Afghanistan and the Privatisation of Security in the Czech Republic

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The Czech Republic has its own, specific experience with the privatisation of security. The Czech private security market and private security services available in the country have mainly been limited to the domestic arena. This study explores the potential of Czech private security market actors to operate abroad and possible implications for the development of the privatisation of security in the Czech Republic. Of these, one of the most significant is the gradual hybridisation of the market, with companies originally unrelated to the private security sector accepting private security roles on a growing scale. Afghanistan is analysed as a prospective export market that could help the Czech private security sector realise its full foreign export potential.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Czech, security, exports, hybridisation, private sector, private military and security companies, risk reduction

Introduction

Outside a few local academic publications, the privatisation of the security industry in the Czech Republic has not yet been the subject of an in-depth, comprehensive and complex research and examination.[1] From time to time, an article or other information about the activities of private security providers appears in local newspapers, other media or non-academic journals, but Czech public awareness of the topic is generally very limited. As such, the attention devoted to problems in the private security sector in the Czech Republic remains insufficient. It is both a cause and a consequence of this situation that the Czech private security market continues to be basically self-regulating.

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The Czech market in private security goods and services is still immature compared to foreign private security markets, but some specifics can be identified. There is quite a wide gap in the market, which is again both a cause and consequence of the security-related goods and services provided by private security actors in the Czech Republic. The market has yet to be consolidated, and a void remains that private security actors could fill when it comes to the provision of private security-related goods and services abroad. One of the most significant reasons for this unfulfilled potential is the shortage – or rather, utter absence – of demand (and thus, need) for Czech private security companies to provide and deliver private security goods and services abroad in a more organised manner.[2] Nonetheless, this potential clearly exists, especially for those seeking to boost and expand the reach of Czech exports. Various exploratory analyses have, thus, been conducted on behalf of either the Czech Ministry of Defence or Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the aim of identifying potential export markets for Czech goods and/or services.

Given the long historical relationship between the Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia) and Afghanistan, the existence of established trade and economic ties between them and the strong presence of past and on-going development and reconstÂction efforts in Afghanistan, Afghanistan represents a potential export market, albeit one that is controversial. The country has been identified as one of the few long-term priorities for Czech foreign (security and defence) policy. However, with conflict in Afghanistan still under way and gradually escalating, companies wanting to export and Ân their business in Afghanistan face many serious security risks. Regular armed forces cannot ensure the security of these commercial actors in Afghanistan (or any conflict zone more generally), and thus, an alternative needs to be found. Companies may either hire an established private military and security company to arrange their conflict zone security or develop their own security provision-related capabilities. The second option is becoming more and more common in the context of the global privatisation of security. This trend may be referred to as the “hybridisation” of security privatisation since corporate actors who previously did not provide security-related goods or services have started to perform various security-related roles and tasks on their own; the aim here is to use their own risk reduction capabilities to sufficiently secure their original activities, goods and services. Based on this logic, Czech companies interested in exports and/or Ânning their business in Afghanistan (or another conflict zone) may not be immune from this new trend. Given the lack of consolidation of the Czech private security market, this development, thus, could have significant implications for the business of privatising security in the Czech Republic.

This study aims to explore the potential of Afghanistan as an export market and its probable effect on the future of the privatising of security in the Czech Republic.[3] The primary focus is on private security companies of Czech origin though multinational private security companies also perform various security-related roles and tasks in the Czech Republic and other countries. While the analysis may, thus, be affected by these multinational private security and military companies, my chief intent is to analyse potential developments for Czech private security companies and the possible trajectories of the privatisation of security in the Czech context more broadly.

The main data sources for this work come from relevant Czech and foreign academic publications and newspaper reports as well as interviews with selected owners and/or managers of Czech private security companies (CS Solutions and Čechyman) and two foreign companies (Securitas and GEO-SSL) that perform private security-related tasks in the Czech Republic.[4] I have elected to preserve the anonymity of respondents until appropriate triangulation of the data is conducted.

Privatising Security in the Czech Republic

To analyse the possible development of the issues at hand, we need first to introduce and understand the main features, challenges, opportunities and trends surrounding the privatisation of security in the Czech context. This rather general section, thus, seeks only to introduce key factors and attributes of the Czech private security environment and so provide a knowledge base for the analysis conducted to meet the goal of this research.

Private security actors have become an integral part of the Czech security architecture. Since the 1990s, the market in private security goods and services has been growing and developing gradually both in terms of the number of companies providing security-related goods and services[5] and the scope and character of the goods and services on offer. According to Bures, the number of private security companies registered in the Czech Republic exceeds 7,000 entities.[6] I was not able to verify this figure as I could not find the data cited from the Czech Statistical Office. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the number of private security entities in the Czech Republic is higher than the count in other countries. At the same time, the number of Czech private security companies that actually perform security roles and tasks is widely believed to be much lower, with estimates putting it at no more than 10% of all registered private security companies in the Czech Republic. One major factor that, thus, needs to be taken into account in any analysis of the privatisation of Czech security is the very high number of companies established for a single purpose only (i.e. one contract, task or function). Such entities create a "black hole" in the Czech private security market, a phenomenon discussed below. In such an environment, there is virtually no space for so-called "healthy" competition among private security actors. On the other hand, none of these companies has a monopoly within the private security market though some have almost monopolised certain (sometimes geographically limited) sectors of private security goods and services.

There are various reasons behind this rather Czech-specific trend, some of which relate to other characteristics of the Czech privatisation of security. Such features are deeply interconnected and so influence and support as well as subvert one another.

First of all, for the last twenty years, there has been no separate legal framework that would set up clear regulatory and control mechanisms for private security actors. Commercial security-related businesses are still authorised and conducted under the terms and relevant provisions of the Trade Licensing Act.[7] There are several provisions in other regulations that help build up at least some kind of framework,[8] but – with just one or two exceptions – they do not address private security goods and services provision abroad. The fact that these provisions are scattered across different instÂments is not only problematic and somewhat confusing, but also works to create a grey area, or vacuum, in which Czech private security businesses self-regulate. This also leaves us with many provisions that are poorly defined and unclear, creating additional problems like the non-transparency of businesses in the field. Czech private security company personnel do not have any special or wider competencies, authorisations or powers. They are basically regular citizens authorised to use an appropriate level of force under the doctrine of necessary and appropriate (self-)defence. This fact may limit the due performance of private security provision roles and tasks. In the absence of any specific framework of regulatory and control mechanisms, however, no special functions or powers should be assigned to a sector that practically (and functionally) regulates itself based on the trends, developments and internal and external influences on the private security goods and services market. Private security actors make Âles based on what suits *them* most.

On the other hand, the absence for more than twenty years of a separate statute dealing with problems, challenges and opportunities in sector – combined with a lack of clarification and rather broad requirements and low set-up costs for private security start-ups – have led to an environment where comparatively high numbers of private security actors and related players like politicians can barely agree on a compromise or concessions for potential negotiations. Even in this context, however, opportunistic and practical cooperation between private security entities is not rare and it can often be mutually beneficial.

Based on my exploration of relevant Czech and foreign literature and the answers of the private security-related respondents whom I interviewed, there are two main scenarios for cooperation between Czech private security entities: (1) the subcontracting of a locally established and consolidated company with local knowledge and appropriate capabilities to carry out a given contract and (2) the expansion of a company's influence and brand. The prevailing pattern of such cooperation involves two or potentially three private security actors, but no more than this. Given the predominance of such cooperation between and among private security entities in the Czech private security market environment, there appears to be great potential for manipulation, corÂption and tax evasion as well as personal enrichment and exploitation of the "weaker" party. A certain level of personal leverage in the Czech private security market and hence the critical role of personal ties cannot be overlooked or underestimated (see below).

