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Czechs object to US military show of strength: "Tanks? No, thanks!"

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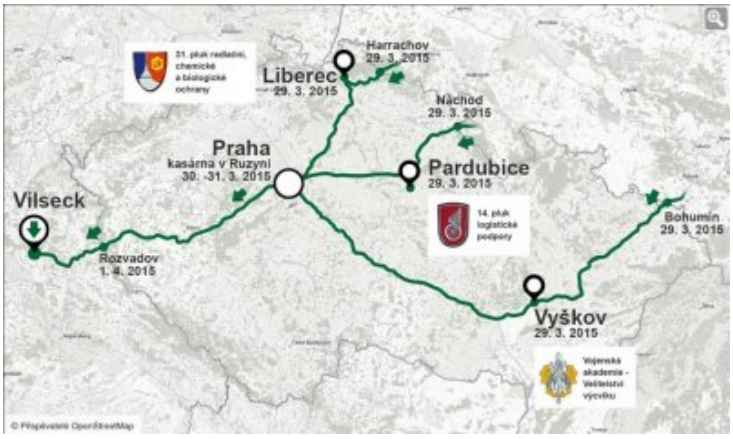
21.03.2015 - Prague - Tony Robinson



Map showing the route of the US convoy through the Czech Republic

Czech anti-war campaigners have launched a new campaign to focus opposition to the proposed procession of US military equipment through the country having completed military exercises in the Baltic as part of "Operation Atlantic Resolve".

The US is building up its military capacity by upgrading its hardware and increasing numbers of personnel in a direct display of force to Russia which has been conducting its own military exercises near the Ukraine border.

The Nato exercises, led by the US have taken place in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland and are due to be extended to Romania and Bulgaria over the coming weeks.

As the Baltic exercises come to an end the hardware will be transported to the Vilseck base in Germany and in order to get there, the quickest route from Poland is via the Czech Republic.

Last week, the Czech government authorised the passage of the military equipment through the country without any debate in parliament. The procession is due to take place between the 29th of March and the 1st of April.

Campaigners are horrified as the military movement has been turned more into a "victory parade" than a return of troops to their home base. You can drive easily from Poland to Germany in 6 hours.

"For some reason the authorities have decided that the convoy of 118 stryker vehicles and 516 personnel have to divide into three parts in Poland, they have to spend two nights on Czech territory, sleeping in 4 cities, and organise activities to impress local residents with their military power," said TáHa BednáYová from the organisation World without Wars which is also promoting the campaign. "The last time that vehicles like this came to the Czech Republic, they were Soviet tanks coming to crush moves towards democracy in 1968. We don't want such vehicles from foreign armies coming here ever again!"

The campaign "Tanks? No thanks!" has been started on Facebook and is informing the Czech population about the reasons why such ostentatious displays of military might are not helpful in reducing tensions with Europe's largest neighbour.

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"The time for Nato finished in 1991. It should never have expanded beyond Germany and up to the borders of Russia. If Nato really wants to create security in the world then Russia and China and all other countries of the world should be invited to join. That way all military tensions can be reduced and we can move towards disarming the world and creating the conditions for peace."

Tony Robinson



The Czech campaign can be found on Facebook and twitter with the hashtag #tanksnothanks.

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