed.[64] The turn of the 1950s brought new momentum to the war plans. The operational preparations of the Eastern Bloc clearly shifted to an offensive strategy. At the same time, from the state's point of view, creating an independent strategic-operational unit, the so-called Czechoslovak Front (CF), played a decisive role. Only the resources of the Czechoslovak People's Army's (CPA) were used for its build-up, and therefore it had the status of a first-tier national union within the Warsaw Pact troops. It was a massive grouping, formed, among other divisions, by the 1st, 4th Divisions and the special 10th Air Force, which could deploy up to 1,920 tanks. However, the CPA's missile arm was not established until 1962, and until then the Czechoslovak Front did not include any means for a nuclear attack on the enemy. [65] If Czechoslovak war plans provided for the use of nuclear weapons at that time, the atomic warheads would be exclusively Soviet delivered and controlled. Therefore, only the Soviet command could decide on nuclear deployment.

This was expressed in the Plan of Action of the Czechoslovak People's Army during Wartime created in 1964 in a single copy (in Russian) during a meeting of senior officials of the Czechoslovak army at the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR in Moscow. [66] For the initial period of a war, it was planned to move from an

[63]Ibid., p. 142.

[64]M. Bílý, 'Je načase opustit alianci s Moskvou? Organizace Varšavské smlouvy v kontextu krize východního bloku v roce 1956', *Paměť a dějiny* 10 (1) (2016), p. 25.

[65]V. Mohyla and V. Šufajzl et al., *Taktické jaderné prostředky ČSLA* (Praha: Československý spisovatel 2012), p. 226.

[66]S. Polnar and B. Prokop, "'Memorandum 68" v kontextu československého strategického myšlení 60. let', *Sborník prací pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity, řada společenských věd* 33 (2) (2019), p. 133.

initial defence of the state's border to an offensive campaign. The emphasis on the offensive campaign was also reflected in the growing importance of highly mobile tank corps and divisions. The average operating pace of advance was estimated at 90 to 110 kilometres per day. According to these calculations, the army's planned main force was a thousand tanks in two divisions.[67] Military theorists did not appreciate the fact that a completely new situation would arise on the battlefield in the case of a bilateral nuclear strike. According to the American strategic concept of 'Shield and Sword', the entire Eastern Bloc had to expect strikes by B-52 bombers carrying nuclear warheads of up to several tens of megatons.[68] In this context, it is clear that the plan of 1964 prepared an early strike against the Czechoslovak Front's missile forces, and its frontal and long-range aviation forces. The offensive campaign's success was based on the use of 131 Soviet nuclear missiles and atomic bombs. The first nuclear strike was to take place in conjunction with an airborne forces operation that would cross the German rivers Neckar and Rhine. The offensive sequence of the CF operational line-up was intended for an offensive in the direction of Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Strasbourg, Epinal, Dijon and finally, Lyon. According to Soviet planners, Lyon was to be achieved on the ninth day after the campaign had started.[69]

According to the 1964 plan, the Soviet plan was to reach and occupy the Atlantic coast as quickly as possible, especially the entire depth of French territory.[70] This was to prevent the seaborne influx of American reinforcements to NATO. Concerning the CF's tasks the plan was based on unrealistic assumptions. The CF's nuclear strikes were intended to destroy the enemy's operational line-up from a depth of 100 to 150 km beyond the Czechoslovak border. In this situation, the CF's armed forces would be faced by undamaged and well-armed conventional NATO forces. Behind them, the attacking Czechoslovak troops would encounter a devastated 'no man's land'. In these conditions it would be impossible to maintain an operational pace of advance of around 100 km per day. The plan only copied the visions of the Soviet General Staff, expressing as it did the subordination of the Czechoslovak command.[71] Its main weakness was an

[67]J. Nečas, 'K některým problémům plánování útočné operace', *Vojenská mysl* 11 (4) (1961), p. 93.
[68]J. Tůma and J. Pokštefl, *Svět a jaderné zbraně: štěpné – vodíkové – neutronové* (Praha: Nakladatelství politické literatury 1962), p. 50.
[69]P. Luňák, 'Za devět dnů jsme v Lyonu: plán použití Československé lidové armády v případě války z roku 1964', *Soudobé dějiny* 7 (3) (2000), p. 414.
[70]MHA Prague, Fund Collection of Czechoslovak Military Regulations after 1945 (Part 1), carton 218, inv. no. 3380, volume 1965, OPER-52-6, Military-Geographical Handbook of the Western Battlefield, Part VI. (France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg), pp. 84-86.
[71]M. Zachariáš, *Příběh vojáka: pohled na čtyřicetiletou službu vojáka z povolání, od poručíka po generálporučíka, od 50. let až po listopadovou revoluci v roce 1989 a krátce po ní* (Praha:

isolated understanding of the course of possible campaigns. The situation that would have arisen within the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic following a NATO nuclear strike was not considered at all.

