CZECH AUTHORITIES BUST RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE NETWORK IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Prague, Oct 21 (CTK) The Security Information Service (BIS) civilian counter-intelligence and the National Organised Crime Centre (NCOZ) last year revealed and busted a network that the FSB Russian intelligence service was creating in the Czech Republic, BIS chief Michal Koudelka said today.

The network was financed from Russia and the Russian embassy in Prague and was to attack targets in Czechia and its foreign partners through a network of servers, Koudelka said at a security conference in the Chamber of Deputies.

The network was completely broken up and decimated thanks to the NCOZs excellent work. The investigation continues. From the territory of the Czech Republic, we prevented this activity, which was part of another chain that Russians used and prepared to use in other European countries, Koudelka added.

The NCOZ keeps dealing with this case, its spokesman Jaroslav Ibehej said. As criminal proceedings in this case are underway, our squad will not provide any concrete information, he told CTK.

It was created by the persons linked to the Russian intelligence services and funded from Russia and the Russian embassy, he said without elaborating.

The TASS Russian News Agency cited the Russian diplomats in the Czech Republic as saying that the Russian embassy in Prague has nothing to do with any intelligence network.

The data on the BIS and NCOZ intervention may be included in the BIS annual report for 2018 that the Chamber of Deputies commission supervising the BIS work will deal with on Thursday. The report is usually published by the end of the year.

The Respekt weekly has reported that the operation at the beginning of last year targetted a group of Russian citizens and some other Russians with Czech citizenship. The group was to work with the cover of two private firms in Prague that were selling hardware and software to common customers, but at the same time carrying out hacker attacks, the weekly writes.

Koudelka today called the Russian and Chinese intelligence activities the most important long-term risk for the Czech Republics security.

Russian intelligence officers are gaining many valuable pieces of information from everyday conversations with people close to the diplomatic and political circles in the Czech Republic, he added.

Koudelka appreciated that the Czech Republic had expelled three Russian intelligence officers working at the Prague embassy in reaction to last years poisoning of former Russian agent Sergei Skripal in London.

The Chinese act differently, often inviting scientists, politicians and others to their country where they are trying to influence them and gain information from them, Koudelka said.

BIS primarily warns of armed forces and police members accepting such invitations to visiting China.

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