

CZECH-AMERICAN RELATIONS

SHARED HISTORY, COMPATIBILITY OF ATTITUDES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRACY

Czech-American relations are reviewed from the era of early immigration of people from the Czech lands to America and the creation of Czechoslovakia with support from the U.S.A. and Czech Americans. Americans of Czech descent are noted, as well as the main monuments standing in the U.S.A. to commemorate important Czech personalities.

The core of the publication is devoted to the dynamics of mutual relations between the U.S.A. and the Czech Republic from the democratic Velvet Revolution of 1989 until the present time: the honeymoon period and the following phase of disenchantment. Since the author is a political psychologist, special attention is paid to mentalities & attitudes and to the psychology of democracy.

It is concluded that the Czech-American relations are well rooted in a positive mutual heritage and potential compatibility of typical national attitudes. Most of all, though, the mutual relations of the Czech Republic and the U.S.A. appear to depend on the quality of democracy in the respective countries.



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AND THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRACY**

Martina Klicperová-Baker

Dedicated to my husband James

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CONTENTS

1. Czechs in America	1
From Early Contacts to Immigration Waves	
English Words of Czech Origin	
Czech Americans	
Wilber - Nebraska, the Czech Capital of the USA	
Czech Memorials and Other Places of Interest in the U.S.A.: Chicago, New York, D.C.	
2. Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic and America throughout History	10
Joint Struggle for an Independent Czechoslovakia	
Loss of Czechoslovak Freedom in 1938/1939	
Liberation from the Nazis in 1945	
The Communist Period 1948-1989 in Czechoslovakia	
Regained National Sovereignty after the Velvet Revolution of 1989	
3. The Dynamics of the Recent Czech-American Relations	14
The Honeymoon Phase	
The Disenchantment	
The Humanitarian War - The War on Terror - The War in Iraq	
Ballistic Missile Defense Plan: NATO Radar and Troops	
Czech Humanistic Heritage and Military Involvement	
An End of an Era: The Legacy of Presidents Havel and Obama	
Opinion polls: Czech Affinity to the USA, American Politics and Americans	
4. The Current Situation in Context	27
President Trump, the Czech Republic, and the World	
The World Opinions on American Culture, Americans, the USA, and the American President	
Similarities and Differences between Typical American and Czech Attitudes	
Similarities – Democratic Character and Subjection to Populism	
Differences – Differences and Misperceptions	
Czech Skepticism vs. American Optimism, Even Naivety - Humor	
Czech Peaceful Conflict Resolution vs. American Hawks	
The Czech Appreciation of Truth vs. Post-Truth Propaganda	
Hedonists and Bon Vivants vs. Ascetism and Possible Bigotry?	
Secularism vs. Piety - Respect for Education vs. Anti-Intellectual Tendencies	
Different Meanings of Nationhood: Americanness and Czechness	
5. Complex contexts	37
Conclusion: The State of Democracy as a Basis for Closeness	
Democracy – The Foundation of the US-Czech Partnership	
Honeymoon – The Democratic Highpoint	
Disenchantment and Abandonment of Good Democratic Practices on Both Sides	
The Rise of Populist Leaders as a Result of ‘Blah Mood’ and Mobilized ‘Deplorables’	
Downgraded Democracies	
The US and the Czech Republic as a Part of the Overall Global Decline of Democracy	
An Optimistic Conclusion?	
References	44
Further Reading	46
Index	47

1. Czechs in America

The history of relations between the Czech lands and America is rich. M. Rechcigl appropriately starts the joint chronology with the name of a Czech anthropologist Aleš Hrdlička (1869-1943) as he was the first who suggested and proved that some 3,000 years ago Native Americans arrived on the American continent across the Bering Strait from East Asia. His theory of a joint origin of humankind has a great humanistic and anti-racist significance.

Since then, the U.S.A. has often served as an inspiration, asylum, and home for many significant Czechs, including the politician and diplomat Madeleine Albright, composers Antonín Dvořák (*New World Symphony*) and Rudolf Friml (*Rose Marie*), pianist and conductor Rafael Kubelík, pianist and composer Jaroslav Ježek, actors and playwrights Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich (*Liberated Theater*), film director Miloš Forman (e.g., *Amadeus*), supermodel Paulina Porizkova, outstanding sports stars (tennis champions Martina Navrátilová and Ivan Lendl, hockey players Jaromír Jágr and Dominik Hašek). Astronauts James Lovell and Eugene Cernan, as well as Ray Kroc (the founder of McDonald's chain) were also of Czech heritage. Most importantly, the United States, its constitution and its multi-ethnic origin served as a political inspiration for Tomáš G. Masaryk, the founder and the first President of Czechoslovakia.

The Czechs are indebted to the United States for their national independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I, to a great degree also for their liberation from the Nazis in World War II, and for the moral support during the Cold War. Following the collapse of communism, the Czechs swiftly reunited with the free world – rejoicing in their restored democracy and independence while accepting the responsibilities of the new world order.

From Early Contacts to Immigration Waves

A detailed timeline of this relationship was elaborated by M. Rechcigl (2013); here we focus on the pivotal events. The first documented case of a Czech native arriving to America dates back to 1585 (35 years before the arrival of the Pilgrims). He was Joachim (Chajjim) Gans, a Jewish technology expert from Prague who arrived to Roanoke, NC on one of Sir Walter Raleigh's ships (Grassl 1998). The first Czech who was known to successfully settle in America was Augustine Herman from Prague, a surveyor, cartographer, fur trader, and tobacco merchant who arrived in 1644. He produced a remarkably accurate map of the Chesapeake and Delaware bay regions, in exchange for which he was permitted to establish an enormous plantation in what is now Southeastern Cecil County, Maryland, which he named Bohemia Manor.¹

What followed were several immigrant waves initiated by religious, economic and political motives:

- The Moravian Brethren, offsprings of the early Bohemian Reformation of the 15th century, were forced out of their native country by the Catholic counter-reformation. They ventured out on religious missions around the world, including the U.S.A., e.g., they founded the mission Bethlehem in Pennsylvania in 1741 (see the web Historic Moravian Bethlehem).
- Economically motivated immigrants arrived in the second half of 19th century and often settled in big cities, such as Chicago, New York and Cleveland. Anton J. Cermak, an immigrant of Czech origin was elected the mayor of Chicago, he served from 1931 until his death in 1933 (he was shot by G. Zangara while shaking hands with President-elect F. D. Roosevelt).

Farmers immigrating into the New World often aimed towards land with climate reminiscent of their original homeland – Czech settlements were thus most often formed in the rural

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_Herman Fiske, J. (1897)

Midwest, and Czech-Moravian farms were established in the warmer areas of Texas. These areas remain the main foci of Americans with Czech ancestry (see the map – Figure 1).

- Political persecution motivated waves of immigration in the wake of three tragic events: (a) the Nazi invasions of Czechoslovakia (1938 and 1939) which preceded World War II, (b) the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, (c) the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

According to the 2000 U.S. census, there are almost 1,260,000 US citizens who claim Czech ancestry. That is in addition to 441,000 who identify themselves as Czechoslovaks without taking into account other Slavic, Slovak, and mixed European categories.

Czech immigrants (particularly those from the later waves) were usually well educated and had professional careers. They did not form isolated ethnic neighborhoods but integrated themselves fully into American society. This did not prevent many from preserving their heritage by forming Czech “cultural communities” through which they maintained Czech periodicals, libraries, and organizations such as The Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU), the patriotic gymnastic association Sokol, the Czechoslovak National Council of America, and others; see a detailed listing at the krajane.net website:

<http://archiv.krajane.net/societyTable.view>.

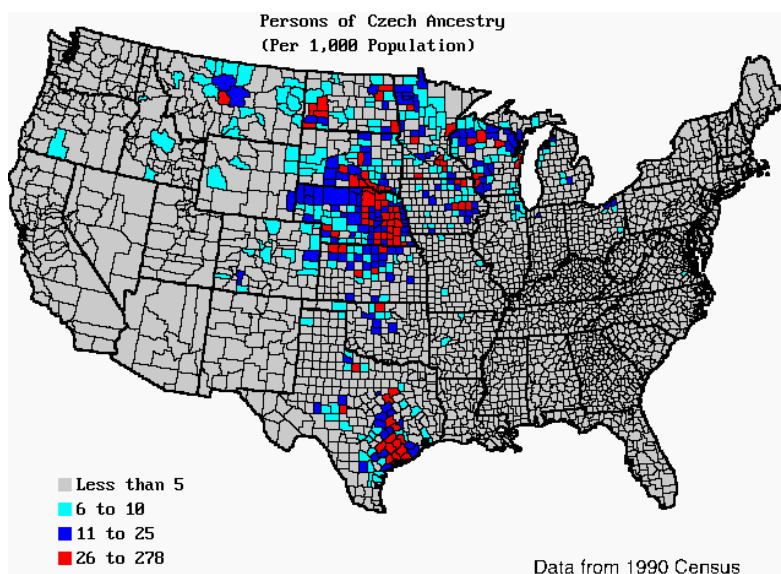


Figure 1. Czech Ancestry in the USA

Map source: <http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us/maps/ancestry/us/czech.gif>

or: <http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/maps/ancestry/us/czech.gif>

English Words of Czech Origin

The English language borrowed and fully adopted from the Czechs a few important words:

dollar originates from *thaler*, a silver coin from Joachimsthal in Bohemia (i.e., St. Joachim’s Valley - Jáchymov in Czech);

robot is a word coined by Josef Čapek for a sci-fi play RUR by his brother Karel Čapek; the word has a root in an old Czech word *robot* which means forced labor; RUR (Rossum’s Universal Robots) was a factory producing artificial people;

pistol has an origin in Czech *píšťala* (a whistle, tube, pipe) dating back to the Hussite wars in the 1420s.

polka a traditional lively Czech dance characterized typical by half-steps (half = *puolka* in Old Czech)

kolache flat round pastry filled with plums, jam, poppy seeds, or cheese

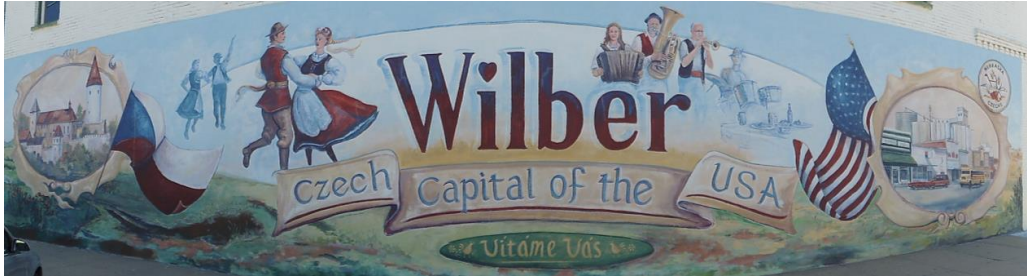
Czech Americans

Table 1. Czech Americans – Population Prevalence and Festivals

Largest Czech American populations:	Top percentages of Czech Americans:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illinois 123,708 Wisconsin 97,220 Minnesota 85,056 Nebraska 83,462 California 77,673 Ohio 70,009 Iowa 51,508 New York 44,942 Florida 42,890 Vermont 38,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Dakota 2.3% North Dakota 2.2% Wisconsin 2.1% Iowa 2.1% Minnesota 2.1% Illinois 1.2% Montana 1.0% Wyoming 1.0%
American festivals celebrating Czech culture and cuisine:	
<p>Iowa, Cedar Rapids - St. Ludmila's Church in June Protivin - Czech Days in August Kansas, Wilson - Czech Festival, last weekend in July Maryland, Parkville - Czech and Slovak Heritage Festival Minnesota, Bechyn - Czechfest. Second Sunday in August. http://www.czechfest.com/ New Prague - Dozinky Days Montgomery - 4th full weekend in July. Started in 1929. Nebraska, Wilber - Wilber Czech Days Oklahoma, Prague - Kolache Festival, First Saturday in May Yukon - Yukon Czech Festival, 1st Saturday in October South Dakota, Tabor - third Friday and Saturday in June - www.taborczechdays.com Texas, Weimar Hallettsville 4th weekend in March and last Saturday of September Shiner Kolache festivals Hallettsville Kolache Festival Yoakum 2nd week of June as part of the annual Tom-Tom Festival Missouri City festival Corpus Christi 3rd Saturday in March Houston 4th Sunday in March and 3rd Sunday in May Rosenberg first full weekend in May Ennis Memorial Day Weekend San Antonio first weekend in June and Last Sunday in October East Bernard second Saturday in June Ammansville Father's Day Dubina First Sunday in July Praha August 15 Flatonia Czihilspiel during the last full weekend in October Marak Last Sunday in August West Labor Day Weekend Caldwell second Saturday in September Pasadena 4th weekend in October Crosby Czech Fest held the first Saturday in October. Temple Texas Music Festival (Polka Festival) in early March Wisconsin, Phillips - Festival and Lidice & Ležáky Memorial Service, 3rd weekend in June. Hillsboro Český Den, 2nd full weekend in June. Kewaunee Czech & Kolache Festival, 1st full weekend in August at Heritage Farm</p>	
<i>Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech_Americans#cite_note-SFC-8</i>	

Wilber - Nebraska, the Czech Capital of the USA

As illustrated by the map on page 5, Nebraska is a state with a significant Czech concentration; additionally, it is centrally located. Since 1962, Wilber (Saline County, Nebraska) organizes a well-attended Czech Festival. This popular August event also includes a Miss Czech-Slovak US pageant. There were many good reasons for proclaiming Wilber “The Czech Capital of the USA.” This title was first awarded by Governor F. Morrison in 1963; in 1987 the US senators sponsored a bill which made the title official on the federal level.²



A giant mural illustrating the proud title of the Czech capital of the USA



A Wilbur bench with a Czech ‘Welcome’ inscription and bilingual street signs



The City Hall and Cultural Centre with a Czech Lion and flag on the left, and the Czech Museum in Wilber on the right

² More on Czechs in Wilber see the text of Reconnaissance Level Survey For Saline County at http://www.nebraskahistory.org/histpres/reports/Saline_County.pdf And their current website <http://www.nebraskaczehsofwilber.com/>

Table 2. The top 50 U.S. Communities with the Highest Percentage of People Claiming Czech Ancestry:

1. Conway, ND 55.2% ^[9]
2. West, TX 40.9%
3. Oak Creek NE 38.2%
4. Wilber, NE 37.3%
5. Shiner, TX 32.1%
6. Montgomery, MN (township) 30.9%
7. Lonsdale, MN 30.5%
8. Wheatland, MN 29.9%
9. Tyndall, SD 29.5%
10. David City, NE 28.0%
11. Montgomery, MN (city) 26.3%
12. Franklin, WI 26.1%
13. Lanesburgh, MN 25.2%
14. Granger, TX 25.1%
15. Port Costa, CA 24.0%
16. Schulenburg, TX 23.7%
17. New Prague, MN and Erin, MN 23.5%
18. Wahoo, NE 22.7%
19. Carlton, WI 22.4%
20. Wallis, TX 22.0%
21. Hallettsville, TX 21.5%
22. Hale, MN 20.8%
23. Montpelier, WI 19.7%
24. Flatonia, TX 19.5%
25. West Kewaunee, WI 19.2%
26. Schuyler, NE and Webster, NE 19.0%
27. Gibson, WI 18.9%
28. Hillsboro, WI 18.4%
29. Kossuth, WI 18.2%
30. Lexington, MN 18.1%
31. Mishicot, WI 16.9%
32. Kewaunee, WI and North Bend, NE 16.7%
33. Franklin, WI 15.9%
34. Oak Grove, WI and Caldwell, TX 15.7%
35. Lake Mary, MN 15.4%
36. Solon, IA 15.2%
37. Mishicot, WI 15.0%
38. Helena, MN 14.9%
39. Marietta, NE 14.7%
40. Stickney, IL 14.5%
41. Ord, NE and Weimar, TX 14.3
42. Crete, NE 14.2%
43. Park River, ND 14.1%
44. Ord, NE and La Grange, TX 14.0%
45. Wagner, SD 13.6%
46. Needville, TX 13.2%
47. Calmar, IA and Worcester, WI 13.0%
48. Webster, MN 12.9%
49. North Riverside, IL 12.4%
50. Belle Plaine, IA 12.3%
51. El Campo, TX 12.2%



Source: <http://www.epodunk.com/ancestry/Czech.html>

Czech Memorials and Other Places of Interest in the U.S.A.

Numerous historical places in the USA commemorate the Czech spirit. There are many communities with distinctly Czech names, Sokol halls, Czech museums and libraries, churches and cemeteries, schools, parks and monuments commemorating significant personalities of Czech origin. An impressive list can be found in a publication *Czech-American Historic Sites, Monuments & Memorials* by M. Rechcigl (2004).



