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ON NUCLEAR ISSUES

BULGARIA

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Bulgaria joined NATO in 2004 and the EU in 2007, and is a party to important non-proliferation and disarmament treaties. Bulgaria supports the gradual approach to nuclear disarmament and vocally calls for strengthening of non-proliferation measures. Bulgaria is especially active with regard to the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). The country has not been a vocal participant in public discussions on NATO nuclear policy.

NUCLEAR

Bulgaria does not possess, produce or host nuclear weapons on its territory. Bulgaria is a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and has an Additional Protocol with the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Bulgaria is a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and the Zangger Committee, as well as a participating state of the Wassenaar Arrangement.

NUCLEAR DETERRENCE, DISARMAMENT AND POSITION REGARDING NATO'S NUCLEAR POLICY

As Bulgaria joined NATO in 2004, its participation in NATO's nuclear activities has been limited by the 1997 NATO–Russia Founding Act, in which the Alliance declared that it had “no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members.” The act does not exclude the potential participation of Bulgarian armed forces in non-nuclear supportive roles, although there is no indication of such

arrangements being envisaged or exercised. Bulgaria participates in the work of the Nuclear Planning Group and general discussions on NATO nuclear policy.¹

Bulgaria did not engage in public debate on NATO's nuclear policy preceding the adoption of the 2010 New Strategic Concept and on the 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review (DDPR). According to studies based on interviews with Bulgarian

¹Ł. Kulesa, “The New NATO Member States,” in: P. Foradori (ed.), *Tactical Nuclear Weapons and Euro-Atlantic Security*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2013, pp. 143–144.

and regional officials and experts conducted before the adoption of the 2012 DDPR, Bulgaria shared the general stance of other Central and Eastern European (CEE) NATO members, which opposed drastic changes to NATO's nuclear posture. CEE countries objected to the idea of the complete withdrawal of U.S. non-strategic nuclear weapons (NSNWs) from Europe or their unilateral reductions by NATO. Nonetheless, CEE countries have been reportedly willing to agree to potential consolidation of the NSNW arsenal or its partial reduction, provided that such cuts were reciprocated by Russia.²

According to these studies, CEE countries presented a number of arguments for the continued basing of U.S. NSNWs in Europe. The main ones included the role played by

U.S. NSNWs in maintaining the transatlantic link and the Alliance's cohesion, as well as their utility in deterring potential threats to NATO.³ Officials from individual countries have attached different levels of importance to these rationales. The specific views of Bulgaria in this matter remain unknown. However, Romania and Bulgaria were described as states that strongly emphasised the value the presence of NSNWs in non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, with reference to the hypothetical acquisition of nuclear arms by Iran and the subsequent reaction of Turkey.⁴

Bulgaria has not referred publicly to NATO's nuclear policy in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis, deteriorating relations between the Alliance and Russia, or the 2014 NATO summit in Wales.

NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT EFFORTS IN THE GLOBAL ARENA

The Bulgarian national statement at the 2010 NPT Review Conference called for multilateral efforts to strengthen all three pillars of NPT: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy.⁵

Bulgaria underlined the necessity to "build a momentum" for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and to "reverse" their proliferation.⁶

Bulgaria advocated especially strongly for strengthening of the IAEA verification regime,

² J. Durkalec, "NATO Defence and Deterrence Posture: Central and Eastern European Perspectives," *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 29, May 2012, pp. 1–3, 8–10, www.pism.pl.

³ CEE states did not directly point to specific countries to be deterred by the U.S. NSNWs, although they referred to the Russian NSNW arsenal. See: J. Durkalec, *op. cit.*, pp. 2–3.

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 2–3.

⁵ Bulgaria has not delivered any national statements at the meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

⁶ "Statement by H.E. Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons," New York, 3 May 2010, p. 1.

and stressed that, in the Bulgarian view, the Additional Protocol and comprehensive safeguard agreements together constitute a verification standard. Sofia also called for enhanced “enforcement measures of the non-proliferation regime,” including the endorsement of export controls, and full implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. The third Bulgarian priority was the reinforcement of NPT withdrawal provisions.⁷

The country also highlighted, among other issues, the need to secure global stocks of weapons-usable fissile material, and endorsed the U.S.-Russia New START Treaty, as well as the United States’ “commitment to seek ways to reduce the role of nuclear weapons while maintaining a safe and secure deterrent capability.”⁸

Bulgaria participated in the second and third conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, in Nayarit, Mexico, in February 2014, and in Vienna in December 2014. In a statement delivered at the Vienna conference, Bulgaria “shared the concern” in regard to the humanitarian consequences of the potential use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, and reiterated support for total elimination of such

arms. At the same time, Bulgaria stressed that discussions on nuclear disarmament should also take into the account the security considerations related to nuclear weapons. Moreover, the country emphasised that progress in total nuclear disarmament requires the participation of nuclear-armed states in the process.⁹

