



**IVETA HLOUCHOVÁ**  
**Czech Approach**  
**toward**  
**Counterinsurgency**



MASARYKOVA  
UNIVERZITA

EDIS  
Publication series  
Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University

Volume 17

**muni**  
PRESS

# CZECH APPROACH TOWARD COUNTERINSURGENCY

ÍVETA HLOUCHOVÁ



Masaryk University  
Brno 2018



*Published with the Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University subvention within the EDIS publication series, aiming to support PhD. graduates' publication activities.*

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ISBN 978-80-210-8912-9

ISBN 978-80-210-8911-2 (brož. vaz)

*To all those who kept telling me that research on this topic would not be possible, thank you. Your discouragements gave me more motivation to keep going until the end.*

*Improvement*

*“When you reach the top, keep ascending;  
otherwise, you start descending.”*

LINCOLN PATZ

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

One of the distinctive features of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century security environment has been asymmetrical war fighting, with major conflict parties being framed by many politicians, security practitioners as well as researchers with labels of insurgencies of various kinds, sizes, methods of fight they deploy and the interests they pursue. Closely aligned to this was also the tendency to restore to the frequent use of the term “counterinsurgency” in reference to the measures and efforts employed and carried out in order to minimize and essentially eliminate activities of the contemporary non-state belligerents and/or war opponents, designated as insurgencies.

The concept of counterinsurgency started gaining traction as related to the coalition efforts in the post 9/11 conflict zones after the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan (overlapping operations Enduring Freedom – Afghanistan (OEF-A) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)), and has been associated mainly with the discourse politicians, military officers as well as various researchers and commentators had been using under the administration of the then-US President Barrack H. Obama. Since its introduction as one of the most effective ways of how to best counter the contemporary security challenges in the post 9/11 conflict zones, counterinsurgency has been one of the dominant military doctrines on the potential/possible deployment of military (as well as, to some extent civilian) forces in the contemporary security environment. As such, counterinsurgency as a military strategy and/or a military doctrine has been studied, analyzed and discussed broadly and in depth, with most of the attention focused on what are the most effective counterinsurgency principles, what does the appropriate use of military force in counterinsurgency missions mean, how to reliably measure any possible success of counterinsurgency operations. Factors like what level of local knowledge and localization of the conflict is required for the mission to succeed/meet its minimal objectives or how to best prepare military and civilian agents engaged

in this type of operations, and how to make the military actors and the civilian actors cooperate with each other effectively have been studied as well. A significant level of attention has also been devoted to the best counterinsurgency practices and lessons identified and (ideally) learned from the past for potential future operations.

Major part of the relevant literature, studies, and research project has addressed the issue of counterinsurgency from the Western point of view, as the perspective of a country/a coalition of countries engaged in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations “abroad”, i.e. not in its own territory (distinct, for instance, by the stress put on the element of the development of a host nation security forces and the significance of assistance provided to them). Most of those studies focused on strategies of individual sovereign states, most notably those with the superpower status, mirroring the security environment vis-a-vis national interest assessments and/or historical experience, like the United States (USA), the United Kingdom (UK) or France or the Russian Federation (Russia), or the Philippines, India, Israel or Colombia, as examples of the countries with long-term stakes in the potential effectiveness of their counterinsurgency efforts, given the presence of ongoing insurgencies in their sovereign territories. With regards to the coalition efforts (particularly) in Afghanistan, it was also the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as another actor subjected to the closer scrutiny of its counterinsurgency efforts on the Alliance level. Individual counterinsurgency approaches and strategies differ in some of its principles, their framework, in both theoretical and practical terms, is, however, common and mostly invariable.

Smaller countries, like the Czech Republic, have been spared the greater counterinsurgency scrutiny, due to their limited means of projection of individual state power beyond its borders unilaterally and the comparatively stable domestic security environment with a low likelihood of insurgent activity in their sovereign territories. Nevertheless, it was much smaller countries that contributed greatly (in terms of resources and capabilities, but also knowledge and connections) to various counterinsurgency operations, especially those in Afghanistan and in Iraq, in order to help achieve the most effective level counterinsurgency efforts of engaged multinational coalitions possible.

