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## **CHARLES KATEK, A FRIEND DEVOTED TO OUR CAUSE: A CASE OF AMERICAN-CZECHOSLOVAK INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION, 1943–1945 (1948)**

As far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, the activity of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the first predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), has remained a relatively little known chapter of World War II. In the context of the allied intelligence system aimed at the defeat of the Nazi Third Reich, the American secret service and its two constituents – Secret Intelligence (SI) and Special Operations (SO) – gradually achieved an increasingly significant position, thanks to their operational effectiveness in the Central Europe, including Slovakia and the Protectorate of Bohemia, and Moravia.

This article is the first attempt to look behind the scenes of the American intelligence unit focused on Czechoslovakia, in the context of the culminating Allied effort to defeat Nazi Germany, then also a brief outline of the temporary cooperation with Czechoslovak authorities in exile, ending in a fierce conflict with the communist military security apparatus in Czechoslovakia. The aim of the article is not to analyze American-Czechoslovak diplomatic relations or reconstruct the complex American-British-Czechoslovak power triangle, but to serve as an introductory presentation of unknown contexts through the reconstruction of the history of service of a US intelligence officer of Czech origin.<sup>1</sup>

The key person responsible for communication with representatives of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile was Dr. Charles Katek, intelligence officer, approved by the OSS leadership as chief liaison officer at one of the allied intelligence services and subsequently appointed as head of the Czechoslovak Section of the Secret Intelligence Branch OSS/London.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The goal of the author's long-term archival research is the publication of a monograph, which will also focus on some other aspects of the OSS activity.

<sup>2</sup> The study was for the most part compiled on the basis of research of personnel and operative documentation kept in the National Archives at College Park, MD (hereinafter NARA), Military Agency Records. Records of the Office of Strategic Services (hereinafter RG 226), Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek; see I. Lukeš, "Selhání tajných služeb: Československo 1945–1948," *Securitas Imperii* 1 (15) (2009), pp. 12–41; I. Lukes, *On the Edge of the Cold War: American Diplomats and Spies in Postwar Prague*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 192–194 and especially P. Žáček, "Charles Katek, oddaný přítel naší věci. Nástin americko-československé zpravodajské spolupráce v letech 1943–1945", *Historie a vojenství* 3 (2023), pp. 62–81.

## Student of History & Intelligence Officer

Charles Katek was born on 31 October 1910 in Chicago, Illinois, the firstborn son of Charles and Josephina Anna Kotek, impoverished immigrants from the north-east of the Lands of the Crown of Bohemia, a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The family decided that Charles would study, while the second-born Otto Kotek (b. 1912) took over the family removals' business from their father.<sup>3</sup>

After primary and secondary school, Charles Katek studied history and economics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign from 1928 to 1932, undergoing a two-year training in the Reserve Officers Training Corps at the same time. He then earned his living by working for the family business Katek Bros Transport and Storage, moving furniture and pianos and in 1932 took up a post as teacher of social sciences (European history, economics) and athletics coach at Morton High School, followed in January 1934 by the post of economics-research assistant for social work at the Young Women's Christian Association of Chicago.

From November 1934 to September 1935 he worked as assistant supervisor of economic research of the Illinois State Labor Department, where he organized various studies on the situation in individual industrial branches, analysed statistical information and negotiated a minimum wage with representatives of industrial enterprises.

In September 1935 Katek returned to teaching history, law and politics at the Morton Jr. College & High School, where he also coached students in basketball and baseball. In the summer holidays, thanks to a *graduate fellowship*, he defended his graduate thesis of history at the Northwestern University, coming to a successful conclusion in the summer of 1941. He obtained his doctor's diploma in July 1942 for the successful defence of his thesis: *The Development of a Czech Democratic Tradition, 1840–1867*.<sup>4</sup> From 1938 until 1940 he worked as a part-time economics consultant for the Western Electric Employees' Federation. He remained at the Northwestern University, where he taught European history, until he entered the special services of the federal government.<sup>5</sup>

By 8 August 1942 Katek had been vetted and approved by the Security Office of the new American Intelligence authority – the Office of Strategic Services, OSS.<sup>6</sup> Fourteen days later, on 24 August 1942, he became a reference assistant,<sup>7</sup> later a specialist and analyst of the South East European Section of Secret Intelligence Branch OSS/Washington, with a starting salary of US\$3000 a year.

<sup>3</sup> I. Lukeš, "Selhání tajných služeb," p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Placement Questionnaire, 12 May 1943.

<sup>6</sup> The screening was probably also connected with his wife Anne Gertrude Katek, née Stich, living at their home address 845 Armitage Ave, Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>7</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Record, 24 August 1942.

Dr. Katek was, in his first months in the OSS, in the section directed by Lt. Col. Florimond DuSossoit Duke situated in the complex of buildings of the command headquarters of the OSS/Washington, highly rated for his dealing with intelligence issues in the southeast Europe region. In this field he was drawing on his education and on his good knowledge of Czech, Slovak and French, as well as Russian and Serbian (although in these cases his knowledge was only passive). At the beginning he was working for Major Harold Jefferson Coolidge Jr., but subsequently for Lt. Col. Lanning (Packy) Macfarland, the incoming head of the OSS station in Istanbul.<sup>8</sup> By March 1943 at the latest, Dr. Katek headed a review team of up to ten members, which focused on analysing and evaluating information about Czechoslovakia and Hungary for Czechoslovak – Hungarian Desks SI OSS/Washington, recruiting suitable personnel for foreign missions and communicating with both Allied representatives in-exile.<sup>9</sup>

Soon after that a decision was made to assign Dr. Katek to an important and confidential position in the London Office of the OSS where he was to take over responsibility for direct liaison with leading representatives of the Czechoslovak intelligence service (CIS)<sup>10</sup>, which was expected to provide a large quantity of useful and reliable information. According to the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Branch, Mr. Whitney H. Shepardson, Katek was the best qualified for this task, *inter alia* because of his unique overview of previous cooperation with this allied secret service and his contacts with the resistance on the continent of Europe.<sup>11</sup>

During cooperation with the OSS Military Personnel Board, the War Department was recommended to award Dr. Katek the rank of First Lieutenant. Anything lower would have been perceived as an encumbrance for his forthcoming work in London.<sup>12</sup> In an application to the army commission, Katek stated quite explicitly that he would be a liaison officer and a negotiator with the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in the field of intelligence and politics.<sup>13</sup>

On 10 June 1943 the OSS director Brigadier General William J. Donovan confirmed that Katek would be assigned to the Secret Intelligence Branch of the OSS overseas. With reference to completing a special ten-month training, he had to take over responsibility for the organisation of intelligence and counter-intelligence operations on territory occupied or controlled by the enemy, setting up of *bases* in neutral countries, maintenance of contact with resistance groups and collection of

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Interoffice Memo, Subject: Charles Katek, 18 January 1943.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Placement Questionnaire, 12 May 1943.

<sup>10</sup> In the OSS files is Czechoslovak Intelligence Services referred to as CIS; mostly it means Military Intelligence (2nd Section of the Ministry of National Defence, later 2nd Department of Czechoslovak High Command), sometimes also State-Security Section (4th Section) of the Interior Ministry as Political Intelligence Section (Bureau).

<sup>11</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Interoffice Memo, Job description for Dr. Charles Katek, 4 June 1943.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Appointment in AUS, Charles Katek, 4 June 1943.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Application Form for Commissions in Army, NAVY, or Marine Corps (OSS Form).

information about the intentions, and capabilities of the enemy.<sup>14</sup> Two days later the Chief of the OSS for the War Department added that Katek's position could not be adequately undertaken by a civilian as it required contact with military personnel and knowledge of military matters.<sup>15</sup> At the end of the month Katek and his office received a memorandum stating that, on the decision of the President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Katek was temporarily appointed a lieutenant assigned to serve in the United States Army and allocated the serial number 0924907.<sup>16</sup>

In the first half of July 1943, 1st Lt. Katek left to Chicago to complete an OSS recruitment project and to meet representatives of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile and of the American Sokol organization. At the same time, he moved his property to Berwyn in Illinois.<sup>17</sup> At the beginning of September he was sent to Camp Breckinridge in Kentucky to interrogate the German prisoners of war and returned to the East Coast via Chicago.<sup>18</sup> On 16 September 1943 he applied for a life insurance policy and wrote his last will and testament.<sup>19</sup> At the end of the month he left the USA and on 4 November 1943 assumed the new post of chief liaison officer of the OSS Detachment, European Theater of Operations (OSS/ETO), with the Czechoslovak intelligence service on the European front.<sup>20</sup>

## Establishing Cooperation & First Projects

First Lt. Katek, on his arrival in London, took over regular communication with the head of the 2nd Section of the Czechoslovak Ministry of National Defence (MNO) Col. František Moravec of the General Staff and his deputy Lt. Col. Emil Strankmüller of the General Staff and gradually expanded his circle of contacts among the representatives of the Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia.<sup>21</sup> After 24 December 1943 the leadership of the newly reorganised Division of Strategic Intelligence – including the deputy head of the Central European Section 1st Lt. Katek – began to prepare plans for the setting up of an independent American intelligence network in Western, Northern and Central Europe.<sup>22</sup>

As early as January 1944, the head of Secret Intelligence Branch OSS station in London Maj. William P. Maddox praised the way Katek approached and fulfilled his

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Job Description in the Case of Charles Katek, 10 June 1943.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., Release and Pay and Conversion Justification, Charles Katek, 12 June 1943.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Temporary Appointment, 26 June 1943; Special Orders, No. 179, 28 June 1943, By order of the Secretary of War, Maj. Gen. J.A. Ulic, The Adjutant General, G.C. Marshall, Chief of Staff.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Interoffice Memo, Travel Orders, 29 June 1943.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Orders, 3 September 1943; Request for Travel Order, 6–14 September.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Application for National Service Life Insurance, 16 September 1943, Last Will and Testament, 16 September 1943.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Promotion of Captain Charles Katek, 31 October 1944.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Entry 190, Box 250, Folder 730. Relations with Czechs – 1943.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., Entry 210, Box 64, Folder 6. SI Branch Semi-Monthly Report #22, 1 January 1944.

duties as representative of the Central European Section and chief liaison officer to Czechoslovak Intelligence. He described him as a loyal, conscientious, reliable and very capable contributor, showing initiative, enterprise and resourcefulness. Referring to his communication with superior Czechoslovak officers, he proposed his promotion.<sup>23</sup>

As well as regular conferences with the leadership of the Czechoslovak military intelligence service, 1st Lt. Katek also communicated with representatives of individual ministries of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, including the Minister of National Defence Sergěj Ingr and the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr. Hubert Ripka.<sup>24</sup>

On 3 March 1944, roughly halfway through his working trip to Algiers and Cairo, where Katek discussed the coordination of the operations of the North African Theater of Operations (OSS/NATO) with those conducted in occupied Czechoslovakia, he was temporarily promoted to the rank of captain.<sup>25</sup> Among the first intelligence operations which Capt. Katek looked after were the projects PEGGY (OSS/Cairo) and FALCON (OSS/Algiers and Brindisi), and the deployment of former Czechoslovak citizens in occupied France.<sup>26</sup>

After D-Day, the individual Branches of Secret Intelligence and Special Operations OSS introduced a new phase of activity, one of their aims being the penetration of Central Europe.<sup>27</sup>

At the request of the Command Headquarters of the OSS in Washington and the War Department, Capt. Katek tried to obtain from the Second Section of MNO intelligence information about the rocket experiments on Rügen Island, mining operations in Western Bohemia with certain top secret specifics, production of new explosives at Opava and Moravská Ostrava and the products of an underground arms factory in Slovakia. The deployment of up to two Czechoslovak-American operative teams to Czechoslovakia was considered in the context of negotiations about the execution of the project FALCON; however, the Secret Intelligence Service (*Broadway*) did not agree. The British moreover blocked the joint project PEGGY targeting Yugoslavia and another project, DOBLE, prepared with the Western European Section in Washington for Spain had to be paused.<sup>28</sup> Preparations, nonetheless, for the project NEMO to deploy an operative group in Slovakia continued.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Promotion of 1st Lt Charles Katek, 24 January 1944.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Entry 210, Box 64, Folder 7. SI Branch Semi-Monthly Report #25, 15 February 1944.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Travel Orders and Transportation for Lt. Charles Katek, 2 February 1944; Orders, 8 February 1944; Promotion, 2 March 1944; staff card of OSS.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., Entry 210, Box 276, Folder 7. Progress Report, 1st May to 15th May, 13th May 1944.

<sup>27</sup> See N. MacPherson, *American Intelligence in War-time London. The Story of the OSS*, London – Portland, 2003, p. 160 ff.

<sup>28</sup> In addition to the rivalry between the “older” British and the “younger” American intelligence services, there were understandably also secrecy, organizational or technical reasons. See for example, T. Piffer, “Office of Strategic Services versus Special Operations Executive. Competition for the Italian Resistance, 1943–1945”, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4 (2015), pp. 41–58.

<sup>29</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 276, Folder 7. Progress Report, 15 June– 30 June, 28 June 1944.