The city of **Chicago** is particularly rich with such reminders. The monument devoted to the Czech patriot, journalist, poet, and politician Karel Havlíček Borovský (1821-1856) can be found on Solidarity drive, not far from the planetarium (photo on the left).³



The University of Chicago campus, the Midway Plaisance Park, hosts a massive statue by the Czech sculptor Albín Polášek (the photo on the right),⁴ personifying one of the mythical knights of the Blaník mountain, who, according to legend, are ready to rescue Bohemia at the time of the utmost need.

The plaque on the pedestal honors the first President of Czechoslovakia, Thomas G. Masaryk, who used to lecture at the University of Chicago.

³ Source of Havlíček monument photo: www.galenfrysinger.com

⁴ Source of Polášek monument photo: h3ather.com/ucwiki/index.php/Masaryk_Memorial_Monument

The Czech national spirit and cultural life in **New York** is personified by the Bohemian National Hall (BNH - Národní budova), an impressive building on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.⁵ Built at 321 East 73rd street, between First and Second Avenues, at the end of the 19th century by architect W. Frohne. This neo-renaissance style building was the site of many social gatherings, performances, balls, weddings, political meetings, gymnastic trainings, and Czech language courses, as well as bowling and shooting practices. It became a historical landmark of New York City.

As time progressed, the Czech expatriates lost the ability to maintain the building. The Czech government adopted it for a symbolical one Czech crown and invested 730 million into its reconstruction. The renovation was led by a Czech-American architect Martin Holub and supervised by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karel Schwarzenberg.⁶ It was finished in 2008. The Bohemian National Hall became the seat of the Czech Consulate General, a Cultural Center, and a Czech ex-pat organization. The restored ballroom houses memorabilia of the composer A. Dvořák. The Bohemian National Hall website is:

<http://www.bohemiannationalhall.com/>

Bohemian National Hall (Česká národní budova)



⁵ The source of information about the National Hall in New York: article by Amy C. Sims for *The Prague Post* (August 21, 2003), <http://www.praguepost.com/> and <http://www.nyc-architecture.com/UES/UES024.htm>

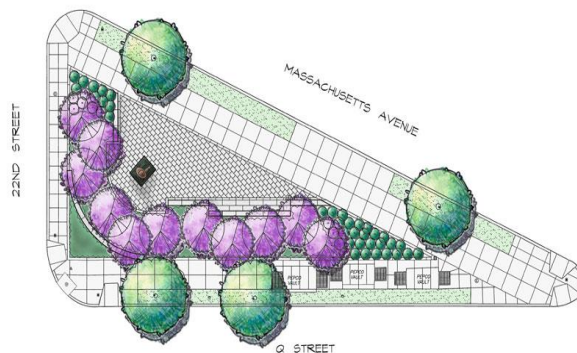
⁶ An interview with K. Schwarzenberg at the occasion of the opening of the BNH can be found at http://zpravy.idnes.cz/ceska-narodni-budova-v-new-yorku-je-konecne-opravena-fyu-zahranicni.aspx?c=A080930_135706_zahranicni_stf

President T. G. Masaryk was memorialized in **Washington, D.C.** by a 12-foot tall bronze statue. It is located in T. G. Masaryk Memorial Park at the crossing of Massachusetts Avenue and 22nd Street NW. That location, near Dupont Circle, creates an entrance to Embassy Row.



The statue itself, unveiled in 2003, has a long and dramatic history. It was conceived immediately following Masaryk's death in 1937 by Czech sculptor Vincenc Makovský. It depicts TGM holding the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence. Its design had to wait a very long time to become fully realized, not only through the Nazi occupation but also during the era of the Communist terror which followed. The statue was cast in the Zolov foundry as late as in 1968, during the so-called Prague Spring – a short period of Czech political renaissance. However, the statue soon had to be placed to storage following the Soviet invasion in August 1968. This long period of waiting continued even after the democratic Velvet Revolution in 1989: The statue was displayed only at the National Gallery as Czechoslovakia was undergoing internal disputes before breaking up into the Czech and Slovak Republics. Finally, a decision was made to place the statue in its current prestigious location in Washington, DC.

The Congress approved of it to be placed on American soil and the American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR), together with a support of numerous other sponsors, raised the money to bring the statue to the US.⁷



<http://www.courtney-powell.com/text/02/091802masaryk.htm> <http://www.afocr.org/masaryk.html>
<http://www.mzv.cz/washington/newslet/2000/ctn032000.html#bnh>

⁷ Source: <http://www.afocr.org/wilson-monument-and-tg-masaryk-memorial>

Václav Havel triumphed in **Washington, D.C.** in early 1990 when he, former dissident turned president of the free Czechoslovakia, addressed the joint session of Congress. Since



November 2014, Václav Havel has been commemorated in the Capitol, where his address took place, with a bronze bust in the Freedom Foyer rotunda, thus joining George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and Lajos Kossuth, among others.⁸

The sculptor, Lubomír Janečka, who knew Havel personally, intimated that he tried to capture Havel's "clear and open nature, unwavering firmness of his convictions, and his kindness to people. The bust is cast in bronze and gilded.... I finished it with some patina applied over the gold. The whole bust should evoke an image of a nugget of gold."⁹ The Canadian magpie pedestal is little polished and shows some chisel marks to match the portrait. The pedestal is decorated by the Czech lion, the coat of arms of the Czech Republic. and three inserted stones: an agate from the Czech Paradise, a moldavite (a mineral from a meteorite which landed in the Vltava valley), and an ordinary rock from the garden of Havel's summer house Hrádeček where he passed away.

Another memorial to Václav Havel can be found at the Georgetown University Alumni Square.¹⁰ "Václav Havel's Place," is a seating area consisting of a circular table through the center of which grows a young linden tree (a Czech national tree) and two adjacent chairs with glass ornaments. It was designed by Bořek Šípek, a sculptor who was also a friend of Havel. The Georgetown University Havel's Bench (from 2013), is the first of many others installed in cities all around the world. As of 2017, there are 22 such benches.



⁸ Photo source:

http://www.mzv.cz/public/e9/4b/41/1302951_1222442_V.Havel_by_L.Janecka_LR_photo_c_Embassy_of_the_Czech_Republic_in_Washington_DC.jpg

⁹ <http://www.speaker.gov/general/havel-bust-sculptor-s-own-words>

¹⁰ <http://www.vaclavhavel-library.org/en/havelsplace/washington>

2. Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic and America throughout History

Joint Struggle for an Independent Czechoslovakia

Many of those who immigrated to the USA from Austria-Hungary cherished their national sentiments and shared the longing for Czech liberation with their compatriots in the home land. M. Rechcigl – the former President of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU) diligently documented the intensity and variety of ways in which American Czechs contributed to Czech sovereignty. Their help was material as well as moral. Rechcigl (2000a) pointed out that the Austrian declaration of war against Serbia in 1914 was followed by an avalanche of anti-Austrian and patriotic rallies organized in Chicago, Detroit, Omaha, and other cities with substantial Czech presence.

The American support for Czechoslovak independence had various forms:

a) information campaigns – The Czechoslovak Information Bureau was created in Washington, DC; information boards and bulletins were installed at significant places, among others next to the New York Public Library; artistic postcards, stamps and posters drew attention to the Czechoslovak cause – see an example of one of the striking posters by Vojtěch Preissig on the right;

b) financial collections were encouraged by T. G. Masaryk “This is our revolution and we must pay for it with our money”¹¹ – bazaars were used to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for the cause;

c) material help was expedited to the old homeland (e.g., assistance to orphans in the Czech lands) as well as packages with vital help for the Czechoslovak Legions in Russia during their Trans-Siberian Railway anabasis;

d) most importantly – encouraged by personal visits of T. G. Masaryk and M. R. Štefánik in the USA, about 50.000 recruits of Czech origin volunteered for the Czechoslovak army.

The participation of Czech-Americans in the creation of Czechoslovakia is excellently illustrated by Vondrášek and Hanzlík (2009) in a publication on the role of Czech expats in America and their role in the creation of Czechoslovakia which is freely accessible here:

<http://www.mocr.army.cz/assets/multimedia-a-knihovna/publikace/vojenska-historie/krajane-v-usa-a-vznik-csr---ce.pdf>.



¹¹ Quoted from Kevin J McNamara (2016) *Dreams of a Great Small Nation: The Mutinous Army that Threatened a Revolution, Destroyed an Empire, Founded a Republic, and Remade the Map of Europe*. New York: Public Affairs, Perseus Group.

What we call today “a civil society” proved vital and offered crucial help to the cause of Czechoslovak independence. A number of voluntary associations and institutions – such as the Czechoslovak National Council – became important partners in political deals which followed. T. G. Masaryk visited the USA on his return from Russia in April 1918. He was already very popular and drew huge crowds wherever he appeared (according to Rechcigl, the rally with Masaryk in Chicago drew over 250.000 people). All this added tremendously to Masaryk’s leverage during his negotiations with President Wilson.

The creation of Czechoslovakia was facilitated by the American president *Woodrow Wilson*, who requested autonomy for the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I in the tenth of the Fourteen Points presented to the U.S. Congress. In fact, T. G. Masaryk wrote the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence¹² in Washington (in what is now the Envoy hotel on 16th street, NW). The Czechoslovak Republic was first proclaimed on American soil, in Philadelphia on October 27, 1918, before it was officially established in Prague the next day.

The relations between the new Czechoslovak Republic and the USA were close and friendly. They were personified also by the fact that T. G. Masaryk, “The Czech George Washington,” married Charlotte Garrigue, who happened to be an American descendent of Mayflower pilgrims. Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (born as Tomáš Masaryk) recognized his wife also by accepting her maiden name as his middle name.

Foto: Masaryk was an avid horseman¹³



Loss of Czechoslovak Freedom in 1938/1939

The 20th century was turbulent, especially in Central Europe. The young Czechoslovak democracy, born in 1918, was not allowed to come of age although it coped bravely with the economic crisis and political turmoil of the 1930s. Czechoslovakia managed to stand tall as the last democratic island in the region, granting asylum to many democratic refugees from Germany and other European states which became authoritarian. It was only a question of time before expansive German Nazism swallowed Czechoslovakia as well. An influential “fifth column” of ethnic Germans in Sudeten territories accelerated the process. The Munich agreement (September 29, 1938) destroyed the Czechoslovak sovereignty--the Western allies chose to sacrifice a substantial part of Czechoslovakia to Hitler. Luckily for the Czech-American relations, it was primarily France and Britain who broke the defense treaties, the US was hardly ever blamed for not keeping up the promise of a common defense.

The Nazi occupation meant an end to national independence and the imposition of the rule of terror, a path to death for those who actively opposed the Nazi regime, sympathized with the Allies or who just happened to be Jewish, Roma (Gypsy), gay or handicapped. Many perished in concentration camps or were sent to forced labor in Germany. The bravest Czech patriots left the country to fight the Nazis from abroad or attempted to resist within. The rest tried at least to keep informed about the progress of the war fronts through foreign broadcasts of the BBC and marked the advance of Allies on carefully hidden maps. Listening to foreign radio was punishable by execution (and every radio set had to bear a written warning notice of that).

¹² the original Declaration of Independence by T. G. Masaryk was presented as a gift from the Library of Congress to President Havel <http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9810/havel.html>

¹³ <http://www.tresbohemes.com/2015/10/tomas-g-masaryk-on-wireless-technology-in-1929/>

Each radio set had to be officially modified to remove its capacity to receive short wave broadcasts but many listeners did overcome that by illegally inserting so-called 'little Churchill' (čerčilek) an improvised gadget which, when inserted to the tuning circuit, enabled the radio to receive short-wave 'London Calling' BBC broadcasts.

Liberation from the Nazis in 1945

The Czechs rejoiced and rose when Czechoslovakia was being liberated in 1945. The American soldiers who freed the West and South of Bohemia (among others, the cities of Pilsen and Budweiss) received a very warm embrace, as did popular American culture - jazz music and Hollywood films, which had been banned during the Nazi occupation.

Admittedly, the liberation euphoria in 1945 was tainted with frustration when the advance of General Patton from the West was forced to a halt in Pilsen on the order of General Eisenhower. At that time the capital city of Prague, a mere 50 miles away, was still engaged in a popular uprising against the occupying German forces. Radio Prague, which citizens of Prague liberated early during the Prague Uprising, was desperately calling for help as unarmed Czech patriots were fighting Nazi troops in urban combat. Still, the American troops had to leave Prague to its fate – Prague, along with the rest of Czechoslovakia, was left to be liberated by Soviet forces which was, supposedly, a decision made during the earlier political summits of the Allies. Although it seemed apparent that President F. D. Roosevelt might have done more at the Yalta conference to protect Europe from Soviet Communism, the Czechs generally did not blame the USA for contributing to their totalitarian post-war fate.

The post WWII restoration of Czech–American relations, however, did not last long. Stalin prevented Czechoslovakia from participating in the Marshall Plan of restoration. The communist coup in 1948 and the inclusion of Czechoslovakia among the satellites of the Soviet Union behind the Iron Curtain restricted all contacts with the West for two generations. During that time, the communist propaganda and brainwashing obscured the historical role of America in the creation and liberation of Czechoslovakia as well as the importance of Masaryk himself. Until 1989, only the Soviet Red Army had to be publicly recognized as a liberator and if communist propaganda mentioned any American involvement at all, more than anything else it would bring up the incidents when American planes bombed the city of Prague¹⁴ and the Czech industrial plants at the very end of the war.

The Communist Period 1948-1989 in Czechoslovakia

The fact that the Soviet army in 1945 liberated most of the Czech lands from the German Nazis weakened the Czechoslovak resistance to communism. Stalin earned his reputation of a liberator. Furthermore, many of the political elites and patriots were destroyed during the Nazi occupation and war. Having experienced the Munich crisis, the ordinary citizens felt betrayed by the West who did not honor the military agreements. The Czechs were also unimpressed by the weakness of domestic democrats who failed them at the time of crisis. That caused a significant Czech disenchantment with democracy at that era.

In the first post-war elections in 1946, the Left (namely, the Communist Party), won by a landslide (gaining as much as 43% in the Czech lands¹⁵) and thus also won a seat for a Communist Prime-Minister—a Stalinist Klement Gottwald. The communists soon attempted to install a Communist dictatorship in the image of the Soviet Union. At the moment of a political crisis, in February 1948, the students were the only ones who opposed the threat of the Communist dictate: they organized a demonstration in support of President Beneš and urged him to prevent the Communist putsch. However, the police had already been in the hands of the Communists and thus brutally suppressed the manifestation and expelled the

¹⁴ <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/czech-history/the-bombing-of-prague-from-a-new-perspective>

¹⁵ http://www.totalita.cz/volby/volby_1946_07.php

students from their schools. The Communists succeeded in the takeover of the government, staging the 1948 coup as if it were a constitutional passage of power. Once the Communists grasped the power, they never allowed the citizens to challenge them by regular elections.

Although most of the population publicly complied with the official communist doctrines in order to save their families from new political persecution, a significant number maintained their positive image of the United States, at least in the privacy of their homes. Many patiently tuned to the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe despite the government's attempt to disrupt the broadcasts by loud radio interferences. For many, the day regularly ended at 9 pm at the radio set, listening to the news broadcast from Washington, D.C. and the week would not be complete without listening to the "Sunday Notebook of Martin Čermák" which was broadcast by Ivo Ducháček from 1949 until his death in 1988.¹⁶ The oppressed citizens appreciated American criticism of the suppression of human rights (President Carter) and a strong stance against the Soviet Union (President Reagan). The anti-American propaganda of the Communist government, ironically, helped to produce in many a boomerang effect of an uncritical and idealized image of the United States.

Regained National Sovereignty after the Velvet Revolution of 1989



The Velvet Revolution restored Czechoslovak freedom and democracy. Its leader, the dissident playwright Václav Havel, was elected president. One of his first official visits abroad aimed to the USA. As a sign of recognition, Havel was invited to address a joint session of the U.S. Congress and was given a hero's reception.¹⁷

Significant treaties between the United States and Czechoslovakia were promptly signed, including bilateral trade agreements (1990, 1992) and an agreement on mutual investments (1991). Prague in particular became an attractive and very welcoming place for tens of thousands of Americans who embraced the fledgling democracy and came *en masse* to teach English, develop businesses, and

enjoy the liberal spirit of the newly freed capital. Conversely, the Czechs expressed their respect, love and fascination with America which for many was a symbol of freedom and prosperity.

Paradoxically, freedom brought an end not only to Communist control but also to the idea of the multinational Czechoslovak state – the Masaryk idea inspired by the U.S.A.. Slovak nationalist parties aspired to full sovereignty for a Slovak nation and defeated the Czech citizen initiatives calling for a referendum. It was assumed that the division was an idea of the politicians and if people would have their say, Czechoslovakia as a common state would survive. However, politicians did not let the referendum happen and initiated a political division of Czechoslovakia into two republics, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, on January 1, 1993.

Although generally disenchanted by the split of the country, the Czechs wasted no time in reintegrating into the Western world with an even stronger commitment to both democratization and economic transformation. The Czech Republic was among the first post-communist countries to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Partnership for Peace (a stepping stone to NATO membership). Prague hosted summits of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and NATO. The Czech Republic completed its integration to the democratic world by joining NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004. The headquarters of Radio Free Europe were moved to Prague.

