



Prague Security  
Studies Institute



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

## MESSAGE FROM PSSI'S CHAIRMAN

As we emerge from the darker period of Covid-19, PSSI is capitalizing on the solid progress we have made over the past two years, despite the rather severe constraints of this historic global scourge.

High on the list of accomplishments has been our being awarded in 2021 the No. 1 ranking worldwide in the category of Economic and Financial Affairs by the prestigious British magazine Prospect and finishing within the top three think tanks in the field of Democracy and Law for our extensive work on disinformation. In the first instance, the Prospect award resulted from our global leadership on an issue area that we originated – China's and Russia's malign presence in the capital markets of the United States and Europe.

As we approach PSSI's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it is an appropriate time to take stock of our now-long track record of world-class conferences, roundtables, publications, and educational activities, as well as the inspirational network of friends and associates which we have developed who have generously given of their executive time and energy on our behalf and that of our nearly two thousand alumni.

Since the inception of PSSI in early 2002, we have consistently adhered to a proven formula for success: recruiting senior security policy practitioners to provide lectures to our highly select cohort of students and young professionals in small group settings; maintaining a casual, but classy, atmosphere to promote privileged discourse between our distinguished speakers or visitors and our students; offering internationally renowned two-day conferences and numerous roundtable gatherings; concentrating in-depth on only a few underdeveloped or less-understood issue areas, such as economic and financial warfare and the commercial activities of authoritarian space powers; building an active alumni network with periodic events to encourage career-relevant interaction; and constantly seeking innovative ways to enrich the PSSI experience, such as our long-running NATO Summer School, which differentiate the Institute from its counterparts in the Czech Republic and elsewhere.

Naturally, this proud record of academic and security policy-related achievements would not have been possible without the generous support of our donors and friends who have provided the financial resources, expertise, and skill-sets required to fulfill PSSI's worthy mission of advancing human freedom, especially at a time of true peril in Europe largely resulting from unbridled and unprovoked Russian military aggression and Chinese egregious security and human rights abuses. We are immensely grateful.



Roger W. Robinson, Jr.  
PSSI Chairman and Co-Founder



Czech Ambassador-at-Large for Energy Security Václav Bartuška delivers a lecture during PSSl's NATO Summer School

## SECURITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

### ROBINSON-MARTIN SECURITY SCHOLARS ACADEMY

The core project of the Security Scholars Program was launched in 2002, the same year PSSl was founded. This two-semester course is primarily designed for master's students of Czech universities majoring in political science, security studies, international relations, economics or other related fields. The Academy helps to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the international security environment. The course consists of a series of lectures and seminars (10 each semester), which are given by distinguished senior Czech or foreign experts from various fields (diplomats, senators, experts from the security community, the military, and others). The course is on average attended by 15-17 highly motivated students, which allows for close interaction not only among the students themselves but also with the lecturers. In addition to active participation in lectures, students are also required to write a policy brief (one per semester) that analyzes a selected topic in the security domain. Students present and defend the findings of their policy papers so that they leave the Academy geared up for the challenges they will likely face in their

careers, not only with the theoretical knowledge gained from the lectures but also with practical skills obtained from our speakers. We are proud that after twenty years of educating future policy practitioners, we can now count among our alumni the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Lipavský; and two Deputy Ministers of Defence and Armed Forces, Jan Havránek and Tomáš Kopečný.

This year the students have met various experts from multiple fields, including governmental officials such as Pavel Fischer (Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs) and Jan Havránek (Deputy Minister of Defense), who shared their expertise on national security policy. Petr Pavel (former Chairman of the NATO Military Committee) aimed his lecture on NATO and its surging role for transatlantic security. Michael Romancov (political geographer lecturing at the Charles University, Prague and Metropolitan University of Prague) and Pál Dunay (professor of NATO and European Security Issues at George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies) addressed critical aspects of Russian foreign policy, while Filip Jirouš (sinologist and researcher with Sinopsis.cz) focused on Chinese foreign policy predations.

### NATO SUMMER SCHOOL

The 17<sup>th</sup> NATO Summer School, entitled "Post-Covid Security Priorities" reflected on changes in the security environment as



Participants of the Cyber Security Academy 2021

well as new challenges emerging from the pandemic situation.