Another CPA operational plan was created in December 1977, and this can be considered a relative shift compared to the war plan of 1964. In the event of a NATO attack the plan envisaged it using conventional weapons and nuclear weapons from the very beginning. The primary CF task was to cover the borders of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic adjacent to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and Austria. However, after repelling the attack, the Czechoslovak Front was to move on to an offensive campaign in the direction of Pilsen, Ulm, Freiburg, and with part of the forces towards Munich. The front's next target was nothing less than reaching the French and Swiss borders on the eighth or ninth day of operational activity. It aimed therefore at the complete destruction of NATO troops in the southern part of the FRG and overall control of Western Europe. The poor Soviet understanding of the impact of nuclear weapons manifested itself in planning for a nuclear variant of the attack, where the Czechoslovak Front was expected to be allocated 258 atomic warheads (162 for the missile forces and 96 for the air forces).[72] It was a plan based on the Soviet concept of the offensive strategic operation of the front.[73] The Czechoslovak war plan of October 1986 did not represent any fundamental shift in this respect. The planning of the Czechoslovak Front's combat activities again provided for both a nuclear variant and a purely conventional variant. After repelling hostile aggression, the plan's internal structure would move over to an offensive campaign, this time, however, with more 'realistic' operational deadlines of fifteen to sixteen days to reach eastern borders of France and Switzerland's Basel. Still, in its atomic variant, the plan again represented 'nuclear madness', with the incredible number of 344 nuclear warheads planned for the Czechoslovak Front's offensive campaign.[74]

The second half of the 1980s brought more significant shifts. In May 1987, following the changes initiated by Gorbachev's Soviet leadership, the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee adopted for the first time the official military doctrine of the Pact, which can simply be described as 'perestroika' or restructuring in the military

Dokořán 2012), p. 202; J. Hoffenaar and Ch. Findlay, (eds.), *Military Planning for European Theatre Conflict during the Cold War: an Oral History Roundtable Stockholm, 24–25 April 2006,* (Zurich: Centre for Security Studies 2007), p. 94.

[72]P. Luňák, (ed.), *Plánování nemyslitelného: československé válečné plány 1950–1990,* (Praha: Dokořán 2019), pp. 261–262.

[73]FM 100-2-1, Headquarters – Department of the Army. *The Soviet Army: Operations and Tactics*. Chapter 4: Front Offensive (4-1). 16 July 1984.

[74]P. Luňák, (ed.), *Plánování nemyslitelného: československé válečné plány 1950–1990* (Praha: Dokořán 2019), p. 297.

field. It was a defensively minded document to which the CPA command had to respond once it had been approved by the Czechoslovak political leadership. There were also efforts to develop a domestic military doctrine; however, realistic changes were ultimately reflected in the greater emphasis of Czechoslovak military science (and therefore operational art) on elaborating defence issues and, in that context, carrying out counterattacks and counterassaults.[75] Consequently, it is evident that the practical implications of the new doctrine on operational planning, although primarily defensive in nature, did not exclude offence as a primary combat activity.[76] This corresponded to the wording of the last Czechoslovak war plan, as signed by the President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic Gustav Husák at the beginning of July 1989, which took full account of the 'recommendations' of the Soviet General Staff from the previous year. The defensive campaign was again prepared in both conventional and nuclear variants. Should the war enter the nuclear stage, the Czechoslovak Front was to destroy NATO troops with tactical nuclear weapons. Simultaneously, Soviet strategic forces would attack targets throughout the depths of West German territory. It was planned that the Czechoslovak Front would be allocated 546 nuclear warheads and would move into the FRG in a subsequent counterattack.[77]

Collapse of the bipolar world and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia

The final period of Czechoslovak war planning began in January, and in his own distinctive way by the first post-November 1990 president, Václav Havel. He confirmed the operational plan from the previous year with his signature, after requesting the removal of the paragraphs referring to a possible counterattack and emphasising that this would only apply in situations where NATO attacked the Warsaw Pact. When the Czechoslovak state entered its last period of existence between 1990 and 1992, the military-political situation in Europe was dominated by entirely different trends to those of the Cold War. A security vacuum emerged in Central Europe, and a treaty to limit conventional weapons in Europe was implemented.[78] The new strategic reality expanded the treaty's essential functions to include conflict prevention, crisis management, communication with former enemies,

[75]M. Bílý, '"Každý metr země socialistických států musí být urputně bráněn": proměna vojenské doktríny Varšavské smlouvy ve druhé polovině 80. let', *Historie a vojenství* 68 (2) (2019), pp. 30–31.