Furthermore, what makes achieving compromise even harder is the existence of a staggering sixteen private security-related associations in the Czech Republic.[9] Several of these wield more real influence and power than others, however, none of the associations includes all of the relevant and most significant private security entities. Mutually beneficial alliances of private security actors are common. It is tougher, however, to predict the viability of these alliances, many of which are purely practical and based on pre-existing personal ties, a point that further complicates any potential research of the issue at hand. This other dimension of the Czech private security market's fragmentation exacerbates the legal vacuum, which, however, works in favour of many Czech private security actors. Nevertheless, objectively speaking, such marked fragmentation underlines the lack – or inexistence – of any political will or commitment to finding effective means and mechanisms to regulate the market.

In my opinion, the privatisation of security in the Czech Republic is still in the process of consolidation, an assessment that may Ân counter to the opinions of other scholars and experts. Based on the stÂctural conditions that presented themselves in the Czech Republic after the fall of the Communist regime, the privatisation of security is developing according to the same patterns seen in other privatised sectors in the country—something that only compounds the nuances of this process.[10] It is important here to stress the legacy of Communism and the fact that there was no proper "decommunisation" in the Czech Republic. This left a void in the country's political and economic sectors that was filled by inadequate dynamics and mechanisms. The potential of the private security market has, thus, not (yet) been fully exploited. Since it is still under way, this privatisation process is open and sensitive to both internal and external influences, and there remain gaps that can be targeted. What is apparent, however, is that the Czech market is not the same as – or even similar to – the market in the US, the UK or any other country. For reasons that go beyond the existing legal vacuum, many dominant private security actors have begun providing a wide range of security-related goods and services that enhance domestic security, and the potential extension of their business abroad has not been appropriately explored.[11] A further factor for which the Czech Communist legacy can partly be blamed is the employment situation in the Czech private security market where company personnel are for the most part regular employees. This situation can, however, again be linked to the lack of exploration of the market's external potential.

One sign of the unexploited potential abroad (i.e. in geographically distant markets) is the current absence of any private military company in the Czech private security sector. This claim strongly depends, however, on what is understood to constitute a private military company and the services they provide. Singer, a father of private security studies, distinguishes three subcategories of private military companies: military provider firms, military consultancy firms and military support firms.[12] Viewed through this lens, all private military companies provide security goods and services that were once dispensed by regular state armed forces/state military. This includes direct combat and combat support roles on the front line as well as assistance, advice, mentoring, training, education, consultancy and logistical support and related goods and services. In this context, the assumption that private military companies operate only within the borders of the country where they are registered is misleading and simplistic: after all, while armed forces in democratic states have a very limited role at home, they have significant domestic security functions and tasks in other countries. By this logic, there are some entities offering and delivering good and services on the Czech private security market who may meet the criteria for Singer's categories of military consultants and supporters. Such companies, however, do not only focus on these types of goods and services and they generally provide a wider range of goods and services at home compared with their offering abroad. Since some Czech private security entities provide close protection (or goods protection) both inside Czech territory and abroad, they may also be identified with some aspects of Singer's military provider category. However, the actual performance of these services abroad is generally quite problematic and challenging for these companies, particularly in conflict zones (given issues with the lack of Czech regulations as well as transport and logistics, local contacts, compliance with local legal frameworks, etc.).

In fact, none of these companies provides adequate complementary risk assessment, consultancy and intelligence services in foreign areas of interest. One of the main reasons for the absence of these services is the low level of demand: many potential customers do not know about the possibility of contracting private security services of this kind, or else they believe they do not – or actually do not – need them. Either they are not interested in Ânning business operations abroad, or else they have no interest in these services since they have started to establish their own specialist departments. The second scenario may be considered a sign of the hybridising of the privatisation of security as companies that were originally not security actors embrace their own security provision-related functions and tasks. The lack of an adequately qualified and skilled workforce with the required capacity is another factor behind the dearth of private security services. The majority of Czech private security companies also mis-target their PR campaigns, primarily focusing on potential recÂits and underestimating the customer-seeking dimension.

Nonetheless, an environment missing a legal regulatory framework raises questions about why this is the case, that is, the reason for such a prolonged absence. Here, we may consider the lack of attention from responsible lawmakers resulting in a lack or non-existence of political will and commitment. According to the resources that I consulted, this deficit/ absence of will really matters, but its underlying cause lies in "irregular" links with the political establishment. In particular, former high-ranking private security executives have been appointed to (sometimes very important) political functions and roles, a trend which is quite the opposite of the pattern in other countries where former politicians move to the commercial sphere.

It should be noted that, in 2012, the Âling government attempted to reform the self-regulating private security market and introduced a bill on a purported compromise between private security providers on the one hand and the Ministry of the Interior on the other. However, private security representatives maintain that this bill was not in fact a compromise and its provisions had been set up to satisfy the interests of the Ministry first and foremost. One critical issue that must be addressed, then, is the clarification of the requirements, obligations and rights of Czech private security companies who provide their goods and services in foreign countries.

Interestingly, one private security representative whom I interviewed mentioned the possible growth in demand for what he called 'higher security services' (primarily close protection services). This potential demand is strongly connected with the potential of foreign markets. Among these higher security services, we can also include aerial capabilities (unmanned aerial vehicles) of private security actors.

Overview of Key Czech Export Data

I suggest an introduction to the basic features and timing of Czech exports is needed in order to put Afghanistan's potential as a significant Czech export market in a broader context. As such, this overview is not comprehensive. Moreover, since I lack an appropriate educational background in economics, I have deliberately refrained from analysing the economic issues at hand in the depth and thoroughness that they deserve. However, in general, the Czech economy can be classified as small, open and export-driven. According to 2013 data from the Czech Offices of Statistics and Customs Authorities, the export of goods and services comprised some 81% of the annual Czech GDP.[13] In compliance with binding EU regulations, surveys of export data are regulated by the Customs Act, and since 01 May 2004, they have also come under a Czech Ministry of Finance decree on trade with third countries.[14] The data from Customs Authorities and presented by the Czech Statistical Office cover both trade with other EU member states and non-EU countries. These statistics show that recently exports have exceeded import figures. The increasing role of public-private partnerships in external trade is also identified.[15] Even outside the security sector, I believe that private companies are useful vehicles through which state representatives can trade certain goods and services abroad without needing the parliamentary authorisation that is required under Czech law.[16] This commonality is expected to prompt a trend once Czech political and corporate representatives decide to diversify Czech export markets. One of the main incentives for the long-term vision of finding new markets and new projects for the Czech economy within broader European economic diversification efforts, is a generally very strong dependence on Russia.[17] In light of the latest developments in Ukraine, Russian partners are understood to be increasingly unreliable, a condition that goes beyond the business and trade context though that is critical for to our purposes.

The potential advantages of this export diversification are self-evident and dominated by the generation of more revenue and boosting of the economy. There are, however, significant disadvantages as well including the re-opening of the debate on the schism between economic profit and human rights, especially in cases of the supply of potential weapons, ammunition and/or possible dual use technologies to countries with a record of human rights abuses. Afghanistan may be one such controversial export market since it is still a hot conflict zone. This discussion has the potential to challenge the Czech Republic's international prestige as a strong supporter and defender of human rights and freedoms. Related to this debate, there is a need to address the potential social responsibility and accountability of the Czech private security actors who intend to deliver their goods and services abroad.