Therefore, Bulgaria has not supported calls for a legal instrument banning nuclear weapons on the grounds of international humanitarian law, endorsed by some countries participating in the Humanitarian Initiative, but opposed by the nuclear powers.¹⁰ Bulgaria has instead advocated for a “constructive and realistic approach,” based on “mutually reinforcing and simultaneous multilateral, bilateral or unilateral measures.” The country pointed to the need to “build a common ground for effective progress” through the NPT, and called for revitalisation of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the enlargement of its membership, entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and commencement of negotiations on the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices (the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty-FMCT).¹¹

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 2–6.

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 4–5.

⁹ D. Zakov, Head, Department for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Statement of Republic of Bulgaria at the Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of the Nuclear Weapons,” Vienna, 9 December 2010.

¹⁰ L. Kulesa, “The nuclear weapon ban is inevitable—too bad that it won’t bring disarmament,” European Leadership Network, 9 December 2014, www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org.

¹¹ D. Zakov, *op. cit.*

The FMCT is also Bulgaria's top priority within the Conference on Disarmament.¹² Bulgaria endorsed the draft programme of work submitted by the Hungarian presidency in January 2013, which envisaged that nuclear disarmament issues and the FMCT would be negotiated within one working group.¹³ According to that document, work on the FMCT would constitute the first step of nuclear disarmament negotiations, with "the ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons by progressive and systematic

efforts."¹⁴ Bulgaria was also one of eight sponsors of the 2011 working paper on the FMCT, according to which the treaty should establish increased transparency of military stockpiles of fissile materials, which should be declared and placed under safeguards. The proposed agreement could also include provisions for the elimination or conversion of such materials.¹⁵

Bulgaria participates in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).

NUCLEAR SECURITY

The 2014 NTI Nuclear Materials Security Index ranked Bulgaria as twentieth out of 151 countries without weapons-usable nuclear materials. Bulgaria ratified the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), along with the 2005 amendment, and signed the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, but has not ratified it as of April 2015. The country participates in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT).

Bulgaria currently operates two nuclear reactors at Kozloduy power plant. The country also plans to launch a new unit at Kozloduy in 2025.¹⁶ Bulgaria became free of highly enriched uranium (HEU) in July 2008, when the remaining spent HEU fuel was transferred to Russia. The removal of spent HEU fuel took place under the Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) run by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and in cooperation with Russia, the IAEA, Romania and Ukraine.

¹² "Conference on Disarmament Holds Focused Debate on Nuclear Disarmament," The United Nations Office at Geneva, 24 February 2015, www.unog.ch.

¹³ "Statement of Ambassador Ivan Piperkov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria to the UN Office and the other International Organisations at Geneva," Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 12 February 2015.

¹⁴ See: "Draft decision on a programme of work for the 2013 session, submitted by the President," Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 11 February 2013, CD/1948.

¹⁵ See: "Working Paper—Bulgaria, Germany, Mexico, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Turkey on FMCT," Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 9 June 2011, CD/1910.

¹⁶ See: "Nuclear Power in Bulgaria," World Nuclear Association, www.world-nuclear.org.

Earlier, in 2003, the United States, Russia and the IAEA also assisted Bulgaria in the removal of fresh HEU fuel.¹⁷

Since 2008, the U.S. DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has assisted Bulgaria within the "Second Line of Defence" programme, aimed at countering nuclear material smuggling.¹⁸

In July 2014, Bulgaria and the IAEA signed an agreement on "cooperation in

education and research in the field of nuclear security."¹⁹ Bulgarian experts have also taken part in IAEA international missions. Bulgaria has participated in nuclear-security related exercises, such as the 2011 joint Romanian–Bulgarian exercise involving the transport of spent nuclear fuel from the Bulgarian power plant, and the 2007 exercise co-organised with Romania and Georgia, which included a nuclear material smuggling scenario.²⁰

MISSILES

MISSILE DEFENCE

Bulgaria is not scheduled to host any BMD installations. The country neither possesses nor plans to acquire its own BMD assets.

Bulgaria has long supported plans to deploy a U.S. ballistic missile defence system in Europe. However, during discussions on plans announced in 2007 by the George W. Bush administration, Bulgaria emphasised that the missile shield should cover the territories of all NATO members, including Bulgaria and other Allies on NATO's

South-Eastern Flank, which would not be fully protected under Washington's original plan. Sofia also indicated its willingness to join the project, and stressed the need for cooperation and dialogue with Russia, which strongly opposed the U.S. initiative.²¹

Bulgaria was also willing to join the U.S. missile defence system after the new U.S. administration of Barack Obama shelved Bush-era plans in September 2009, and introduced a modified version of the system

¹⁷ "All Highly Enriched Uranium Removed from Bulgaria," National Nuclear Security Administration, 17 July 2008, <http://nnsa.energy.gov>.