Our annual Summer School provides an opportunity for highly qualified students to participate in lectures, interactive workshops and a practical simulation based on real events since its foundation in 2005. Held at Hotel Orlik (situated 80 km from Prague), it offers an intensive one-week educational and training course for a group of 25-30 students of international relations, security studies, political science and other relevant fields from over a dozen countries. The topics covered included hybrid warfare, cyber security, space security and many more. Lectures and workshop modules were run by prominent Czech and foreign experts including Petr Pavel, former Chairman of the NATO Military Committee; Václav Bartuška, Ambassador-at-Large for Energy Security; Ladislav Stahl, director of the Satellite Center Czech Republic; Pál Dunay, professor at George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies; Jan Šnidauf, who has directed Policy Planning and Strategy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic; Elisabeth Braw, Resident Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute; Luboš Přikryl, Emerging Disruptive Technologies analyst at National Cyber and Information Security Agency of the Czech Republic; Tomáš Kopečný, Deputy Minister of Defence, and Michael Myklín, head of Strategic Information and Analyses Unit at National Cyber and Information Security Agency.

## CYBER SECURITY ACADEMY

We added a new, highly topical element to the Security Scholars Program in September 2018 in cooperation with the Czech National Cyber and Information Security Agency. In 2021, the fourth annual Academy focused on the geopolitical, legal, and institutional aspects of cybersecurity, and was supported by the National Cyber and Information Security Agency, KPMG, Check Point, Cybexer Technologies, the U.S. Embassy, Norwegian Embassy, and the British Embassy.

The week-long course consists of 15 lectures and practical workshops and is designed for a group of 20-30 university students and young professionals. The topics range from cyber security and cybercrime to critical infrastructure and data-centric security and information warfare.

This prestigious gathering continued a tradition of attracting prominent cyber-security policy practitioners and experts, such as Karel Řehka, Director of the National Cyber and Information Security Agency, Michael Myklín, Head of Strategic Information and Analyses Unit at National Cyber and Information Security Agency; Lucie Kadlecová and Kari Rannikko from CybExer Technologies; Richard Kadlčák from the Department of Cybersecurity at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic; ČSOB's IT expert Milan Zrcek; Andrew Dwyer, Addison Wheeler Research Fellow at Durham





PSSI's Project Coordinator Simone Neads delivering a speech at the World Peace Conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh

University; David Pikálek, KPMG expert on cybersecurity; Alžběta Bajerová, Association for International Affairs Research Fellow; and others.

Students were also invited to attend an invitation-only reception celebrating the cooperation in cyber security between the Czech Republic and the UK, hosted by the British Ambassador to the Czech Republic Nick Archer. In attendance were foremost cyber security experts in Prague and beyond, which made it an ideal opportunity for networking.

### **PSSI ALUMNI NETWORK**

PSSI is proud of its extensive alumni network, which currently connects more than 1000 graduates of our educational programs. In addition to sharing relevant information in the field, our alumni network is a great source of job or internship offers, ongoing projects, or calls to engage in research activities. In 2021, the Institute launched the PSSI Alumni Brief series, which consists of policy analyses and commentaries on current security issues prepared by graduates of our programs, former interns, or colleagues. Since its inception, two policy briefs have been published, covering the topics of “Open Source Intelligence and Terrorism” and “China's Navy: A Serious Threat to U.S. Naval Superiority?”. The objective of these Briefs is to broaden public policy debate, as they are aimed at both experts in the field and the general public and journalists.

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

Since its inception in 2002, PSSI has worked in close collaboration with Charles University in Prague. In 2006, PSSI initiated, and financially supported, a new – first of its kind in the Czech Republic – Master's Program in International Security Studies. The program also achieved English-language accreditation in 2012.

In addition to the educational activities conducted through the Masters' Degree Program, PSSI organizes lectures in coordination with Charles University. Their aim is to bring together academics and security experts, providing students with practical insights as well as theoretical knowledge.

PSSI is also involved at the level of doctoral studies offered by Charles University. The International Relations Program at Charles University's Institute of Political Studies offers a PhD in Economic and Finance (E&F) Statecraft. As part of this undertaking, PSSI sponsors the Oldřich Černý Ph.D. Scholarship for one full-time student. The scholarship will not only help students cover their living expenses, but also guarantees them the opportunity to work on collaborative projects with PSSI in the field of E&F. The Institute offers similar scholarship support in the field of Space Security.