On 1 July 1944 Capt. Katek presented a plan to Maj. Gen. Ingr, Minister of the National Defence in the Czechoslovak government-in-exile. This plan proposed the deployment of a joint operative group in occupied Czechoslovakia that would provide material support to the home resistance. The OSS promised to ensure complete equipment for all the members of the mission, including a radio set and Maj. Gen. Donovan even personally guaranteed the donation of weapons, and sabotage material “into reasonable limits”.<sup>30</sup> Minister Ingr must have been delighted by the strong interest in the Czechoslovak resistance shown by the OSS director and in the possibility of receiving this support. He briefly reported on negotiations with the Special Operations Executive (SOE), the British sabotage and diversion organisation, about deliveries of weapons. On the Czechoslovak side, negotiations were led by their logistics Chief of Staff for building matters of the Czechoslovak Army Forces Brig. Gen. Bedřich Neumann – “Miroslav” – who even promised to discuss the implementation of the American plan without involving the British.<sup>31</sup>

Ten days later Capt. Katek was informed by Gen. Neumann about the result of the negotiations with the director of SOE Maj. Gen. Colin Gubbins, especially the British request to transfer negotiations directly to the highest representative of OSS/London Col. David K.E. Bruce. Katek did not hide the fact that with the OSS “it was not only a question of the delivery of weapons to Slovakia but above all getting a joint group of their people and ours there.” He repeated the interest of the American intelligence service “in beginning to work in Central Europe...”<sup>32</sup> Col. Bruce noted some discord between the Allies in his diary: “Katek is deep in Czechoslovakian problems. We are having trouble with the British, who claim that American-Czech intelligence teams will further confuse an already mixed situation.”<sup>33</sup>

After the relatively successful deployment of the third wave of parachutists in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and in Slovakia,<sup>34</sup> the Czech Section was

<sup>30</sup> Military Central Archive – Military Historical Archive (hereinafter MHA Prague), Collection (hereinafter Coll.) 37, 37-383-1/91. To: General Sergei Ingr, 1 July 1944.

<sup>31</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 300, Folder 3. Katek Log, Record of 1 July 1944.

<sup>32</sup> MHA Prague, Coll. 37, 37-383-1/121-122. Record of a conversation with Gen. Gubbins, SOE, 8 July 1944, 10/7.44. With a view to the importance of the discussion about material support of the home resistance Ch. Katek obtained the conclusions of the meeting in written form. Ibid., 37-383-1/92. Ref. our conversation on 10th July 1944, 14th July 1944; NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 300, Folder 3. Katek Log, Record of 17 July 1944.

<sup>33</sup> *OSS against the Reich. The World War II Diaries of Colonel David K.E. Bruce*, ed. N.D. Lankford, Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1991, pp. 104–105.

<sup>34</sup> Nine operative groups were airdropped into the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in the third wave of CIS/SOE-SIS parachute missions (from 3.4. to 3.7.1944): CALCIUM, BARIUM, SULPHUR, CHALK, CLAY, CARBON, POTASH, SPELTER, GLUCINIUM; the tenth, MANGANESE, was dropped into Slovakia. See e.g. Z. Jelínek, “Západní paraskupiny a spolupráce s domácím odbojem v letech 1941–1945,” *Odboj a revoluce 1* (1970), pp. 113–146; J. Šolc, *Bylo málo mužů. Českoslovenští parašutisté na západní frontě za druhé světové války*, Praha, 1991, pp. 133–161 and 163–165; M. Reichl, *Cesty osudu. Životní příběhy československých parašutistů vycvičených v letech 1941–45 ve Velké Británii*, Cheb, 2004, pp. 196–373; *SOE in Czechoslovakia. The Special Operations Executive's Czech Section in WW2. An Official History*, Barnsley, 2022, pp. 18–19, 57–85.

able, with the means provided by the Second Section of the MNO, to send instructions and requests for particular intelligence that was of interest to Washington to individual operative teams.

The director of the OSS Gen. Donovan was directly linked into the support of the FALCON project. At the same time, he presented to the Czechoslovak general staff a supplementary plan of a supply mission to Czechoslovakia, discussed with the Special Operations Executive. The last prepared operation was the Labor Desk project for the penetration of Czechoslovakia under the code name GIBSY. Finally, the Czech Section gathered intelligence information in London from official Czechoslovak exile institutions and Czechoslovak, Slovak, and Sudeten opposition sources.<sup>35</sup>

In mid-July 1944, during reorganisation resulting from the recent establishment of the Continental Division of the Secret Intelligence Branch of OSS in London, eight sections were formed. Capt. Katek was understandably appointed head of the Czechoslovak section – in most internal written materials almost invariably described as the *Czech Section*.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 1.** Organisational Structure of the Continental Division, Secret Intelligence Branch OSS/London, 11 July, 1944

SI Branch, OSS/London	Function	Rank and name
Continental Division	Chief	Maj. Henry DeVries
	Special Assistant	Dr. Robert MacLeod
	Administrative Officer	Capt. N.P. Borchert
German Section	Acting Chief	Maj. Aubrey Harwood
Polish Section	Chief	Maj. Joseph Dasher
Czechoslovak Section	Chief	Capt. Charles Katek
Norwegian Section	Acting Chief	Lt. Leslie Fossel
Danish Section	Acting Chief	Mr. Abel Sorensen
French Section	Chief	Maj. Justin O'Brien
Belgium & Luxembourg Section	Acting Chief	Lt. N.L. Brittenham
Netherlands Section	Acting Chief	Lt. Jan Laverge

On 21 July 1944 Capt. Katek presented a memorandum to the head of the Continental Division of the OSS in London Lt. Col. Henry P. DeVries, in which he emphasised the importance of Czechoslovakia for the last phase of the war, especially the territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia as an arsenal of

<sup>35</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 276, Folder 7. Progress Report, 1 July–15 July 1944, 13 July 1944.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Box 64, Folder 7. SI Branch Monthly Report #36, 1 August 1944.



German military efforts. The whole country, including Slovakia, was presented as a crossroads, on which the Wehrmacht's ability to defend the *Festung Europa* significantly depended. Intelligence activity therefore should have been directed towards the extensive industrial complexes and troop movements.

With regard to the current military and political situation, Capt. Katek did not consider the present level of intelligence cover of occupied Czechoslovakia to be adequate. Following the assassination of the acting Reich-Protector and head of the Reich Security Main Office Reinhard Heydrich, the German police forces successfully liquidated the network of agents of the Czechoslovak intelligence services in the Protectorate. It seems that only its Slovak part survived, thanks to its links with the resistance and different security conditions.

Changes did not come about until the second quarter of 1944, as a consequence of the deployment of five operative groups trained in cooperation with the Secret Intelligence Services (SIS) and another five with the Special Operations Executive. The details of these operations, as well as their consequences for intelligence, signalled certain gaps which the OSS wanted to fill at least partially. According to the records, it was primarily the War Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff which drew attention to these inadequacies in the intelligence project.

The War Department described the acquisition of information about mining activities in the surroundings of Jáchymov, where a large amount of uranium pitch was to be processed for the Nazi wartime needs of the Third Reich, as a high priority. Concurrently, the attention of the OSS should be focused on the German heavy and chemical industry in western Bohemia. Other requests concerned the massive industrial concentration in the surroundings of Moravská Ostrava and Opava, with the focus on factories developing new types of explosives. Last but not least, it understandably concerned Prague and its surroundings, to which had been moved essential segments of German aircraft industry including the manufacture of engines.

From the military point of view the report emphasised the crucial position of the railway infrastructure in the Czech lands and in Slovakia for the transport of German forces and supplies to the Eastern Front, the Balkans and to Italy, further activity in the large training areas near Malacky and Milovice, and the massive use of factories built before the outbreak of World War II in the course of the decentralisation of the Czechoslovak arms industry. In this phase of the war, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was, in regard to its strategic position, considered in every respect to be an intelligence target as important as Germany itself.

Additionally, according to Capt. Katek, Czechoslovakia was turning out to be an intelligence target of prime importance because of its balancing position between East and West and the strong political relationship between the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, and the Soviet Union. "On the one hand there is the Russian penetration into Western Europe which the Czechoslovaks could serve, but do not have to; on the other, some variant of a Danubian federation in which the Czechoslovaks



could almost certainly play a leading role is being discussed.” Katek, as head of the Czechoslovak section, described the inadequacies of political intelligence in this field as a strategic blind spot and said that its correction could be enormously important when it came to solving the problem of Central Europe.<sup>37</sup>

Negotiations about organising intelligence penetration into Czechoslovakia from Algiers and Bari were, in the context of the FALCON Project, divided into two parts: (1) the preparation and dispatch of joint intelligence teams of the OSS and CIS, the negotiating of which was led with officers of the British Secret Intelligence Services by Commander Kenneth H.S. Cohen and by the head of the German-Czech Section P6, Major Galleon and (2) the organization of the supply chain to the Czechoslovak underground, proposed by the OSS director Maj. Gen. Donovan and negotiated through the Special Operations Executive.

The Czech Section was at the same time closely cooperating with the Fourth Section (Political Intelligence) of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior, dividing the information acquired into the following categories: “(1) The official political line of the Czechoslovak President, Cabinet and State Council, (2) material on internal political and economic questions that was obtained from Czech business and nonofficial sources, (3) the internal opposition led by Dr. Stefan Osusky, General Lev Prchala and certain Slovaks and (4) the Sudeten-German minority led by Wenzel Jaksch and other German contacts.”<sup>38</sup>

The leadership of the Czech Section was in constant communication with the representatives of the Prime Minister’s Office, Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, Minister of State Ripka and other members of the Cabinet. Their political discussion focused “not only on the Czechoslovak position, but also on their relations with the Russians and the Poles.” Close cooperation was established with the delegation of the Minister of Economic Renewal František Němec who, it was anticipated, would go to the Soviet Union in the near future and would then administer the liberated parts of Czechoslovak territory.

In the final weeks, the Second Section of the MNO had obtained, through the wireless communication with operative groups deployed in Czechoslovakia from the resistance movement, a number of intelligence reports of a political nature about the situation in Central Europe, the larger part being intended exclusively for President Edvard Beneš. However, Capt. Katek came to an agreement directly with Col. Moravec that from time to time he could study this material “for his own needs”.

The aim of the DOBLE Project, developed in cooperation with the OSS station in Madrid, was to make contact with Czechoslovak soldiers still staying in the south of France with the use of the French Section OSS station network in London.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> P. Žáček, “Projekt ‘Jonquil’ a Mělník. Snahy OSS o vytvoření operační základny v protektorátu, 1944,” *Confluens. Vlastivědný sborník Mělnicka* 10 (2017), p. 95.

<sup>38</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 64, Folder 7. SI Branch Monthly Report #36, 1 August 1944.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. For DOBLE project, previously HUB project, see P. Žáček, “‘Když je Bůh s námi, kdo proti nám?’ Americké přípravy na válečný konflikt. Zpráva Blahoslava Hrubého o rozmístování vysílaček v Československu v letech 1948–1949,” *Securitas Imperii* 42–43 (2023), p. 155.

## Intelligence Penetration into Slovakia & Aid to the Insurgents

On 2 August 1944 OSS/NATO in Algiers notified the OSS headquarters of the *Mediterranean Theater of Operations* (OSS/MEDTO) in Caserta that Capt. Katek would fly to Bari in the middle of the month to consult on Central European operations.<sup>40</sup>

In the course of the preparation for his two-week trip to Italy, head of section Capt. Katek held a number of conferences with SIS and Czechoslovak Military Intelligence about intelligence penetration into Slovakia. The Second Section of the MNO was prepared to help the Central European Section of the Secret Intelligence Branch (SICE) OSS/MEDTO in Bari with these operations by providing appropriate operational equipment, the necessary false documents, a selection of suitable landing areas (pinpoints) and safe addresses and last but not least, help with the preparation of a joint communication plan which would ensure the safety of American operative groups in the occupied lands.

The Progress Report moreover, contained information about the Czech proposal for bilateral cooperation with OSS in preparing a mission to Slovakia entirely for the purpose of political intelligence. In the light of the ongoing British–Soviet negotiations about operations in Czechoslovakia, this requirement was naturally considered to be a delicate matter.<sup>41</sup>

During negotiations with Col. Moravec on 16 August 1944, Capt. Katek asked about the provision of operational plans which he had already discussed with Maj. Galleon of SIS, so that he could familiarise “our people” in Bari with those plans. He repeated to the head of the Czechoslovak intelligence service the intentions he had already outlined to his deputy, Lt. Col. Strankmüller, about the operational mission for Slovakia with functions other than purely intelligence or supply contact with the underground.

“I expressed my view,” Capt. Katek noted, “that our planning in this rapidly changing situation must provide for many contingencies in the situation which would prevail in Slovakia around the time of the cessation of hostilities. At such a time the United States would certainly want to have the clearest and most direct information as to conditions prevailing in Czechoslovakia. Any interest which the United States develops in Central Europe must thus be based on sound and unbiased information. From this point of view, I could foresee the need for planning an American mission which would be on the spot in the critical times following the declaration of an armistice and which could give us an accurate picture of prevalent conditions from

<sup>40</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 190, Box 100, Folder 187. Incoming Air Dispatch, 2 Aug 1944.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Travel Orders and Transportation for Captain Charles Katek, 31 July 1944; Ibid., Box 210, Folder 276, File 7. Progress Report, 1 Augus – 15 August 1944, 15 August 1944. See M. Kitchen, *British Policy towards the Soviet Union during the Second World War*, London, 1986, p. 62.

the American point of view. Complete reliance upon either the English, the Czechs, or the Russians would not be enough.”<sup>42</sup>

After the war, Czechoslovakia’s strategic positions would, according to the Czech section, be influenced by political cross-currents inevitably covering the whole country that would have to be thoroughly analysed and evaluated from the intelligence point of view. It was obvious that the Czechoslovaks would, more than ever before, have to maintain a delicate balance between Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States.