¹⁶ http://www.totalita.cz/volby/volby_1946_07.php

¹⁷ https://img.washingtonpost.com/rf/image_480w/2010-2019/WashingtonPost/2011/12/18/Obituaries/Images/507824227.jpg?uuiid=PRX7yC14EeGDKURg8pC4_A

3. The Dynamics of the Recent Czech-American Relations

The Honeymoon Phase

The first and only US president who visited Czechoslovakia was George H. W. Bush (there were multiple additional presidential visits to the Czech Republic, after Czechoslovak split). The memorable first visit occurred on November 17, 1990—the first anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. President Bush was returning the February visit of Václav Havel in Washington. The country was still experiencing the revolutionary euphoria and the world's problems seemed to be finally resolved in favor of democracy (as was famously expressed by an essay by Francis Fukuyama *The End of History?* in 1992).



Czechoslovakia was in its first year of the post-communist transition, still formally a member of the military Warsaw Pact (by which it was attacked in 1968) and eager to integrate into the Western European and Atlantic unions and treaties. The Czechs gave the US president an enthusiastic welcome.

The photo above shows Presidents Havel and **Bush** with their wives greeting the crowds at Wenceslas Square.¹⁸ President G. H. W. Bush gave the Czechoslovaks a reassurance of American support and also a symbolical copy of the Liberty Bell with a proclamation:

“And so now I am proud to ring this bell three times: once for your courage, once for your freedom, and once for your children. [Rings the bell]. And may God bless Czechoslovakia!”¹⁹

While expressing American support for a new democracy, President Bush, at the same time, was seeking a support himself. His Prague visit was a stop on a tour in which he was preparing a coalition of allies which would support American involvement in the Gulf War in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Bush knew he could rely on the Czechs, both for their uncritical love of the USA and because they would certainly empathize in solidarity with another small country (Kuwait) which had experienced occupation from a larger neighbor (Iraq). Bush appreciated the Czech cooperation:

“Czechoslovakia was one of the first nations to condemn the outrage in the Persian Gulf, one of the first to measure the magnitude of the wrong committed in the name of territorial ambition. It is no coincidence that appeasement’s lonely victim of a half century ago, should be among the first to understand that there is right and there is wrong, that there is good and there is evil, and there are sacrifices worth making.”²⁰

¹⁸ <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/archives/george-bush-sr-tolls-a-bell-for-czechoslovakia>

¹⁹ ditto

²⁰ ditto

The international operation Desert Storm was launched in January 1991. Czechoslovakia participated along with dozens of other nations after the invasion was approved by a rare United Nations accord. Still, the Czechoslovaks did not provide resources for combat operations but sent to the Gulf a unit of 200 specialized in chemical defense, decontamination and first aid.²¹

In 1993, Czechoslovakia split to two independent states—the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Václav Havel, the popular hero of the Velvet Revolution, was elected the President, this time, of the Czech Republic. The relations between the Czech Republic and the USA remained very good also as a result of personal friendship between Václav Havel, the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (a Czechoslovak-born immigrant to the United States) and President Bill Clinton.

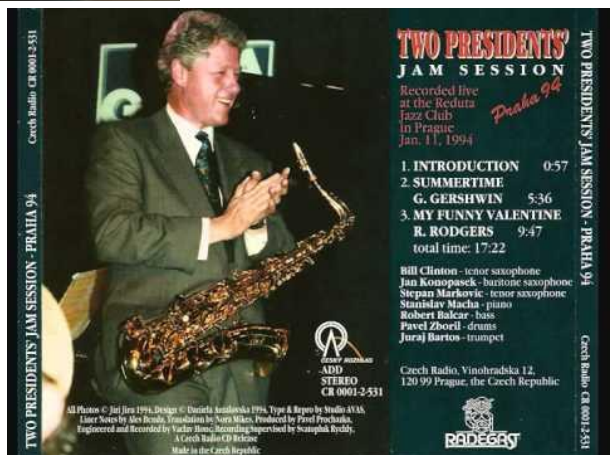
Photo on the right: M. Albright²²



President Clinton visited Prague in January 1994. As a first step toward the Czech full NATO membership, he offered the post-communist countries (so called Visegrad four – Czech and Slovak Republics, Poland and Hungary) the so called Partnership for Peace.

Photo on the left: Václav Havel, Bill Clinton and Madeleine Albright in Prague²³

During the informal part of the program Havel invited Clinton and Albright to the famous Czech beer pub At the Golden Tiger and then to a jazz club Reduta; there Clinton received a present—a saxophone and with gusto enjoyed the play.



²¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czechoslovakia_in_the_Gulf_War

²² Source of photo: <http://www.feminist.com/resources/artspeech/interviews/albright.html>

²³ Source of photo: <http://www.tresbohemes.com/2015/10/presidents-politics-pubs/>

The Disenchantment

The doubts about the infallibility of American policies started to creep in at the turn of the century, during the civil war in Yugoslavia. They signaled the oncoming *phase of disenchantment*. The Czechs were hesitant to approve the bombing of Serbian cities by NATO forces (so called “humanitarian bombing” in spring of 1999) during the Kosovo War. Later on, they were also very torn about recognizing the legitimacy of the American preemptive strikes against Iraq in 2003 and the subsequent war in Iraq. In fact, most Czechs did not approve these operations²⁴ (despite the fact that Václav Havel himself remained loyal to the US and explicitly supported the Iraq intervention). Importantly, the increased criticism of the US policies was a world-wide phenomenon. Among others, Pew Global Attitudes Project (2004) reported erosion of the trustworthiness of the United States all around the world at that time.

The “Humanitarian War”²⁵

The Czech Republic was accepted into NATO in 1999 but the restrained joy of reuniting with the Western allies was dimmed by the controversial operations during the Kosovo War in former Yugoslavia which immediately followed. Although horrified by reports of ethnic cleansing and frustrated by the incompetence of the European Union to stop the violence, the Czech public felt uneasy about belonging to the armies engaged in bombing Serbian cities; in fact, most citizens did not approve.²⁶ Czechs had a general sympathy for Yugoslavia, the country which many knew well from holiday visits. They also appreciated the historical bravery of the Serbs who opposed all their oppressors, whether Austrians, Nazis, Stalin, or Brezhnev—Yugoslavia opposed and did not participate in the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, instead, Yugoslavs helped the Czechs who decided to defect to the West.

The War on Terror 2001-

In 2001, the people of the Czech Republic intensely identified with the victims of the 9/11 tragedy and offered immediate help, including blood, monetary donations, and trained rescue-dog teams. (The offers of foreign aid were not much reported in the US media which already started to focus primarily on domestic patriotism.) The Czech Prime Minister Miloš Zeman pledged: “We are prepared to help, not by words but by acts. I understand that solidarity is a long-term and concrete chain of actions, not declarations.”²⁷

Research by the STEM polling agency (Center for Empirical Research, Prague) conducted a survey within days of the attack showing that 40 percent of Czech respondents at the time were convinced that the attacks must be followed by military retaliation. Indeed, the Czech Republic participated in the “Enduring Freedom” campaign in Afghanistan, operating primarily in the provinces of Helmand, Kandahar and Nangarhar,²⁸ sending not only combat units but also engineers, medical staff, and police and military instructors.

The War in Iraq 2003-

While the Czech Republic had soldiers fighting al-Qaeda in Afghanistan as part of the “Enduring Freedom” campaign, its involvement in the additional operation “Iraqi Freedom” became a matter of national controversy. G. W. Bush at the NATO summit in Prague in 2002 announced he would “disarm” Saddam with a “coalition of the willing”.²⁹ The USA was a very

²⁴ ditto

²⁵ <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/sipa/S6800/courseworks/NATOhumanitarian.pdf>

²⁶ IVVM April 1999, http://nesstar.soc.cas.cz/webview/index/en/nesstar/-SDA.c.nesstar/-esky.d.1/IVVM.d.4/1999.d.11/Duben-1999-Kontinu-ln-m-s-n-v-zkum-IVVM.s.V9904/Z-sah-NATO-v-Jugosl-vii-R-a-NATO.h.5/Souhlas-respondenta-se-zasahem-NATO-v-Jugoslavii/fVariable/V9904_V12

²⁷ <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/czechs-are-ready-to-help-us-victims>

²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech_Afghanistan_Contingent

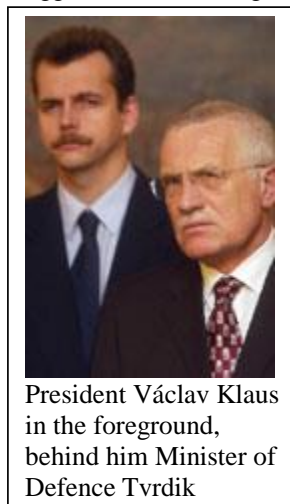
²⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002_Prague_summit

strong supporter of the Czech presence in NATO and the Czechs wanted to be loyal partners, yet the war did not seem to be well substantiated and remained controversial.

As many as 72% of Czechs polled in March 2003 by CVVM³⁰ expressed disapproval of the preemptive strike against Iraq (21% approved); 70% did not think that the attacks on Iraq would help to suppress world terrorism (18% thought it would). A majority also did not agree with the attack on Iraq without a UN mandate (83% vs. 10%). Almost two-thirds of respondents agreed that “an insensitive foreign policy of the United States might have been among the main causes of the attack” in the first place. Over two-thirds of respondents also feared that events related to the terrorist attack could grow into a world war.

Those respondents who disapproved of the preemptive strike against Iraq (CVVM April 2003) were further asked about their main reason for disapproval: 27% claimed that war harms innocent people, 24% expressed their disapproval of war and violence in general, for 20% an attack without approval of the Security Council qualified as an act of aggression, 5% thought that a search for diplomatic solution should have continued.

Neither the politicians were in agreement. On one hand, President Havel, just two days before the end of his term, co-signed an open statement, the Letter of Eight (Eight European statesmen),³¹ a pro-American letter in support of the invasion in Iraq. On the other hand, the Czech government distanced itself from the letter and Prime Minister Špidla announced that the Czechs would only go to war with the backing of the United Nations or in the event weapons of mass destruction were used. The newly elected President Václav Klaus based his anti-war attitude on polls showing that majority of Czechs strongly opposed the war, he even asked Craig Stapleton, the American ambassador in Prague, to intervene with the US administration to take the Czech Republic off the list of coalition supporters. The Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cyril Svoboda, also stressed that the Czech Republic prefers a peaceful solution to the Iraqi crisis.



President Václav Klaus in the foreground, behind him Minister of Defence Tvrdik

The Czechs found themselves uncomfortably torn between the loyalties to the US (USA, after all, was a strong supporter of the Czech Republic entering NATO) and loyalties to Europe (the Czech Republic was about to join the European Union)³²

It was concluded that the Czech participation in the War in Iraq will have a strictly humanitarian character without a direct military involvement. The Czech Army provided a field hospital and an anti-chemical warfare unit specializing in detection of weapons of mass destruction (the unit that also served in the first Gulf War and has earned high respect throughout the world). In addition, the Czech government offered a financial assistance to the process of Iraqi transformation (e.g., equipment and training of Iraqi police, instruction for Iraqi lawyers, medical personnel, NGO and civil airport employees, and assistance with the restoration of Iraqi cultural heritage).

³⁰ <https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/tiskove-zpravy/politicke/mezinarodni-vztahy/303-postoje-oban-k-valce-v-iraku>

³¹ Europe and America Must Stand United, The Times, London, January 30, 2003

³² The mid-February of 2003 was a hot diplomatic period. The French president Jacques Chirac leashed out against the east European candidates for membership in European Union who showed stronger inclination to the American rather than French/German view on invasion. Chirac accused the aspirant members of “infantile” “not well-brought-up behaviour,” and he added that “They missed a good opportunity to keep quiet.” Suggesting they might jeopardize their acceptance to EU. www.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,7369,897893,00.html

Czech Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda responded to Mr Chirac: “We are not joining the EU so we can sit and shut up.” www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/02/19/1045638359852.html

Ballistic Missile Defense Plan:

NATO Radar and Troops to be Placed in the Central Czech Republic

The 2002 Prague summit of NATO revealed one more controversial initiative, the NATO missile defense system. It crystallized into a more concrete shape in 2006 when details of the project started to be more openly discussed: the system was supposed to destroy the missiles from Iran or Korea and it would consist of a radar tracking system placed in the forests of central Bohemia and of a launching system of interceptor missiles stationed in Poland. Both Czech and Polish governments indicated a preliminary agreement.



However, the Czech public viewed the radar project (which also involved foreign troops on Czech soil) as highly controversial both technically and morally. After all, the Czechs just recently sighed with relief when the last Soviet soldier left their country.

Two thirds of citizens disapproved (62 to 70% in 2006 to 2008), only a little over a quarter of citizens (but never more than 30%) approved, the rest was undecided.³³ The strongest opposition was among the Communist voters (91% definitely or rather against it), the most decisive proponents were ODS (Civic Democratic Party) voters (66% definitely or rather for it). About three quarters of citizens thought that the matter should be decided by a referendum.

Some citizens fought the project by demonstrations with decisive NO signs (picture above), others ridiculed it by creative outlets, e.g., by a photoshopped picture of Radar (the popular MASH character – see photo on the right) towering over Czech forests³⁴ or by a documentary film comedy about the turbulent negotiating process called *The Czech Peace*.



On September 17, 2009, the President Barack Obama announced that the planned deployment of long-range missile defense interceptors and equipment in Poland and the Czech Republic was not to go forward.³⁵

³³ https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a744/f9/100858s_pm90116.pdf

³⁴ http://zpravy.idnes.cz/foto.aspx?r=zajimavosti&foto1=ADL18eac4_radar.jpg

³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO_missile_defence_system

Czech Humanistic Heritage and Military Involvement

The Czechs generally abhor war conflicts. That may be part of being a small nation in Central Europe. This anti-war sentiment also appears to be in congruence with a first-hand experience of the Central European turmoil during the 20th century (WWI, WWII, and the Soviet military occupation), as well as with the Czech heritage of humanistic philosophy represented e.g., by T. G. Masaryk, Karel Čapek, and Petr Chelčický.

Throughout the history, Czechs have been strongly inclined to settle their internal as well as international conflicts in a non-violent manner (Klicperová et al, 1997b). This peaceful inclination prevails over their proud military traditions, namely the Hussite wars and the “stellar performance”³⁶ of Czechoslovak legions during WWI, including their incredible adventures when they were able to control the whole Russian Trans-Siberian Railway (Williams 1979) during the return to their motherland.



Illustration: A poster depicting Czechoslovak legions abroad³⁷ Czechoslovakia had a well performing army before it was even established.