PSSI's Senior Communications Manager Kateřina Krejčířová receiving a Prospect Magazine Think Tank Award from the magazine's editor-in-chief, Alan Rusbridger

## COOPERATION WITH THE ERASMUS INTERNATIONAL MASTERS' DEGREE IN SECURITY, INTELLIGENCE AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

In line with our mission to educate and train new generations of security-minded students and young professionals, the Institute has established cooperation with an Erasmus Mundus International Masters' Degree Program facilitated by the University of Glasgow, Dublin City University, University of Trento, and Charles University. As part of this partnership, highly motivated students of this International Masters' Degree in Security, Intelligence & Strategic Studies are offered internships at PSSI.

Consistent with this cooperation, in 2021, PSSI's Space Security Program team welcomed František Avrat to assist our research efforts. After successfully completing his internship, he became a full-fledged member of the team, currently writing and publishing, organizing events, and participating in our core ongoing research (including updating PSSI's database of Chinese and Russian global transactions in the space sector), thus helping shape the future of European and allied policy decision-making in the space security domain (civil, commercial and military).

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL STATECRAFT PROGRAM

The Institute's Economic and Financial Statecraft Program works to highlight the growing risks associated with economic interdependence especially with regard to authoritarian regimes. This field of research is cutting edge and has the potential to deepen further transatlantic security cooperation.

Over the past year, we have authored multiple PSSI Perspectives (short reports reacting to breaking issues) to help raise awareness and understanding of economic and financial threats and warfare. These included reports such as, "Biden Administration Opts To Sustain and Strengthen Trump-era Capital Markets Sanctions on Chinese Corporate Bad Actors" and "Imposing Capital Market Sanctions Against Chinese And Russian Enterprises Poised To Underwrite The Taliban."

The Program also continued its long-term project of highlighting the threats of economic and financial interference in the CEE region with a detailed investigation of the Russian-led International Investment Bank (IIB). This included the Perspective "Czech-Russian Crisis: High Time to Leave Moscow's International Investment Bank"

We have also authored a longer report on this issue, which we were able to



PSSI's Senior Fellow Edward Christie delivering a lecture entitled "Economics and Technology: Emerging New Threats" at the American Center

publish in both Czech and English to achieve a greater impact. We also produced a short video explaining this urgent issue. Our original research also appeared in a joint publication with other regional partners on the activities of the IIB entitled "Banks, Special interests, and Communist Comrades: the International Investment Bank's Modus Operandi in Central – Eastern Europe."

Another comprehensive report focused on the malign economic and financial activity of authoritarian states in the European security sphere. It focused on China's malevolent presence in Western capital markets, "The Security and Human Rights Implications of Chinese Corporate 'Bad Actors' Traded on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange."

Additionally, we have expanded our E&F outreach through a lecture series program, hosting four public events this year. The first served as an introduction to the E&F portfolio and was presented by our Chairman, Roger W. Robinson, Jr. This was well-received, and followed up by a roundtable discussion on the topic, "Chinese Corporate 'Bad Actors' in the EU's Capital Markets: Policy Options."

The E&F program has also added a new dimension – technology – exploring the crucial ties between investment and innovation through our roundtable, "Assessing the Associated with Chinese Companies Present in the Architecture of Open RAN." This was further discussed in our final lecture presented by our new

Senior Fellow Edward Christie entitled "Economics and Technology: Emerging New Threats."

Before joining PSSI, Edward Christie served as Deputy Head of NATO's Innovation Unit between 2014-2020 and was the lead author of NATO's White Paper on Artificial Intelligence and a key consultant in the development of the NATO Artificial Intelligence Strategy. PSSI will use his expertise to develop an initiative that addresses the nexus of technology and investment bans.





PODCAST  
**SIGNÁL**  
**MARTINA EHLA**  
*Jana Robinson*

HN

Dr Jana Robinson was a guest on Martin Ehl's podcast

## SPACE SECURITY PROGRAM

PSSI believes that the security and sustainability of the space environment are essential to the day-to-day lives of Earth's inhabitants. Perhaps not surprisingly, in the contest between authoritarian versus democratic space powers, there is increasing competition for international space partnerships and space equipment/services markets. To probe this and other downside risks in the space domain, the Institute launched a program in 2010 dedicated solely to space security – the first such program in the region. In January 2020, former Principal Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force for Space, John P. Stopher, and former Principal Adviser for Space and Security Policy for the European Commission, Frank Asbeck, joined the program as Senior Fellows.