Col. Moravec agreed that it was necessary to organise such a mission and said that under these conditions no one would consider it superfluous. He indicated moreover, the Minister of National Defence, Gen. Ingr, also thought that the Czechs could not oppose the efforts of American Intelligence to undertake a specialized operation in Slovakia focused on political intelligence. Capt. Katek further commented that the CIS “were still anxious for us to participate in the penetration of the Protectorate and would give us every assistance.”<sup>43</sup>

On 22 August 1944, considering the operational urgency to grant priority to Capt. Katek, the OSS director, Gen. Donovan, personally asked for him to fly as soon as possible from London to Caserta.<sup>44</sup> Three days later the head of the Czech Section left Great Britain and the management of the Section was taken over by his deputy Blahoslav Hruby.<sup>45</sup> Capt. Katek learnt in Caserta that Gen. Donovan considered him as the representative of OSS for the Czechoslovak delegation to the Soviet Union, which was to take over the administration of the liberated territory. In spite of the fact that the Soviet side had requested that a recommendation be made by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the OSS director believed that after negotiations in Washington he would acquire the “Russian” acceptance.

Meanwhile Capt. Katek had won over several members of the Czechoslovak delegation to cooperate with the Czech Section. Communication was to be established in Moscow by means of employees of the State Department and on the territory of Czechoslovakia with the help of the operative teams of the OSS.<sup>46</sup>

On 29 August 1944, the day when the Slovak Uprising started, Capt. Katek obtained permission from Commanding Officer OSS/MEDTO Col. Edward J.F. Glavin to visit Bari and its surroundings.<sup>47</sup> His main task in Italy was to complete the penetration plans for Slovakia in cooperation with OSS/MEDTO. The operational organization of three prepared and briefed operative teams should according to expectations remain in British hands.

<sup>42</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 300, Folder 3. Katek Log, Record of 16 August 1944.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Air Priority for Captain Charles Katek, 22 August 1944.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Entry 210, Box 300, Folder 3. Katek Log, Record of 25 August 1944.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Box 55, Folder 2. Progress Report, 1 September – 15 September 1944, Czech Section, SI, 15 September 1944.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Travel Orders, 29 August 1944.

Capt. Katek shrewdly negotiated with representatives of the Fifteenth American Air Force (AAF) plans to evacuate shot-down airmen from the territory held by the insurgents. In the course of this operation the necessary material support was to be transported to the Slovak partisans and further assistance discussed with them. With the help of Czechoslovak Army Headquarters in London, a landing at the airport Tri Duby near Zvolen was agreed with the insurgent leaders from 15 to 17 September 1944. In the course of a conference with the leadership of OSS/MEDTO, the head of the Czech Section joined in the preparation of several scenarios for further development, before he flew to Rome on 7 September 1944 or shortly after.<sup>48</sup>

The appointed Commander of the Czechoslovak Military Mission with the Staff of Josip Tito in Yugoslavia, Lt. Col. František Hieke “Stoj”, had met Capt. Katek while he was still in Bari. Hieke then sent Capt. Katek in London a report about the partisan movement in Yugoslavia, a code book and a copy of an article from the *Catholic Herald London* acquired with a commentary by Karol Sidor, Slovak ambassador in the Vatican.<sup>49</sup>

After returning to London Capt. Katek stated that the civilian personnel of the Czech Section had completed their intelligence training at Milwaukee School<sup>50</sup> and before leaving for Paris had acquired para-military status. He supposed that at least one or two of them would be sent to Italy for deployment in Central Europe.<sup>51</sup>

On 17 September 1944 American B-17 Flying Fortress bombers transported the operative teams HOUSEBOAT I, HOUSEBOAT II (SI/MEDTO), DAWES I (SO/MEDTO) to Slovakia.<sup>52</sup> According to Lt. Col. Hieke, both aircraft transported 6 tons of weapons, ammunition and other supplies. On 24 September another six aircraft with 18 tons of cargo were to be prepared. The Commander in Chief of Czechoslovak Army Forces, Gen. Ingr, was informed that the shipment of military material worth three quarters of a million dollars took place “without agreement from Washington” and was on the initiative of the head of SICE in Bari, Maj. Howard M. Chapin and the head of the Czechoslovakian Desk Otto H. Jakes; the operation being known besides them only to Capt. Katek.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Air Movement Order, 6 Sept. 1944. See P. Žáček, “Cílový prostor: Slovensko. Příprava a vysazení operačních týmů OSS/MEDTO v září a říjnu 1944,” *Paměť národa* 2 (2024), pp. 11–13.

<sup>49</sup> MHA Prague, Coll. 37, 37-25-40/1. Report of 18 September 1944, Jit 091804-44.

<sup>50</sup> This was like the British Special Training School (STS), primarily focused on training agents in the projects Labor Division OSS/London, intended for deployment in Germany; advanced base *Milwaukee Forward*, subordinate to OSS/Paris, had its base in Luxembourg. See N. MacPherson, *American Intelligence in War-time London*, p. 173.

<sup>51</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 55, Folder 2. Progress Report, September 1 – September 15, 1944, Czech Section, SI, 15 September 1944; Ibid., Box 300, Folder 1. Draft, SI Branch, Planning and Projects.

<sup>52</sup> See E. Hymoff, *The OSS in World War II*, New York, 1986, pp. 185–186; M.J. Ličko, *USA v Banskej Bystrici 1944*, Bratislava, 1994, pp. 114–115; J. Downs, *Druhá světová válka: Tragédie OSS na Slovensku*, Bratislava, 2004, pp. 52–54; L. Nedbal, *Operace KARAS. Zpravodajec mjr. Jaroslav Krátký ve službách Československa za druhé světové války*, Praha, 2019, pp. 290–292.

<sup>53</sup> MHA Prague, Coll. 37, 37-25-40. Report of 27 September 1944, Jit 092711/44; ibid., 37-25-40/14. Report of 20 November 1944, Jit 112-012/44. See P. Žáček, “Cílový prostor: Slovensko,” pp. 15–16.

Captain Katek's section intended to participate in the main aim – the intelligence operation inside the Third Reich – indirectly, through Czechoslovakia's Sudeten German territory. The British Secret Intelligence Services and the Czechoslovak Military Intelligence asked the OSS for help in penetrating the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, promising to provide all possible assistance. The JONQUIL project in particular was under consideration, the prepared deployment of a three-man operative team into the Mělník region north of Prague, which it seems was due to be implemented in the next three weeks. On the other hand, another project was still in its early stages and suitable parachutists, including the radio operator, had not even been chosen. The place for the jump and other confidential details had to be chosen in cooperation with the Second Department of Czechoslovak High Command as deployment in east Moravia, where significant resistance activity had been developing, was considered to be the most probable.

Following his journey to Italy, Capt. Katek anticipated the use of the SICE in Bari as an operational base, in the course of which London remained the driving point of control and liaison, especially for communication with the CIS, which was in regular radio contact with the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and with Slovakia.

Katek, as head of the Czechoslovak Section, emphasized in his statement that he had succeeded in turning the attention of the 15th AAF to Slovakia to the extent that it carried out an evacuation of shot down American airmen from partisan territory, delivered essential supplies to the Czechoslovak resistance forces and several times supported their defense activity by bombing selected German targets. The airport Tri Duby, providing an air bridge with Italy, was used to land two Secret Intelligence operational teams and one Special Operations team in Slovakia. According to Katek, the OSS undertook the delivery of the military material requested to Slovakia, which in turn made it possible to expand the intelligence operations by sending more men into the field. At the instigation of the insurgent command, they also considered a plan to send their own intelligence officer with propaganda film material, provided by the Office of War Information for the use of the partisan-held territories.<sup>54</sup>

On 21 September 1944, the Headquarters of OSS/MEDTO received a telegram from Slovakia, in which the Command of the First Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia requested a considerable amount of military material as a priority: 5,000 rifles, 2,000 Thomson submachine guns, 500 light machine guns, 300 bazookas, 10,000 field bandages, 2,000 doses of anti-tetanus serum, and communication material.<sup>55</sup> Two days later Capt. Katek assured his colleagues in Caserta that reports of the meteorological situation in Slovakia would be at their disposal every day and added that he had requested approval of the supply operation to Slovak territory from the head

<sup>54</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 55, Folder 2. Subject: Projects of the Czechoslovakian Section, SI, 21 September 1944.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., Box 300, Folder 3. Katek Log, Record of 21 September 1944.

of the operations division (G-3) Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF).<sup>56</sup>

On 3 October 1944, the acting chief of Special Operations, Gerald Miller, informed Capt. Katek that G-3 did not consider Czechoslovakia to be within the operational zone of SHAEF. Katek, on the other hand, as head of the Czechoslovak Section quoted the view of the Special Operations Executive, arising from discussions with the Director of Mediterranean Group Col. David J. Keswick and the head of the Central European Section Lt. Col. Harold B. Perkins. According to them, it would be possible to cooperate in the support of the resistance movement in the Protectorate based on a directive published for the SOE by the British Chiefs of Staff with the agreement of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Miller reacted by saying that the OSS could again have a special purposes squadron put at its disposal if it could make out a convincing case for its use in supply flights to Moravia. He requested only that this project be presented to the United States Strategic and Tactical Air Force (USSTAF).<sup>57</sup>

Later the same day, Capt. Katek and the Liaison Officer of the OSS for Special Air Operations, Maj. Philip O. Stearns, visited the Deputy Chief of Staff of Czechoslovak High Command Col. Moravec and the head of the Second Department of High Command Lt. Col. Strankmüller. Capt. Katek, as head of the Czechoslovak Section, reported that for night flights the 492nd Bombardment Group (Heavy) would be at their disposal, consisting of 48 Consolidated B-24 Liberator aircraft. These had until then been deployed in France, Belgium and Holland, and could have been freed for flights to the Czech lands if USSTAF recognised demand for them. In the name of the OSS he therefore urgently requested the following information in writing:

- the total number of persons to be armed
- for how many persons, where and when the weapons had to be delivered in the night operations
- for how many persons, where and when the weapons had to be delivered in the daytime operations
- a general overview of the technical preparations carried out so far to enable the weapons to be dropped at night.”<sup>58</sup>

On 7 October 1944 the operational teams DAY (SI/MEDTO) and DAWES II (SO/MEDTO) were transported to Slovakia as part of the DETROIT operation. The group DALLAM and the one-man operation DARE were deployed at the same time.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> S. Kokoška, “Americké dodávky zbraní Slovenskému národnému povstání,” in *SNP v paměti národa. Materiály z vědecké konference k 50. výročí SNP Donovaly 26.–28. aprila 1994*, ed. J. Lipták, Bratislava, Banská Bystrica, 1994, p. 365.

<sup>57</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 300, Folder 3. Katek Log, Record of 3 October 1944.

<sup>58</sup> MHA Prague, Coll. 37, 37-89-58/19. Official record, 3 October 1944.

<sup>59</sup> See E. Hymoff, *The OSS in World War II*, pp. 188–190; M.J. Ličko, *USA v Banskej Bystrici*, pp. 121–122; J. Downs, *Druhá svetová vojna: Tragédia OSS na Slovensku*, pp. 77–82; L. Nedbal, *Operace KARAS*, pp. 294–295.

## Preparations for Post-war Cooperation & Special Operations

Capt. Katek's response to the Slovak Uprising was to start work on the question of future post-war cooperation with the Czechoslovak representatives in exile – in other words, the position of members of the American Intelligence service on Czechoslovak soil. The OSS was comfortable with a direct connection to the Allied intelligence network, enabling the immediate transfer of military, economic and political information from its own sources to other agencies and staff. Katek here referred to the claim by the British SIS that Czechoslovak military intelligence had been the best in Europe before the war and agreed that it was easily capable of “renewing its activity along the old lines. [...] Certainly, a network [of agents] will be created in Germany, Hungary, Poland and perhaps even Russia.”<sup>60</sup> The outcomes of this work can be put at your disposal if we continue in close cooperation with London [obviously] and aware of the delicate situation that will, with the greatest probability, be created in Central Europe.”

He was aware that it would require a delicate balancing act between the triangle of Russians, British and Americans, with the Czechoslovaks in the middle.

In the light of various uncertainties, Katek proposed to the Chief of the SI Branch of OSS/Washington, Whitney H. Shepardson, that only a small unit of the OSS should be set up for Prague. According to Katek, a close circle of people officially connected to the Czechoslovak intelligence service, could enhance its performance to a higher standard than such full-scale organised by the OSS operating in a wide range. He envisaged an increase in the number of personnel once the situation would allow it.

The composition of the OSS unit was to be the following: Capt. Katek, Jakes, Hruby, Sgt. Kurt L. Taub and Helena Fisher. Its formal aims would be stated thus:

- a. Obtain and transmit reports from the Czechoslovak intelligence service.
- b. Channel the activities of the service in the direction of Germany and Hungary.”

Bearing in mind the complications of the forthcoming situation, he thought it would be unwise to operate in Prague with OSS members recruited from the ranks of Czech experts exclusively and to expect everyone to believe they had to work exclusively against Germany. “Therefore, some respect must be paid to having personnel who have abilities in the German direction as well as the Czech.”<sup>61</sup>

It was 12 October 1944 when the chief representatives of OSS/MEDTO sent Gen. Donovan a telegram describing special operations in Central Europe. They drew attention to the position of the operations division (G-3) SHAEF, which did not consider Czechoslovakia to be in their operational zone and at the same time

<sup>60</sup> This somewhat naïve idea did not come true either in CIS's ability to re-build agent networks abroad (perhaps except for Germany), or in ideas about post-war cooperation.

<sup>61</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 289, Folder 7. Memorandum. Subject: Plan – OSS – Prague, 12 October 1944.



to the desperate need for the rapid transport of assistance for the Slovak resistance movement: "It depends however on the number of aircraft available and on the priority level of these deliveries decided by Allied Force Headquarters Caserta (AFHQ). At present, it is actually Italian and Polish deliveries that have the highest priority,<sup>62</sup> while Czechoslovakia is at the bottom of the list."