Specifically, in the case of the Czech Republic, as a country that lacked any broader, direct experience with efforts considered to be falling with a framework of counterinsurgency operations prior to its involvement in the NATO ISAF mission in Afghanistan in 2002, it is even more urgent to explore its conduct and approach in comprehensive manner in order to identify the key attributes, principles, liabilities as well as unique features of “the Czech way of doing counterinsurgency”. Such a comprehensive study, which this publication aims to be, seeks to critically assess and evaluate the current state of the art and identify its potential effectiveness, flaws, challenges or spheres for further development or yet unexploited potential.

The Czech Republic has been actively participating in the NATO counterinsurgency mission in Afghanistan for almost 15 years now and gained valuable broad counterinsurgency experience during these engagements. And even though the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic’s (along with another civilian state as well as non-state resources in the areas of reconstruction, development or humanitarian aid) deployment in Afghanistan marks historically the longest combat mission of the Czech (and Czechoslovak) state, with the largest and longest deployment of the greatest number of human, material, financial, etc. resources and capabilities, several frictions, caused by discontinuous approach, have occurred during the almost 15 years. The challenging discontinuity with its potential impacts on the overall effectiveness of the mission can be potentially costly (in human, financial or political terms) and is linked to the non-existence of any comprehensive, unifying official document on the governmental level, that would serve as a general framework of the Czech approach to counterinsurgency operations, listing resources and capabilities available, specify the conditions and requirements of their use or oversight and control mechanisms.

The added value of this monograph is also increased due to the basically non-existent larger expert community in the Czech academic, political as well as practitioner’s circles. The Czech contributions and conduct of counterinsurgency missions have been mostly described (and perhaps analyzed) in a fragmented manner, with a research focus placed on a specific issue or problem. This publication seeks to fill this gap in the Czech as well as international expert literature.

The deployment of the Czech civilian and military manpower and resources in Afghanistan, as part of the NATO (but also the EU and UN) mission resulted in a progressive, gradual learning process and in acquiring important combat, practical, counterinsurgency experience, knowledge and understanding of a complex, out of area mission, useful and beneficial for the power projections of the Czech state as well as the pursuit of its national interests, even in the future security environment. As already mentioned, the Czech mission in Afghanistan can be distinguished by the great amount and wide range and scope of both military and civilian resources deployed in Afghanistan, in both simultaneously conducted operations, OEF and ISAF, with various assigned tasks and efforts, as well as the historically longest essentially combat deployment of the Czech military, making it the main research subject of the author of this monograph.

Nevertheless, to draw any inferences or conclusions based on the exploration of just one, even though major case study can be misleading and simplistic. Therefore, two other foreign multinational missions the Czech Republic contributed to and that evinced significant counterinsurgency features are described and analyzed in this study as well, i.e. the missions in Kosovo and Iraq. Even though the counterinsurgency dimension of the Czech deployments was comparatively limited, the fact that the Czech Republic deployed under the NATO command aids the ambition of this monograph to be a first case study of the NATO counterinsurgency doctrine.

The time frame of this research is long enough to allow for a proper process-tracing method to be applied. It starts in 1999 with the Czech deployment to KFOR mission in Kosovo and ends with the end of 2013 when the Czech Republic withdrew most of its assets and resources from the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. Short historical excursus is included in the text, and covers the periods of the Czechoslovak Legion's operations in Russia (1917–1920), the prelude for the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia in the form of the armed resistance in the Sudeten with the overwhelming majority of inhabiting Germans (1938–1939), the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (1939–1945) and the Czechoslovak (Federative) Socialist Republic (1948/1960–1990). The overall impacts of these historical periods on the results of this research are, however, very limited and mainly ab-

stract. The dominant focus of this publication is on the contemporary approach of the Czech Republic toward counterinsurgency endeavors.