## SPACE SECURITY CONFERENCE SERIES

PSSI's Space Security Conference series is the flagship initiative of this program. To date, five such international gatherings have taken place (three in Europe, one in Japan, and one in the U.S.) that brought together high-level government officials, private sector executives, NGO and former policy practitioners, as well as oth-

er experts from the space communities in Europe, the U.S., and Japan. A sixth conference will be convened in June 2022 in Prague.

## SPACE SECURITY COURSE AT CHARLES UNIVERSITY

This course, established and sponsored since 2015 by PSSI, is a collaborative undertaking with Charles University and is structured within the University's Master's Degree in International Security Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences. The course is designed to explore the security dimensions of space from policy, regulatory, and technical perspectives.

The central objective of the guest lectures is to offer students the opportunity to interact with distinguished policy practitioners who manage various aspects of space security. These include safe access to, and operations in space, the security of satellites, links, and ground infrastructure, as well as various threats ranging from unintentional interference to counterspace operations. The lectures have also examined the status of international space governance, including various initiatives to strengthen existing legal structures. Past lecturers included senior experts from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Commission, the Czech and Slovak Ministries of Foreign Affairs, George Washington University, the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), the





British Ambassador Nick Archer greets the participants of the Cyber Security Academy

European Space Policy Institute (ESPI), and the Secure World Foundation.

In 2021, lectures were delivered by Dr. Ajey Lele, a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) in New Delhi and former Indian Air Force Officer; Dr. Xavier Pasco Director of the Foundation for Strategic Research and a member of multiple ministerial and inter-ministerial working groups; and Dr. Stefano Iannitti, Head of the Security Department at European Union Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA) and an active contributor to the development of security in the European Union Global Navigation Satellite Systems since 2003 and to the development of the security aspects of the EU Space Programme, including GOVSATCOM.

#### OTHER PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

In February 2021, PSSI's Managing Director and Head of the Space Security Program, Dr. Jana Robinson, led the plenary session on "grey zone" space threats at Module 2 of the "Critical Infrastructure Protection Course of the Training of EU Member States' Civil and Military Employees". The course was organized under the auspices of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) by the EU's Joint Research Centre (DG JRC), the Digital Security Authority (DSA) – National CSIRT-CY of Cyprus, and the National Institute of Research and Development in Informatics (ICI Bucharest, Romania). This three-day train-

ing was aimed at enhancing the knowledge of civil servants and military personnel from EU member states, and EU institutions and agencies, in the areas of cyber, transport, energy, and space. Dr. Robinson reviewed the latest global space security trends and introduced new challenges posed by space hybrid operations, including those stemming from offensive economic and financial operations.

In March 2021, Dr. Robinson discussed live on The Pat Kenny Show, a national radio broadcast in Ireland, the more insidious economic and financial aspects of the U.S. – China space race, mainly on display in the competition for international space partnerships. Recruiting countries with the lure of future national space activities could well influence the setting of standards and norms. She described this high-stakes game, fought not with guns and missiles, but with subsidized loans and offers of infrastructure, technology, products, and services.

In the same month, Dr. Robinson presented, as a member of the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA), the IAA's 2018 Study on Space Traffic Management, entitled "Space Traffic Management: Towards a Roadmap for Implementation", at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the European Space Traffic Management (STM) Conference Preparatory Group. The second IAA study of 2018 was preceded by a 2006 study that delivered a technical definition of STM. The latter study recommended: an interdisciplinary approach; active



Participants of the Cyber Security Academy during a table-top exercise ran by CybExer Technologies

involvement of decision-makers at national levels; coordination in international fora; and raising public awareness. It brings a multidisciplinary approach to, and an update on, global space activities, a structure for a Space Traffic Management regime, and a concrete roadmap for implementation with a timeline.

PSSI's Space Security team organized an online, closed roundtable entitled "Strategic Competition for International Space Partnerships and Key Principles for a Sustainable Global Space Economy" on 22 April 2021. The roundtable consisted of experts from the space policy community in Europe, the United States, and Japan, including current and former government officials, non-governmental experts, and industry representatives. The goals of the roundtable were to: review key principles of global space commerce; configure arguments to elevate the priority attached to the competition for international space partnerships; and counter the influence of state-led, non-market economic and financial practices employed by non-democratic space powers – notably, China and Russia; and review available measures and response options to ensure that our values and principles form the bedrock of a sustainable global space economy.