According to the Czech Statistical Office's *Statistical Yearbook* for 2013, some export sectors may be considered "traditional."[18] In line with efforts to find new external trade markets, we can also highlight other non-traditional export sectors based on specific conditions and needs in selected countries.

A major portion of total Czech external trade consists of the export of machinery and transport equipment. This is followed by miscellaneous manufactured articles, mineral fuels and chemicals, manufactured goods, cÂde materials and food, beverages and fats.[19] These categories are general but sufficient for our purposes. The Czech Republic's main export partners are identified as Germany, Slovakia, Poland, France, the UK and Austria. This indicates the prevalence of Czech external trade/exports inside the EU.[20] There is some argument about whether this amounts to an advantage or a disadvantage given the potential impact of a future financial crisis both in the Eurozone and worldwide.

Overview of Czech Policy on Afghanistan

To understand why Afghanistan might potentially be another important export market for both the Czech state- (semi-) owned and private companies, it is useful to place these issues in the larger context of the Czech Republic's general policy towards Afghanistan. Again, I set out only basic characteristics and relevant factors since this study does not aim to address this topic in greater depth and scope.

The two countries have a relatively long history of bilateral relations that includes a strong mutual trade exchange element. The potential expansion of Czech exports to Afghanistan has solid roots even as unstable security continues to limit any more significant efforts by Czech corporate actors to re-establish trade and a presence in the country. The multilateral dimension of this relationship is also significant, especially considering the Czech Republic's reconstÂction and development activities in Afghanistan and its active participation in NATO's International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan, which is set to continue in a transformed state until 2016. However, while this multinational dimension is strong and cannot be underestimated, the primary focus of this study remains the bilateral dimension of the Czech-Afghan relationship.

Afghanistan is further identified as one of the five long-term priority countries for Czech foreign policy in the Czech Foreign Ministry's latest concept document, whose primary focus is the security and economic dimension of the Czech-Afghan relationship at both bilateral and multilateral levels. In general, the Czech Republic has a strong strategic interest in the existence of a stable, democratic and developed Afghanistan, and up to now its development, humanitarian and reconstÂction aid and efforts on the ground have supported Afghanistan's socioeconomic development and progress. Alternative actions with the same aim (i.e. supporting (socio-)economic transformation and growth) could contribute to stabilising the country. Here, for example, Czech exports might provide further economic incentives or employment opportunities.

The Czech Foreign Ministry has also developed an unofficial roadmap document titled *Development Cooperation Programme for Afghanistan, 2013-2017*, which identifies economic stabilisation and the creation of grounds for lasting sustainable development in the country as critical priorities for Czech-Afghan relations at both bilateral and multinational levels.[21] Czech exports of non-security related goods and services—along with the potential supply of goods and services by Czech private security actors— could help with this effort. This approach might be mutually beneficial since it would create new job opportunities for both Czechs and Afghans. It could also find productive roles for skilled and qualified experts across relevant subject areas and support small business activities on both sides. Further, the transfer of technologies is explicitly identified as one of the priorities for future Czech policy towards Afghanistan. Even so, I believe that the absence of any unified common document of the Czech Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Defence regarding what the country wants to achieve in Afghanistan and how it should therefore proceed (i.e. in terms of strategies, capabilities, instÂments, etc.) complicates any corporate business (whether private security-related or not) and may potentially make it unproductive and ineffective.

Importantly, exports of private security and non-security business activities, goods and services to a conflict zone like Afghanistan could prove to be a double-edged sword. There may even be a severe backlash given the strong risks of lobbying, corÂption and bribery as well as the maintaining of bad practices/methods. The latter include both factors in Afghanistan (warlordism, personality-driven politics, ethnic/tribal rivalries, corÂption, poppy cultivation, organised crime, bad governance and ineffective provision of even the most basic services to the population, etc.) and the practices of Czech private security companies (irregular connections with the political establishment, the creation of ad hoc, single-purpose private security companies, real influence over the political-economic "grey zone," and the general potential to cause damage to the Czech Republic's international reputation in Afghanistan and elsewhere, etc.). These drive the critical need for a legally binding regulatory framework at the Czech state level even though the conduct of private security actors in Afghanistan would fall under the strict Afghan regulatory and control framework. Cooperation and consultation with Afghanistan (and any other foreign states where Czech private security actors may be active) should be considered when drafting any legal instÂment on these issues. The regulatory and control framework in Afghanistan could even| introduce effective mechanisms to be integrated into a Czech counterpart since the presence and activities of Czech private security companies in the country would underline the urgency of such a framework in the Czech Republic. A situation in which private security companies continue to basically regulate themselves is no longer sustainable, and if their presence and activities are strengthened and expanded abroad – let alone into conflict zones – it will be increasingly indefensible at both domestic and international levels.

Czech-Afghan Bilateral Trade and Economic Relations

As shown, the economic dimension of Czech-Afghan relations is fundamental. This section aims to provide a fact-sheet of basic characteristic and trends in this area. My goal is, thus, to enhance this study's analysis, and not to provide a comprehensive and complex breakdown of Czech-Afghan trade and economic relations.

The information presented and analysed in this section – and the two parts that follow on Afghanistan's potential as a Czech trade and business export destination and the prospects for private security respectively – may also help explain why Afghanistan could (and, for some important reasons, should) become another market for the export of Czech goods and services. We can, thus, see why Czech political decision-makers could and should support these exports. This move can help to diversify Czech export markets, promote overall economic growth and develop a much needed regulatory framework given the state of the Czech private security business. Importantly, while such a framework may not be particularly in the interests of some significant

Czech politicians or corporate actors in general, I also do not expect it to be very restrictive, limiting or concrete and specific in the provisions and measures it establishes. Moreover, given the attention and domestic and international pressures that the extension of Czech private security across borders—let alone to conflict zones—would certainly generate, a legal document establishing a regulatory and control framework and tools and mechanisms amounts to a "must-have."

As noted, the Czech Republic and Afghanistan have a good historical record of reciprocal trade relations. The first record of trade cooperation between the former Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan dates back to the 1920s, when Czechoslovakia established a sugar factory in Baghlan. The existence of very good relations at diplomatic level also supported and underscored the economic and trade dimension of these bilateral relations. After 1957, the first exports of machinery and equipment took place under the intergovernmental credit provision framework, with items being used for cement works in Jabal us-Siraji and Puli Chumri, coal mines in Karkar-Dudkas and a slaughterhouse in Kabul. After Afghanistan became a republic, its government and Czechoslovakia signed an economic agreement on 17 December 1973. The economic cooperation between Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan was strengthened further after April 1978, when a Communist puppet regime was established in Afghanistan. As a "brotherly" Communist state, Czechoslovakia (along with the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries) became very active in creating and boosting Afghan economic potential. A Czechoslovak trade department was established in Kabul, and several bilateral agreements were signed between the two governments dealing with issues of trade and economic cooperation and cooperation in science and technology. The period of the 1980s, when Soviet troops occupied Afghanistan, was marked by several significant economic developments in bilateral Czechoslovak-Afghan relations; these included support for trolleybus transport in Kabul, on-going constÂction activities in the cement industry, power engineering and the mining industry. Furthermore, Czechoslovak specialists in geology, parasitology, medical geography, Oriental studies and other disciplines were sent to Afghanistan to educate and assist with local capacity-building efforts. The priority, however, remained goods and services related to mining, energy, transport and cement work for reconstÂction. After the signing of a bilateral postal agreement, various engineering products, freight vehicles, tÂcks, tyres, tubes, building materials and other consumer goods were delivered to Afghanistan. In the opposite direction, commodities such as cotton, raisins and other dried fÂit, animal hide, skins and the like were imported to Czechoslovakia from Afghanistan. Significantly, all of the facilities and projects that Czechoslovakia implemented in Afghanistan were compromised or destroyed during the conflict in Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s. Therefore, there is virtually no groundwork that Czech companies could build on for their future reconstÂction projects in Afghanistan.