## 1.1 STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLICATION

In the first part of this monograph, the author introduces the methodology of the research at hand, articulates the main research questions as well as discusses major limits of such a research, along with the sources she used. Following chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the research. First, the theory of strategy developed by Harry Yarger is introduced, in conjunction with theoretical equation model of strategy, developed by Arthur F. Lykke, Jr. these two closely interconnected theoretical frameworks are applied in the text and help explain why the Czech counterinsurgency approach doesn't constitute a strategy. Second, the concept of counterinsurgency is addressed and discussed, with the purpose of establishing the conceptual framework of this publication, and to help readers better understand the topic. Counterinsurgency theories of two well-known and distinguished experts are introduced – David Galula and David Kilcullen. The works of these two experts are also used as the lenses through which the Czech counterinsurgency approach is analyzed through in the concluding chapter of this book. Additionally, the extensive conceptual and theoretical background counterinsurgency (as policy, strategy, approach) entails deserves some more space in this publication. For as comprehensive theoretical/conceptual framework of this research as possible, the author of this monograph discusses counterinsurgency related ideas, thoughts, opinions, theories and main arguments of several other renowned scholars in the field, namely Santa Cruz de Marcenado, B.H. Liddell Hart, Robert Thompson, Martin van Creveld and John Nagl. This selection provides readers with the opportunity to learn about the evolution of counterinsurgency strategy and policy thinking, number of counterinsurgency pillars that have remained solid in different operational theaters throughout the time, as well as its shifting focus correspondingly to the changing nature of the security environment and changes in the nature of warfare itself.

The empirical part of this monograph starts with a short historical excursion, which maps the historical experience of Czechs with



the art of counterinsurgency. Such historic overview helps identify potential existing legacy that can affect the current Czech approach toward counterinsurgency. Then the contemporary Czech approach to counterinsurgency is described and analyzed in two dimensions: (1) conceptual, when all official relevant documents at NATO and Czech levels are presented, and (2) practical. The practical dimension then addresses the major Czech counterinsurgency contributions to three NATO operations – in Kosovo and Iraq, where the Czech counterinsurgency experience remained largely limited and indirect, and in Afghanistan, which represented the first truly counterinsurgency operation the Czech Republic participated in directly. Importantly, these all were multinational missions. Hence any examination of the Czech contributions to them is inherently very closely linked to the overall missions' mandate and settings. Given the primary relevance of the Czech Republic's participation in the mission in Afghanistan, the missions in Kosovo and Iraq are introduced only briefly.

The findings discovered in the empirical part are analyzed in the fifth chapter of this publication. Two analytical models, SWOT and CEG, are used to gain analytical inferences that allow examining the research subject in a comprehensive way. CEG model is then the main analytical technique applied in this monograph. The main findings of the previous chapters are then summarized in conclusions. Research questions are answered and recommendations for improvement and future development of the Czech approach toward counterinsurgency, as well as recommendations for directions and areas of future research in this topic, are formulated in the concluding chapter.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 APPROACH

This monograph was developed using the qualitative design of the research, with a slight overreach to the quantitative research design.<sup>1</sup> The author seeks to overcome the state-centric tendency and includes the exploration of relevant sources of data and dynamics at the levels of NATO and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who not necessarily coordinate their efforts with the state. The empirical-analytical approach seems to be the adequate one in the efforts to address and explore such a topic because it allows for unbiased and neutral work with data, their interpretation and analysis, regardless any ideological or values' tone and purpose. Proper counterinsurgency research should be multidisciplinary to allow examination of all important features and perspectives. The author approaches the counterinsurgency topic from the perspective of political science/security and strategic studies field. Interdisciplinary outreach of this monograph is limited and includes mainly economy and psychology (especially the issue of perception<sup>2</sup>).