Thus, the director of OSS received the information that they had been offered one squadron from the 492nd Bombardment Group USSTAF: "The squadron is required later for operations in Germany but meanwhile is available for us to use, if we can make use of the aircraft. [...] If the squadron is allocated to us all these supplies would be collected here<sup>63</sup> and transported to Slovakia."<sup>64</sup>

On 20 October 1944 Capt. Katek informed Lt. Col. Strankmüller in advance that an agreement would be reached on arranging a flying unit that could transport American and British military material from Italy to Czechoslovakia. He also told him that the British Chiefs of Staff continued to hold the attitude that they could not "undertake the commitment to support and maintain open resistance in Bohemia from the air because of the experience gained at Arnhem and Warsaw, and because of the impending bad weather. However, we have the support of the British Staff to continue special operations in Czechoslovakia which can mean more or less the same thing for us."<sup>65</sup>

At the beginning of November 1944, the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Branch OSS station in London Lt. Alan M. Scaife approved the scope of duties of the head of the Czechoslovak Section. In the execution of intelligence activities, Capt. Katek was responsible for submitting plans and implementing covert operations that brought military, political and economic intelligence from occupied Czechoslovakia as well as from other countries. In the operational field he had to cooperate closely with Czechoslovak exile bodies – especially the CIS and selected ministries and with the British intelligence and special operations organisations (SIS, SOE), and with US Air Forces. In London, moreover, he represented the interests of the Central European departments of the OSS in Italy (MEDTO) and North Africa (NATO).

As part of his liaison duties, Katek was entrusted with communication with the official sources of intelligence information, in particular President Edvard Beneš, Commander-in-Chief of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces Gen. Sergěj Ingr, Chief of Staff Div. Gen. Bedřich Neumann-Miroslav, Deputy Chief of Staff and former

<sup>62</sup> To plans of the sorties to Poland for October 1944 see J. Walker, *Poland Alone: Britain, SOE and the Collapse of the Polish Resistance, 1944*, Stroud, 2010, pp. 263, 266 ff.

<sup>63</sup> As mentioned in Bari, 25 tons of military material was available immediately and a further unascertained amount in Algeria, and in warehouses of the SO/SOE in London.

<sup>64</sup> S. Kokoška, *Americké dodávky zbraní Slovenskému národnému povstání*, pp. 369–370.

<sup>65</sup> MHA Prague, Coll. 37, 37-89-58/8. Official record of conversation with Captain of the American Army Kotek, 20. X. 44. The British Chiefs of Staff were clearly influenced by the negative experiences of the MARKET GARDEN airborne operation, but also of the air support of the Warsaw Rising. See J. Walker, *Poland Alone*, pp. 207–208, 216–217, 220–221, 229–230, 245–246, and 256–257.

Chief of Military Intelligence Brig. Gen. František Moravec, Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, Interior Minister Juraj Slávik, Chief of political intelligence at the Interior Ministry Col. Josef Bartík and Minister of Agriculture and Public Works Ján Lichner.<sup>66</sup>

In November 1944 Katek's section, with the help of Special Operations, prepared a staff document describing the activity of the Czechoslovak resistance movement. The memorandum was addressed to the commanding general of USSTAF and awaited for his decision, especially regarding a commitment to provide the resistance groups with essential assistance. Almost every week adjustments were made to the operational plans in cooperation with the Third and Second Department of the Czechoslovak High Command, especially to the drop zones. After the loss of contact with the W/T operator OSS, the Czechoslovak Section was in almost daily contact with Lt. Col. Perkins and Maj. Peter W. Auster of SOE, who made reports from Slovakia available to them, originating from the commander of the operative group WINDPROOF<sup>67</sup> Maj. John Sehmer.

Information about the personal encounters between Capt. Katek and the Czechoslovak president Beneš provide an interesting detail. The talks resulted in the partial clarification of operational plans, in the context of which the head of the Czech Section was assured especially "that the Russians will have no objections to our continued operations in Czechoslovakia."<sup>68</sup>

Capt. Katek dealt all the time with intelligence requests sent from Washington, whether through contacts at various ministries of the exile government, or through the CIS from the operational groups deployed. At the same time, he conferred with the SOE about possibly using Czech workers sentenced to forced labor in the Third Reich for sabotage purposes and even setting up a field unit on the Western Front composed of them.

New operatives who could be used for the Special Operations project CARBURATOR, were admitted to the Czechoslovak Section and sent for training under Sgt. Taub.<sup>69</sup>

On 6 December 1944 Capt. Katek could at last tell Gen. Moravec officially that USSTAF had agreed to the deployment for special operations over the territory of Bohemia and Moravia; specifically, the transportation of weapons and other material for the resistance movement. The 859th Squadron of the 492nd Bombardment Group (18 B-24 Liberator aircraft) was prepared to relocate from Great Britain to

<sup>66</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Description of Duties Chief of Czech Section, SI, 9 November 1944.

<sup>67</sup> For operation WINDPROOF see A. Ogden, *Through Hitler's Back Door. SOE operations in Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria 1939–1945*, Barnsley, 2010, pp. 62–84; *SOE in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 21–25.

<sup>68</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 60, Folder 1. SI Branch. Progress Report, 15 November to 30 November 1944 (Czech Section), 30 November 1944.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

Italy for this purpose, under the Balkan Air Force, with a special assignment for operations in Czechoslovakia. It was anticipated that the transport of military material would start in the next full moon period, which meant the end of December 1944 or beginning of January 1945.<sup>70</sup>

## Deployment of Operative Groups & Material Airdrops

On 11 December 1944 Lt. Col. Perkins confirmed that the allocation of the American squadron had substantially improved the whole situation. Like Capt. Katek hitherto, he also promised on behalf of SOE that the use of these flights for operations to Czechoslovakia would take precedence over other tasks (such as Yugoslavia and north Italy). The Commander in Chief of Allied Forces in the Mediterranean, Field Marshal Harold Alexander, would shortly receive an analysis of the need for special air operations to Czechoslovakia, which would contain a directive according to which an average of twenty flights a month would be authorised by the end of March 1945.

As Katek had already pointed out, the British Imperial General Staff was not prepared to promise its support for the “nationwide uprising”, because “a large revolutionary movement over isolated territory could not be supplied successfully”. Nevertheless, it approved authorisation to supply “underground organisations” in occupied Czechoslovakia with MEDTO weapons and sabotage materials sufficient to equip 10,000 people, which meant altogether 125 flights.

In response to a report from the commander of the SOE operational group WINDPROOF, Maj. Sehmer, two British officers Maj. Kenneth Greenless and Maj. Rupert Raw were preparing to be dropped in Slovakia with provisions and medical supplies. At the request of the Second Department of Czechoslovak High Command, a Czech radio-telegraphist was to accompany them to maintain direct contact with the Commander of the Second Czechoslovak independent paratrooper brigade Col. Vladimír Příkryl.<sup>71</sup>

In mid-December 1944 Capt. Katek informed the head of Planning & Operations Staff OSS/ETO Col. William C. Jackson of further developments in Operation CARBURATOR – BAUXITE.<sup>72</sup> This detailed the locations of members of the operational teams HOUSEBOAT and DAWES from the last remaining radio contact of the Western allies in Slovakia: “This past week a message came through to SOE reporting that our men have made contact with the Partisan detachment (700 men) of Colonel Příkryl, a Czechoslovak officer serving with the Red Army. They face

<sup>70</sup> MHA Prague, Coll. 37, 37-89-58/16. Official record, 6 December 1944.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., file 37-290-3/17-19. Official record of conversation with Lt. Col. Perkins, SOE, 11 December 1944.

<sup>72</sup> On the subsequent course of the operation BAUXITE see also Z. Jelínek, *Západní paraskupiny*, pp. 174–175; J. Šolc, *Bylo málo mužů*, pp. 211–212; *SOE in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 43–47.

a winter of activity in the Slovak mountains without adequate supplies [including medical] and direct communications.”

The Special Operations Executive, the Second Department of High Command and the Czechoslovak Section therefore planned to deploy a team of two British majors (Greenless and Raw), a Czech captain (Capt. Pavel Hromek) and an US navy officer working for OSS. This party of four had to be transported to Bari and then dropped in Slovakia as soon as possible:<sup>73</sup> “The function of the American member of the team will be to (a) provide a direct radio link from Slovakia to the UK, (b) reorganize the remnants of the Houseboat and Dawes team, (c) participate in the Partisan activities of the Prikryl group which will eventually be attached to the Red Army and (d) report on pertinent intelligence to this headquarters.”

The operational team had to take the *British medical pack O* with them, including 17 kitbags with medicine, each weighing between 210 and 240 pounds.<sup>74</sup>

On 26 December 1944 a proposal for Capt. Katek to be promoted to the rank of major was sent across the Atlantic to London. It had been approved by the Secret Intelligence Branch of OSS/Washington, the OSS Board of Officers and the director of the Office of Strategic Services with the recommendation that the commanding officer of OSS/ETO submit it to the commanding general for approval.<sup>75</sup>

Capt. Katek probably informed the Second Department of the Czechoslovak High Command before the end of 1944 that he had received “essential agreement from headquarters in Washington to carry out operations for supplying the underground movement in Bohemia and Moravia with weapons.” Katek was granted a free hand as a head of the Czechoslovak Section to negotiate all the necessary requirements for the successful implementation of those operations, in close cooperation with the US Air Force and SOE.<sup>76</sup>

A directive by the British chiefs of staff in cooperation with the Czechoslovak Section was negotiated with SOE. According to this, Gen. Alexander was instructed that MEDTO guaranteed minimally ten British supply operations into Czechoslovakia and another ten to twelve by an American squadron of B-24.

During delicate negotiations, especially with SOE HQ, Capt. Katek obtained agreement to the assignment of an American W/T operator to the British-Czechoslovak mission BAUXITE, which was to be deployed to the aid of the Anglo-American groups trapped in Slovakia. The operational team BAUXITE was fully equipped and ready for deployment by 30 December 1944.

<sup>73</sup> See M. Posch, *Spojenectvo z núdze. Spolupráca SOE a československej spravodajskej služby počas 2. svetovej služby*, Bratislava, 2021, p. 103.

<sup>74</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 115, Box 2, Folder 10A (also Entry 190, Box 327, Folder 561). Memorandum. Subject: Operations, Carburator – Bauxite, 15 December 1944.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Entry 99, Box 5, Folder 1. Subject: Promotion, 26 December 1944.

<sup>76</sup> MHA Prague, Coll. 37, 37-89-58/9. Official record.

Representatives of the section conducted negotiations with SOE about joint operations in Bohemia and Moravia that were to expand the Allied intelligence communication network and accordingly, OSS was to be able to place one or two men into every Czech operative team sent.<sup>77</sup> In the context of the agreement with SOE about expanded intelligence penetration into Germany, the Second Department of Czechoslovak High Command showed itself willing to prepare contacts with Czech workers in the Third Reich, from which it would be possible to build an information network.

Last but not least, Capt. Katek succeeded in making contact with a Czech official used as a source of intelligence information, who was heading for Slovakia via Moscow.<sup>78</sup>

In his report for Lt. Richard Helms, Central European Section, OSS/Washington, Capt. Katek presented selected Czechoslovak projects “with mineral names” as the joint operations of the Second Department of Czechoslovak High Command, the SOE, the SIS and the OSS, emphasising that there was a marked difference in the extent of involvement of the individual allied intelligence services.

The operational team PLATINUM<sup>79</sup> was described as being fundamentally a SOE/CIS project, whose four Czech members were to be reinforced at the last minute by an American officer. Both the Czechoslovak Army Staff and the SOE HQ held the task of the group, which was prepared to take off to the advance base in Bari, to be very important. According to the report, the group should be dropped in south Bohemia so that it could support the weaker resistance movement in this region and set up the radio contact with countries abroad. Capt. Katek urged the OSS/MEDTO personnel to support the deployment of the PLATINUM team, in return for which he promised they would create conditions for further airdrops of material support and OSS operatives. The information included details of the shelling of the aircraft by Soviet anti-aircraft guns during the last attempt at deployment.

The successful deployment of the operational group TUNGSTEN,<sup>80</sup> a CIS/SIS project, on 23 December 1944 with a purely intelligence assignment should, thanks to

<sup>77</sup> Most likely, it was the reaction of the Czechoslovak Section to the pressure of the OSS/ETO heads to rapidly expand the operations against Germany. See J.E. Persico, *Piercing the Reich, The Penetration of Nazi Germany by American Secret Agents during World War II*, New York, 1979, p. 187 ff.; W. Casey, *The Secret War Against Hitler*, Washington, D.C., 1988, pp. 260–262; J.E. Persico, *Casey. From the OSS to the CIA*, New York, 1990, p. 68 ff.

<sup>78</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 60, Folder 1. SI Branch. Progress Report, 15 December to 31 December 1944 (Czech Section), 31 December 1944.

<sup>79</sup> For the operation PLATINUM, which was finally executed (airdropped) at Nasavrky near Javorná in Železné Hory (Chrudim region), see Z. Jelínek, *Západní paraskupiny*, pp. 166–174; J. Šolc, *Bylo málo mužů*, pp. 208–211; *SOE in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 93–106; P. Žáček, “Jaromír Nechanský a pražské povstání I., II.,” *Historie a vojenství* 2 (2005), pp. 4–18; 3 (2005), pp. 43–60.

<sup>80</sup> For the operation TUNGSTEN see Z. Jelínek, *Západní paraskupiny*, pp. 167–168; J. Šolc, *Bylo málo mužů*, pp. 207–208; *SOE in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 86–92.

its Eureka ground-based radio homing beacon, have made further dropping operations in the area possible. Capt. Katek promised his superiors to arrange for TUNGSTEN to receive one of the operative teams prepared by the Central European Section of the Secret Intelligence Branch OSS/MEDTO.