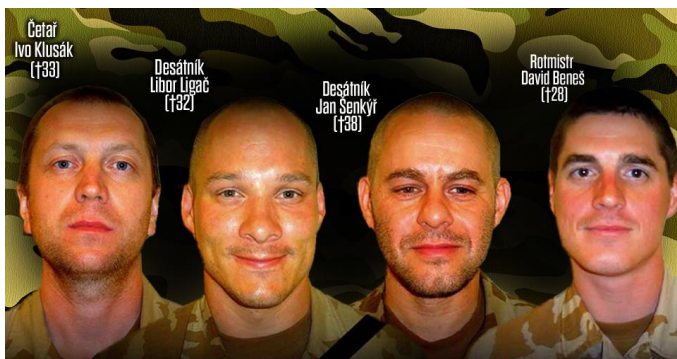


Table 3 on the following page summarizes the Czech (and Czechoslovak, until 1992) military involvement in international operations. To this date, 11 Czech soldiers died in the Afghanistan mission. The most tragic recent incident happened July 8, 2014 when four Czech soldiers died along with Afghani civilians and policemen as a result of a suicide attack.³⁸

The photo on the right³⁹ captures a funeral of Sgt. David Beneš, one of the Czech soldiers who were killed during their mission in Afghanistan. The list of all Czech casualties can be found at Wikipedia.⁴⁰



³⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czechoslovak_Legion

³⁷ <http://www.vhu.cz/legionarske-stejnokroje-v-jedne-rade/>

³⁸ <http://protiextremismu.wz.cz/zemreli%20za%20svobodu.html>

³⁹ Foto: Deník/Karel Pech, Source: http://ustecky.denik.cz/nazory_region/ocima-janniho-vorlicka-aby-to-nebyla-zbytecna-smrt-20140718.html

⁴⁰ Wikipedia: Seznam českých vojáků, kteří zemřeli v zahraničních misích

Table 3. Czech Military Missions

NAME	SIZE	TIME - LOCATION
DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM Liberation operation	200	1990 – 1991 Kuwait
UNGCI United Nations Guards Contingent in Iraq	320	1991 – 2003 Iraq
UNPROFOR Peacekeeping mission	2 250	1992 – 1995 Former Yugoslavia
UNCRO Peacekeeping mission	750	1995 - 1996 Croatia - Krajina
UNTAES Field Hospital participated	100	1996 - 1998 Croatia, Slavonia
IFOR, SFOR, SFOR II Peacekeeping operation	6 300	1996 – 2001 Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia
AFOR 6 th Field Hospital	100	1999 Albania, Turkey (earthquake)
KFOR Peacekeeping operation	980	1999 - 2002 Kosovo
ESSENTIAL HARVEST (TFH) Peacekeeping	120	2001 Macedonia
KFOR Czech-Slovak battalion	2 400	2002 – 2005 Kosovo
KFOR Brigade, Contingents and Task Force	>8000	2005 – 2011 Kosovo
SFOR Command posts + civil cooperation	42	2002 - 2004 Bosnia & Herzegovina
ENDURING FREEDOM Anti-terrorist operation	612	2002 - 2003 Kuwait
ISAF Peacekeeping - Field Hospitals	269	2002 - 2003 Afghanistan
ISAF Field Surgical Team	11	2003 - 2003 Afghanistan
IZ SFOR 7 th Field Hospital participated	526	2003 - 2003 Iraq, Basra
IZ SFOR (MNF - I) Military Police participated	>4818 R	2003 - 2006 Iraq, Shaibah
CONCORDIA EU operation	2	2003 - 2003 Macedonia
ISAF EOD Explosive Ordnance Disposal and meteo at Kabul International Airport	350	2004 – 2007 Afghanistan, Kabul
ENDURING FREEDOM 601 st Special Forces	120	2004 Afghanistan
WINTER RACE NATO Humanitarian and Medical Relief	29	2005 - 2006 Pakistan
ISAF PRT Feyzabad - Badakshan within German Provincial Reconstruction Team	600	2005 - 2007 Afghanistan
ALTHEA EUFOR Mission - Protection of a camp and expert service	421	2004 - 2008 Bosnia & Herzegovina
NATO Training Mission Iraq	423	2003 - 2008 Iraq, Baghdad
ISAF KAIA Field Hospital and Chemical Detachment in Kabul International Airport	658	2007 - 2008 Afghanistan, Kabul
ISAF URUZGAN Protection contingents	2 x 63	2008 - 2009 Afghanistan
EUFOR European Union operation in Chad	2	2008 - 2009 Chad/Central Africa
MINURCAT United Nations mission to Chad	2	2009 Chad/Central Africa
BALTIC AIR POLICING Defense and protection of Baltic states' air space	2 x 75	2008 - 2009 Lithuania
ENDURING FREEDOM	3 x 100	2008 – 2009 Afghanistan
ISAF Helicopter Unit	700	2009 – 2011 Afghanistan
ISAF Special Forces	2 x 100	2011 - 2012 Afghanistan
BALTIC AIR POLICING Defense and protection of Baltic states' air space	2 x 64	2012 – 2013 Lithuania
ISAF Training Units of the Military Police	4 x 12	2012 - 2013 Afghanistan, Wardak
ISAF Units of Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams - OMLT	5 x 54	2012 – 2013 Afghanistan, Wardak
ISAF PRT 11 units Provincial Reconstruction Teams	>2.500 R	2008 – 2013 Afghanistan, Logar
1st ACR MAT Unit in Wardak, Afghanistan, ISAF Military Advisory Team	59	2013 Afghanistan, Wardak
1st ACR MAT Unit in Logar, Afghanistan, ISAF Military Advisory Team	64	2013 Afghanistan, Logar
NATO Air Policing	75	2014 Keflavik Air Base, Iceland
Active Fence	7	2014 - 2015 Incirlik Air Base, Turkey
NATO Air Surveillance	70	2015 - 2016 Keflavik Air Base, Iceland
Field Surgical Team	17	2016 – 2017 Iraq

Notes: R = repeated, Status to June 2017

Source: <http://www.army.cz/scripts/detail.php?id=5717> accessed August 28, 2017

An End of an Era: The Legacy of Presidents Havel and Obama

Barack Obama visited Prague in April 2009. At the Hradčany Square, in front of the Prague Castle, he delivered an important speech befitting his Nobel Peace Prize. It was his first major speech on foreign policy, so called Prague Speech on disarmament. He paid tribute to president Masaryk and the Czech heritage in the US:

I've learned over many years to appreciate the good company and the good humor of the Czech people in my hometown of Chicago. (Applause.) Behind me is a statue of a hero of the Czech people—Tomas Masaryk. (Applause.) In 1918, after America had pledged its support for Czech independence, Masaryk spoke to a crowd in Chicago that was estimated to be over 100,000. I don't think I can match his record--(laughter)--but I am honored to follow his footsteps from Chicago to Prague. (Applause.)⁴¹



The core of the Prague Speech presented a plan to eradicate the nuclear weapons (the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty).

So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. (Applause.) I'm not naive. This goal will not be reached quickly—perhaps not in my lifetime. It will take patience and persistence. But now we, too, must ignore the voices who tell us that the world cannot change. We have to insist, “Yes, we can.” (Applause.)⁴²

The Czechs very much welcomed the popular President but there were some peculiar circumstances of Obama's Prague visit: It was a period of the world economic crisis. The Czech Republic was presiding over the Council of the European Union at that time (the January to June 2009 term), yet, embarrassingly, at the time of the transatlantic talks between the EU and USA and on the eve of Obama's visit to Prague, the Czech Parliament brought down the government of Civic Democrats (ODS) by a non-confidence vote. That made the Czech Republic, presiding over the EU, dysfunctional. Moreover, the conservative/libertarian president Václav Klaus was ideologically opposed to Obama's economic interventionism and green policies against global warming. The ousted Prime Minister Topolánek was also critical and called Obama's stimulation of American economy publicly “the road to hell.”⁴³

⁴¹ <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-barack-obama-prague-delivered>

⁴² ditto

⁴³ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2009/mar/25/obama-rescue-eu-criticism>

Thus, there were multiple reasons for President Obama not to spend more time than necessary with the outgoing conservative government or President Klaus. Instead, Obama crowned his Czech visit by a meeting with ex-President Havel (photo on the right).^{44 45 46}

Unfortunately, Václav Havel had only two more years to live then. He passed away at a Christmas time of 2011 at the age of 75.

At that occasion, deeply saddened President Obama commented that “(Havel’s) peaceful resistance shook the foundations of an empire, exposed the emptiness of a repressive ideology and proved that moral leadership is more powerful than any weapon.”



Havel’s funeral was not only a national but a world event. He was honored also by an American delegation, The photo on the left⁴⁷ shows former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, former President Bill Clinton and his wife, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the funeral ceremony in St. Vitus cathedral in Prague.

The world was in mourning, realizing the loss of a “shy but iron-willed intellectual endowed with a playful sense of humor and a powerful moral compass” (Green 2011), “shy yet resilient, unfailingly polite but dogged man who articulated the power of the powerless...” (Bilefsky & Perlez 2011).

The photo on the right⁴⁸ shows one of the fields of candles, their wax remnants were later molded into a gigantic heart. The mourning nation realized how much is leaving with the beloved president Havel.



⁴⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/04/world/europe/04iht-letter.html>

⁴⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/04/world/europe/04czech.html>

⁴⁶ Photo source <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/obama-v-praze-s-vaclavem-havlem/r~i:photo:244182/>

⁴⁷ Photo source <http://www.cnn.com/2011/12/22/world/europe/czech-republic-havel-funeral/index.html>

⁴⁸ Photo source <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2078021/Vaclav-Havel-funeral-World-leaders-including-David-Cameron-pay-respects-man-freed-Czechoslovakia-communism.html>

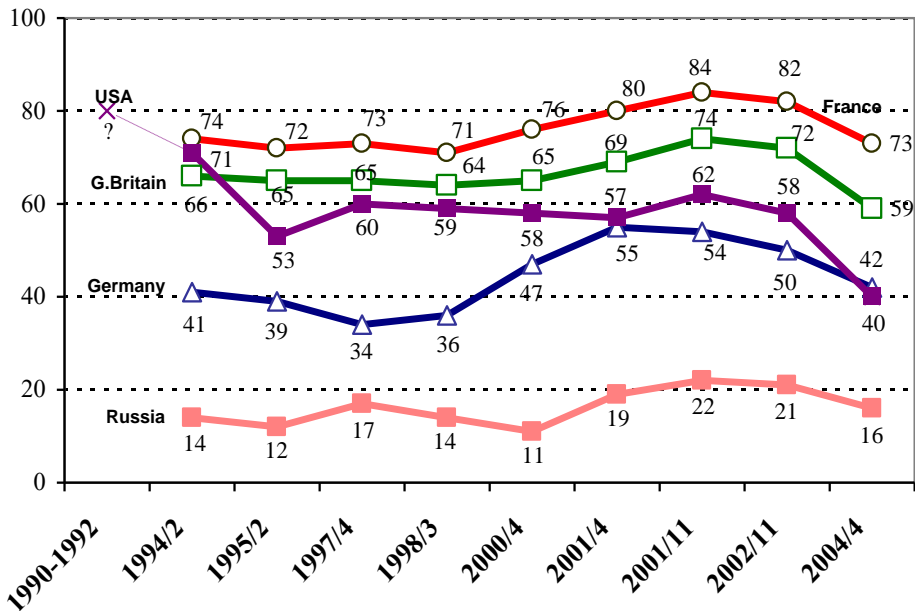
Opinion polls: Czech Affinity to the USA, American Politics and Americans

The opinion poll agencies in the Czech Republic conduct repeated surveys of the views on the USA and on Americans. The most popular institutions in that matter are CVVM (Public Opinion Research Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences) and STEM (Institute for Empirical Research).

Representative samples of Czech respondents have been asked to classify their “favorable or unfavorable relationship to various countries using a school grading scale.” The results are depicted in Graph 1. The affinity to the USA would be particularly high in early 1990s during the euphoric era shortly following the 1989 Velvet Revolution when the US President visited the Czech soil for the first time. It was before STEM started its systematic surveys. The sympathies could have been expressed, we can estimate, by as many as 80% respondents.

Graph 1. Czech Sympathies to the USA in Time Perspective and in the International Context - Adapted graph by STEM (2004)

(Sympathies indicated by % of the best and second best ratings on a 5-point scale)

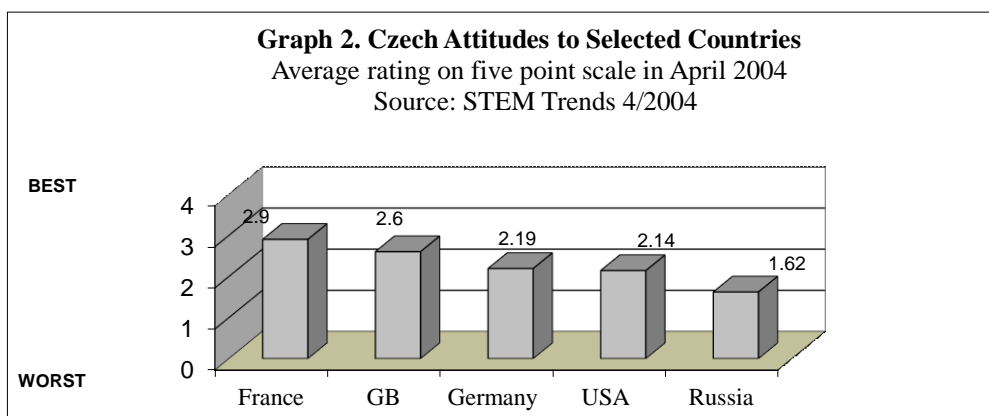


This very high level of affinity has rather eroded in time, the major declines are attributable to the gradual loss of idealistic illusions, to the disenchantment due to the controversial US foreign policy (air strikes against Yugoslavia March-June 1999 and especially the invasion of Iraq launched in 2003). On the other hand, the 9/11 solidarity may be behind the increase in sympathy to most nations in November 2001. That is followed by a general decline in sympathies attributable to the international controversies related to the War in Iraq.

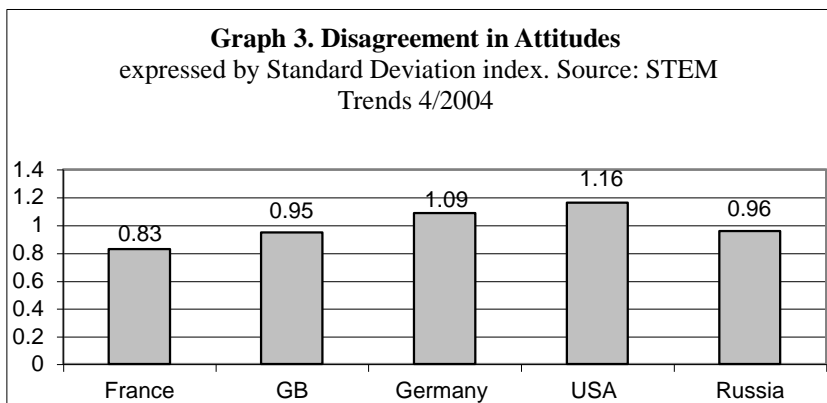
Attitudes to Germany reflect the successful mending of the Czech-German relationships severed by WWII (and frozen by the Communist regime). The feelings toward Russia are stable low; opinions of Great Britain and France manifest unwavering high ranking. The Czech sympathies to France may be explainable by the fact that France, although an influential country, does not overpower the Czech Republic by political or economic means but manifests a conciliatory foreign policy; Czechs also have a high esteem for French culture (art and literature, appreciation of life, liberal heritage and romantic appeal).

The American invasion of Iraq has hurt the attitudes toward the USA and its policies all over the world.⁴⁹ The polls by CVVM showed that the Czechs were not at all sure in May 2004 whether “the United States strives to secure a stable and peaceful world” (47 percent of respondents agreed, 44 percent disagreed); just half of respondents (51 percent) agreed that “the U.S. foreign policy defends freedom, democracy, and human rights” (38 percent disagreed). Many (42 percent) believed that “the current U.S. foreign policy represents a threat to the current world” (in March 2003, just before the invasion of Iraq, that number was as high as 57 percent). A distinct majority (from 64 to 73 percent in 2003 and 2004 polling) opposed the notion that “the United States has a right to use military force against non-democratic regimes” and felt that the United States “neglects the opinion of the world community.” The most favorable rating of American foreign policy was provided by the sympathizers of the then strongest Czech party, the right-of-center Civic Democrats, yet even among them critical voices prevailed over positive judgments.

The popularity of the U.S.A. among the Czechs started to lag not only behind such countries as France and Great Britain but also behind Germany—see Graphs 1 and 2.



Moreover, attitudes to the U.S.A. became most controversial – as illustrated by the highest standard deviation of rating by respondents in the STEM agency survey in Graph 3.



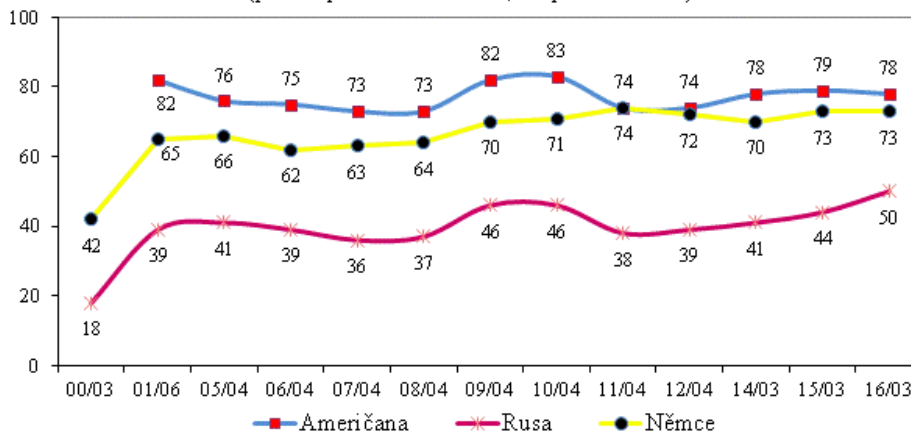
⁴⁹ D. Levinson and K. Christensen. (Eds.) *Global Perspectives on the United States*. Washington D.C. Great Barrington, MA: Berkshire Publishing, Volume 1 and 2.

Having lived under detested governments for generations, the Czechs are able to differentiate between people and their governments. Affinity to Americans as a people have remained high in the long run despite the controversial American policies and mixed Czech feelings about American presidents. This can be illustrated by a curve of acceptance of Americans (in comparison to Russians and Germans) in Graph 4 below.