Moreover, in April 2021, Dr. Robinson contributed to a panel of the Atlantic Council discussion on "The Future of Security in Space: A Thirty-Year US Strategy". The panel focused on national security and commercial aspects of a future

U.S. space strategy. She talked about the competition for international space partnerships and the need to promote a sustainable model of global space commerce based on free-market principles.

In June 2021, Dr. Robinson contributed an article to the NATO JAPCC Joint Air and Space Power Conference 2021 Read Ahead. The article discusses the significant – and continuously increasing – number of Chinese enterprises that are being sanctioned or officially designated as, in effect, 'bad actors' by the United States and Japan. Later that year, in September 2021, Dr. Robinson also contributed to the 2021 NATO Joint Air Power Competence Centre (JAPCC) Conference, entitled "Delivering NATO Air & Space Power at the Speed of Relevance" held in Essen, Germany. In her remarks, she focused on the connectivity that exists among technologies, markets, and norm-building within the framework of the space domain. Dr. Robinson also joined the Urban Talk Discussing the European Space Programme during the Prague European Summit in July 2021.

In October 2021, Dr. Robinson chaired a Session on "Threats to Space Security" at the Ad Hoc Seminar of the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium. The seminar focused on emerging threats, including but not limited to cyber-attacks, electronic warfare, launch and re-entry risks, or near-space activities such as space tourism and high-altitude platform systems (HAPS).





Getting ready for another online lecture, this time with Dr. Xavier Pasco, director of the Foundation for Strategic Research (FRS)

In the same month, Dr. Robinson took part in a panel on space security at the CyFY 2021 Conference organized by the Observer Research Foundation. Dr. Robinson spoke about the nexus of global governance, technology, and sustainable space commerce.

Later that year, in December 2021, PSSI's Space Security team organized a roundtable discussion in collaboration with MP-IDSA, and with the support of the Czech Ministry of Defence and the Indian Embassy in the Czech Republic. During the roundtable, Czech and Indian experts were discussing topics ranging from the Rise of China, the U.S. Re-Engagement in Asia/Indo-Pacific, Quad, India-Czech Republic Cooperation, and India-Europe Defence Cooperation. Opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Roger W. Robinson Jr., Chairman and Co-Founder of PSSI, and his Indian counterpart Amb. Sujan R. Chinoy, Director General, MP-IDSA. Special remarks were delivered by H.E. Hemant H. Kotalwar, India's Ambassador to the Czech Republic, and H.E. Jan Havránek, Czech Deputy Minister of Defence for Policy and Strategy.

Finally, in the course of 2021, PSSI's Space Security team also published two PSSI Perspectives. The first was entitled, "China Deploys BeiDou to Project Power and Influence." Dr. Robinson, together with her team, reviewed how China leverages its economic and financial strategies to project power and advance its regional and global economic, strategic and

military objectives. Its global navigation satellite system (GNSS), BeiDou, has been an important element of China's expanding global space footprint, bolstering the Chinese Communist Party's industrial and civil-military fusion policies.

The second PSSI Perspective on Space Security Fair entitled, "Fair Space Commerce: A Key Component of Sustainable Global Space Governance". Dr. Robinson, argued that the space governance discussions need to go beyond emerging technologies to include fundamental principles, such as the protection of sovereignty, free and fair trade, and the independence of fledgling and other space-faring nations.





PSSI organized a discussion of political representatives about the societal resilience in the V4, EaP countries and Western Balkans

## REGIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM

The Regional Security Program seeks to identify and analyze emerging foreign policy and security-related issues that will increasingly affect and influence the transatlantic security policy community. At times, these challenges exceed the scope of the traditional political-military agenda that effectively dominated the public policy space in the previous century. Less visible, unconventional methods of warfare are gaining traction among adversaries, including sophisticated cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, counterspace activities, and hybrid warfare methods, which are often driven by economic and financial warfighting priorities.

### THE WESTERN BALKANS

The Western Balkans Project focuses on the external actors' influence in the region, specifically that of Russia, China, Turkey, and the Gulf States. The aim was to analyze various aspects and mechanisms of the foreign influence activities within the Western Balkan region.