In the case of the operational team BAUXITE, consisting of two British majors (one of them a medical doctor), a Czech captain and an OSS naval officer, its aim was a joint rescue operation by SOE, CIS and OSS, with the main task to renew contact with the groups HOUSEBOAT and DAWES, and deliver to Slovakia the material essential for them. This was a reaction to the last dispatch from the commander of the SOE team WINDPROOF Maj. Sehmer; no one knew yet that most of the members of the American and British mission were captured at Polomka on 26 December 1944.<sup>81</sup>

The members of the BAUXITE team left Great Britain on 31 December 1944 in a RAF special aircraft, together with approximately one ton of medical and other equipment. Maj. Gen. William A.M. Stawell, Chief of Special Operations Mediterranean (SOM), and Lt. Col. Henry McLeod Threlfall, the commander of the SOE HQ (Force 139) at Monopoli, received an order to carry out their drop into Slovakia at the earliest possible opportunity.<sup>82</sup>

## City Team Prague & Operative Mission Košice

During his stay in Caserta, Italy, from 8 to 10 January 1945, Maj. Gen. Donovan dealt, among other things, with the future of the Czechoslovak Operations and the organisation Prague City Unit. The director of the OSS was informed about London's standpoint on Capt. Katek becoming Commanding Officer of the Prague City Unit, replacing Otto H. Jakes in this position. The recommendation was based on his close association with the Czechoslovak government-in-exile over many months, supported moreover by the opinion of an unnamed official, that after the liberation of Prague he should be present among the representatives of the OSS in Czechoslovakia. Gen. Donovan praised the consensual proposal of the Plans and Operations Committee, which supported this change provided that Jakes retained full responsibility for all secret field operations run from MEDTO and both would remain under the direct command of the Chief of SICE, Lt. Col. Chapin.

It was not until after Gen. Donovan had left that it became clear that the Chief of the Proposed Prague Mission Lt. Col. Charles W. Thayer would for a period of

<sup>81</sup> See A. Ogden, *Through Hitler's Back Door*, pp. 77–80; J. Downs, *Druhá světová vojna: Tragédia OSS na Slovensku*, pp. 164–170; M.J. Ličko, *USA v Banskej Bystrici*, pp. 140–142; E. Hymoff, *The OSS in World War II*, pp. 209–212; L. Šindelářová, *Einsatzgruppe H. Působení operační skupiny H na Slovensku 1944/1945 a poválečné trestní stíhání jejích příslušníků*, Praha, 2015, pp. 112–113.

<sup>82</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 5, Folder 2 (also Entry 210, Box 289, Folder 7). Subject: Czechoslovak Projects, 2 January 1945.

some months be otherwise deployed. In reaction to this Capt. Katek was eventually recommended only as liaison officer with the Czechoslovak government and Jakes as head of SI for the Unit. The director of the Office of Strategic Services approved generally this proposal by dispatch.<sup>83</sup>

On 16 January 1945, the Czech Section head was temporarily promoted to the rank of major.<sup>84</sup>

A few days later Maj. Katek forwarded an interesting reflection on cooperation with the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service to the Chief of Secret Intelligence Branch OSS/Washington Shepardson, through the superior Chief of SI/ETO William J. Casey. He stated that the “internal” secret intelligence operations in which Washington was interested were being discussed with the staff of the CIS. The “external” aims, especially those involving the attitudes and policy of the Czechoslovak government in exile had to be approached in a more indirect manner. The priority task of the Czech Section was to gain information, at the very least of a secret nature and to carry out projects that would achieve their assumed aims. With a view to the mandate to cooperate with CIS, they maintained the best possible relationship in the development of joint projects which were often a delicate matter for the Czechs. The operative cooperation with CIS was used to establish the widest possible contact in the context of the government and thereby be up-to-date of the entire Czechoslovak picture.

At the same time, with due precautions, selected members of the Czech section had taken on assignments with a particular aim, regarding for example, Wenzel Jaksch, Stefan Osuský and other representatives of the opposition to “Beneš’s regime”. These political contacts, which had expanded with the passage of time, had to be subordinated to the basic task of developing the complex intelligence penetration into Czechoslovakia; they nevertheless brought some important intelligence items and supplemented an otherwise incomplete sequence of information. The contribution of the Czech section was supposed to be capability of obtaining information in advance, frequently connected with fundamental political issues known only to a few people in the Czechoslovak government-in-exile.

Even more important than the provision of information about Czechoslovak matters, was the use of the Czech Section’s capacities for obtaining information about the Third Reich and also about the complex of Central European relationships. Through the close cooperation with SIS and SOE, as well as CIS, the Czech Section achieved a kind of indirect participation in the activities of the operative groups deployed in Czechoslovakia and knew the operational space and terms of their operations, the code names and squad composition, and even had frequent access to radio despat-

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., Entry 99, Box 31, Folder 1. Semi-monthly Progress Report, SICE Division, Period 1–15 Jan., 18 January 1945.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Registration card of a member of the OSS.



ches received. This two-way communication enabled them to request specific intelligence information through CIS HQ.

Moreover, the Czech Section promised a significant reinforcement of the intelligence network in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia by the future deployment of the PLATINUM team, probably also with the use of the relief and alternate teams being trained in the SOE schools which, it was anticipated, would be deployed in a two month time span.

The intelligence organisation in occupied Czechoslovakia was intended to be involved in the penetration of selected areas of the Third Reich by running safe houses and drop zones for operative personnel. As far as the direct and indirect connection of Czech intelligence parties with the resistance was concerned, their current influence relied on the amount of material assistance, especially weapons, which they were able to obtain from the Allies: "Material aid and intelligence thus become intimately connected in Czechoslovakia, a fact which has determined much of our work in the past few months."<sup>85</sup>

The OSS, in close cooperation with the SOE, succeeded in positively influencing the form of the directive of the Combined Chiefs of Staff given through the British Chiefs of Staff for involvement in special operations in Czechoslovakia. In the first half of December 1944, after negotiation with the US Air Force, they managed to move to Italy the new squadron of B-24s trained for covert operations to increase the capacity of flights to Czechoslovakia. During negotiations lasting several days with the SOE, a directive, gradually modified, aimed to raise the monthly limit by fifty per cent, up to 20 flights, covered by resources of the B-24 squadron.

With the increase in air resources, the Czech Section promised to achieve the aims of the OSS, both in Special Operations supporting the resistance movement in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and in the field of Secret Intelligence: "The sending of material aid will more easily enlist the aid of CIS and its network in bringing out more intelligence from Czechoslovakia and organizing the new emphasis toward Germany." The purpose of Maj. Katek's next planned trip to Italy was intended to be an effort to secure the measures of coordination needed between the OSS, the Czechs, and the Special Operations Executive for the implementation of the prepared directive. Increasing the number of reception groups and the provision of drop points in the Protectorate in this regard was an essential condition.

Last but not least, Maj. Katek drew attention to the delicate matter concerning the frequently poor English translations of reports sent from HQ CIS, which affected their intelligibility. He also complained about inadequate comprehensiveness (meaning they were incomplete): "For reasons of their own and unknown to me, CIS has not acted on my request, put at least three times, to provide us with reports

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Entry 210, Box 61, Folder 1. Subject: Czechoslovak Intelligence, 20 January 1945.

in Czech. It is possible that such would involve yet another operation that staff limitations do not permit at present.”<sup>86</sup>

In mid-February 1945, Lt. Col. William P. Maddox, Chief SI OSS/MEDTO, reported from Caserta on the conclusions of the negotiations concerning the personnel prepared for intelligence activity in Czechoslovakia. It was agreed that Maj. Katek with his colleagues (Hruby, Pvt. Steve Vitek, Erik J. Vesely and the personnel assigned by the Signal Section) would accompany the Deputy Chief of Staff and former Chief of Military Intelligence Gen. Moravec on his anticipated journey to the seat of the Czechoslovak government on liberated territory, wherever it would be. As a proposed officer and liaison with the CIS, Katek should come to an agreement with Col. Aage Woldike, attaching himself and his unit to the office of the US Military Attaché accredited to the Czechoslovak government. It was assumed that when Maj. Katek’s Czech unit reached Prague, he would report directly to the headquarters of Secret Intelligence Branch OSS/MEDTO.

Under the cover of the Fifteenth AAF, “Mr. Jakes with party” also planned to arrive in the liberated Czechoslovak territory, with the task of developing intelligence activity. For the purpose of administrative supervision and clearance, Otto H. Jakes would, if it were necessary, report to Maj. Katek, the senior military liaison officer with Czechoslovak Intelligence. Sgt. Taub would then remain in London until the whole of CIS was transferred to its homeland, with the task then of joining Maj. Katek. The rest of the Czech Section would remain on standby in Italy, prepared to be attached to either group. The overall representative of the OSS in Czechoslovakia would not be appointed until after the liberation of Prague and the transfer of the two units to the capital city.<sup>87</sup>

In reaction to a memorandum recording the agreement on OSS representation after the liberation by the Red Army, Lt. Col. Chapin announced a proposal to appoint Lt. Cdr. Frank Wisner to the command of all Czechoslovak-related OSS activities. He added at the same time that AFHQ had sent a request to the War Department for the launching of a formal inquiry concerning the fate of the DAWES team and associated groups.<sup>88</sup>

On 22 February 1945 the Commanding Officer of the OSS station in London Col. James R. Forgan sent a letter to the Commander in Chief of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces Gen. Ingr in which he recalled a number of positive results of OSS cooperation with Second Department of Czechoslovak High Command: “Our Czechoslovak Section from the first has had full powers to develop with you the strongest possible collaboration in the field of intelligence and special operations to the end that the

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., Entry 99, Box 31, Folder 5. Subject: SI Plans for Czechoslovakia, 16 February 1945; Ibid. Copy. Disposition of Personnel for Czechoslovakia.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., Subject: Progress Report, SICE, 1–15 February 1945, 18 February 1945.

common aim of acquiring the greatest body of intelligence on the German enemy may be achieved. The importance of continuing these activities cannot be minimized in these late stages of the war.”<sup>89</sup>

The headquarters of ETO and of MEDTO had both already accepted the development of organisational logistics and technical measures to ensure further cooperation and the American intelligence service therefore asked for agreement to send its own personnel who were to be attached to Czechoslovak High Command and especially to its Second Department. This small group, composed of Maj. Katek, Hruby, Vesely, Vitek and two signal officers, would be authorised, on the basis of a requirement from SHAEF, to carry out all essential measures for the achievement of intelligence aims in Germany: “Since the operational centre of gravity of your staff is to be shifted to your homeland, it becomes manifest that, in order to carry out our joint objectives, we do likewise. For this purpose, we have already made plans to coordinate our activities in the United Kingdom and Italy with such a new base for Czechoslovak operations. Moreover, communication between these three bases would need to be established, which we are also prepared to do.”<sup>90</sup>

On 27 February 1945 the Czechoslovak MNO proposed to the Presidium of the Council of Ministers in London that they approve and recommend to President Beneš the award of decorations to selected members of the British and American intelligence services. Maj. Katek was specifically proposed for the Order of the White Lion IV Class with this citation: “As the devoted friend of our cause [Maj. Katek] cooperated very closely and with great understanding with the Czechoslovak military headquarters in the military and military-political field. His devoted work and effective support were very valuable for the development of the Czechoslovak cause.”<sup>91</sup>

On 8 March 1945 Maj. Katek wrote a letter to the head of the Czechoslovak section SICE OSS/MEDTO Jakes, in which he described the preparations for the return of the Czechoslovak government to its homeland: “After several postponements, it is beginning to look as though the Benes party, of around twenty-six people will certainly leave this week for Tehran and thence to Moscow. Meanwhile a ship [to Constanța, Romania] is being readied for the end of the month which will take the Army Staff and principals of the various ministries, together with the British and American diplomatic staffs.”

He informed his colleague that he had sent a letter to Gen. Ingr, in which he had asked that the OSS should continue to Košice, in liberated eastern Slovakia and thus prevent the burying of two intelligence programmes, one targeting the Protectorate and the other Germany.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Entry 115, Box 2, Folder 11. Letter to Gen. Sergej Ingr, 22 February 1945.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> *Zápisy ze schůzí československé vlády v Londýně 1945. (V.)*, ed. J. Němeček, I. Štoviček, H. Nováčková, J. Kuklík, J. Bílek, Praha, 2016, p. 450.

According to Maj. Katek, it was encouraging for Czechoslovak military intelligence when news came through on 16 February 1945 about the successful landing of the operative team PLATINUM. However, almost all its operational equipment had been destroyed in the drop. German occupying forces reacted brutally, attacking the dismounted groups and their network in south-east Moravia. This necessitated reorganisation, their wireless communication in particular. The Special Operations Executive immediately reported these changes to Maj. G.I. Klauber and Katek therefore recommended that Jakes should be prepared to modify the operational deployment with their own aircraft: "The whole supply dropping scheme (code name Ely<sup>92</sup>) has had to be postponed for a while, particularly for the Clay group.<sup>93</sup> However, Carbon<sup>94</sup> and Calcium<sup>95</sup> are now waiting supply drops. For your information in planning for [operative team of the Czechoslovak section SICE] Ferndale<sup>96</sup>, there is a Czech group, Sulphur, at Nemecký Brod, composed of Adolf Horak and Oldřich Janko. Most certainly it appears to be under German control.<sup>97</sup> Having received information that Cottage [Vlastislav Žuk alias Eman Horak] was successfully landed on the night of 20–21 February, I am most anxious to hear any further developments."<sup>98</sup>

The next day Maj. Katek sent a report to the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Branch OSS/MEDTO Lt. Col. William P. Maddox, in which he stressed the need – with the agreement of Gen. Ingr, Gen. Moravec, Col. Keswick and Lt. Col. Perkins – to send their own mission to Košice: "It was felt that there was yet a substantial margin of military operations in the Protectorate which would make necessary close collaboration and coordination between CIS, SOE and OSS in the UK, the MEDTO and Slovakia. In particular, this means that the intelligence network in the Protectorate now communicating with London has to be maintained and expanded from plans and resources made and assembled by us jointly."<sup>99</sup>

<sup>92</sup> See J. Marek, "Čs. výsadková a zásobovací báze v jižní Itálii," *Historie a vojenství* 1 (2013), p. 78; *SOE in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 29, 127–129.