Tolerating an American, Russian, and German Neighbor

"Jak byste nesl(a), kdybyste měl(a) za souseda: "

(podíl odpovědí "velmi dobře, bez problémů" v %)



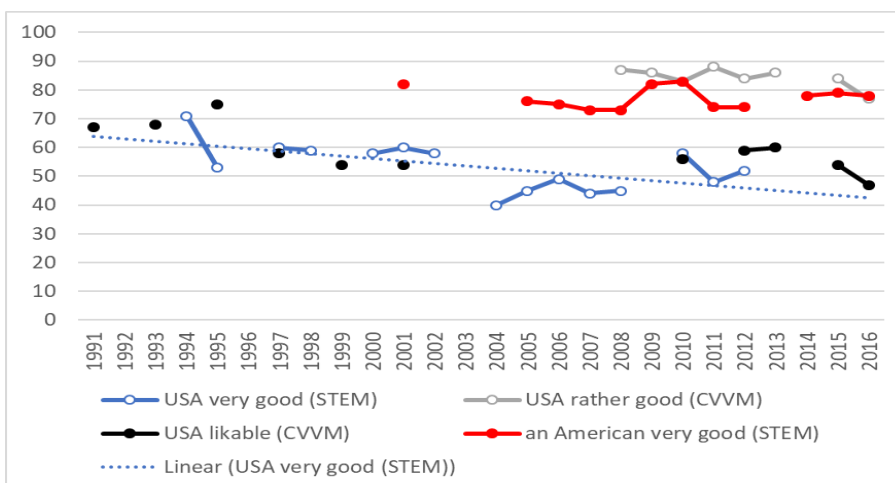
Graph 4. Tolerating an American, Russian, and German Neighbor (2000 to 2016)

Note: The graph shows a percentage of Czechs who would bear it very well and without problems if their neighbor were an American (blue line), a Russian (red line), or a German (yellow line).

Graph 4 indicates that the Czechs dependably express high sympathies to Americans, even if these feelings seem to be to some degree influenced by political events, such as the unpopular policy in Iraq, controversial plans to install radar in the Czech Republic, electing a trustworthy president Obama and easing off of the American political pressure. (Table 4, further in the text, attests that Obama was by far perceived as the most trustworthy among the recent presidents and presidential candidates.)

The Czechs consistently express high sympathies to Americans but with time, their support to the USA as a *country* has been more reserved, although still distinctly positive. For example, in a recent survey by CVVM from November 2016, 17% Czechs rated the USA as *very likable*, 30% as *likable*, 30% *neutral*, 11% as *unlikable* and only 6% as *very unlikable*. Thus, positive attitudes are expressed overall by 47% of respondents. However, in the past, over ten years ago (1991 to 1995), the positive attitudes toward the USA (and Americans, see point 2 on the bottom of the next page) were held by 67% to 75% respondents (CVVM 2017). Similar decline has been observed by STEM – note the linear downward trendline in Graph 5.

Although the methodology of various surveys differs, the data plotted together in Graph 5 convey the general impression and trends of the Czech perception of the USA and of Americans.



Graph 5. Positive Opinions of the USA and of the Americans across Time

(details about individual surveys, survey questions and response scale are on the bottom of this page)

Overall, Graph 5 indicates several general trends in the perception of the USA and Americans:

- All ratings are fairly *high*.
- The Czech ratings of the *Americans as a people seem to be better than their ratings of the USA as a country*. The red dots (indicating very good tolerance of an American as a neighbor) are higher than the blue and partly also black dots which express likability of the whole country. The high positioned grey dots assessing mutual relations relate also to the USA as a country but a “softer” four-point response scale was used without the neutral mid-point (scales are described on the bottom of this page).
- The attitudes suggest a *slight decline in time*. That may to some degree be explained by changes in American policy (controversial initiatives such as NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999, the Iraq invasion in 2003 and the plan to station the US radar and troops on the Czech soil in 2002-2009); early 2000s also brought a cool-off in mutual Czech-American relations: the USA started to shift their interest to other territories and the young European democracies prepared for joining the European Union. (E.g., the Czech Republic joined the EU in 2004, coincidentally, the year when the rating of the USA happened to be the lowest—at 40%).

1. Attitudes to Americans: STEM (2016) marked in red 2001-2016. How would you experience if you had an American for a neighbor (5-point response scale, top two are positive: very well, without problems). <https://www.stem.cz/jaky-je-vztah-obcanu-cr-k-ruznym-narodum-a-etnikum/>

2. Attitudes to the USA (and initially also to its citizens): CVVM (2017) marked in black 1991-2016. Rating of how (un)likable the US is to the respondent 1 – *very likable (velmi sympatická)* and 5 on the contrary, *very unlikable (velmi nesympatická)*. Top two are rated as positive (in the 1991-2010 period the question was a little different and included the citizens (i.e., how likable are the USA and its citizens). https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a2139/f9/pm170105.pdf

3. Attitudes to the USA: STEM (2012) marked in blue 1994-2012. Rating of how positive or negative relation to the USA the respondent has (do jaké míry příznivý či nepříznivý vztah těmto zemím máte), assessed on a school grading scale. The top two grades on a five-point scale are considered positive. https://www.stem.cz/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/2627_1606.pdf

4. Attitudes to the USA: CVVM (2016) marked in grey 2008-2016. How are, in your opinion, current relations of the USA with the Czech Republic? Four-point scale was used: *very good, rather good, rather bad or very bad?* „Jaké jsou podle Vás současné vztahy České republiky se zeměmi, které Vám přečtu? [Občané o vztazích ČR s některými zeměmi - listopad 2016]. https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a2133/f9/pm161216.pdf

4. The Current Situation in Context

President Trump, the Czech Republic, and the World

The USA started a new era with a new president. The Czech president Zeman has wholeheartedly welcomed Trump's election⁵⁰ and in his congratulatory letter intimated that he prides himself when his political opponents label him as the "Czech Donald Trump."⁵¹

Interestingly, Donald Trump happens to have a significant Czech link since his first wife Ivana née Zelníčková is Czech. They have three children: Donald John Jr. (*1977), Ivana Marie called Ivanka (*1981), and Eric Fredrick (*1984). Donald Trump visited Czechoslovakia (Moravia) in 1990 for a funeral of his father-in-law Miloš Zelníček (photo on the right).⁵²



The children of Ivana Trump enjoyed spending their vacations with Czech grandparents and the oldest son (Donald John Jr.) is fluent in Czech language.⁵³ The current (third) wife of President Trump happens to be also from the post-communist region – from Slovenia (wearing the white coat in the picture on the left)⁵⁴

President Zeman was visibly disappointed by the fact that Ivana Trump turned down the possibility to serve as an US Ambassador to the Czech Republic.^{55 56} However, Zeman's attitude was not necessarily in concord with the views of other Czech politician or of general public. CVVM reported that the Czechs accepted the election of President Trump with ambivalence (37% undecided, strongly satisfied and dissatisfied 8% each, rather satisfied and rather dissatisfied 14% each)⁵⁷ and mostly with distrust (30% trust: 43% distrust of the President Trump in a poll in 2016).

⁵⁰ Reuters (2016) <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-czech-idUSKBN1342HT>

⁵¹ http://zpravy.idnes.cz/v-zemanove-dopise-trumpovi-jsou-chyby-dhn-domaci.aspx?c=A161115_094244_domaci_jj

⁵² Photo source: <http://www.reflex.cz/clanek/zajimavosti/76109/tajemstvi-zlinskeho-pohrbu-pojdte-sepodivat-na-misto-kde-skoncila-valka-trumpovych.html>

⁵³ http://zlin.idnes.cz/donald-trump-byl-ve-zline-synove-vzpominaji-na-prazdniny-u-prarodicu-12x-zlin-zpravy.aspx?c=A161110_2285077_zlin-zpravy_ras

⁵⁴ https://www.google.com/search?q=trump+na+pohrbu+ve+ZLine&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjtiJfa2o7WAhUoqlQKHWJOAG8Q_AUICygC&biw=1996&bih=961#imgrc=30odf2Q6PPyb8M:

⁵⁵ <http://www.politico.eu/article/czech-president-furious-at-ivana-trump-for-turning-down-prague-role/>

⁵⁶ <http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/05/politics/ivana-trump-czech-republic-ambassador-twitter/index.html>

⁵⁷ https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a2146/f9/pm170117.pdf

Interestingly, satisfaction was expressed to a higher degree by those who followed the US elections with most interest, by men, by university educated respondents and by those who trust President Zeman.

Table 4 shows various levels of trust in recent American presidents and presidential candidates. G. W. Bush earned the least popularity—he received only 29% of Czech approval and as much as 69% of disapproval in April 2007; thus matching Russian president Putin who had 31% of approval and 66% disapproval in the same period.⁵⁸ The presidential candidates of 2016, Trump and H. Clinton earned very comparable, negative trust ratings by the Czechs.

Table 4. Trust in American Presidents and Presidential Candidates by Czech Population
 data for Obama, Clinton, and Trump from CVVM December 2016,⁵⁹ data for G. W. Bush from CVVM September 2006⁶⁰

Politician	Trust (trust/rather trust) : Distrust (distrust/rather distrust)	
George W. Bush	31% : 59%	[9% not sure, 1% does not know him]
Barack Obama	56% : 30%	[12% not sure, 2% does not know him]
Hillary Clinton	34% : 45%	[17% not sure, 4% does not know her]
Donald Trump	30% : 43%	[24% not sure, 3% does not know him]

Compare that with President Obama who at the height of his popularity (April 2009) earned approval of 85% of Czechs⁶¹ and great popularity worldwide. Obama was also very soon after his election awarded a Nobel Peace Prize “for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.”⁶² The award triggered a lot of surprise and even some regret,⁶³ it was an obvious feedback on the US foreign policy.

The map below⁶⁴ in Figure 2 depicts the confidence in President Trump based on the results of an international survey by Pew Charitable Funds. Prevalent sympathies are marked by the green color. Detailed results are presented in Graph 8. (Pew funds did not survey all countries).

Confidence in President Trump



Figure 2. Map of Confidence in President Trump – Source: Pew Charitable Funds

⁵⁸ STEM (2007) https://www.stem.cz/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/1296_936.pdf

⁵⁹ https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a2155/f9/pm170201.pdf

⁶⁰ https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a934/f9/100608s_pm61030.pdf

⁶¹ STEM (2009) <https://www.stem.cz/vyznamne-osobnosti-svetove-a-evropske-politiky/>

⁶² https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2009/

⁶³ cf., Nobel secretary regrets Obama peace prize <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34277960>

⁶⁴ http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/06/26/u-s-image-suffers-as-publics-around-world-question-trumps-leadership/pg_2017-06-26-us_image-00-2/

The World on American Culture, Americans, the USA, and the American President (Based on the Pew Charitable Fund Surveys ⁶⁵)

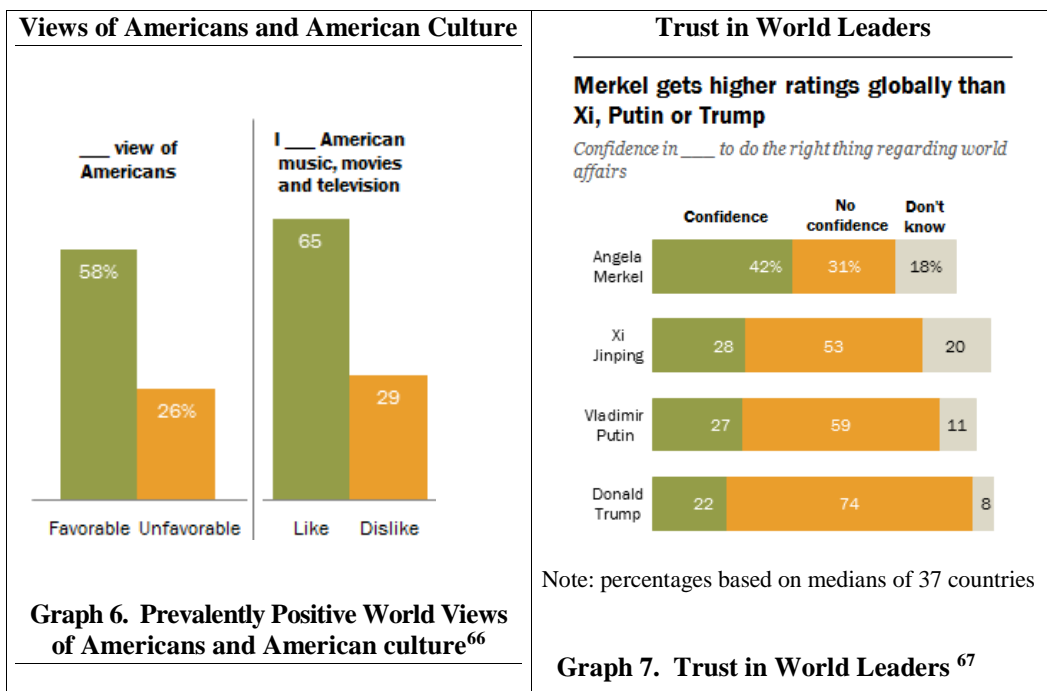
The Pew survey deserves a closer attention. Although Pew (2017) did not include the Czech Republic among the surveyed countries, the results are consistent with the findings in the Czech Republic which we mentioned earlier.

The Pew data can be generalized into the following findings:

- the world loves American culture, more precisely, 65% of Pew respondents do (Graph 6);
- most respondents (58%) like Americans as a nation (Graph 8);
- the world respondents are somewhat critical of the USA as a country but still refer to it mostly favorably (49% favorable : 39% unfavorable) (Graph 3);
- most of the world (as many as 74%) does not trust President Trump (Graph 3).

Indeed, these results are in a good agreement with the Czech surveys results which we presented earlier and which also indicate high liking of the Americans, more reserved affinity to the USA and distrust to the current president (Graph 5 and Table 4).

Importantly, there is not much trust overall in the current world leaders. Graph 7 illustrates that from the world powers, Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, appears to have more trust than the Presidents of the other world powers—the USA, Russia, or China.



⁶⁵ <http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/06/26/u-s-i>

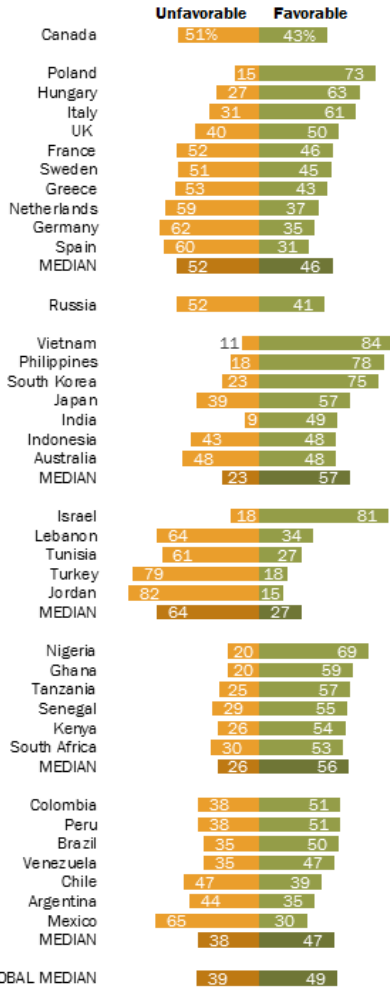
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⁶⁶ http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/06/26/u-s-image-suffers-as-publics-around-world-question-trumps-leadership/pg_2017-06-26-us_image-00-7/

⁶⁷ http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/06/26/u-s-image-suffers-as-publics-around-world-question-trumps-leadership/pg_2017-06-26-us_image-00-4/

Views of the US vary across regions but are mostly favorable

Views of U.S.

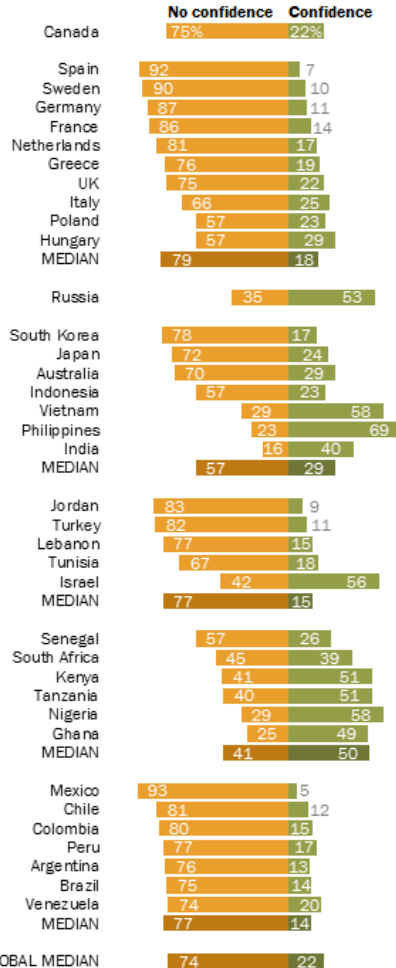


Source: Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey. Q12a.

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Confidence in President Trump tends to be low across the world, highest confidence is in Asia and Africa

How much confidence do you have in U.S. President Donald Trump to do the right thing regarding world affairs?



Source: Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey. Q30a.

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Graph 8. International Views of the USA and President Trump

Similarities and Differences between Typical American and Czech Attitudes

In real democracies, politics does not depend just on politicians and economists, the people and their preferences play a role as well. In that respect, the relations between the Czechs and Americans could also be a result of compatibility of their attitudes and values: some of them are in concord, others are not. As in relationships among people: some differences may add interest to mutual relations, some can be irreconcilable.