This monograph is a descriptive analysis and a case study of a counterinsurgency approach of an individual, smaller (in power, economic and geographical terms) European country, that is a member state of NATO, the EU, and UN. It also represents a first academic case study of a newly adopted (2011) NATO Counterinsurgency strategy doctrine.

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<sup>1</sup> This overreach has a form of an original metrics developed by the author for the purposes of measuring the value of the gap existing between capabilities and expectations relevant for the Czech approach to counterinsurgency, which serves as a research sub-tool generating important data and findings which are further utilized and evaluated in the context of broader Czech counterinsurgency approach.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the roles and significance of perceptions in the modern warfare, including counterinsurgency missions see: McKeldin, T.R. – David, G.J. (2009): *Ideas as Weapons: Influence and Perception in Modern Warfare*. Washington DC: University of Nebraska Press.

The aim of this publication is then to develop an evidence-based comprehensive study of the contemporary Czech approach toward counterinsurgency by describing and analyzing its key features. Importantly, the author doesn't frame this research in the traditional theoretical approaches of realism and liberalism, even though certain tendencies in terms of implicit diversions of the arguments to one direction or another are noticeable through this publication. Key pillars of both approaches are important for the purposes of this study, i.e. a sovereign state acting in accordance and pursuance of its national interests, and important roles played by individual state agencies as well as non-state, non-governmental actors like private entities,<sup>3</sup> humanitarian organizations, but also multinational organizations. Significantly, certain patterns of activity are traced and identified through this research, considering the complexities of the research topic that is distinguishable by its multifaceted, multidimensional character, further complicated by the multiplicity of identities of the Czech Republic (i.e. nation-state, NATO member state, EU member state, UN member state, etc.).

## 2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the fact that this monograph compiles and analyses data to draw a framework of the contemporary Czech approach to counterinsurgency at its end, the research questions articulated by the author intuitively mirror the so far unmapped landscape of the researched topic. The main three research questions, enabling the author to fulfill the stated aim and reach the objectives of this publication are:

1. *What are the key attributes of the strategic Czech approach toward counterinsurgency, and how consistent is it?*
2. *How autonomous and how specific is the Czech approach toward counterinsurgency?*
3. *What counterinsurgency model does the Czech approach adhere to, and how?*

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<sup>3</sup> Some of the private entities have semi-governmental character, because its founders, directors and/or chief executives tend to be closely linked to government individual on personal as well as wider basis.

Providing sufficient and evidence bolstered answers to these three research questions requires not only an explicit scale for measuring the level of autonomy of the Czech counterinsurgency approach but also determining the level of its consistency. Identification of the most problematic or challenging principles, as well as an examination of the practical, not only theoretical, dimension of the research subject matter, and their mutual reflection, enables the author to determine the level of consistency. As for the autonomy, the essential platform for determining its level in the case of the Czech counterinsurgency approach is established by decision-making processes, ordinary functioning and the powers, responsibilities, and commitments of the individual nation states within NATO. The NATO factor is critically important for the purposes of this monograph. The Czech Republic is a credible member of the Alliance and cannot ignore its security and defense commitments stemming out of it. The majority of the foreign missions the Czech Republic has ever deployed its assets and resources to where conducted under the auspices of NATO. The individual theoretical or conceptual models are introduced in the respective chapter below in the text.<sup>4</sup> What the individual counterinsurgency models differ in are the military vs. civilian dominance and decision-making authority, the importance and specific measures of a kinetic action against the enemy, the significance of stabilization, reconstruction, and development or the level of discretion assigned by nation states to their deployed military and civilian forces.

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<sup>4</sup> In the field of political science, international relations and security and strategic studies, the term “autonomy” often refers to self-governance. The level of autonomy or self-governance is usually determined by numerous deals and agreements that explicitly state the areas of greater discretion. Therefore, any specific concept related to the question of how to measure autonomy is not introduced and used in this research.