<sup>93</sup> For the operation CLAY see Z. Jelínek, *Západní paraskupiny*, pp. 127–131; J. Šolc, *Bylo málo mužů*, pp. 144–146; Antonín Bartoš, Radomír Kunc, *Clay Eva volá Londýn: hlášení z let 1939–1945*, Praha, 1992; *SOE in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 70–79.

<sup>94</sup> For the operation CARBON see Z. Jelínek, *Západní paraskupiny*, pp. 133–134, 149–150; J. Šolc, *Bylo málo mužů*, pp. 147–150; *SOE in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 80–85.

<sup>95</sup> For the operation CALCIUM see Z. Jelínek, *Západní paraskupiny*, pp. 113–119; J. Šolc, *Bylo málo mužů*, pp. 133–137; J. Šolc, "Zbraně nebudou! K dodávkám zbraní do českých zemí na jaře roku 1945," *Historie a vojenství* 3 (1991), p. 64.

<sup>96</sup> For the operation FERNDAL (Miroslav Pajer alias Mirka Jasan, Josef Pešek alias Joseph Lipa and W/T Sgt. Theodor Zaloga) see P. Žáček, "Contest for Prague: Czechoslovakia and the Intelligence Efforts of the Allies in 1945," *Journal for Intelligence, Propaganda and Security Studies* 2 (2020), pp. 186–187.

<sup>97</sup> For the unsuccessful operation SULPHUR see Z. Jelínek, *Západní paraskupiny*, pp. 122–123; J. Šolc, *Bylo málo mužů*, pp. 140–142; O. Sládek, *Zločinná role gestapa. Nacistická bezpečnostní policie v českých zemích 1938–1945*, Praha, 1986, pp. 301–307; *SOE in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 57–58.

<sup>98</sup> For the operation COTTAGE see J. Šolc, *Bylo málo mužů*, pp. 256–257.

<sup>99</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 115, Box 2, Folder 11. Subject: Kosice Mission, 9 March 1945.

Intelligence Targets: Third Reich & Protectorate

Maj. Katek was also preparing for the possibility of the move to Košice being delayed and in a such case, after consultation with Washington, he wanted to be attached to the office of the military attaché at the US Embassy. Col. Woldike, the appointed US military attaché, who valued the work of the OSS and would welcome the head of the Czechoslovak Section as Assistant Military Attaché; nevertheless he was aware that it would be necessary to have the approval of Ambassador Lawrence Steinhardt and the War Department. He also warned that he would be bound by the restraints of official policy and would be subject to the usual diplomatic principles. Col. Woldike in any case supported the establishment of an OSS branch in Czechoslovakia, whether it would be attached to the Czechoslovak Army staff or embodied directly in the US State Department structure.<sup>100</sup>

Table 1. Organisational structure of the Secret Intelligence Branch, OSS/ETO, 1 March, 1945

	SI Branch of ETO	
Chief		William Joseph Casey
Deputy Chief		Lt. Cmdr. Milton Katz
Executive Officer		Lt. Col. Charles C. Bowman
Liaison		Lt. (j.g.) Henry. H. Proctor
	Division of Intelligence Direction	
Chief		Robert B. MacLeod
Deputy Chief + Post-Hostilities Planning		Dr. S. Collisen
Research Section		Maj. Gordon Stewart
	Special Projects	
	Division of Intelligence Procurement (DIP)	
Chief		George O. Pratt
Deputy Chief		Maj. Hans V. Tofte
Agent Processing		Mission Processing
French-Belgian Section	Dutch Section	Polish Section
Czech Section	Scandinavian Section	German Section
7th Army Section	Labor Section	R-Section
Operations Office	Field Service and Supply	Air Operations
	Operational Intelligence Office (Bach Unit)	
	Reports and Registry – London	
Chief		William J. Gold

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

Deputy Chief		Lt. James S. Kronthal
	Executive Officer	
	Intelligence Sections:	
Political	Economic	Technical Naval
	Air Military	
Documents Officer		Editor
	<b>SI Branch Forward – Paris</b>	
Chief		Mr. Thomas Gantz Cassady
DGER Operations		French Operations
German Section		Labor Section
	Reports Board	
Simba Base	Field Base A, B, D	Aquitaine Mission

Before the Czechoslovak government delegation left for Moscow, the Czech section was assured personally by President Beneš and Foreign Minister Masaryk that during negotiations with Soviets they would try to push through approval for the assignment of the OSS mission to the CIS so as to enable it to continue the intelligence work aimed at the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Minister of National Defence Gen. Ingr had his attention drawn through diplomatic channels to the American request to install a mission of American intelligence service with the Czechoslovak Army Staff to Slovakia. Both the OSS and the SOE, who kept each other mutually informed, held negotiations to obtain Czechoslovak and Soviet agreement; Col. H.M. Threlfall was placed as a head of the British mission.

The Czech Section anticipated that the operative missions in Košice could be delayed for some time and therefore initiated discussion with Col. Woldike with a plan of joining Maj. Katek to his staff as his assistant. The military attaché agreed, provided it was approved by his superiors at the War Department.

The supply operations on behalf of the resistance movement in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, in planning of which OSS had cooperated with the Czechoslovak High Command and SOE, faced considerable pressure from German security forces, which threatened the drop zones. The Allies urgently sought alternative places for further operations, in cooperation with OSS/MEDTO.

Meanwhile, negotiations with Col. Bartík at the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry resulted in a promise to continue the cooperation between the two services even after the return to Prague. The head of the Political Intelligence Section shared with his American partners the Czechoslovak government's secret plans for a post-war intelligence organisation. If there was a delay, and the ministers were seated in Czechoslovakia substantially earlier than the OSS unit was, Col. Bartík agreed to stay in contact with the Czech Section using his own code through the Czechoslovak Home station in England. His deputy, Col. Jan Krček, who remained in London, was to be instructed to enable this communication.

When two of the Czech Section's agents arrived from France, it was planned to deploy them in the Third Reich and they began to train in Area F (Ruislip), outside London. Eight more Czechoslovak escapees recruited in France were currently being screened. After consultation with the OSS German Desk it was assumed that out of the group of ten agents who should be available for operative deployment in the foreseeable future, three missions could be put together to fulfil tasks inside the Third Reich.<sup>101</sup>

On 20 March 1945 Maj. Katek reported other details about his section's activity to the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Branch OSS/London, W.J. Casey. His deputy Hruby had been recruiting suitable candidates for agent work in Germany from among groups of Czechs active with the French Maquis. Two of those chosen for the operative team BOVRIL (Franz Binder alias Karl Botek, and Martin Barath alias Stefan Ursiny) were already in training. Linz in Austria was chosen for the time being to be their field of operation, but in cooperation with the Second Department of Czechoslovak High Command, deployment in Bavaria or Sudetenland was also considered. In the following week five other agents would be heading for England after screening. The Czech Section estimated that by May 1945 at least three teams would be ready for operational deployment. It was planned to deploy the last agent, who was also in France, in the environs of Baden-Baden or Stuttgart.

Maj. Katek anticipated that by the end of March 1945 all the key elements of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, High Command and the intelligence service would be moved to Slovakia. The radio centre for communication with the resistance movement in the Protectorate and the coordination centre of the OSS Czechoslovak projects would remain in the British Isles. These projects were prepared and awaiting in Italy to be implemented as well as the operations of the Second Department of Czechoslovak High Command and SOE. The Czech Section created a communication scheme to connect with Col. Bartík, who was prepared to signal from Košice to London using his own code: "The formal liaison with CIS wherein we obtain intelligence gathered by them all over Europe will continue until such time as the entire CIS staff is moved out of England. The Czechs feel that this move can be completed in two months and thereafter only a formal Czech military mission to Great Britain will remain. For about the same period of time, various Czechoslovak ministries will be maintained in London and liaison, especially for political intelligence to be maintained with them."

Before President Beneš, however, could inform Minister Masaryk (who at the time was in Moscow) about the intention to move a small group of American intelligence officers to the liberated territory, OSS received a negative response from

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., Entry 99, Box 6, Folder 3. SI Branch Progress Report, 1 March to 15 March 1945, Czech Section, 15 March 1945.



the Soviet Foreign Ministry.<sup>102</sup> Another possibility considered was the assignment of Lt. Cdr. Wisner, who should have headed the OSS group, as special assistant to Ambassador Steinhardt. The third option previously discussed with Col. Woldike seemed to be a dead end, probably due to their less than good relationship with the Military Intelligence Service (G-2).

In the end, Maj. Katek suggested it would be very useful if he took part personally in negotiations about future developments in Washington. Apart from trying to revive the possibility of joining with Col. Woldike, he wanted to contribute his experience with the Czechoslovak government-in-exile to the planning, and to be available to Ambassador Steinhardt before he took up his position.<sup>103</sup>

In the second half of March 1945, the Czech Section devoted great attention to developments among the Czechoslovak exiles. In Moscow, President Beneš and several political leaders negotiated with the Soviet leadership before establishing a new interim government and administration of the liberated territories. "Close contact with the Czechoslovak Foreign Office was maintained in order to obtain all information forthcoming from the Moscow talks." The nucleus of the government-in-exile meanwhile continued its plans to move the whole establishment to Košice.

The Czech Section held conversations with Minister Ripka, the most senior minister in London with Gen. Moravec and with Lt. Col. Strankmüller, with the aim of reaching a clear agreement about the future relationship between the two services after the government's return to Czechoslovakia. They emphasised above all the importance of maintaining the radio connection of England with the resistance in the Protectorate. The request to keep a responsible Czechoslovak intelligence officer in London who could continue discussing immediate plans and projects with the OSS and SOE was also favourably received. Maj. Katek noted that it was important, because they would be able to obtain all their reports for as long as the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service kept its wireless Home station in England.

The plan of linking the OSS mission to the Czechoslovak authorities so they could continue with them to Slovakia was not executed. A formal request submitted to Moscow through the staff of the Czechoslovak Army was immediately rejected by the Soviet authorities. OSS Headquarters was at the same time informed that G-2 would probably not confirm the possibility of placing Maj. Katek as assistant to the US military attaché. Washington therefore continued to negotiate for the estab-

<sup>102</sup> On the negative Soviet position towards the Western Allies in this matter see B.F. Smith, *The Shadow Warriors. O.S.S. and the Origins of the C.I.A.*, New York, 1983, pp. 352–353; D. O'Sullivan, *Dealing with the Devil. Anglo-Soviet Intelligence Cooperation During the Second World War*, New York, 2010, p. 245; B. O'Connor, *Churchill and Stalin's Secret Agents. Operation Pickaxe at RAF Tempsford*, Stroud, 2012, pp. 187–188; P. Žáček, "Contest for Prague," pp. 194–195.

<sup>103</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 115, Box 5, Folder 68. Memorandum. Subject: Current Situation – Czech Section, 20 March 1945.

lishment of the OSS station in Czechoslovakia attached directly to Ambassador Lawrence Steinhardt.

On an operational level, the cooperation with CIS and SOE continued in the course of planning Ely Operations, the supply operations for the Underground in the Protectorate. During the last month of the war, around ten flights had been made from Italy and some degree of success was achieved in dropping supplies and personnel. Both operations in the field, TUNGSTEN and CARBON, were thus successfully supported and at the same time, the amount of intelligence information obtained began to increase. That showed itself in the last two weeks of war, when the CIS processed a considerable number of reports, some of which were evaluated as of high quality. The Czech Section considered the information about the *Alpen Stellung* fortification<sup>104</sup> and the recording of the sessions of German intelligence service in Stockholm to be especially remarkable.

The Czech Section continued to pass on to CIS all specific requests for information from SHAEF, AFHQ and other allied bodies, *inter alia* because the OSS/MEDTO agent deployed in Bohemia on 21 February 1945 in Operation COTTAGE had not been heard from. Meanwhile the BOVRIL team prepared for deployment in Linz had completed the first half of its training. Several other agents had moved from France to Great Britain where they were to undergo training.<sup>105</sup>

On 31 March 1945 Brig. General Egmont Francis Koenig summoned Maj. Katek from the ETO to the United States to report to the Director of OSS. He did not fly overseas until 7 April 1945, and his stay outside London was shortened to 14 days.<sup>106</sup> In Washington he discussed the future form of the OSS mission in Czechoslovakia.<sup>107</sup>

In the last Progress Report of the Czech Section of Intelligence Procurement Division SI Branch OSS/London, deputy head Hruby reported that they had focused on attentively following the Czechoslovak political situation. They obtained information about the constitution of a new Czechoslovak government in Moscow, about which information was not released until several days after arrival in Košice. "This information was the first of its kind to reach the Department of State and revealed the strong Communist influence on the new Czechoslovak Government."

At the request of OSS/Washington headquarters they reported reactions to the current political situation from top officials of the Foreign Ministry, the Czechoslovak intelligence service, the Political Intelligence of the Ministry of the Interior and offi-

<sup>104</sup> To the mythical Alpine Redoubt see R.G. Minot, *The Fortress That Never Was. The Myth of Hitler's Bavarian Stronghold*, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, 1964; Ch.B. MacDonald, *The Last Offensive. United States Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations*, Washington, D.C., 1973, pp. 407–442.