Nations tend to have their ethnic peculiarities and a lot has been written about “national characters” (see a tongue-in-cheek generalization in the box on the right⁶⁸ and try to enrich it with references to Americans and Czechs). Still, keep in mind one should be never prejudiced and in advance assign stereotypes to individuals. A certain compromise between national and individual character is a group mentality, an approach which we also used in our research (Klicperova-Baker & Kostal 2015) mentioned two pages further.

Heaven is where the police
are British, the chefs
Italian, the mechanics
German, the lovers
French, and it's all
organized by the Swiss.

Hell is where the police
are German, the chefs are
British, the mechanics
French, the lovers Swiss,
and it is all organized by
the Italians.

Similarities - Democratic Character and Subjection to Populism

Like-minded democratic character. This is the most substantial basis for positive coexistence. Democracies are fond of each other, that is the basis of democratic peace – *pax democratica* (Feierabend & Klicperová-Baker 2015). Czechoslovakia was originally created with these values in mind and with the USA as a model. All truly democratic countries share democratic spirit of a significant percentage of their citizens. The democratic spirit includes important civic values such as freedom, equality, human rights, the rule of law, civic political culture, civic patriotism, and civility (Feierabend & Klicperová-Baker 2015). The corresponding psychological characteristics include the following:

Nonviolence, tolerance, benevolence, warmth,
capacity to identify broadly and positively with others;
Autonomy, healthy ego strength, critical judgment, cognitive independence,
harmoniously integrated self, emotional security;
Openness (ideational & social) flexibility and adaptability,
concentration on more than one value
Participation, activism: interest, knowledge, decision, action
Cognitive flexibility: tolerance of ambiguity
Moral reasoning common good and universalizable moral principles

Populism on both continents. While some part of the population in every nation is democratic, another may be easily swayed by demagogic populism to non-democracy. The Czechs cannot stage much of a surprise at the election of 2016 which brought into office President Trump. After all, at that time the Czechs already had their “Czech Trump” President Zeman. Also, as president G. W. Bush was elected for two terms, so was President Klaus (although not by a popular vote).

The populists focus on emotionality rather than on rational thinking. They demagogically abuse nationalistic feelings and fears of immigrants or terrorists. The most susceptible are people with lower education struggling with adaptation to the modern life, those who were ‘left behind’ by modern technologies and globalization, the unemployed and seniors, people overwhelmed by negativity and passive approach to life. In the post-communist territory these people may be labeled with the ‘post-communist syndrome’ (which will be in more details described on next pages); in the United States, they have been, not without controversy, designated e.g., as “deplorable” or as bitter people who cling to their antipathies...

⁶⁸ Photo source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/304626362274864110>

Differences

Differences and Misperceptions. Totalitarian propaganda under communism along with Cold War information barriers had severed some of the good traditional Czech-American relations. At the same time, as a boomerang effect, it triggered many unrealistic illusions about the USA. As the Czechs began to learn more about the USA and travel and study there, they started to correct some of these idealized images.

Some values dear to the Czechs are naturally expected in Americans based on only superficial knowledge gained only from the news or American films. In them, all Americans appear to the world as very progressive, liberal and perhaps hedonistic; it may take some time to realize that this stereotype may be valid for only some strata of the American population.

For the Czechs, who are an extremely secular nation, it is often shocking to learn that religion may have a stronger impact on the thinking of average Americans than science. On the other hand, the Americans may be surprised to see that the Czechs may be more progressive and tolerant of modern lifestyles (soft drugs, birth control, gay life) than most Americans. The Czechs have much less respect for law and law enforcers than Americans do. Czechs learned how to cheat the system, how to corrupt and how 'to Schwejk' which is harmful for democracy.

For Americans, all things 'public,' such as social programs, welfare, housing projects and municipal transport tend to sound negative as a giveaway. The Czechs (and Europeans in general) profess social compassion (social welfare, humanism, and solidarity rather than social Darwinism) and they are willing to pay higher taxes for increased social benefits simply as a matter of culture and civilization. The Czechs appreciate "free" public education on all levels, health care, culture, and public TV & radio subsidized from their taxes. The Czechs do enjoy freedom and democracy but are less willing to allocate taxes for military spending. Europe is grateful to America for saving her from Nazism in WWII but still seems to have problems to stand on its feet with respect to security and defense. Europe was at loss during the Yugoslav civil wars in 1990s and it fully recognizes the importance of NATO and the American presence in Europe for security reasons.⁶⁹

Czech Skepticism vs. American Optimism, Even Naivety

Skepticism is a strong aspect of the Czech (and Central/Eastern European) stereotype. In a more extreme, fatalistic form, it has been described in the former Soviet Union (e.g., Goodwin 2000).

Skepticism has both adaptive and destructive aspects. The positive skepticism is expressed by a famous saying "Optimism is a lack of information." It is in more detail described by T. Pojar (2015):

"As Czechs, we are by nature sceptics. That does not mean that we do not believe in freedom, liberty, and democracy. It just means that we do not believe in miraculous or imposed solutions and we do usually try to warn of wearing rosy glasses based on wishful thinking. We are not always right and our skepticism can be an obstacle. At the same time, wishful thinking can easily lead to the opposite results of those intended."

The destructive skepticism seems to be a fundamental aspect of what we coined as *post-totalitarian or post-communist syndrome* (Klicperová et al. 1997a). The syndrome is characterized by passive negativity and learned helplessness. Its main symptoms are summed up in Table 5.

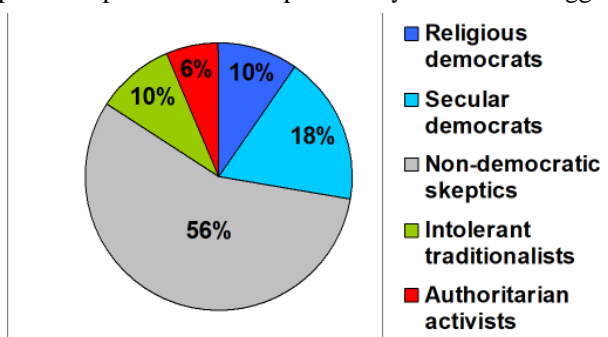
⁶⁹ A recent survey (Center for Transatlantic Relations 2014, p. 1) confirms that for as many as 70% Czechs joining NATO was a right thing, 65% agree that having USA as an ally is important for the security of their republic, and 54% agree that the U.S. presence in Europe is important to keep the balance of powers of Russia and Germany.

Table 5. Main Symptoms Constituting the Post-Communist Syndrome

	INDIVIDUAL LEVEL	INTER PERSONAL LEVEL	INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL	SOCIETAL LEVEL
VALUES AND MORALITY	Lack of moral values and integrity	Disrespect, prejudice, dishonesty	Legitimization of immorality	Lack of civic virtues, avoidance of responsibility
SELF	Suppressed individuality	Conformity, feeling of inferiority	Provincial loss in the system or its clever abuse	“Us” and “them” perspective
COGNITIONS	Rigidity, defensive mechanisms	Distrust, prejudice	Ignorance or shrewdness	Black/white thinking
EMOTIONS	Anxiety, depression	Envy, fear, xenophobia, hatred	Distrust, apathy	Resentment, nostalgia
ACTIONS	Passivity, learned helplessness	Rudeness, cunning, utilitarianism	Lack of initiative, opportunism	Alienation and parasitism

The post-communist syndrome permeates the whole personality. If enough people emanate the negativity, it manifests itself on a societal level. This destructive skepticism on a large scale can become obvious as so called ‘bad mood,’ ‘foul-’ or ‘blah mood’ (blbá nálada). In the Czech Republic, ‘bad mood’ surfaced after a surprisingly long period of post-revolutionary euphoria and became obvious on a large scale in 1997, pointed out by Václav Havel.

We empirically observed the ‘bad mood’ when we studied European mentalities by a secondary data analysis of the European Values Study (Klicperova-Baker & Kostal 2015). In the Czech Republic, bad mood (non-democratic skepticism) appeared as the most prominent among the typical five European mentalities – see Graph 9. Was it a sign of a transitory bad mood, superficial pose or a post-communist personality structure as suggested in Table 5?



Graph 9. The Czech Profile of Five European Mentalities Based on Data from the European Values Study 2011 (collected in 2008, at the time of the economic crisis)

Almost 10 years later, we collected new data for the Czech Republic. This time in the economically prosperous period of 2016-2017 but without the context of other European countries. Preliminary analyses indicate that non-democratic skepticism (bad mood) is still significant but appears characteristic of a smaller fraction of citizens, i.e., of only about a quarter of Czech population.

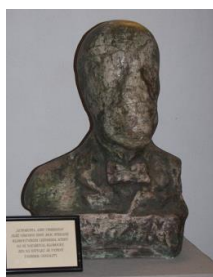
The differences between the typical Czech and American moods are obvious to most tourists and expats. They tend to witness a cultural phenomenon of frowning Czechs and smiling Americans. While the American “how are you?” triggers a reliable positive response, the Czechs are much more reserved in responding to such a question. Check the photograph on the right which became a viral post on the Prague Visitor site.⁷⁰ The post triggered a lively debate. The best responses on the Cityspys network include:⁷¹



“I grew up in Texas, smiling is expected and caring about people you don’t know is the norm, it’s considered rude if you don’t smile when you meet someone” (posted by ‘inspirature’).

“When you live under a repressive authority (be it a government, an asshole boss, an abusive parent, whatever) you learn ESPECIALLY not to show happiness when you are happy,” comments ‘tarlton,’ “it’s just an invitation for some-one to demonstrate their power by ruining your good day.”

L. Ann (2012) in an expats article on a Czech poor customer service⁷² concludes: I think I’m not alone in preferring an honest frown to a fake grin.



Speaking of a grin, Czechs love humor. The personality who surprisingly won the competition “The Greatest Czech” of all times was a fictitious polyhistor Jara da Cimrman (his ‘autobust’ is pictured on the left⁷³). The Czechs are also often personified by a more down to earth comic figure of good soldier Švejk⁷⁴ (picture on the right). The Nazi leader who was in charge of the Czech lands during WWII famously stated that the Czechs are laughing beasts—before he was assassinated by Czechoslovak patriots.



Czech Peaceful Conflict Resolution vs. American Hawks. The life at the crossroad of Europe with Germany and Russia as powerful neighbors and the experience of world wars, which started in Central Europe, taught the Czechs to appreciate peace more than freedom. Being a nation of only 10 million, the Czechs prefer to solve conflicts without violence, by creative problem solving or a rational compromise⁷⁵ (Klicperová-Baker et al. 1997b). Had they behaved differently, they would not have survived till the present time.

On the other hand, Americans have a more balanced ratio of doves and hawks. Americans are in general fonder of weapons, they were decisive in winning WWII for democracy. However, the hawks also dragged the US to wars without clear end.

The Czech Appreciation of Truth vs. Post-Truth Propaganda.

Czechs are often pragmatic but many also stand by respectable ideals. Truth is one of such fundamental values. The most respected national hero, Jan Hus, died for truth, burnt at stake by the Pope. The motto of the Czech presidential flag says Pravda vítězí (picture on the right). This motto was personified both by the founder of the republic, T. G. Masaryk as well as by his democratic successor, President Václav Havel who wrote about the *life in truth* and moral integrity (cf. the book *Living in Truth* by Havel and Vladislav 1990).



⁷⁰ <https://www.praguevisitor.eu/fitin-stand-czech-republic/>

⁷¹ <https://cz.cityspys.network/prague/features/usa-vs-czech-smile-goes-viral-reddit/>

⁷² <https://www.expats.cz/prague/article/czech-culture/customer-service-in-the-czech-republic/>

⁷³ Photo source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cimrman_autobusta.jpg

⁷⁴ Photo source: <http://czechfolks.com/2009/01/25/josef-lada-drawing-came-alive-karikatura-od-josefa-lady-ozivla/>

⁷⁵ When the USA hastened to start the war in Iraq, they put a lot of pressure on the allies to join in. That clashed with the Czech historical appreciation for *peaceful conflict resolution*. Although the Czech Republic—part of “the new Europe” in the words of Donald Rumsfeld—belonged to the more hawkish part of the European Union, many Czechs would have preferred if the USA had shown more restraint rather than starting an unnecessary war.

All these (the respect for T. G. Masaryk and Václav Havel, the motto on the presidential flag and the huge monument to Jan Hus in the Old Town Square) may be mainly proclamations; many Czechs do not hesitate to bend the rules, be dishonest and swindle, especially when cheating authorities. Yet, even proclamations count as valid moral reminders.

Some of the recent American policies appear to successfully challenge the value of truth. The pretext for the war in Iraq was fabricated, scientific facts on global warming are falsified.⁷⁶ President Trump and his Orwellian alternative facts⁷⁷ seemed to have launched the whole post-factual era,⁷⁸ the word post-truth became the word of the year.⁷⁹

Hedonists and Bon Vivants vs. Asceticism or Possible Bigotry? The Czechs believe in the good life, “live and let live,” enjoyment of life’s pleasures, vacations, good food & drinks, accessible fine art etc. Are they *bon vivants* (people with refined tastes) or hedonists?⁸⁰ It depends. Our survey (Klicperova-Baker et al. 2007) to some degree confirmed this trait: We identified the following main Czech value orientations a) tolerant hedonistic liberalism, b) amoral negativistic post-communism, c) conservative Christian values, and d) peaceful asceticism. The first one, tolerant hedonistic liberalism clashes with the traditional ideal of American puritanism and the protestant work ethic.

The Czechs (and Europeans in general) also wonder why when sex and aggression are being compared, sexuality and nudity tends to be understood in Europe as something more natural and acceptable while in the USA the more tolerable instinct is aggression and violence. Perhaps it has to do something with their fundamentalist religion and its cruel asexual God?

Secularism vs. Piety. Secularism as a very typical Czech trait. It is rooted in Czech history and in the fact that Jan Hus, a president of Charles University, a priest and a progressive religious reformer (a hundred years ahead of M. Luther) was burnt at the stake by the Pope as a heretic. After finally losing the Hussite wars, the Czechs were forcibly re-catholicized. (Of course, Czechs have also relatively little respect for authorities in general. Unfortunately, also rather low respect for law and law enforcement.) Czechs have a hard time believing that in the USA, a country renown for technology and first-class universities, more people believe in hell than in evolution and that Americans would never elect a secular president.

Secularism does not necessarily make people immoral; Czechs tend to be secular humanists, they appreciate peace and compassion. When they have to participate in world conflicts, they tend to choose helping professions, mainly in medical units, chemical detection and ordnance disposal.

Respect for Education vs. Anti-intellectual Tendencies. The most popular King and Emperor, Charles IV, had excellent education. The founding president of Czechoslovakia, T. G. Masaryk, was a university professor, so were his successors Beneš and Klaus. Had the communists allowed Havel to study, he might have been professor as well. The Czechs have a high respect for John A. Comenius (Komenský), a humanist pedagogue of 17th ct. Comenius is on Czech banknotes as well as a few other men (and woman) of letters. In the Czech Republic, former presidents of the Academy of Sciences have a chance to be the President.

One of the greatest hazards for the USA and indeed, the world, lies in the popular anti-intellectualism which is often tied to religion as if ignorance was a virtue.⁸¹ Science does not have respect even by the current US Secretary of Education and some members of the House

⁷⁶ <http://www.factcheck.org/issue/global-warming/> (among others, the article [Trump Official Wrong About Warming, Again](#) on the Energy Secretary Rick Perry from *June 21, 2017*.)

⁷⁷ <http://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-et-jc-george-orwell-20170125-story.html>

⁷⁸ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-sirota/welcome-to-the-postfactua_b_42527.html

⁷⁹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/16/post-truth-named-2016-word-of-the-year-by-oxford-dictionaries/?utm_term=.e0752c19f56a

⁸⁰ Surveys show that the French, rather surprisingly, are the most favorable nation of the Czechs (right after the Slovaks). Could it be because of the appreciation of life and taste which the Czechs and the French share?

⁸¹ Note the still topical classic book by Richard Hofstadter (1964) *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*.

Science, Space, and Technology Committee. Anti-intellectual politicians are courting so called “low information voters.” In American politics, “the professor” can be a mockery (Sen. Elizabeth Warren can attest) and the gates of (vice)presidency are wide open even to very non-intellectual candidates. Multiple scholars write about “dumbing down” of America.⁸²

Different Meanings of Nationhood: Americanness and Czechness. The Czechs and Americans tend to be defined by different values, although there is also variance within the individual nations. An empirical probe (Feierabend et al. 1997) among the Czech and American students (205 students of Charles University in Prague and San Diego State University, USA) illustrated some of this variation. Students were asked what does it mean to them personally to be Czech or American and their task was to correspondingly rank-order a set of values. The Q-factor analysis of their responses yielded four factors which are presented below in Table 6.