In 2021, PSSI successfully completed a research project entitled, "Western Balkans at the Crossroads: Ways Forward in Analyzing External Actors' Influence". This undertaking was a follow-up to a previous project, which mapped, analyzed, and

publicized Russian, Chinese, Turkish, and Gulf State influence activities in the region. The second project encompassed in-depth local research and investigative journalism, and combined innovative methodological approaches, such as visual anthropology.

The 18-month-long project involved eleven researchers from the Balkan countries and a three-person Prague-based coordination team. PSSI published 14 analytical studies and one opinion paper, which are all accessible on our website. The most widely read article posted on PSSI's FB account reached 44,532 people, while the average number of people reading the project's outputs was about 10,000. In addition, 11 articles have been written and published in prestigious and widely-read Balkan media portals – the Balkan Insight and the European Western Balkans. The articles have also been translated into the local languages to reach the local audience.

We have organized two online debates which built upon the key arguments and findings of our analytical studies. The moderators were senior experts in Western Balkan politics and external actors' engagements, Senada Šelo Šabić and Ioannis Armakolas, the scientific advisor to the project. Both events were organized as Zoom webinars and were also live-streamed on Facebook. The debates attracted significant attention of about 100 participants, with the recording of the first debate having been seen by more than 20,000 people on Facebook and the second by more than 23,000 viewers.



Participants of the Cyber Security Academy during a table-top exercise ran by CybExer Technologies

Additionally, in September 2021, PSSI became a part of a Visegrad Fund project, "Western Balkans Trends – Exploring Trajectories for the Region" organized by the Polish Res Publica Foundation, in cooperation with five other Central and Eastern European NGOs – the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, EUROTHINK – the Center for European Strategies, the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Albanian Institute for International Studies.

The key aim of this project was to explore possible trajectories for the Western Balkans in light of EU's priorities, other global players' power projection aspirations, and pandemic-related developments. The objective was also to identify negative trends as well as opportunities arising from regional cooperation in the European context and present them to the relevant stakeholders and wider audience in the EU and U.S.

The project is ongoing and will map potential trends for the Western Balkans and include the V4 perspective in the debate in order to enrich the discussion on the importance of the region for the West, particularly the EU and NATO. PSSI's analysts worked on a Western Balkans scenario report focusing on global challenges. They assessed how vulnerable the Western Balkans are to present global challenges (e.g. Covid 19 pandemic, environmental issues, and external actors' influences). In addition, as part of the

project, they also organized and moderated an online event with a speaker from the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project will be completed by the end of May, 2022.

## DISINFORMATION

PSSI researchers have long focused on monitoring the spread of disinformation in the Czech information space and engaged in activities to both increase awareness of, and counter, this insidious challenge.

Researchers from the Regional Security Program discussed the spread of hostile propaganda within the Czech media space related to the revelation of Russian GRU involvement in the Vrbětice ammunition depot explosions in 2014, while also examining the Czech response and resilience to hostile propaganda in the Perspective "Vrbětice: Case Study of Czech Resilience Against Hostile Propaganda". PSSI also contributed to the project "Authoritarian Shadows in the European Union" headed by the Hungarian think tank Political Capital, which monitored the voting patterns of MEPs in order to map their attitudes towards authoritarian states. The output of this exercise, "The Specter of Authoritarian Regimes is Haunting Europe", evaluated how MEPs perceive those states but also their opinions about the issue of disinformation in the context of the Common EU Foreign Policy.

PSSI contributed to the creation of the GLOBSEC Vulnerability Index, which estimates susceptibility to foreign malign influence in eight Central European & Western





Public debate about the topics trending on disinformation websites in the run-up to the parliamentary elections

Balkan countries. Findings of the report were then presented on two occasions — first, at a closed roundtable attended by politicians and state institutions' representatives, and second, at a public event co-organized with the U.S. Embassy in the Czech Republic.

The latter was attended by three former or current ministers of foreign affairs — Tomáš Petříček (former Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Jan Lipavský (current Minister of Foreign Affairs) as speakers on the panel, and Karel Schwarzenberg (former Minister of Foreign Affairs) as a participant. Additionally, PSSI, together with partners (i.e., the Association of International Affairs and the International Republican Institute) organized a public roundtable on societal resilience to internal and external threats in the Czech Republic. In attendance were representatives of political parties — the aforementioned Jan Lipavský (Czech Pirate Party), Helena Langšádlová (TOP 09, now Minister of Science, Research and Innovations), and Robert Králíček (Member of Parliament for ANO, member of the Commission on Hybrid Threats).