Interestingly, I was told by (former) Czech Ambassador to Afghanistan, Petr Pelz, during direct discussions with him, that Czechoslovak JAWA-brand motorbikes were very popular among irregular anti-Soviet *mujahedin* forces. He also noted that some current insurgent groupings continue to use these bikes both for transport and to stage their attacks (they serve as both a means of transport and as actual vehicles bearing improvised explosive devices).

Two chambers of commerce provide established platforms that may serve to increase the level and expand the scope of reciprocal trade relations.[22] First, the Czech-Middle Asian Mixed Chamber of Commerce provides general help with building and developing economic relations and trade cooperation between Czech companies and foreign business entities. Since these services have a wide reach geographically, there is a potential risk that they may not be provided with great awareness of the finest details of the Afghan economy and market.[23] On the other hand, by joining this network, companies and small businesspeople become part of a more established and consolidated business platform, which may serve as an assurance of their safe business practices. This chamber also cooperates closely with the Association of Afghan Businessmen. In October 2014, the two entities signed a memorandum of cooperation on a joint project, the Afghan Czech Business Centre.[24] This development could potentially make the Czech-Middle Asian Mixed Chamber of Commerce a more attractive and productive platform than the second chamber of commerce.[25] The latter, the Czech-Afghan Mixed Chamber of Commerce in the Czech Republic limits its focus to bilateral relations between the Czech Republic and Afghanistan. It was established in 2005 with the specific purpose of restoring the good name of Czech companies and products on the Afghan market. This chamber provides support through experienced consultants who are familiar with the Afghan economy and have practical knowledge and experience; they counsel Czech investors, exporters and/or importers who are interested in expanding the reach of their goods, products and services in Afghanistan. The chamber's wide range of services are directed at facilitating entry into the Afghan economy along with the start-up and consolidation of business on the Afghan market and successful and effective commercial practice there.[26] Companies that are interested in Afghanistan as an export market for their goods and services can, thus, join the chamber and make use of its services.

However, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of these two chambers based on the success of Czech companies and small businesspeople on the Afghan market to date. For one thing, there are many other variables that can significantly influence start-ups and their consolidation on the market. Another factor that makes evaluation hard is the general lack of any demand from Czech corporate actors to enter Afghan markets.

The determinant that has been—and will continue to be—critical when it comes to the drive of Czech corporate players to expand into Afghan markets is the state of security in Afghanistan and general uncertainty about the country's post-2014 future. Given the latest developments like US President Barack Obama's decision to issue guidelines to US forces in Afghanistan after 2014 that endorse combat-enabling support (and thus, basically allow the US to fight the Taliban and not just the remnants of al-Qaeda, as was previously authorised), these forces will provide ground and aerial combat support to Afghan national security forces and so retain some of their combat role. The close attention of the international community to Afghanistan and its continued presence and support in the country, may serve to increase Czech corporate actors' demand and efforts to enter Afghanistan since no single actor would want to take over responsibility and accountability for abandoning Afghanistan on its own. Another significant variable is the potential of corporate actors to make use of private security goods and services already being offered or, as they case may be, to develop their own security-related roles and capabilities. Considering the strong ties between politicians and entrepreneurs and those among entrepreneurs themselves in the Czech environment, I believe that Czech corporate actors would not be inclined to hire a foreign or multinational private company providing security-related goods and services despite their greater experience. Taking into account another rather typical Czech element—the quest for the lowest price for goods and services generally—it is also significant that some Czech private security actors would be cheaper to hire than any international competitor.

There is no agreed basis for reciprocal trade cooperation at a whole-of-government level between the Czech Republic and Afghanistan though particular official documents serve as the grounds for more in-depth and specific cooperation. In 2012, for example, the Afghan transport minister visited the Czech Republic and signed an intergovernmental agreement with his Czech counterpart. Its contents included the Czech constÂction industry's participation in the development of transport infrastÂcture in Afghanistan. In addition, as we have seen, the transfer of technologies is an explicit priority for future Czech policy on Afghanistan.[27] From a historical standpoint, although several agreements were signed by the governments of Afghanistan and Czechoslovakia, they did not give rise to successive Czech-Afghan agreements.

According to the data from the Czech Statistical Office, the balance of reciprocal Czech-Afghan trade shows a downward trend in recent years. This correlates with increasing instability in Afghanistan and the general worsening of the national security situation, again highlighting the underlying and determining effects of the security issue on considerations of whether to engage in the country. According to the Czech statistics, after the surge by US/NATO combat forces in Afghanistan in 2009, the volume and turnover of reciprocal trade between the Czech Republic and Afghanistan sank by 35.42% from the figure earlier that year (i.e. down from CZK 638 million to CZK 421 million).[28] Czech exports also fell by 36.61% over this period (i.e. from CZK 631 million in 2009 to CZK 400 million in 2010).[29] In contrast, correlating with the international community's increased efforts to stimulate Afghan economic growth and reduce dependence on international aid and investments, imports from Afghanistan soared by 71.43% in the same period (i.e. from CZK 7 million in 2009 to CZK 12 million in 2010).[30] This trend prevailed increasingly and began to consolidate in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Given the prolonged armed conflict, the overall demand for Czech goods and services is low in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the Czech Republic is seen very positively among Afghans, who appreciate the high quality of Czech products. On this basis, Czech actors who revive and offer Czech products, goods and services on the Afghan market may enjoy a comparative advantage over other potential exporters.

Furthermore, the Czech Statistical Office data also helps us to identify three main spheres of Czech-Afghan trade partnership and economic cooperation: agriculture, infrastÂcture work and the mining industry. Notably, the major commodities exported from the Czech Republic to Afghanistan are vehicles, industrial machinery and equipment (especially pumps). On the other hand, the main imports to the Czech Republic from Afghanistan are fÂit, nuts, fragrances and medicinal plants.

Exploring Afghanistan's Potential

Exports

Based on this intelligence about exports to Afghanistan, various actors have evaluated the needs and demands in the country in order to identify those which the Czech Republic could help meet with exported goods and services. A number of potential export commodities have been pinpointed. Some of these would basically succeed products once delivered to Afghanistan from Czechoslovakia while others would be first-time exports to the country. As a Âle, commodities exported from the Czech Republic to Afghanistan must not only meet Afghanistan's needs and be in its interests; they also need to fall within the overall framework of Czech policy towards Afghanistan, which they should support and complement. No Czech exporters may supply goods and services to Afghanistan that do not accord and are not consistent with broader Czech policy towards the country. This is because of the potential such exports have to affect the Czech Republic's international image and the democratic norms, values and principles being promoted in its bilateral and multilateral diplomatic agenda all over the world. Czech export activities should also support the particular development and reconstÂction projects being implemented on the ground by various Czech entities in Afghanistan. Cooperation between Czech actors and their Afghan counterparts need to be directed at enabling and enhancing the democratic transition process in Afghanistan with the aim of supporting stable economic growth and decreasing dependence on international aid and investments. This means carrying missions out in ways that encourage local businesses and the local economy to grow sustainably.