Table 6. Schemata of Substance of Nationhood. Four factors explained 69.7% of total variance

Items	Factor I Czech cultural nationalism 29.6%	Factor II American civic nationalism (libertarian, constitutional) 19.6%	Factor III US-Czech civic nationalism (pacifistic, egalitarian) 14.5%	Factor IV American entrepreneurial nationalism 6%
Language	1.63	-.65	-.71	.50
History	1.50	-.15	-.75	-1.58
Literature & arts	1.34	-.96	-.26	.30
Education	.94	-.19	.97	.71
Freedom	.51	1.57	1.10	.25
Democracy	.43	1.41	-.12	-.03
Constitution	-.04	1.54	-.62	-1.24
Peace	-.26	-.59	1.99	.21
Science & technology	-.55	-.37	-.20	1.42
Equality	-.63	-.01	1.58	.00
Food	-.69	-1.57	-1.05	.78
Great leaders	-.71	-.57	-.75	-.90
Free enterprise	-.85	1.17	-.99	1.62
Religion	-1.13	-.99	.70	-1.68
Great power	-1.48	.37	-.87	-.35

The results confirmed the hypothesized differences in students’ national identities. The primary Czech factor was characterized by cultural values (especially the Czech language, awareness of joint history and cultural heritage, secularism, and awareness of the country’s limited power). In contrast, the primary American factor was civic, defined by freedom, constitution, and democracy. The third most significant factor was shared; it was a pacifistic/egalitarian factor. The fourth, typically American was a forward looking entrepreneurial factor.

These results can be used as an illustration of both civic/ethnic differences as well as mutual compatibility. The match between partners (whether individuals or nations) may be based on their identity/likeness or on the basis of a matching complementarity.

⁸² G. M. Murray (2009) *The Dumbing Down of America*; J. T. Gatto & Z. Slayback (2017) *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling*; J. Delisle (2014) *Dumbing Down America: The War on Our Nation’s Brightest Young Minds (And What We Can Do To Fight Back)*; C. T. Iserbyt (2011). *The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America*; among others.

5. Complex Contexts

The perspectives on the USA are influenced by an array of wider circumstances of political, cultural and economic character:

a) Political context (e.g., compatibility of policies of international allies and alliances)

Although the Czechs gladly rejoined Europe and the Western world (NATO and EU), becoming a part of greater political, economic, and military alliances, this also brought along a non-trivial loss of sovereignty, national identity, and subordination to collective rules. The populists (namely, President Klaus) scared people that if the Czech Republic joins the EU, it will dissolve like a lump of sugar in the European coffee.⁸³

Additionally, the Czech government had to deal with the *pressure from the American administration which was often in conflict with the demands of the EU* thus, incompatible requests regarding the war in Iraq resulted in a clash between the “new and old Europe,” there were conflicting pressures to purchase fighter jets from particular countries (American F-16 or European Gripen) etc.

b) Economic and cultural contexts – e.g., fears of economic colonization and globalization

The post-communist transition to a market economy brought initially an enriching experience of newly imported goods and culture. However, the commercial substance of this wave became soon apparent when powerful pressures of global market and big food chains made their way into daily life. National products (e.g., popular drinks, child cartoons) were replaced with not necessarily better imports. When Czechs and Slovaks coordinated their complaints about lower quality of Western foods intended for Eastern European consumers, they were ridiculed for waging “a war on food.”⁸⁴ Big chains hurt diversity and choice by installing global uniformity and universal pop culture. Many citizens felt that colonization by the Soviet Union is only being replaced by Western economic colonization—“McDonaldization” and viewed this process as overwhelming and arrogant. Needless to say, language also began to change.

As early as in 2001, STEM agency⁸⁵ asked the Czechs about their international concerns. (See Table 7). It appears that the main worries about safety threats from the East and economic and political influence from the West prevail until now.

Table 7. International Threat. (The source of data STEM 2001)

Military danger		Organized crime		Economic subjection		Political Subjection	
Russia	49 %	Russia	41 %	Germany	68 %	Germany	38 %
Balkans	13 %	Ukraine	32 %	USA	15 %	USA	31 %
Germany	9 %	Balkans	8 %	Russia	7 %	Russia	18 %
China	7 %	USA	4 %	No country	3 %	No country	8 %
No country	7 %						

A similar question was also asked recently (STEM 2015). In the descending order, the Czechs ranked as the top most dangerous the following phenomena: Islamic fundamentalism (85%), influx of immigrants (76%), terrorism (75%) international organized crime (74%), situation in the Middle East (65%), poverty in developing countries (49%), and Russian politics (43%). (For comparison, American politics was perceived as very dangerous by 42% and Chinese politics by 41%.)

⁸³ Note the ambivalent controversy and skeptical rebelliousness related to the entry of the Czech Republic to the EU, e.g. at <http://www.dw.com/en/czechs-stick-it-to-the-eu-with-sugary-video/a-3624968>. Strong political and economic pressures caused in some a boomerang effect of cooling off or withdrawal and sympathies to so called euroskeptics.

⁸⁴ <http://www.dw.com/en/is-eastern-european-nutella-worse/a-39748826>

⁸⁵ STEM (2001) The Trends (in Czech). <https://www.stem.cz/vojensky-nas-ohrozuj-e-rusko-ekonomickou-hrozbu-je-podle-obcanu-nemecko/>

Conclusion: The state of Democracy as a Basis for Closeness

Democracy – The Foundation of the US-Czech Partnership

According to a famous quote by T. G. Masaryk: “States are upheld by the ideals of which they were born.” This wisdom can be probably applied to international relations. International partnerships are upheld by the ideals of which they were born.” For the Czech-US partnership this ideal is democracy. Czechoslovakia was founded as a democracy with the U.S.A. as a model and the foundations of the Czechoslovak-US partnership were laid by strong democrats and humanists with bright visions: Woodrow Wilson and T. G. Masaryk. (They both also happened to be university professors, one of political science, the other of sociology.) Following the break which was caused by Nazism and Communism, this relationship could be revived only by another surge of democracy—and by a democrat, V. Havel (twice the president of Czechoslovakia and twice of the Czech Republic).

Honeymoon – The Democratic Highpoint

Democratic regimes stand out by liberty, equality, and feelings of fraternity.⁸⁶ It is only logical that the overall spirit of freedom and brotherhood strengthens the bonds between democracies (the democratic peace). The Czech-US friendship was manifested with such intensity and sincerity that it was seen as a renewed honeymoon, golden age, or ‘romantic alliance.’⁸⁷ President Havel was able to nurture outstanding relationships with all American presidents, G. H. W. Bush, Clinton, G. W. Bush and Obama; they all visited Prague and vice versa, President Havel was the only Czech president invited to Washington.

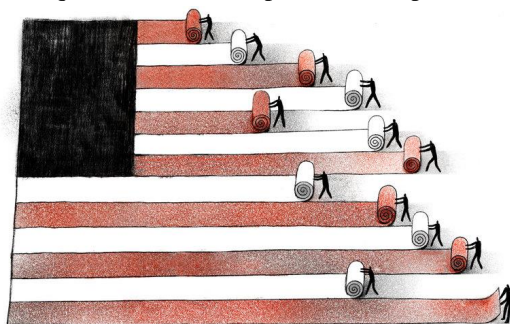
This democratic bond of partnership well fits the theory of democratic peace (*Pax democratica*) and the thesis that democracies are amiable to each other. Democracies are created by democrats—democratic voters electing democratic statesmen. Hence, it is crucial that there is a robust democratic spirit in a substantial part of the populace. (It would warrant another research to tell how prevalent this democratic mentality has to be. Real democrats tend to be active, diligent voters and well represented in the elites, perhaps a quarter of the population may suffice under ideal or at least normal circumstances?)

Disenchantment and Abandonment of Good Democratic Practices on Both Sides.

Regrettably, the circumstances in the current era are far from normal. Both countries faced their challenges and failed to nurture the democratic spirit of their citizens. Under the strain of 9/11, economic challenges, and climate change which causes unrest and immigration waves, the priorities of the populace change and as a result there is also a change in politicians, their political course and the Zeitgeist of the whole era. The romance changed to disenchantment.

The USA fell for the provocation of 9/11: nationalism, isolationism and greed played a role in seducing the country to an unnecessary war in Iraq. Obama leadership seemed to promise a reverse which did not materialize. The country experienced an increasing economic inequality, a sharp political & cultural split and a decline in political civility. All this weakened the feeling of equality, fraternity and liberty of Americans and with that the democratic substance of the USA.

Cartoon: Juliana Brion, NYTimes, 9/7/ 2017.



⁸⁶ Feierabend & Klicperova-Baker (2015)

⁸⁷ Jackson (2015) spoke of ‘a romantic alliance’ and pointed out: “Americans embraced Havel as a secular saint, and the Czech embraced America as a symbol of all the culture and consumerism that had been denied to them by communism and misrule.”

The U.S.A. is being criticized for being an oligarchy with unlimited political bribery (in words of a former President Carter⁸⁸) and for the fact that “America’s corporate and political elites now form a regime of their own and they privatize democracy“ (Bill Moyers⁸⁹). The American decline in democratic spirit and freedom is reflected by falling indices by Freedomhouse and the Economist Intelligence Unit which will be discussed later in detail.

In the most recent elections (2016), populist rhetoric won and with it isolationism, nationalism, and many would argue, also racism. The USA started to withdraw from international treaties, most importantly, from the deal on climate control⁹⁰ and from economic treaties with its allies.

At the same time, the Czech Republic faced vital challenges as well. That strained the democratic processes and made the young country too focused on itself. Around 1997, the excitement by so far very smooth economic transition from communism soured as it became apparent how much of the national wealth was frittered away and stolen in mismanaged privatization. It turned out that the economists neglected the rule of law and morality. Corruption was an insurmountable problem which hurt both the economy and politics. None of the presidents who succeeded Havel—neither Václav Klaus nor Miloš Zeman (pictured below⁹¹), both economists, were able to follow Havel’s footsteps. They lacked his humanism, idealism, and civility and rather than cultivating relationships with the Western democracies, they oriented their politics to non-democratic Eastern powers, Russia and China and courted their leaders. (Not surprisingly, neither was invited to the White House.) Some Prime Ministers attempted to counter-balance the presidential politics, but not Prime Minister Topolánek who publicly, from the position of the EU president, sneered at Obama’s attempts to stimulate American economy right at the time when Obama was to visit Prague. Moreover, the Czechs (although they overwhelmingly agreed with their place in NATO) were not willing to double their NATO contributions and military spending to reach the requested level of 2% of GDP.



It should be noted that the Czech Republic became a kind of an *enfant terrible* also in its relation to the EU, not just to the US. It showed disinterest to join the euro currency zone, dragged its feet, requested exceptions or plainly refused some EU initiatives (e.g., to boycott Russia after her annexation of Crimea,⁹² to strengthen the pollution limits, to settle on European Constitution, to fulfill immigration quotas). The Czech politicians focused on inner political scuffles even at the time of the Czech EU presidency (during which the Czechs displayed in Brussels a hoax mystification art *Entropa* by David Černý, a parody on stereotypes of individual EU member states which irritated some of the nations (e.g., Bulgaria, portrayed as a set of Turkish toilets, GB was already portrayed as missing).⁹³

With respect to economy, after a bit of a stumble during the economic crisis, the economic relations with the USA have been slowly increasing and America has always been a welcome investor. However, some significant projects did not go through (e.g., Boeing withdrew from a contract with Aero Vodochody and Westinghouse still has not been offered a large assignment to build two new atomic reactors in Temelín.) The Czech Republic has a positive balance in the trade with the USA which is the third biggest economic partner of the Czech Republic outside the EU after China and Russia, but is still only 13th in the ranking, with just 2% of the share of the Czech foreign trade.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/videos/jimmy-carter-u-s-is-an-oligarchy-with-unlimited-political-bribery-20150731>

⁸⁹ <http://www.pbs.org/now/commentary/moyers21.html>

⁹⁰ <http://www.npr.org/2017/06/01/531090243/trumps-speech-on-paris-climate-agreement-withdrawal-annotated>

⁹¹ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Milo%C5%A1_Zeman_2013.JPG

⁹² http://www.lidovky.cz/zeman-meli-bychom-zrusit-sankce-proti-rusku-jsou-vyrazem-bezradnosti-1zj-/zpravy-domov.aspx?c=A160825_112730_ln_domov_bri

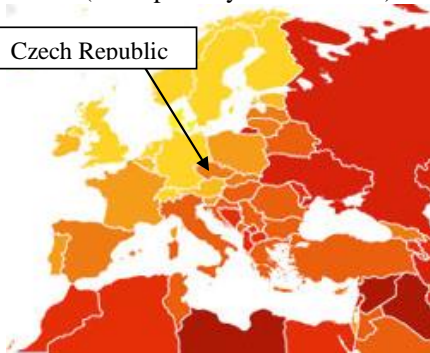
⁹³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entropa>

⁹⁴ The economic data are borrowed from the article by Kovanda (2015) The Czech-US Economic and Trade Relations after 1989. Glenn et al. Czech-American Relations: A Roadmap for the Future. (Pp. 61-79.)

Overall, the Czech Republic is doing fairly well (especially in comparison to most of other post-communist countries) yet it is still failing to catch up with established democracies. Prevailing post-communist mentality (passive negativism) of some people seemed to have expanded to a more general phenomenon – societal “bad mood.”

Figure 3. Corruption in Europe
(Transparency International)

Corruption and fraud still do not measure up to a successful democracy. This is illustrated by the corruption index of Transparency international⁹⁵ which is illustrated on the map to the right. The current rating of corruption in the world (Transparency International 2016) puts the Czech Republic on the 47th position from 176 rated countries. (The best, on top, are Denmark and New Zealand, along with several other Scandinavian countries; the USA is rated on the 18th position).



The rise of Populist Leaders as a Result of ‘Blah Mood’ and Mobilized ‘Deplorables’

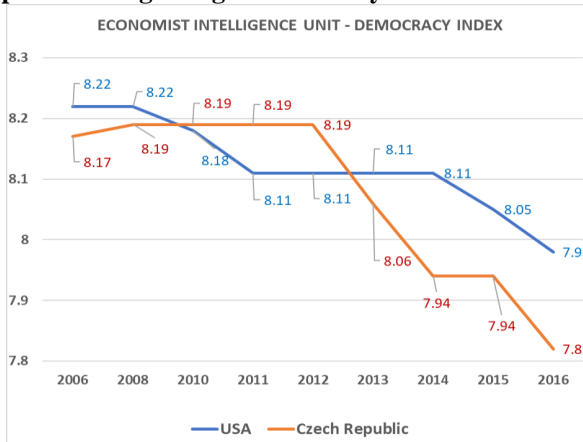
In brief, both the US and the Czech Republic, each in its own manner, abandoned open-minded pro-democratic policies and their concern for global problems. They diverted from global issues and from attention to each other and although individualistically focused on their homeland, have not progressed much with solving their own grave problems either. (The US was still tied up with the unending Afghani and Iraq situation, with rising inequality and cultural divides; the Czech Republic suffered from economic and political corruption).

Even worse, the citizens in both countries failed to vote for those who would honestly address their problems and chose populist. nationalistic leaders. In the Czech Republic those most vulnerable to populism were passive and negativistic post-communists, carriers of the so called “blah mood.” In the USA populism was most likely among the underemployed white men or the “deplorables,” the alienated and angry (Diamond 2016, p. 158) who were ostentatiously abandoned by both Democrats and Republicans. In both countries, people looked for salvation outside the established political parties. That is how populist, nationalist, and narcissist leaders gained power. Needless to say, democracy, rule of law and civility were not their priorities.

Downgraded Democracies

As a result, the quality of democracy both in the USA and in the Czech Republic declined. The rating by the Economist Intelligence Unit⁹⁶ illustrated in Graph 10 and Table 8 takes into account: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation, and political culture. The Economist Intelligence Unit downgraded both countries from “full democracy” to “flawed democracy.” See the latest map of the world in Figure 4 on the next page.