PSSI continued with its "Czech Elections in the Era of Disinformation" project series and concluded its fifth edition with a report focusing on events leading up to the 2021 parliamentary elections. Our researchers mapped websites known for spreading conspiracy theories and disinformation and explored their respective narratives and their level of active engagement, as well as identified their postures toward the respective candidates. This report was complemented

by sociological research on partisan misinformation by the STEM Institute and was presented at an event co-organized with the British Embassy in Prague.

Moreover, PSSI continued its efforts to help companies with brand safety and ethical business by holding two lectures for their employees to help prevent the unconscious funding of disinformation websites through advertising. The first lecture was held in collaboration with the British Embassy in Prague and the British Chamber of Commerce, and the second one with the Czech-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, both garnering strong interest among industry representatives. Thanks to these efforts, PSSI was shortlisted for the Prospect Magazine Think Tank Awards of 2021.

### **PUBLIC DEBATE „THE AFTERMATH OF VRBĚTICE – HOW TO REACT TO THE ESCALATION OF HYBRID ACTIVITIES“**

In April 2021, the new National Strategy for Countering Hybrid Operations was approved, reflecting the evolving situation in the field of hybrid threats, based primarily on the rise of new technologies. In order to preserve the ability of a state to act in accordance with the interests of its citizens and to prevent disruption of society or weakening of EU and NATO alliances, hybrid threats need to be addressed comprehensively. Jan Havránek, Michael Romancov, and Martin Povejšil discussed the political framework of hybrid operations, their purpose, and options to counter these unconventional threats.





Reception celebrating the UK-Czech bilateral co-operation in cyber security, hosted by the British Ambassador Nick Archer on the occasion of Cyber Security Academy

## PSSI WASHINGTON

In the fall of 2006, PSSI Washington Inc. was established in Washington, DC. Its primary mission is to strengthen U.S. understanding of the security challenges facing Central and Eastern Europe and other post-communist states and pursue groundbreaking initiatives in the economic & financial and space domains. PSSI Washington's China/ Russia Capital Markets Transparency Initiative, for example, is the leading NGO work program in this field worldwide. This partner organization of PSSI Prague has gained a good deal of stature in the United States and is a leading source of research and data on China's expanding presence in America's capital markets and that of Russia as well. It is likewise the principal hub of PSSI's Space Security Program and convenes periodic, co-sponsored conferences and roundtables in this and other fields in Washington and elsewhere. More information can be found at [www.pssiwashington.org](http://www.pssiwashington.org)



PSSI's Director of Operations Boris Kaliský at the Global Think Tank Summit in Manama, Bahrain

## PERFORMANCE IN RANKINGS

The Prague Security Studies Institute was announced the winner of the Economics and Financial Affairs Award at the prestigious 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Think Tank Awards organized by Prospect Magazine.

Judges praised the Institute's groundbreaking work on Chinese and Russian corporate "bad actors" present in the U.S. and allied capital markets, acknowledging its "very impressive and rigorous focus on increasingly important issues that have not been given much attention by other think tanks or the media."

PSSI was also shortlisted (in the top three think tanks) for the Democracy and Law Award for its extensive work on disinformation.

As an engaged part of the world's think tank community, the Prague Security Studies Institute's staff took part in discussions on pressing issues for think tanks facilitated by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the University of Pennsylvania.

On July 27-28, 2021, PSSI's Senior Communications Manager Kateřina Krejčířová represented the Institute at the Think Tank Talent for the Future Forum. The conference was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and was co-hosted

by TRENDS Research and Advisory and TTCSP. Think tanks from around the world met to discuss the strategic and operational challenges they face in recruiting and retaining talent for their organizations. The participants tried to identify effective strategies that will help prepare think tanks for the fast-paced and increasingly complex public policy environment in which all policy research organizations must now operate.

PSSI was also invited to participate in the Global Think Tank Summit in Manama, Bahrain (December 5–7) organized by the TTCSP and the Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat). The event was marked by the unexpected demise of Dr. Jim McGann, who, as the director of TTCSP, was working tirelessly to promote think tanks, their work, and their contributions. Even more importantly, he was able to connect organizations into a tight-knit community poised to achieve positive change through policy work.