As has been noted, however, the risk of corÂption and other bad financial practices increases alongside growing interest from foreign investors and exporters. The international finances being pumped into Afghanistan are generally perceived as sources of "quick, big money" based on experiences of the last few years when international aid was often ill-stÂctured, mismanaged and misused in Afghanistan. What Czech companies and small businesses considering doing any business in Afghanistan also need to take into account is the reality on the ground when it comes to the tÂe power brokers at local level. As Afghanistan is a highly heterogeneous society, a strong tribal element cannot be overlooked even in the context of potential exports to the country. Tribal rather than ethnic rivalries could potentially accompany any business deal at local level like the constÂction of facilities, geological exploration or waste processing projects, etc. In this regard, corporate actors interested in exporting their goods and services and/or starting up businesses in Afghanistan can either use local Afghan partners considered tÂstworthy and credible as proxies or intermediaries to make deals with tribes and clans, or they may try to reach an agreement with these entities on their own. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, and it is not the aim of this study to analyse these problems in any depth. It is, however, important here to consider the organised crime dimension, which manifests predominantly around poppy cultivation.[31] Any foreign business operating in Afghanistan outside the capital Kabul will most likely encounter organised crime sooner or later. There is, hence, a need to include guidelines in their overall business and project implementation strategies on how to approach this activity when it starts to affect the business at hand. These guidelines should address issues like coping with potential racketeering imposed on the company's activities, as well as looting and attempted robbery. Such guidelines can give private security actors additional space to develop themselves and their operations.

Among the commodities which relevant actors suggest the Czech Republic can start exporting to Afghanistan in greater quantities are agricultural machinery, industrial machinery and equipment, geological exploration technologies and veterinary and agricultural technologies. Other potential exports include machinery for mining and quarrying along with professional training regarding mining and quarrying products, Czech crystal, waste processing technology, fire protection and shoes (especially military boots). All of these items require the constÂction and maintenance of infrastÂcture, including supplies for railway networks, the building of public roads and restoration of public transport. On the latter count, the re-establishment of the trolleybus network in Kabul is, according to former ambassador Pelz, one of the top topics on the current agenda of negotiations between Czech business entities and their Afghan counterparts.

I add three categories of items to the list of potential Czech export goods and services to Afghanistan: vehicles, dual-use technologies and weaponry and ammunition. These additions, of course, need to be weighed up before any decision is taken about actual supplies to Afghanistan.

Concerning the delivery of vehicles, there is a history of tÂck exports from the former Czechoslovakia to Afghanistan. This export segment may potentially be expanded with the supply of Czech family cars or multi-purpose vehicles. Such exports would, however, have to come after the building of public roads and other infrastÂcture and follow-up maintenance. This is, in fact, the prerequisite for the delivery of many potential Czech exports to Afghanistan.

Regarding dual-use technologies, I maintain that Afghanistan will not develop its weapons of mass destÂction programme in the future given the overall weakness of Afghan state stÂctures. However, what must again be thought through carefully is the widespread organised criminal activity across the country. Corporate entities delivering their goods and services to Afghanistan need to ensure that these technologies and/or maintenance services are protected and do not fall into the hands of non-state actors linked to organised crime or any other entities that could trade in or misuse these technologies.[32] These facts widen the scope for private security activity to include the protection of personnel, goods and related services on the ground.

The export of weaponry and ammunition presents an even more complex problem. Historically, the former Czechoslovakia supplied various kinds of weaponry and ammunition to Afghanistan. This arms trade was seen as part of a tradition. Czech exporters of this type could, thus, again enjoy a comparative advantage over other potential exporters. On the other hand, there are several factors that make Czech weaponry and ammunition exports problematic and potentially unproductive. The first of these is the abundance of agreements between Afghanistan and other more influential arms-exporting states (the US first and foremost, but also Germany, India, Russia and others). Czech weaponry and ammunition may be comparatively cheaper, but given the strong political pressure surrounding this trade, any Czech arms export items would most likely be very specific and limited. One segment where Czech arms deliveries to the country might find support is the Afghan air force since the Czech Republic is one of the leading nations contributing to its build-up. Though these tasks were assigned entirely to Czech armed forces, Czech private players could supplement their efforts by providing technologies to the aviation industry along with maintenance services, education and other forms of Afghan capacity-building. Here, any gap in essential security provision could be filled with private security goods and services. In addition, there is a need to consider the risk of an emerging foreign policy dispute over the export of arms to conflict zones; a rift opens up when the pursuit of economic interests clashes with a policy of support for the protection of human rights and freedoms. Human rights concerns have been – and remain – an intrinsic part of Czech foreign policy. The Czech government and parliament have also adopted some regulations that prohibit arms exports to countries where there is clear potential for the items supplied to be used to violate human rights and freedoms. Afghanistan is obviously one of the target countries given the extended and on-going conflict that has recently been prone to escalate and intensify. In this regard, future developments in Afghanistan remain deeply uncertain and bound up with numerous factors: the future of the insurgency itself; the potential spread of instability from Iraq as the influence of ISIS-aligned entities increases; the future of the Afghan national security forces and of the real power-holders in the country; the related problem of re-establishing exclusive rights to the legitimate use of violence; the actions of neighbouring countries (especially Pakistan linked to the actions of India in Afghanistan, but also Iran); and many other determinants that are difficult to predict. All this means that the potential supply of Czech weaponry and ammunition to the country is also highly unpredictable. But just as the uncertainty about Afghanistan's future may create serious obstacles and challenges for Czech exports, so too could it prove beneficial in cases where specific demands arise and Czech exporters are able to meet them.

It should be stressed that the natural resources and mineral reserves of Afghanistan have the potential to meet the Czech Republic's energy needs and interests. This assumption is, of course, complex and subject to a variety of other important factors, and an analysis of these issues is not the purpose of this study. For our purposes, it is enough to note that Afghanistan's potential role in Czech energy policy may stimulate the Czech export of geological exploration and exploitation technologies and mining and quarrying machinery along with the deployment of experts on the ground in Afghanistan (and in the Czech Republic) to educate and train local professionals about mining and quarrying products. Furthermore, if the Czech Republic decides to participate in the exploration and exploitation of Afghan natural resources and mineral reserves, it may also provide technologies and experts for the reconstÂction of essential infrastÂcture across the country. The actual execution of these tasks on the ground in Afghanistan could expand the private security goods and services delivered and performed across the country. Importantly, Czech exports would not be limited to the delivery of items, but could also include constÂction, maintenance, servicing and an educational role in Afghanistan based on the International Security Assistance Force(ISAF)-promoted slogan *shona ba shona* (shoulder by shoulder) if interested actors decide to hire the local workforce.

Private Security Goods and Services

As indicated in the previous section, the opportunity to export Czech goods and services to Afghanistan gives the Czech private security sector a way to use external markets to expand its activities abroad. This section therefore focuses on the potential (future) activities of private security companies in Afghanistan from a Czech perspective based on the capabilities, specificities and other circumstances of the privatising of security in the Czech Republic.