Graph 10. Downgrading of Democracy in the Last Decade



⁹⁵ https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016

⁹⁶ <https://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index>

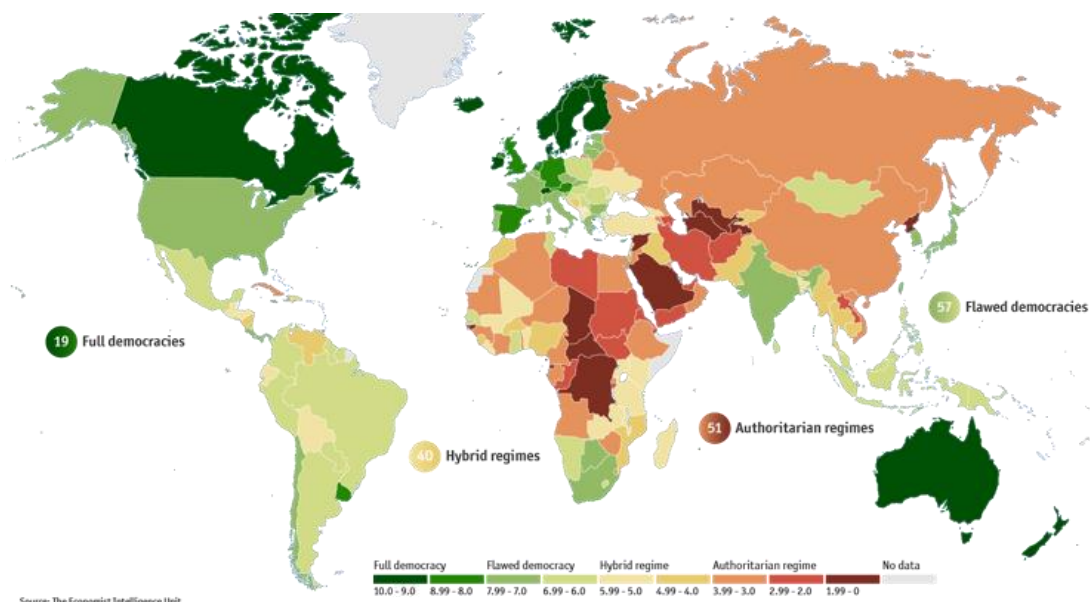


Figure 4. The world map of the Democracy Index by the Economist Intelligence Unit. Full democracies are marked by two darkest shades of green.

Table 8. Full and Flawed Democracies according to the Economist Intelligence Unit (2016)

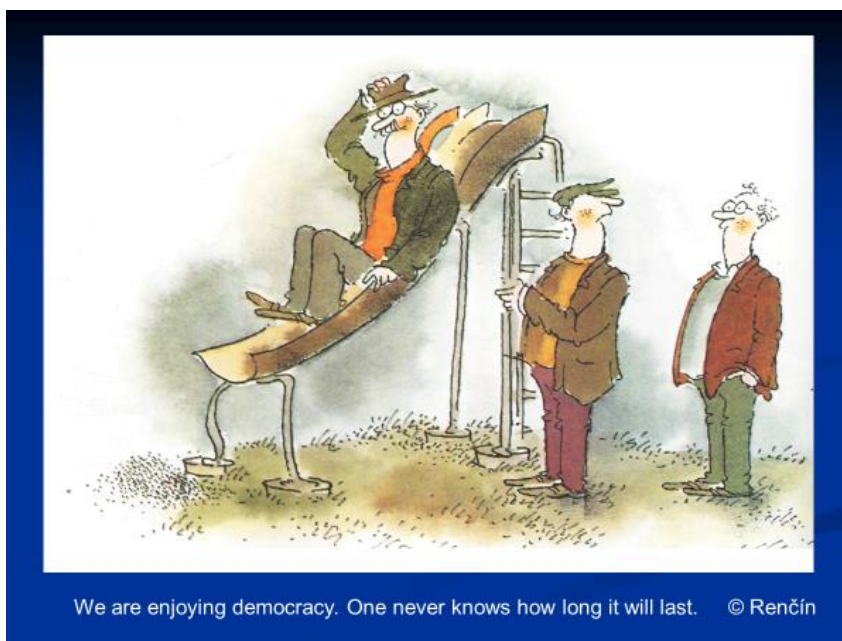
FULL DEMOCRACIES⁹⁷	FLAWED DEMOCRACIES
1 Norway 9.93	20 Japan 7.99
2 Iceland 9.50	21 USA 7.98
3 Sweden 9.39	21 Italy 7.98
4 New Zealand 9.26	23 Cabo Verde 7.94
5 Denmark 9.20	24 France 7.92
6 Canada 9.15	24 South Korea 7.92
6 Ireland 9.15	26 Costa Rica 7.88
8 Switzerland 9.09	27 Botswana 7.87
9 Finland 9.03	28 Portugal 7.86
10 Australia 9.01	29 Israel 7.85
11 Luxembourg 9.71	29 Estonia 7.85
12 Netherlands 8.80	31 Czech Republic 7.82
13 Germany 8.63	32 India 7.81
14 Austria 8.41	33 Taiwan 7.79
15 Malta 8.39	34 Chile 7.78
16 United Kingdom 8.36	35 Belgium 7.77
17 Spain 8.30	36 Cyprus 7.65
18 Mauritius 8.28	37 Slovenia 7.51
19 Uruguay 8.17	38 Lithuania 7.47
	39 South Africa 7.41
	40 Jamaica 7.39
	41 Latvia 7.31
	42 Slovakia 7.29
	43 Timor-Leste 7.24
	44 Greece 7.23
	45 Panama 7.13
	46 Trinidad and Tobago 7.10
	47 Bulgaria 7.01

⁹⁷ Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, Democracy Index 2016 – The Revenge of the “Deplorables,” p. 7-8

The US and the Czech Republic as a Part of the Overall Global Decline of Democracy

The recent democratic slide in the Czech Republic and in the USA is not very dramatic but along with the previous offenses against democracy, both countries have disqualified themselves from the first democratic league. Admittedly, they are not alone in this democratic backslide, they simply failed to resist the global decline of democracy and freedom documented around the globe. The admirable democratization wave of 1989 has been followed by a counter-wave (see the graph on the next page). According to Freedomhouse, only one country improved its freedom in 2016 (Colombia); but ten countries followed a reverse direction (including China, Hong Kong, Poland, Turkey...)⁹⁸

In a typical Czech ironic style of humor, this state can be illustrated by a drawing by a popular Czech cartoonist Vladimír Renčín.



Despite the described challenges and disenchantments and although both countries failed to preserve their exceptionally warm and friendly relationship,⁹⁹ the US-Czech relations are still positive and on a good level as they should be between two democracies. However, the current state of compromised democracy is worrisome, as it projects not just to domestic but also to international relationships.

⁹⁸ https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2017?gclid=CjwKCAjw_8jNBRB-EiwA96Yp1s0mABstWG2ZIXQQWUTM3Emp_7bswch4e6RPjeeHLBYbAeWS50XrHhoCsBAQAvD_BwE

⁹⁹ Intellectuals and former dissidents nostalgic after the former tight US-European Atlantic relationship made an attempt to revamp these relations and sent an open letter to President Obama urging him to refocus on Europe and to strengthen the role of NATO (including the radar defense system) without close involvement of Russia. The letter did not seem to have had much of an effect. Its text is at: http://zpravy.idnes.cz/dokument-otevreny-dopis-vychodoevropskych-politiku-baracku-obamovi-1kg-/zahranicni.aspx?c=A090716_214930_zahranicni_dp

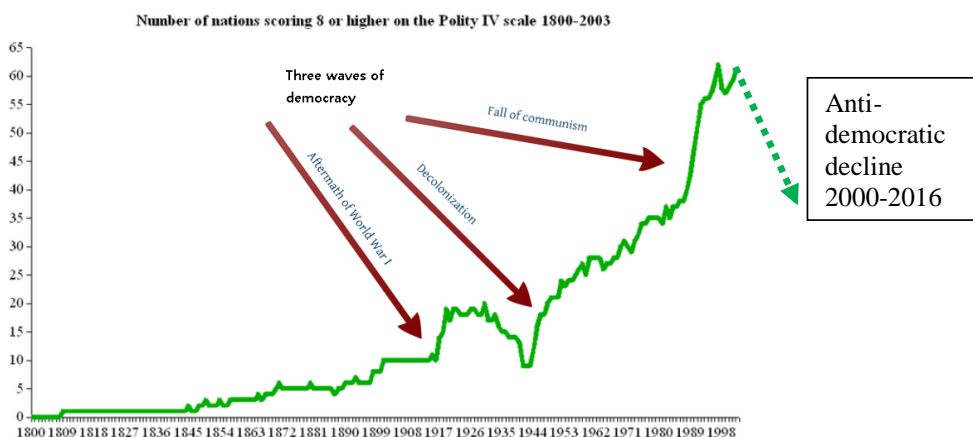
An Optimistic Conclusion?

The former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright asserted:

“While democracy in the long run is the most stable form of government, in the short run, it is among the most fragile.”

This quote can be illustrated by Graph 11 depicting

- a general increase of the number of democratic countries over time: the trend of democratization in the long run is rising and
- short term declines of number of democracies, with the most recent drop particularly deep—note that Diamond (2016) asserts that “between 2000 and 2015, democracy broke down in 27 countries.” When this decline is added to Graph 11, the curve obtains an alarming trend, threatening to undo the democratization achievement of the 1980s.



**Graph 11. The Increasing Number of Democratic Nations in Time¹⁰⁰
Supplemented with a Correction Expressing the Recent Anti-democratic Decline**

The quality of future Czech-American relations is well rooted in a positive mutual heritage, potential compatibility of typical national attitudes and in complex international political and economic relationships. Most of all, though, the mutual relations of the Czech Republic and the U.S.A. appear to depend on the quality of democracy in respective countries.

Shall the USA and the Czech Republic find the way back to the first democratic league of the exemplary, full democracies which they used to be? If they do, both countries will also find themselves closer to each other.

¹⁰⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_democracy

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Index

9/11 · 16, 23, 38, 45

A

Afghani/ Afghanistan · 16, 19, 20, 40
Albright · 1, 15, 22, 43
American Friends of the Czech Republic ·
8
anti-intellectualism · 35, 36
anti-racist · 1
Austria-Hungary · 1, 10, 11
Austrian · 16
authoritarian · 11

B

bad mood · 33, 40
Balkans · 37
BBC · 11, 12
Beneš, E. · 12, 35
Beneš, D. · 19
Bethlehem · 1
Blaník knight · 6
Bohemia Manor · 1
Bohemian National Hall · 7
Borovský · 6
Brion · 38
Bulgaria · 39, 41
Bush, G. H. W. · 14, 38
Bush, G. W. · 16, 28, 31, 38

C

Čapek, J. · 2
Čapek, K. · 2, 19
Carter · 13, 39
Catholic · 1, 35
Cermak, A. J. · 1
Čermák, M. · 13
Cernan E. · 1
Černý, D. · 39
Charles IV · 35
Chelčický, P. · 19
Chicago · 1, 6, 10-11, 21

China · 29, 37, 39, 42
Churchill, W. · 9, 12
Cimrman, J. · 34
civic 31, 33, 36
Civic Democratic Party · 18, 21, 24
civil society · 11, 40
civility · 31, 38-39, 40
Clinton, B. · 15, 22, 28, 38
Clinton, H. · 22, 28
Cold War · 1, 32
Colombia · 42
Comenius · 35
communism / communist · 1, 2, 8, 12-13,
18, 23, 32, 35, 38, 49, 42
constitution / constitutional · 1, 13, 36, 39
corruption · 39, 40
counter-reformation · 1
CVVM · 17, 18, 23-28
Czech(oslovak) Army · 10, 17, 19, 20
Czech capital of the USA · 4
Czechoslovak Information Bureau · 10
Czechoslovak legions · 10
Czechoslovak National Council · 2, 11
Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences
· 2, 10

D

Declaration of Independence · 18, 11
democracy/ democrat/ democratic · 1, 18,
11-14, 26, 31, 32, 34, 36, 38-43
Democracy Index · 41
democratic peace · 38
democratization · 13, 42-43
Denmark · 40
Desert Storm · 15, 20
Diamond, L. · 40, 43
Ducháček, I. · 13
Dvořák, A. · 1, 7

E

Economist Intelligence Unit · 39-41
Eisenhower · 12
Enduring Freedom · 16, 20
equality · 31, 36, 38
euphoria · 12, 14

European Union · 17, 21, 26, 37, 39
European Values Study · 33

F

Feierabend, I. K. · 31, 36, 38
Forman, M. · 1
France · 11, 23-24
freedom · 19, 11, 13-14, 16, 20, 24, 31-32,
34, 36, 38-39, 42
Freedomhouse · 39, 42
French · 17
Friml, R. · 1
Frohne, W. · 7
frustration · 12
Fukuyama, F. · 14

G

Gans, J. · 1, 44
Garrigue, C. · 11
Georgetown University · 9
German · 12, 17
Germans · 25
Germany · 11, 24, 37
Gottwald · 12
Great Britain · 11, 23-24, 39
Gulf War · 14, 17

H

Hašek, D. · 1
Havel, V. · 9, 11, 13-17, 21-22, 33-35, 38-
39
heritage · 1-3, 17, 19, 21, 23, 36, 43
Herman, A. · 1
Hong Kong · 42
Hrdlička, A. · 1
humanist/ humanitarian · 1, 16, 17, 19, 20,
32, 35, 38-39
humor · 21, 22, 34, 42
Hungary · 15
Hus/ Hussite · 2, 19, 34, 35

I

immigrant/ immigration · 1, 2, 10, 15, 31,
37-39
International Monetary Fund · 13
Iran · 18
Iraq · 14, 16, 17, 20, 23-26, 35, 37-38, 40

Iron Curtain · 12
Islamic fundamentalism · 37

J

Jágr, J. · 1
Janečka, L. · 9
Jew · 1, 11
Ježek, J. · 1
Joachimsthal · 2

K

Klaus, V. · 17, 21, 22, 31, 35, 37, 39
Komenský, J. A. · see Comenius
Korea · 18
Kosovo · 16, 20
Kroc, R. · 1
Kubelík, R. · 1
Kuwait · 14

L

law · 28, 35, 39
Lendl, I. · 1
liberation · 1, 9, 12, 20
Lovell, J. · 1

M

Makovský, V. · 8
Marshall Plan · 12
Masaryk, T. G. · 1, 6, 8, 10-13, 19, 21, 34-
35, 38
MASH · 18
Mayflower · 11
Merkel, A. · 29
Middle East · 37
Midwest · 2
Miss Czech-Slovak US pageant · 4
Moravian Brethren · 1
Morrison, F. · 4
Moyers, B. · 39
Munich agreement · 11

N

national characters · 31
National Council of America · 2

national identities · 36
nationalism / nationalist · 13, 31, 36, 38-40
Native Americans · 1
NATO · 13, 15, 16-18, 20, 26, 32, 37, 39
Navrátilová, M. · 1
Nazi/ Nazism · 1, 2, 8, 11-12, 16, 32-34,
38
New York · 1, 3, 7, 10
New Zealand · 40-41
non-violent · 19

O

Obama, B. · 18, 21-22, 25, 28, 38-39, 42
OECD · 13
Orwell, G. · 35

P

patriot/ patriotic · 2, 6, 10-12, 16, 31, 34
Patton, G.S. · 12
Pax democratica · 31, 38
Pew Funds/ Project/ Survey · 16, 28, 29
Philadelphia · 11
Poland · 15, 18, 42
Polášek, A. · 6
populism · 39, 40
Porizkova, P. · 1
post-communist · 13-15, 27, 31, 32, 35, 37,
40
post-communist syndrome · 32, 34
Prague · 1, 3, 5, 7-8, 12-18, 21-22, 27, 34
Prague Spring · 8
Prague Uprising · 12
Preissig, V. · 10
propaganda · 12-13, 32, 34
Putin, V. · 28
putsch · 12

R

Radio Free Europe · 13
Radio Prague · 12
Reagan, R. · 13
Rehcigl · 1, 6, 10, 11
Red Army · 12
referendum · 14, 18
Reformation · 1
religion · 32, 35, 36
Renčín, V. · 42
resistance · 12, 23

Roma · 11
Roosevelt, F. D. · 1, 12
Russia/ Russian · 10, 11, 19, 23, 25, 28,
29, 34, 37, 39, 42

S

Scandinavian · 40
Schwarzenberg, K. · 7
Schwejk, J., to Schwejk · 32, 34
secular/ secularism · 32, 35, 36
Serbian · 10, 16, 26
Šípek, B. · 9
Slovak / Slovakia · 2-4, 13, 15, 20, 37, 41
Sokol · 2, 6
Soviet / Soviet Union · 2, 8, 12, 13, 16, 18,
19, 32, 37
Špidla, V. · 17
Stapleton · 17
Štefánik, M. R. · 10
STEM · 16, 23-26, 33, 37
Sudeten · 11
Švejk, J. · see Schwejk
Svoboda, C. · 17
sympathies · 23-26

T

terrorism · 17, 20, 31, 37
Topolánek, M. · 21, 39
Transparency International · 40
Trump, D. · 27-29, 31, 35
Trump, I. · 27
Turkey · 20, 42

U

U.S. Congress · 8, 9, 11, 13
Ukraine · 37
United Nations · 15, 17, 20

V

Velvet Revolution · 8, 13, 14, 23
Visegrad · 15
Voice of America · 13
Voskovec, J. · 1

W

Warren, E. · 36
Warsaw Pact · 14
Washington, D. C. · 8-11, 13-14, 38
Washington, G. · 11
Werich, J. · 1
Wilber · 3-5,
Wilson, W. · 11, 38
World Bank · 13
World War I · 1, 11, 19

World War II · 1-2, 12, 19, 23, 32, 34

Y

Yalta · 12
Yugoslavia · 16, 20, 23

Z

Zeman, M. · 16, 27, 31, 39