[76]M. Stráňava and S. Beránek, 'Organizace, plánování a řízení komplexního palebného ničení nepřítele v obranné operaci', *Vojenská mysl* 37 (7) (1987) p. 25.

[77]P. Luňák, (ed.), *Plánování nemyslitelného: československé válečné plány 1950–1990* (Praha: Dokořán 2019), p. 341.

[78]J. Kútik and M. Janhuba, *Vojenskostrategické koncepce zahraničních armád: skripta* (Brno: Vojenská akademie 1991), p. 25.

and strengthened tendencies towards collective defence and dialogue.[79] In this context it was logical that the military doctrine of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, approved in a resolution of the Federal Assembly dated 20 March 1991, was based on: a purely defensive principle; and did not define a specific enemy (azimuth defence principle): and banned the production, possession and deployment of all nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction (WMD).[80] Preparation for the previously ubiquitous threat of nuclear attack was no longer relevant.[81]

The Operational Plan for the defence of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, signed by President Havel on 28 January 1992, was based on these principles.[82,] The military doctrine for the Czechoslovak Army's ground forces would be defensive campaigns, most likely conducted by the army corps, and without any use of WMD.[83] In the first half of the 1990s, the Army Corps was to consist of five brigades with 24,600 personnel (including corps units and corps rear), 240 tanks, 350 armoured personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles, and 12 combat helicopters.[84] There were also proposals for abolishing the divisional level and for transition to the structure, battalion – brigade – army corps.[85] The brigade was now considered the optimal and basic operational-tactical unit for ground forces.[86] This would allow greater flexibility and speed of command in the conditions of a defensive campaign. Analysis of the initial period of a war, especially how it would start and how the aggressor's attack would be repelled, continued to be of considerable importance for the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic's defence. The probability of a sudden attack against the state territory decreased significantly, since any crisis situation would

[79]S. A. Johnston, *How NATO adapts: strategy and organisation in the Atlantic Alliance since 1950,* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 2017), p. 118.
[80]Resolution No. 122 of the Federal Assembly, https://mocr.army.cz/images/Bilakniha/CSD/1991%20Vojenska%20doktrina%20CSFR.pdf Accessed 19 Oct 2022.
[81]M. Štangl, 'Místo a úloha zbraní hromadného ničení včera a dnes', *Vojenské rozhledy* 33 (9) (1992), p. 31.
[82]The alteration of the title of the Czechoslovak People´s Army (CPA) to the Czechoslovak Army was realised on 14 March 1990, on the basis of Act No. 74/1990 Coll; P. Tomek, *Československá armáda v čase Sametové revoluce: proměny ozbrojených sil na přelomu osmdesátých a devadesátých let* (Cheb: Svět křídel 2019), p. 168.
[83] R. Janderka, 'Vojenská doktrína ČSFR a principy operačního umění', *Vojenské rozhledy* 33 (3) (1992) p. 46.
[84]M. Sládeček and K. Štěpánek, *Vojenská strategie* (Praha: Ministerstvo obrany ČR 1993), p. 103.
[85]M. Štembera, 'Problémy profesionalizace ČSA', *Vojenská mysl* 41 (3) (1991) p. 19.
[86]L. Klíma, 'Profesionalizace a struktura ozbrojených sil', *Vojenská mysl* 41 (3) (1991) p. 13.

doubtless be preceded by escalating political tensions. Use of the armed forces had to be planned so that they would be able to operate in any part of the Czechoslovak federation and be able to defend it in all possible directions.

Conclusion

Is it possible to pinpoint unifying points in the long period of existence of the Czechoslovak state that were reflected in its war plans as a whole? It is, even if there are not many such points.

Firstly, the shape of the state territory and its geopolitical position at Central Europe's crossroads meant operational planning took these facts into account, even though it was significantly influenced by the prevailing international-political climate in which the republic sought to define its own concept of defence.

Secondly, alliances have always exerted a powerful effect on the format of the plans for military operations. After 1918 this influence came from France, and during the war years from Britain, and after 1948 the Soviet Union. Plans to wage war at those times were not primarily aimed at promoting the interest of the state, but instead largely served the ambitions of other players on the European chessboard.

Thirdly, another turning point was the emergence of nuclear weapons and their planned implementation in the operational planning of socialist Czechoslovakia from the mid-1950s. The ideas prevailing at the time, of conflict with the North Atlantic Alliance, were far closer to apocalyptic visions than the idea of armed conflict as an active tool for achieving political goals. The transformation of the European continent into a glowing atomic cauldron could only have resulted in defeat for many and victory for none.

Fourthly, and more importantly, an emphasis on defensive planning before 1938 which culminated in the mobilisation of a large army in September 1938, and a reversion to a defensive posture after 1990.