When considering any potential private security-related missions in Afghanistan, it is vital to note the specific framework recently established in the country which limits the activities of private security actors in Afghanistan. At the same time, this framework, if appropriately implemented and enforced, may offer lessons about introducing mechanisms and tools for the regulation and control of private security companies as well as ways to ensure their transparency and accountability and an adequate level of social responsibility in their activities. The main points of the regulatory framework for private security (and military) actors in Afghanistan can be summed up as follows: on 17 August 2010, then Afghan president Hamid Karzai issued Decree no. 62 whose articulated goal was an absolute ban on the activities of all private military and security companies in Afghanistan from 01 January 2011.[33]

Karzai justified this complete ban by reference to the uncontrolled flow of money, said to be creating a kind of dependency syndrome and obstÂcting the rise of the Afghan economy. He also cited the misdoings of contractors from some companies, including human rights abuses, espionage activities, collaboration with the insurgency and other misconduct subverting overall counter-insurgency and democratisation efforts. The bottom line here was an allegation that private operations were eroding the government of the Islamic Republic's exclusive right to the legitimate use of force as well as its legitimacy and credibility. A more pragmatic reason can, however, be identified as the driving force behind this decree: as Pelz confirmed to me during an interview, Karzai sought to distract international as well as domestic attention away from internal problems of pervasive corÂption. At the time, several political representatives and aides to the president himself were suspected of deep involvement in fraud and corÂption and they had been threatened with prosecution. According to the decree, the critical issue was whether a private security or military company already possessed a special authorisation and relevant licence that had been issued by the Afghan authorities. A ninety-day deadline was set for companies without the licence to wind up all their activities and leave the country. However, this deadline was subsequently extended. The debate about the ban on private security activities in Afghanistan has fallen silent since FebÂary 2011. Nevertheless, several important regulatory and control provisions were established in the decree: they include a limit on the number of contractors who can be hired for a specific task by a specific company for a specific period of time. This needs to be approved and authorised by relevant Afghan authorities and bodies, and there are Âles on issuing licences and the like. Under the decree, the Afghan private security and military organisations were required to transform themselves into a unified and thus more manageable entity called the Afghan Public Protection Force with the ISAF in an advisory role, or into so-called risk-management companies. These companies have, however, been subjected to further legal restrictions and obligations while the Afghan Public Protection Force has been assigned the tasks originally carried out by private military and security companies (especially when it comes to the protection of strategic assets, facilities owned and used by coalition forces and NATO supply convoys). In March 2013, the Afghan Ministry of Interior announced the Afghan Public Protection Force's integration into the stÂctures of the Afghan National Police. The main impetus for the decision to create this security section can be identified as the efforts of the Afghan government to control activities and money flow. Efforts to curb the profits of insurgents and criminals from the racketeering activities of Afghan private security actors also played a critical role. In my opinion, the reorganising of the Afghan national police stÂctures and integration of the Afghan Public Protection Force in fact increase the scope for foreign private security actors to increase their activities in Afghanistan. This opportunity is due to the challenges and problems of implementing such Afghan efforts in terms of the doubling of tasks, competencies, powers and authority and issues of (mis)management, commanding stÂctures and accountability and responsibility-sharing.

As I have argued, with the expansion of the private security goods and services provided by Czech entities into foreign/external arenas/markets, the potential for the hybridisation of private security providers rises exponentially. Certain tendencies are already evident in the Czech environment where corporate entities which originally provided non-security-related goods and services have started to develop their own private security provision-related capabilities. It is still not clear how the specific legal regulatory and control framework in place in Afghanistan would apply to these actors. Additional changes and amendments are required to adjust the legal provisions and requirements for these new hybrid types of private security providers. Given the absence of such an overall legal framework in the Czech environment, the case of these hybrids needs to be considered, with adequate and appropriate provisions approved and implemented to avoid the creation of potentially exploitable legal gaps.

Significantly, the Czech Republic is a signatory and supporter of the 2008 Montreux Document, an instÂment also signed and ratified by Afghanistan to add to the complexity of the topic at hand. [34] The Montreux Document is an agreement among a number of countries setting up obligations regarding the presence, functions and activities of private military and security companies in conflict zones. This document lists some seventy recommendations for good state practices. These include verifying companies' track records; examining procedures used for the staff-vetting process; conducting correct criminal prosecutions after any violation of effective legal provisions; the existence of company insurance policies; and ensuring the compliance of companies' personnel training and conduct with the protection of human rights and freedoms and the norms of humanitarian law in general. Contracting states, home states and territorial states are reminded of their international legal obligations in the document as well as the various types of behaviour and conduct that are understood to be good practices during any interactions with corporate security businesses. The document applies international law to private security companies themselves. Although the contents of the document and the provisions it applies focus primarily on times of armed conflict, its scope goes beyond this and deals with relevant aspects of non-armed conflict contexts as well. I therefore consider this instÂment to be a good starting point and potential blueprint. Since, however it is a non-binding, non-legal document that neither creates nor alters legal obligations, but merely summarises and articulates existing requirements and provisions about private security roles and functions, there is a pressing need for additional action. It is vital that the measures introduced in the Montreux Document are integrated into some other legal framework that could be created in the Czech Republic (or elsewhere). In sum, Czech decision-makers and other relevant actors should build on the Montreux Document since it creates common ground for various entities and their interactions in the context of providing private security goods and services.

Generally speaking, along with the transformative role that NATO member states' armed forces are playing in Afghanistan under operation Resolute Support—a mission that involves advising, assisting, training and mentoring of Afghan national security forces with a scheduled start date of January 2015—there is space for private security actors who can supplement the official NATO support mission with their skills and capabilities. Of special interest to Czech private security actors could be the training of Afghan prison guard units, a segment overlooked and underestimated in the overall context of training missions by NATO forces. (The training of border police units might present another opportunity though this task is more likely to be conducted by regular NATO forces given the general significance of border police.) Theoretically at least, private security companies could contribute to building the capacities of local units (such as Afghan local police or Pashto tribal militia *arbakai*), but such tasks are highly dependent on the future of security sector reform in Afghanistan and the potential integration of these units into the stÂctures of the national security system. Additionally, Czech private security companies could provide specialists, goods and services in the security engineering and design spheres to give a further boost to Afghan national security force capacities.

The potential export items and services which have been identified and analysed in this study would help Czech private security actors to enhance their close protection and static guarding skills and capabilities and to develop the skills and capabilities needed for effective goods and services protection. Furthermore, the protection of infrastÂcture and facilities, to be achieved through the export of the capabilities, skills and know-how commonly used for these types of tasks domestically, could be a significant component in the evolution of Czech private security. Since Czech exports could potentially include the training and education of Afghans as well as the presence of Czech experts on the ground, private security companies could come under fairly strong pressure to develop their capabilities for rescue/recovery and/or medical evacuation missions. Such private players would also need to strengthen their transport capabilities.

Afghanistan is clearly a very complex conflict zone where various positive as well as negative and subversive influences, supports and pressures can—at times critically—affect the delivery of goods and services on the ground as well as trade and business themselves. These characteristics would most definitely help to stimulate the risk analysis, risk management and other consultancy segments of the Czech private security industry that are connected to intelligence-gathering activity (entailing export intelligence, business intelligence, intelligence about the situation on the ground in the area of interest, etc.). The external activities of Czech private security companies might also spur the growth of the banking and financial services of relevant actors given pressures from both internal and external directions and the general attention bound to follow. In this regard, these activities would be very difficult to keep off the the radar from the public, international organisations and other potentially important entities.

Moreover, in my opinion, Czech private security actors could supply goods and services to Afghanistan outside (or discontinuously with) the export of Czech products and services. Virtually any entity can hire a Czech private security company to undertake particular tasks. It was disclosed to me during the interviews for this research that Afghan entrepreneurs had hired a private security company (a part-Czech enterprise, with a British co-owner) to secure a newly built hotel in Kabul. I also believe that the private security services Ân by Czech companies could be retained by non-governmental or humanitarian organisations or travel agencies wishing to protect tourists travelling to regions where security was risky and unstable. Theoretically, a guard service for national parks or protected areas might also be viable.

All these potential uses of private security forces, goods and services in a foreign conflict zone – and Afghanistan specifically – would significantly affect the state and development of the privatisation of security in the Czech Republic. The potential implications for the privatisation of security in the Czech Republic – and the Czech private security market itself – are examined in this study's conclusion.