¹⁸ "U.S., Bulgaria Partner to Prevent Nuclear Smuggling," National Nuclear Security Administration, 22 November 2010, <http://nnsa.energy.gov>.

¹⁹ "IAEA Director General Visits Bulgaria," International Atomic Energy Agency, 9 July 2014, www.iaea.org.

²⁰ "A Norway Grants Project with Romania," Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority, 26 September 2014, www.nrpa.no; "Black Sea Powers Begin WMD Exercise," *Global Security Newswire*, 25 September 2007, www.nti.org/gsn.

(the European Phased Adaptive Approach, or EPAA), the first phases of which focused on a threat posed to Southern Europe by short and medium range ballistic missiles launched from the Middle East.²² Additionally, Bulgaria supported the establishment of NATO's ballistic missile defence (BMD) capability at the 2010 NATO summit in Lisbon, with the EPAA as a part of the Allied system.²³

In June 2010, Bulgarian defence minister Anyu Angelov said that Bulgaria, along with the whole of Europe, including Russia, was threatened by Iran, which already possessed ballistic missiles capable of reaching Europe, as well as by Syria, which was reported to be developing such arms.²⁴

Although the U.S. and Bulgaria never held official negotiations on hosting EPAA elements on Bulgarian territory, both countries reportedly commenced informal talks on the subject as late as the first part of 2010.²⁵ In June 2011, Bulgarian deputy defence minister Avgustina Tsvetkova stated that Bulgaria could host elements of the missile defence system if Turkey refused to do so. However, in September 2011, Turkey agreed to host U.S. radar, and Bulgarian officials welcomed that decision.²⁶

During later discussions on the 2012 DDPR, Bulgaria, together with other CEE countries, supported further development of the BMD system, as well as the continuation of NATO–Russia dialogue on missile defence.²⁷

BALLISTIC AND CRUISE MISSILES

Bulgaria does not currently possess, produce or host ballistic missiles on its territory. Bulgaria became a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 2004, after the country destroyed its Soviet-

origin SS-23 and Scud-B ballistic missiles, as well as FROG rockets in 2002, with the U.S. financial assistance.²⁸ Bulgaria is also a subscribing state to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

²¹ "Parvanov to Bush: Bulgaria Backs Any Shield Not Aimed at Third Country," *Novinite.com*, 11 June 2007, www.novinite.com; "Bulgaria Set to Seek Its Place under US Missile Defense Shield," *Novinite.com*, 5 April 2008, www.novinite.com.

²² "PM after Obama Dinner: Bulgaria Should Be Active US Missile Shield Partner," *Novinite.com*, 9 April 2010, www.novinite.com.

²³ Bulgarian proposals included in NATO's Strategic Concept, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, 14 October 2010, www.mfa.bg.

²⁴ "Defense Minister: Iran, Syria Pose Missile Threats to Bulgaria," *Novinite.com*, 3 June 2010, www.novinite.com.

²⁵ "Bulgaria to Talk with U.S. about Missile Defense," *Global Security Newswire*, 16 February 2010, www.nti.org/gsn.

²⁶ "Bulgaria Claims to Be Happy Turkey Got U.S., NATO Missile Shield Radar," *Novinite.com*, 2 September 2011, www.novinite.com.

²⁷ J. Durkalec, *op. cit.*, pp. 7–8.

²⁸ M. Nartker, "Bulgaria Joins Missile Technology Control Regime," *Global Security Newswire*, 9 August 2004, www.nti.org/gsn; A. Wagner, "U.S., Bulgaria Reach Deal to Destroy Missiles," *Arms Control Association*, 1 July 2002, www.armscontrol.org.

The Bulgarian arsenal of cruise missiles consists solely of ship based anti-ship systems. Bulgaria possesses MM-38 Exocet missiles and Soviet-origin SS-N-2 Styx missiles in A, B and C variants.²⁹

CHEMICAL

Bulgaria does not possess or pursue chemical weapons. Bulgaria is a member of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Bulgaria is also a member of the Australia Group (AG).

In January 2014, Bulgaria decided to donate 200,000 BGN (around €100,000) to the OPCW Trust Fund for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons.³⁰

BIOLOGICAL

Bulgaria does not possess or pursue biological weapons. Bulgaria is a party to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC).

²⁹ "The Military Balance 2014," The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 2014, p. 81.

³⁰ "Bulgaria supports the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, 15 January 2014, www.mfa.bg.