<sup>105</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 99, Box 6, Folder 1. SI Branch Progress Report, 16 March to 31 March 1945, Czech Section, 31 March 1945.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Subject: Orders, 31 Mar 1945; Letter Orders No. 179. Subject: Leave of Absence, 5 April 1945.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., Entry 99, Box 6, Folder 6. SI Branch Progress Report #53, 1 April to 15 April, 1945 (Executive Officer's Report), 15 April 1945.

cials of other ministries, and offices. Although most Czechoslovak exiles in London accepted the new government, they were afraid that the “Russian” influence was too strong. The prevailing wish was for the American Army to enter Prague and thus create a counterweight to the “Russian” influence. According to some of them, it could not be expected that the Soviet authorities would permit large military and diplomatic missions in Czechoslovakia in the near future.

The Czechoslovak intelligence service remained in London, thanks to which the transmission of intelligence information from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia – including disinformation about *Alpen Stellung* – was not disturbed. The Czech Section forwarded to CIS a request for information concerning American prisoners in Germany and Austria.

The massive advancement of the front forced the Czech Section to re-evaluate the mission for the BOVRIL team, which was to complete its training in ten days’ time. Nine potential Czechoslovak agents from Toulouse and Marseille were still being vetted by the office of X-2 OSS/Paris, but only one agent had started the two-week intelligence course.<sup>108</sup>

### With Katek to Prague & under Diplomatic Cover

On 14 April 1945, considering the rapid advance of the Allied Forces into the territories of the Third Reich, Gen. Donovan in Paris decided to accept measures for the entry of OSS personnel into Czechoslovakia under the cover of G-5, Third US Army.<sup>109</sup> At the same time it was decided that the responsibility for the overall direction and disposition of the allocated members of this Czech unit would remain in the hands of Maj. Katek; Jakes would be responsible for the running of the agents.<sup>110</sup>

In reaction to certain “extremely” interesting intelligence reports received from London over the course of the previous few days, together with the advance of the US Army in southern and central Germany towards the Czechoslovak borders, the former Chief of proposed Prague Mission Lt. Comdr. Wisner drew attention to the possible development of events assuming that American forces entered Czechoslovakia and along with them the OSS unit itself would be able to operate there. In the light of these “certain developments in the military situation”, Maj. Katek was ordered to speed up his return to London.

Lt. Cdr. Wisner recommended that Maj. Katek be reminded of the list of intelligence personnel selected for the Prague Mission, kept in his notes, arranged during the discussion before his departure to the USA: “Chief of Mission – Wisner for-

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., SI Branch Progress Report, 1 April to 15 April 1945, Czech Section, 15 April 1945.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., Entry 210, Box 64, Folder 3, Subject: Progress Report, SICE, 1–15 April 1945, 19 April 1945.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., Box 185, Folder 9, Organizational, administrative, and other decisions taken in the European theatre during the visit of the director, 7 April – 24 April 1945; Ibid., Entry 99, Box 7, Folder 1, Operational Report for Period 25 April to 28 April, 1 May 1945.

merly scheduled for this post, Chief SI officer and liaison with Czech Intelligence Service – Major Katek, Assistant SI and special liaison – Mr. Otto Jakes, X-2 representative – Paul Ursin, R&A representative and typist – Miss Helen Fisher, Assistant SI operative – Mr. Hruby, Code clerk and Russian-speaking assistant – Mr. Eric Vessily [Vesely], secretary-typist – Zdenka Lowers, Russian-speaking liaison officer, Secretary and assistant supply man and Communications personnel, i.e. radio operators and code clerks.”<sup>111</sup>

On 17 April 1945 Maj. Charles B. Robinson, Chief of the Overseas Section of the Transportation Office OSS/Washington, issued Maj. Katek with a travel pass for his return to the European Theater of Operations.<sup>112</sup> The designated chief of the small Czech Special Forces Detachment did not arrive at the headquarters of the Third US Army in Erlangen, Bavaria, until 26 April.

Two days later an advance base was set up for the Czech OSS unit, which numbered sixteen persons, in the town of Bodenwöhr about 25 kilometres from Cham. Before the assault into the Czechoslovak interior was launched, the group prepared to send ten “infiltration missions” to the German rear to ensure a timely transmission of tactical information to combat units.<sup>113</sup>

Maj. Katek reached liberated Pilsen via Cheb on 7 May 1945 and continued with several colleagues to Beroun the next morning.<sup>114</sup> From this position they communicated with insurgent Prague and with the G-2 Third US Army in the American zone beyond the demarcation line. They reached the Czech capital Prague on the afternoon of 10 May 1945.<sup>115</sup> At the same time, Maj. Katek and his men – as part of their G-5 cover – provided substantial assistance in the repatriation of displaced Czechs from the occupied zones of the Third Reich and took care of American prisoners of war in Pilsen, and Prague areas.<sup>116</sup>

On 18 May 1945 negotiations with Gen. Edwin K. Sibert, Assistant Chief of Staff (G-2) of the 12th Army Group, took place in Wiesbaden at which the status of the OSS Czech group and its operations in the liberated Czechoslovakia were resolved.<sup>117</sup> Maj. Katek passed on information concerning his “highly placed personal contacts”, mentioning among them President Beneš, Foreign Minister

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., Entry 210, Box 439, Folder 8. Memorandum. Subject: Aspects of Proposed OSS Prague Mission, 16 April 1945.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Memorandum. Subject: Notice of Alert and Call to Report to Aerial Port of Embarkation, 17 April 1945.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., Entry 99, Box 6, Folder 6, Covering Report for Activities of OSS/ETO (Forward), 16–30 April, 5 May 1945; Ibid., Box 7, Folder 1, Weekly Activities Report, 9 May 1945.

<sup>114</sup> Author's collection, copy of the diary of Blahoslav Hrubý, entries for 7 and 8 May 1945.

<sup>115</sup> J.J. Lorenc, “Osvobození Prahy 1945, II,” *Dnešek* 46 (1948), p. 727; I. Lukes, *On the Edge of the Cold War*, pp. 46–50.

<sup>116</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Recommendation for Award of the BRONZE STAR MEDAL, 7 July 1945.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., Entry 99, Box 7, Folder 1, Subject: Operational Reports for Period 13 May to 19 May 1945, 21 May 1945.

Masaryk, Minister of Foreign Trade Ripka, Deputy Prime Minister Ján Ursíny, State Secretary for Foreign Trade Ján Lichner, Secretary of the Deputy Prime Minister Jan Stránský and Czechoslovak Liaison Officer with the Third US Army Ivo Ducháček. It became a matter of “vital importance” for the OSS to renew these contacts. For this task, Maj. Katek had to be attached to the diplomatic staff of the US Embassy in Prague.<sup>118</sup>

On 7 July 1945, it was proposed that one of the highest American military awards – the Bronze Star – be awarded to Maj. Katek as an expression of appreciation of his wartime efforts and ability to finish difficult tasks. The cooperation with the Czechoslovak military authorities provided the American side with a considerable amount of information, while enabling them to use the Allies’ intelligence sources according to their own requirements. The regular flow of political intelligence about Czechoslovakia and neighbouring countries was highly appreciated by the US military and diplomatic authorities in the European Theater of Operations.<sup>119</sup>

According to internal statistics, the OSS Prague Mission, subject to the Secret Intelligence in the occupied Germany (SI/Germany) with Frank G. Wisner at its helm, became the most productive part of the OSS Mission for Germany. In the context of political and economic intelligence it provided alerting information about developments in Czechoslovakia. Two-thirds of its 145 intelligence reports were forwarded straight to Washington. Reports from “highly placed sources” about President Beneš’s opinions, the activities of Soviet military, economic and political authorities, the behaviour of the Communist Party, etc., were considered especially outstanding. Maj. Katek (“Devon 1”) provided most of the first-class information gained from the members of the Czechoslovak cabinet and other high government officials concerning negotiations with the Soviets, the reorganisation of the Czechoslovak intelligence service, questions of the German minority and the position and plans of Beneš, and other political leaders.<sup>120</sup>

In August 1945 the Prague mission delivered only half of the previous number of reports; nevertheless, they were of much better quality and more detailed, which made it possible to gain a more objective and complete picture of the current political developments in Czechoslovakia. “Devon 1” provided 24 reports, for the most part of a “top” level, comprehending the reactions of major government representatives to changes on the political scene, the nationalisation of industry, the reorganisation of the security forces, the forthcoming elections and the possibilities of a Communist putsch.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., Entry 210, Box 299, Folder 1. OSS Activities in Czechoslovakia, 22 May 1945.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Recommendation for Award of the BRONZE STAR MEDAL, 7 July 1945.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., Entry 214, Box 4, Folder 19. Monthly Report of Steering Division for 15 June – 31 July, SI/Germany, OSS, 2 August 1945.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., Monthly Report of Steering Division for 1–31 August, SI/Germany, OSS, 5 September 1945.

On 27 August 1945 the head of regional directorate of the Czechoslovak Military Counter-Intelligence (*Obranné zpravodajství*, OBZ), Maj. František Bedřich, ordered immediate tapping of telephone calls made by Charles Katek on line 45070 and control of his mail. Reports of the content of his communications were to be made daily.<sup>122</sup> Two days later the Garrison Headquarters of Greater Prague replied that the tapping of the phone line was secured by the telephone switchboard in Prague-Smíchov and the monitoring of his post by the post office no. 11 in Prague-Střešovice. "This station made 520 calls on its own behalf in July. The bill was paid by some 'American mission'".<sup>123</sup> Shortly afterwards the headquarters of military counterintelligence – the OBZ Main Directorate (Hlavní správa Obranného zpravodajství, HS OBZ) – was informed about the measures taken.<sup>124</sup>

In September 1945, Katek's mission processed a somewhat higher number of reports of the same high quality, consequently more specialised. Considerable attention was paid to the profiling of the anti-Communist bloc, the opposition to the nationalisation of industry, information on the deployment of Soviet units, etc. In comparison with the preceding period, a series of mentions concerning Slovakia was greatly appreciated.<sup>125</sup>

After the dismissal of Gen. Donovan, the dissolution of the OSS and the establishment of a new US intelligence service (1 October 1945) under the name Strategic Services Unit, SSU, overseen by the Department of War,<sup>126</sup> Maj. Katek's mission remained subordinate to the SSU/Germany.

In October 1945, Prague again delivered high-quality intelligence reports. These reports described with satisfaction not only conflicts with the Communists at a central level, but also political and economic events in Slovakia. They also focused on the withdrawal of the Soviet units. Reports on economics, focusing on the industrial concerns *Automobilové závody* (Škoda) and *Zbrojovka* Brno, had also improved.<sup>127</sup>

On 4 December 1945, the Czechoslovak Chief of the Main Staff of the MNO Div. Gen. Bohumil Boček informed the Minister of the Interior Václav Nosek that the official operation of the American military mission was just deception. Its real task was to be an intelligence service working in the framework of the SSU: "Maj. Katek's mission has made numerous very influential connections in political and economic

<sup>122</sup> Security Services Archive (hereinafter SSA Prague), Historical Collection of the Ministry of the Interior (hereinafter Coll. MV-H), H-686-2. Monitoring conversations and mail, Katek Charles, ref. no. 6102/1/2 JB/top secret.1945, 27.8.1945.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., Monitoring conversations and mail Katek Charles, ref. no. 2043/Top secret. ex 1945, 29.8.1945.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., Katek Charles, major American Army, monitoring, 31.8.1945.

<sup>125</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 214, Box 4, Folder 19. Monthly Report of Steering Division for 1–30 September, OSS Mission for Germany, 4 October 1945.

<sup>126</sup> See for example, T.F. Troy, *Donovan and the CIA. A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency*, Frederick, 1981, p. 301, and Ch. Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only. Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush*, New York, 1995, pp. 160–161.

<sup>127</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 214, Box 4, Folder 19. Monthly Report of Steering Division for 1–31 October, SSU Germany, 5 November 1945.

circles in Prague. Parties and banquets are often organized in the mission's rooms. These are attended by leading personalities of Czechoslovak political and economic life. They are mostly people with a negative attitude towards the government's program and its implementation."<sup>128</sup>

Czechoslovak Military Counter-Intelligence under the influence of the Soviet intelligence service, by this route requested the Ministry of the Interior to take "measures [...] to have this mission recalled from Czechoslovakia."<sup>129</sup>

Under the pressure of the Communist-controlled Czechoslovak security apparatus, Maj. Katek limited the gathering of intelligence information. Despite the changing situation in Prague, his superiors still considered his current cover (the War Crimes Investigation Commission) to be adequate for his legalisation.<sup>130</sup>

During further reorganisation of the American intelligence service and the emergence of the Central Intelligence Group, CIG,<sup>131</sup> the SSU Prague Detachment following an agreement with the State Department, was reorganised into the form of a regular American Military Mission. Officially it was there to further investigate war crimes and to monitor the deportation of the German population.<sup>132</sup>

In March 1946, all the members of the mission were transferred to the Office of the US military attaché.<sup>133</sup> The US ambassador informed the Czechoslovak authorities that Katek had been assigned diplomatic status as an attaché.<sup>134</sup> Before the 26 May 1946 elections, the morale of his twelve-man team was high. Katek himself supposed that the non-Communist parties could win, or that the situation would be so complex that the mission would only be able to continue its work with difficulty. All of the members of the mission were aware of continuous surveillance by the "enemies from the OBZ" and the Communists' efforts to get rid of them out of the country.<sup>135</sup>

Maj. Katek spent the whole summer of 1946, almost three months, in the USA, where understandably he was negotiating the future of his department. On 9 September 1946, shortly before his return to Europe, he was decorated with the Bronze Star. His wife Anne and daughter Janet travelled to Prague with him.<sup>136</sup>

Meanwhile – still in the framework of the SSU – a new organisation of special operations in Europe was proposed, with responsibility encompassing also

<sup>128</sup> SSA Prague, Coll. MV-H, H-686-2. Re: American Mission of Maj. Katek in Prague, 4 December 1945.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.; F. Hanzlík, J. Pospíšil, J. Pospíšil, *Sluha dvou pánů*, Vizovice, 1999, p. 81.