Conclusion: Contemplating the Potential Implications

I have decided not to categorise the potential implications uncovered in this work as either positive, neutral or negative. All of these implications may have further positive as well as negative effects, and the longer-term outlook may include a backlash. Moreover, this study has not aimed to offer any more concrete and specific recommendations or guidelines. I have sought rather to explore the potential for Czech exports to Afghanistan along with possible activities of Czech private security entities in the country and to identify where these prospects overlap. This overlap builds on the interests currently being pursued by Czech trade and private security actors with a common denominator of profit. My analysis points to the development trajectory that is most probable, but also ideal given favourable conditions on the ground in Afghanistan.

The potential hybridisation of Czech private security providers has been mentioned several times. Formerly non-security-related businesses in the Czech Republic may start to develop their own security-related capabilities, especially in terms of real risk assessment, risk management and business intelligence. Theoretically, these companies could also start to build their own private security provision capabilities as operatives handling protection and guarding tasks. These roles, however, require greater input costs and resources (especially for education and training) than simply hiring qualified analysts. Therefore, it would seem to be more logical and profitable to contract an actor which already has these capabilities at its disposal. There is, then, no prospect of absolute hybridisation of the sector. I would also assume that the two chambers of commerce that already serve as a base for business with and in Afghanistan would be (if they are not already) the initial focal points for exports of private security companies' services from the Czech Republic to Afghanistan. At the same time, these chambers have the greatest potential to develop their own private security-related capabilities.

The role and position of private security actors would be strengthened in the Czech security architecture if the private security market became more consolidated in the face of internal and external pressures. This increased power of corporate security entities and the private security market would most likely bring additional pressure, greater than ever before, to create a law establishing a regulatory and control framework along with instÂments and mechanisms for the private security goods and services market in the Czech environment. Again, I would not expect such a legal document to provide any more concrete and specific provisions or requirements, rights and obligations for private security provider entities. I do believe, however, that this legal regulatory and control framework would be very restrictive and potentially limit the performance of private security roles and functions; at the same time, it would need to stay very general since finding a compromise among so many interested actors remains very problematic amidst mounting pressures internally (from the public) and externally (from international partners and organisations especially at EU and NATO levels, etc.). Nevertheless, it is thanks to these pressures that the political will and commitment might be generated to come up with at least some minimal basis for regulating and controlling the business at hand. The competencies, authority and powers of private security actors would need to be clarified and well-defined in this framework. Given the specific security environments that these players would face in Afghanistan, their competencies would also need to be expanded beyond necessary and appropriate (self-)defence while remaining very moderate. The issue of private security operatives' taking of prisoners—before these persons are handed over to responsible law enforcement authorities, an imperative step—would have to be addressed with relevant provisions set out clearly. A related concern, the potential criminal prosecution of individual contractors would also need to be dealt with. It is clear that if deployed to Afghanistan, the operatives of security companies would fall under Afghan law. What needs to be considered and addressed in the relevant legal document, however, is the potential for the expulsion and deportation of those who are prosecuted in Afghanistan along with the additional issue of their serving sentences in the Czech Republic (in the case of Czech nationals first and foremost; a wider and more challenging debate is expected regarding non-Czech nationals working for Czech companies in a similar situation, and adequate legal provisions would need to address this issue as well). Significantly, any legal regulatory framework for the Czech private security market must be based on the principles of the Montreux Document, which the Czech Republic joined a year ago. With a clear legal framework in place, the businesses of private security entities would become more transparent in the Czech context. The performance of private security actors would become more socially and politically responsible and individual contractors as well as entire companies would be held accountable for their deeds.

The call for a legal framework reflects the need to establish the legality of Czech private security actors performing their business abroad, and in Afghanistan specifically. In this connection, the potential legitimacy of private security actors would be affected both domestically and in the country where tasks are being executed. (This is the ideal scenario.) Objective and unbiased media coverage of missions and tasks of Czech private security providers would raise general public awareness at the domestic level and help generate appropriate pressure on political leaders to adopt a Czech legal framework for the private security sector and market. Once such a framework is in place, private security actors could gain more public respect and legitimacy. In this regard, the "grey zone" of the Czech private security market should be limited through the legal regulatory and control mechanisms enacted for the sector. Increased public awareness and interest could also prompt additional pressures to transform the "irregular" connections between politicians and private security entrepreneurs into more "healthy," effective and productive ones. Nevertheless, the prospect that personal ties will just be pulled under the radar – off the grid and out of public sight – remains relatively high. On the side of Czech state actors, procurement stÂctures may also be affected given the internal and external pressures generated by the export of Czech private security goods and services. The "Afghanistan factor" could disÂpt or dismantle relationships due to the entirely different private security business environment at international level. Achieving legitimacy in the eyes of the local Afghan population may also be a persistent problem in the wake of the overall historical experience.

Participation in the Afghanistan market would, thus, also increase the need for adequate, appropriate and credible local knowledge within the private security sector that provides employment opportunities for Afghans. (These individuals' background checks would need to be detailed, exhaustive and accurate.) As a specific feature of the Czech private security sector, employment relations would see changes, with the loosening of employer–employee ties and the increasing potential for a "Western" model of hiring contractors for specific tasks rather than actually employing them (due to potential insurance problems and other concerns).

Notably, the private security goods and services provided domestically in the Czech Republic would virtually be exported to a foreign country. The emergence of a Czech private military company – i.e. a company dedicated to what Singer classifies as the roles and functions of security provider, consultant and supporter, including developing logistical support services – is therefore highly likely in my opinion. This is in line with growing demands for such services coming from various Czech corporate actors who are not, however, security-related.

Alongside this "externalisation," another important implication is the "transnationalisation" of the Czech private security market based on the increasing tendency for cooperation with a wide range of state as well as non-state actors. There is a fundamental and critical need for the adopting of related legal provisions that address the challenges of externalisation and transnationalisation appropriately and adequately as both these processes include highly controversial, problematic and even dangerous interactions with outside players. Not only do these interactions have the potential to damage the international image and reputation of the Czech Republic, but the potential threats they pose to vital and strategic Czech interests cannot be underestimated. On the other hand, these two trends may also bring great benefits to the Czech market in private security goods and services, especially by introducing standards, methods and codes of conduct from more experienced foreign companies.

Together with other internal and external pressures, the externalising of Czech private security provision efforts—could also generate a more effective educational framework for private security and military company workers. And, the transformation of employment, better education (including various courses, workshops, study visits, etc.) could create a more qualified workforce, potentially attractive to foreign private security companies as well. Externalisation-related pressures and influences could change PR recÂitment as well as customer-seeking campaigns, making them more sophisticated and professional.

At the same time, I suggest that the potential for overloading the private security sector is relativelyhigh—and particularly so in the Czech context. We must therefore consider the potential for the implosion (or burn-out) of the Czech private security market as a result of the inability of relevant actors to meet demands in Afghanistan (and elsewhere).

In sum, in my opinion, the advantages of externalisation and transnationalisation of the Czech private security market potentially surpass their disadvantages. However, this is only tÂe so long as the market's self-regulating tendencies are halted and a strong political will and commitment generated and maintained to address the problems at hand. In the Czech Republic, this second variable remains a formidable challenge.