At the event, PSSI's Director of Operation, Boris Kaliský, spoke about the work of security think tanks in central Europe in the context of challenges caused by COVID-19 and the ambitions and threats of authoritarian powers in the region.

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

### FUNDING SOURCES

#### EMBASSIES/INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

- Embassy of the United States in Prague
- British Embassy in Prague
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway
- NATO Public Diplomacy Division

#### CZECH GOVERNMENT:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

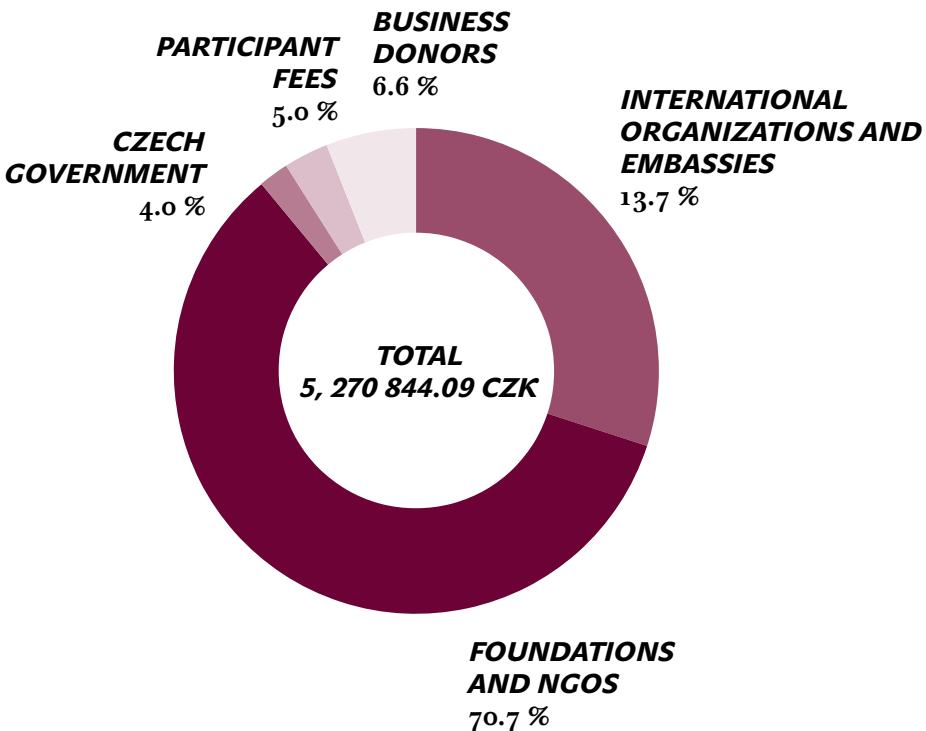
#### FOUNDATIONS AND NGOs:

- Fundacja Prospect
- Political Capital Szolgaltato
- Globsec
- The Atlas Economic Research Foundation
- The Sarah Scaife Foundation
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- **February 10, 2021**  
Disinformation debate: Who and why (doesn't) advertises on the websites spreading disinformation?
- **March 9, 2021**  
1<sup>st</sup> Online Debate: Pleading for European integration, but welcoming non-European influence?
- **March 15, 2021**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Online Debate: What is 'malign' about external influence in the Western Balkans?
- **March 31, 2021**  
PSSI's Economic and Financial Threat Program Guest Lecture with Roger W. Robinson, Jr.
- **April 14, 2021**  
How Not to Support Disinformation?
- **April 22, 2021**  
Strategic Competition for International Space Partnerships and Key Principles for a Sustainable Global Space Economy
- **May 17, 2021**  
India's Perspective on Space Security — PSSI Space Security Guest Lecture with Dr. Ajey Lele
- **May 21, 2021**  
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- **December 13, 2021**  
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### CONTACT INFO:

Prague Security Studies Institute  
Pohořelec 6, 118 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic  
Tel./fax: +420 233 355 735  
[pssi@pssi.cz](mailto:pssi@pssi.cz) [www.pssi.cz](http://www.pssi.cz)

Queries about PSSI activities and projects can be directed to:  
Dr. Jana Robinson ([jrobinson@pssi.cz](mailto:jrobinson@pssi.cz)), Managing Director,  
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