<sup>130</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 214, Box 4, Folder 20. Visit to Nuremberg and Prague, 20 February 1946.

<sup>131</sup> See for example, T.F. Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, p. 325 ff.; M. Warner, "Salvage and Liquidation: The Creation of the Central Intelligence Group," *Studies in Intelligence* 5 (39) (1996), pp. 111–120.

<sup>132</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 214, Box 4, Folder 20. Prague Detachment, 22 April 1946.

<sup>133</sup> I. Lukes, *On the Edge of the Cold War*, p. 147.

<sup>134</sup> SSA Prague, Coll. MV-H, H-686-2. Diplomatic protocol of the Foreign Ministry concerning the information of the American Embassy of 25.3.1946, 23.2.1948.

<sup>135</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 214, Box 4, Folder 20. Prague Detachment, 22 April 1946.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., Entry 224, Box 393, Folder Katek, Charles. Special Orders Number 50, 19 June 1946; Awards and Decorations, 12 September 1946; Major Charles Katek, 12 September 1946.



Czechoslovakia. The target to be achieved by 1 January 1947 was to deploy seven operatives with diplomatic status at the US Embassy and three undercover American agents, i.a. tasked with actions against the Soviet Union. The transformation from a military mission operating in the US Embassy to a *permanent type of semi-covert representation* was not intended to diminish the flow of intelligence reports.<sup>137</sup> The leadership of the SSU in Heidelberg came to the conclusion that Katek's branch had sufficient overview of the basic intelligence issues to be used for the planned recruitment for the *long-term coverage* of Czechoslovakia.<sup>138</sup> As a result of the transfer to the CIG, there was a gradually mounting pressure on Maj. Katek to leave the communication with prominent persons in Prague to the diplomats, in order to help to create a *peacetime reservoir of informants*.<sup>139</sup>

However, in mid-1947 everything changed. The National Security Council, NSC, was established by the National Security Act of 26 July 1947 and in September 1947, the Central Intelligence Agency, CIA, was formed.<sup>140</sup>

In spite of the dramatically deteriorating domestic and foreign political situation, it was not until during the February 1948 putsch that the Czechoslovak Communist security authorities – with the direct assistance of the Soviet state security apparatus – succeeded in compromising Lt. Col. Katek and his colleagues.<sup>141</sup> All that the CIA field station chief in Prague could do then was to ensure that around thirty Czech colleagues and their family members were ex-filtrated to the West.<sup>142</sup> The situation became unsustainable and on 18 March 1948 Katek and his family had to fly to the American Occupation Zone in Germany.<sup>143</sup>

## Afterword & CIA's Post Scriptum

While the wartime OSS operational case-files are essentially fully available, the research on the successor organizations, i.e. Strategic Services Unit and Central Intelligence Group, is significantly limited by the small number of declassified documents.<sup>144</sup> Despite certain promises made that related to the records from the first

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., Entry 214, Box 4, Folder 20. Memorandum. Plans for Future Development of Present Clandestine Intelligence Coverage, 9 July 1946.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., Crosby Lewis to Richard Helms, 18 September 1946.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., Entry 210, Box 428, Folder 4. Prague Detachment of the German Mission, 6 January 1947.

<sup>140</sup> See for example, T.F. Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, p. 377 ff.; John Ranelagh, *The Agency. The Rise and Decline of the CIA*, New York, 1987, pp. 112–142; F.J. Smist, Jr., *Congress oversees the United States Intelligence Community 1947–1989*, Knoxville, 1990, pp. 2–5.

<sup>141</sup> I. Lukes, *On the Edge of the Cold War*, pp. 148–150; G. Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin. America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947–1956*, Ithaca, 2000, pp. 15–16.

<sup>142</sup> T. Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes. The History of the CIA*, New York, 2007, p. 28.

<sup>143</sup> I. Lukes, *On the Edge of the Cold War*, p. 200.

<sup>144</sup> D. Alvarez, E. Mark, *Spying Through a Glass Darkly. American Espionage against the Soviet Union, 1945–1946*, Lawrence, Kansas, 2016, pp. 213–224.

years of the Cold War, systematic archival research of the activities of the Central Intelligence Agency is even more difficult.<sup>145</sup>

According to agents' reports of the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior, Katek participated from Frankfurt am Main over the summer 1948 in the organization of activities among refugees crossing the Iron Curtain and the formation of the first exile intelligence groups. Later, news came to Prague that Katek had become the head of the CIA's secret operations against Czechoslovakia.<sup>146</sup> In 1949, he was supposed to move to Munich via Heidelberg.<sup>147</sup> According to the findings of communist intelligence, all field offices working against Czechoslovakia in the US Occupation Zone in Germany were subject to him. Col. Katek was summoned to CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, only before the mid-1950s.<sup>148</sup>

Between 1960 and 1965, Katek worked at the CIA Station at the US Embassy in Austria, formally as an attaché of the political section. At the end of 1960, Czechoslovak foreign intelligence launched the Operation KAPR (CARP in English) – preparations for his abduction, which were abandoned two years later.<sup>149</sup> According to Czechoslovak and Soviet intelligence, he was a chief of the Vienna CIA station, tasked with intelligence operations against Czechoslovakia and other countries of the communist bloc.<sup>150</sup>

From 1967 to early 1971, Col. Katek lectured at the CIA Intelligence School, passing his experiences to young officers. Unfortunately, he did not get to enjoy the retirement much. Charles Katek's battle with the Nazis and Communists in his parents' homeland had come to an end prematurely; he died suddenly on 19 November 1971 in his apartment in a Washington, D.C. suburb.<sup>151</sup> He never saw a free Czechoslovakia again.

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<sup>145</sup> See P. Žáček, “‘Když je Bůh s námi, kdo proti nám?,’” p. 123, footnote 5.

<sup>146</sup> K. Pacner, *Českoslovenští vyzvědači 1945–1968*, Praha, 2020, p. 243.

<sup>147</sup> SSA Prague, Col. MV-H, H-686/6. Memorandum, 2.10.1962. According other sources Ch. Katek was the first chief of the CIA's Munich Operations Base (MOB) until he was replaced in April 1951.

<sup>148</sup> K. Pacner, *Českoslovenští vyzvědači*, p. 245.

<sup>149</sup> SSA Prague, Col. MV-H, H 686/6. Memorandum, 2.10.1962; P. Žáček, “Odluky osob v padesátých letech (únosy v režii československé Státní bezpečnosti),” in L. Babka, V. Veber. *Za svobodu a demokracii III. Třetí (protikomunistický) odboj*, Hradec Králové, 2002, p. 118; K. Pacner, *Českoslovenští vyzvědači*, pp. 250–255.

<sup>150</sup> SSA Prague, Col. Main Intelligence Service Directorate operative agenda – Dossiers on subject of interest (IS-1), 11444/116, Consignment no. 32, Re: US Intelligence Service in Austria, 25. X. 63.

<sup>151</sup> K. Pacner, *Českoslovenští vyzvědači*, p. 256.

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**Abstract:** The key official of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) responsible for communication with the representatives of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile was Dr. Charles Katek (1910–1971), an intelligence officer whom the OSS director Brigadier William J. Donovan approved first as liaison officer and subsequently head, Czechoslovak section, Secret Intelligence Branch of the London OSS station.

After being assigned to the OSS Detachment, European Theatre of Operations in early November 1943, Katek began a series of regular conferences with representatives of the 2nd (intelligence) Department of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Defence and started communicating with officials from the respective ministries of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile.

At the beginning of September 1944, Katek participated with the Central European Section of the Secret Intelligence Branch OSS/MEDTO in Italy in the preparation of plans for the deployment of operational teams to Slovakia, which were transported to the insurgent territory on 17 September and 7 October 1944. In addition to further assistance to Czechoslovak resistance, Katek – with the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) – actively supported the redirection of the 859th Squadron of the 492nd US Bombardment Group to carry out special operations over the territory of Bohemia and Moravia as well the transport of weapons, and other material for the resistance movement.

In mid-April 1945 Maj. Gen. Donovan appointed Katek as the head of the small Czech Special Forces Detachment which accompanied the Third US Army into the Czechoslovak territories. On 7 May 1945 Katek arrived to the liberated Pilsen, from where he continued with several colleagues to Beroun and in the afternoon of 10 May 1945 they arrived in Prague.

Under Katek's leadership, the Prague Mission became the productive part of the OSS Mission for Germany and subsequently of the Strategic Services Unit/Germany (October 1945), the Central Intelligence Group (after January 1946) and finally the Central Intelligence Agency (after September 1947).

The Soviet intelligence apparatus, working through the Czechoslovak security forces, played a gambit with the US intelligence Field Station in Prague that culminated shortly after the communist coup in February 1948. Katek was forced to leave Czechoslovakia for American Occupation Zone in Germany.

Until the end of his professional career he served in the CIA in charge of organizing intelligence activities concerning Czechoslovakia and other communist countries in Central and

Eastern Europe. On November 19, 1971, Katek died of a heart attack at his home in Potomac, a suburb of Washington, D.C.

**Keywords:** Office of Strategic Services, London OSS station, Secret Intelligence Branch, Special Operations, Continental Division, Czechoslovak Section, Czech Special Forces Detachment, Central Intelligence Agency

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### **Charles Katek, przyjaciel oddany naszej sprawie. Przypadek amerykańsko-czechosłowackiej współpracy wywiadowczej w latach 1943–1945 (1948)**

**Streszczenie:** Kluczowym oficerem Biura Służb Strategicznych (OSS) odpowiedzialnym za komunikację z przedstawicielami czechosłowackiego rządu na uchodźstwie był dr Charles Katek (1910–1971), oficer wywiadu, którego dyrektor OSS William J. Donovan zatwierdził najpierw jako oficera łącznikowego, a następnie szefa Sekcji Czechosłowackiej wywiadu (Czechoslovak Section, Secret Intelligence Branch) w londyńskiej placówce OSS.

Przydzielony do Oddziału OSS w Europejskim Teatrze Operacyjnym (European Theatre of Operation, OSS Detachment) na początku listopada 1943 r., Katek rozpoczął serię regularnych konferencji z przedstawicielami Oddziału 2 (wywiadu) czechosłowackiego Ministerstwa Obrony i zaczął komunikować się z urzędnikami z poszczególnych ministerstw czechosłowackiego rządu na uchodźstwie.

Na przełomie sierpnia i września 1944 r. wraz z Sekcją Środkowoeuropejską wywiadu (Central European Section Secret Intelligence Branch) w OSS/MEDTO we Włoszech Katek opracowywał plany przerzutu grup operacyjnych na Słowację, które 17 września i 7 października 1944 r. zostały przetransportowane na terytorium powstańcze. Oprócz dalszego niesienia pomocy czechosłowackiemu ruchowi oporu Katek – wraz z brytyjskim Kierownictwem Operacji Specjalnych (Special Operations Executive, SOE) – aktywnie zabiegał o przekierowanie amerykańskiej 859 Eskadry 492 Grupy Bombowej do prowadzenia operacji specjalnych nad terytorium Czech i Moraw, a także o transporty broni i innych materiałów dla ruchu oporu.

W połowie kwietnia 1945 r. gen. Donovan mianował Katka szefem niewielkiego Oddziału Czeskiego Sił Specjalnych (Czech Special Forces Detachment), który towarzyszył 3 Armii USA na terytorium Czechosłowacji. 7 maja 1945 r. Katek przybył do wyzwolonego Pilzna, skąd wraz z kilkoma kolegami udał się do Berounu, a 10 maja 1945 r. dotarł do Pragi.

Pod kierownictwem Katka praska misja stała się skuteczną w działaniach częścią Misji OSS w Niemczech, następnie Jednostki Służb Strategicznych w Niemczech (Strategic Services Unit/Germany) (październik 1945), Centralnej Grupy Wywiadowczej (Central Intelligence Group) (po styczniu 1946) i wreszcie Centralnej Agencji Wywiadowczej (Central Intelligence Agency, CIA) (po wrześniu 1947).

Sowiecki aparat wywiadowczy, działając za pośrednictwem czechosłowackich sił bezpieczeństwa, prowadził grę wywiadowczą z amerykańską placówką wywiadowczą w Pradze. Jej kulminacja nastąpiła wkrótce po komunistycznym zamachu stanu w lutym 1948 r. Katek został zmuszony do opuszczenia Czechosłowacji i udania się do amerykańskiej strefy okupacyjnej w Niemczech.

Do końca swojej kariery zawodowej Katek służył w CIA, gdzie odpowiadał za organizację działań wywiadowczych dotyczących Czechosłowacji i innych krajów komunistycznych w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej. Zmarł na atak serca 19 listopada 1971 r. w swoim domu w Potomac na przedmieściach Waszyngtonu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Biuro Służb Strategicznych, Office of Strategic Services (OSS), londyńska placówka OSS, Secret Intelligence Branch, operacje specjalne, Wydział Kontynentalny, Sekcja Czechosłowacka, Oddział Czeski Sił Specjalnych, Centralna Agencja Wywiadowcza (CIA)

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