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Notes

1 Local academic publications on the topic include O. Bures (2012),'Private Actors in the Fight against Terrorist Financing: Efficiency versus Effectiveness,' *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35 (10), pp. 712-732; O. Bures (2013),'Public-Private Partnerships in the Fight against Terrorism?' *Crime, Law, Social Change* 60(4), pp. 429-455; O. Bures (2014), 'Private Security Companies in the Czech Republic: Rearticulating the Security Field and Transforming Politics,' *Security Dialogue* 45 (1), pp. 81-98; O. Bures and V. Nedvedicka, (2011), *Privatizace bezpečnosti:* České *a zahraniční zkušenosti* [Privatisation

of Security: Czech and Foreign Experiences], Prague: Grada; O. Bures (ed.) (2013), *Privatizace bezpečnosti:* České *a zahraniční zkušenos*ti [Privatisation of Security: Czech and Foreign Experiences], Prague: Grada; T. Jurcik (2013), *Soukromé bezpečnostní firmy v bezpečnostním prostředí* České *republiky* [Private Security Companies in the Security Environment of the Czech Republic], Master's thesis, Masaryk University, available at: <http://is.muni.cz/th/237769/fss_m/>; J. Kamenik and F. Brabec (eds.) (2007), *Komerční bezpečnost: Soukromá bezpečnostní* činnost *deketivních kanceláří a bezpečnostních agentur* [Commercial Security: Private Security Activities of Detective Offices and Security Agencies], Prague: ASPI Wolters Kluwer; V. Lamr (2010), *Sociálně-právní a pedagogické aspekty* činnosti *soukromých bezpečnostních agentur* [Socio-legal and Pedagogical Aspects of Private Security Agency Activities], Master's thesis, University of Tomas Bata, Zlin, available at <http://theses.cz/id/d69isp/?lang=en;furl=%2Fid%2Fd69isp%2F>; P. Macek (ed.) (2008), *Bezpečnostní služby*, Praha: Police History, P. Macek and F.Novak (2005), *Privátní bezpečnostní služby*, Prague: Police History; and T. Smid (2012), 'Hrot kopí a české soukromé vojenské a bezpečnostní společnosti,' *Středoevropské politické studie* 4, vol. XIV, autumn 2012.

2 Czech nationals with adequate skills, experience and knowledge are, however, hired quite frequently by foreign (British, American, South African, etc.) private military and security companies and deployed to security-risk areas and conflict zones. They represent an important Czech component of the private security sector at the multinational, cross-border, non-domestic level.

3 For my purposes, the concept of "exports" reflects the aspirations of both state-owned and private companies to Ân their businesses on the ground in Afghanistan. References to exports, thus, denote not only the goods and services to be sold in the foreign country, but also an actual physical presence there. This is mostly to be achieved through personnel operations and export support services as well as assistance, advice and mentoring activities as part of the education and training of locals.

4 These interviews were conducted in 2013 and the first half of 2014.

5 Bures (ed.)(2013).

6 Ibid, pp. 162, 192.

7 Trade Licensing Act no. 455/1991.

8 Other Czech statutes relevant to private security include an amendment to the Trade Licensing Act (2007), Act no. 274/2008, on the police of the Czech Republic and Act no. 292/2009, on excises and a number of other amendments to various statutes.

9 Bures (2013), p. 192.

10 The private security market is also one of the few sectors open to former workers and collaborators in the Communist security apparatus: see Bures (2013), p.163. This situation, however, remains controversial: while it may help these individuals find a way to earn their living without meetingstigma and potentially discrimination, it also brings past modes and patterns of behaviour into a new and still evolving business market. This could eventually harm the market's development.

11 One interview respondent noted that in this situation 'the goods and services of many of the Czech private security companies are being stretched too far, complicating their business.'

12 Peter W. Singer (2008), *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatised Military Industry. Updated Edition*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

13 Czech Statistical Office (2013), *Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2013*, available at: <http://csugeo.i-server.cz/csu/2013edicniplan.nsf/engpubl/0001-13-eng_r_2013>

14 Ibid. This decree implements various Customs Act provisions and repeals several decrees on import duty exemptions and the non-preferential origin of goods.

15 Ibid.

16 For a recent example, consider the supply of Kurdish fighters in Iraq with Czech weapons and ammunition. In this case, the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs made a public statement about using private corporate channels to avoid the potentially drawn-out process of obtaining parliamentary authorisation.

17 More specifically, Russia has highly interdependent relationships with both the European Union as a whole and individual member states. Both sides in these relationships need the other to prevent the dramatic deterioration of their respective economies that would result from an extended shortage of the goods and services imported/exported from the other side. This fact, however, does not prevent these breakdowns from happening, particularly when trade and business are hijacked as political tools to leverage policy changes on either side.

18 Czech Statistical Office (2013). For more information, see Ministry of Industry and Trade (2014), 'Traditional Export Sectors,'<http://www.czechtradeoffices.com/about-czech-republic/export-sectors/> (accessed 15 November 2014).

19 Ibid.

20 See the more detailed and precise data from the Czech Statistical Office (2013), available at <http://www.czso.cz/csu/2013edicniplan.nsf/engt/0E002418FB/$File/000113.pdf> (accessed 16 November 2014) (now dead). For another very good source of Czech export and import data, see the Czech Republic profile in the *Observatory of Economic Complexity* available at <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/profile/country/cze/> (accessed 15 November 2014).

21 The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2012), *Development Cooperation for Afghanistan, 2013 – 2017*. available at: <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:UqxzCEwddzUJ:www.mzv.cz/file/1023376/PROGRAMME_CZ_AFG_2013_2017_FINAL.doc+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=cz>.

22 The primary emphasis here is on Czech export-Afghan import axis given the focus of this study.

23 This risk is, however, minimal considering this chamber's established presence in Afghanistan, including regional offices with permanent representatives in the country. For more information, see *Czech-Middle Asian Mixed Chamber of Commerce* (2014), <http://www.csok.cz/article/en> (accessed 21

November 2014).

24 The project is intended to be long-term. It aims to foster reciprocal trade cooperation and to support Czech exports.

25 Another strength of the Czech-Middle Asian Mixed Chamber of Commerce lies in its educational projects. These focus on training qualified industry and engineering sector specialists on both the Czech and partner (including Afghanistan) sides.

26 More information about the Czech-Afghan Mixed Chamber of Commerce in the Czech Republic is available at its website <http://www.obchodnikomora.cz/index.html> (accessed 21 November 2014; text available in Czech only).

27 Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2012).

28 Based on currency exchange rates of US$1 to CZK 22.3 and €1 to CZK 27.67 (valid on 22 November 2014), reciprocal trade fell from US$28.6m to US$18.48m and from €23.1m to €15.2m respectively.

29 From US$28.3m (€22.8m) in 2009 to US$17.9m (€14.46m) in 2010.

30 From US$0.31m (€0.25m) in 2009 to US$0.54m (€0.49m) in 2010.

31 According to the latest UN report, such poppy cultivation reached record highs in 2014. See United Nations Office on DÂgs and Crime (2013), *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2013*, available at: <http://www.unodc.org/documents/cropmonitoring/Afghanistan/Afghan_report_Summary_Findings_2013.pdf>.

32 The risk of misuse/abuse of dual-use technologies does not necessarily relate to the manufacture of weapons of mass destÂction. These technologies may also, for example, help enable more sophisticated poppy processing etc.

33 President of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2010), Decree about Dissolution of Private Security Companies no. 62, 17 August, available at: <http://psm.du.edu/media/documents/national_regulations/countries/asia_pacific/afghanistan/afghanistan_decree_number_52_dissolution_psc_2010-english.pdf>

34 See *International Committee of the Red Cross* (2014), 'The Montreux Document on Private Military and Security Companies,' <https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/publication/p0996.htm>. For the full text of the Montreux Document on Pertinent International Legal Obligations and Good Practices for States related to Operations of Private Military and Security Companies during Armed Conflict, see <https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0996.pdf> (accessed 22 November 2014). The Czech Republic joined the Montreux Document on 14 November 2013.