

THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN
RESOURCE COLLECTION
ON NUCLEAR ISSUES

SLOVAKIA

UPDATED ON 28 APRIL 2015

Slovakia is a member of the EU and NATO and multiple international disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and initiatives. Slovakia takes active part in the NPT review process and work on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty verification regime, and cooperates on nuclear security matters. The country has not been a vocal participant in debates on NATO nuclear policy.

NUCLEAR

Slovakia does not possess, produce or host nuclear weapons on its territory.¹ Slovakia 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). Slovakia is chair of the IAEA's Board of Governors for the 2014–2015 term.² Slovakia 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

Since becoming a NATO member in 2004, Slovakia's involvement in NATO's nuclear activities has been confined by the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, in which the Alliance pledged 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 Slovak armed forces in non-nuclear supportive

roles, although there is no indication of such arrangements being envisaged or exercised. Nonetheless, Slovakia takes part in common planning as a member of the Nuclear Planning Group. Along with other NATO members, it has also been involved in discussions on the Alliance's declaratory policy.³

During the debate on the 2010 New Strategic Concept and on 2012 Deterrence

¹ However, Czechoslovakia reportedly hosted Soviet non-strategic nuclear missile forces and three related storage sites in the years 1968–1990. See: E.N. Rózsa, A. Péczeli, *Nuclear Attitudes in Central Europe*, Non-proliferation Paper No. 42, EU Non-proliferation Consortium, January 2015, p. 3.

² "Board of Governors," International Atomic Energy Agency, www.iaea.org.

³ Ł. Kulesa, "The New NATO Member States," in: P. Foradori (ed.), *Tactical Nuclear Weapons and Euro-Atlantic Security*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2013, pp. 143–44.

and Defence Posture Review (DDPR), Slovakia generally avoided public references to its position on NATO nuclear policy and seemed to have less interest in the issue than other Central and Eastern European (CEE) states, especially Poland.⁴

One exception was the April 2012 declaration of the Visegrad Group (encompassing Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary).⁵ The document advocated for NATO's continued reliance on "the balanced mix of conventional, nuclear and missile defence capabilities." It also indirectly alluded to a preference for sustained basing of U.S. Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons (NSNWs) in Europe, by describing "a continued and adequate presence of U.S. capabilities in Europe" as "an integral part" of NATO's posture. At the same time, the document endorsed the idea of the Alliance's increased role in arms control, by calling for reconfirmation of "NATO's readiness and willingness to engage Russia on the basis of reciprocity on all topics, including transparency of tactical nuclear weapons."⁶

In general, the Slovak stance appeared to be in line with the overall position of most CEE countries, which opposed drastic changes in NATO's nuclear posture, including the complete withdrawal of U.S. NSNWs based in Europe or their unilateral reduction. Nevertheless, CEE allies were reportedly willing to consider some adjustments, such as consolidation of the NSNW arsenal or its partial reduction, as long as such cuts were reciprocated by Russia.⁷

According to interviews with Slovak experts and officials, Slovakia belongs to a group of NATO members that perceives the utility of U.S. NSNWs' based in Europe less in terms of their deterrent value but rather, in the main, as a measure that strengthens the transatlantic link and NATO's cohesion through nuclear-sharing agreements.⁸ Notwithstanding this, other sources have suggested that Slovakia does not "treat the U.S. nuclear weapons as indispensable for maintaining the transatlantic link."⁹

In September 2012, Slovakia hosted a closed session of the annual NATO Nuclear Policy Symposium.¹⁰ The country has not referred openly to the Alliance's nuclear

⁴J. Durkalec, "The Future of NATO's Deterrence and Defence Posture: V4 Perspective," in: Ľ. Kulesa (ed.), *The Future of NATO's Deterrence and Defence Posture: Views from Central Europe*, PISM Report, December 2012, p. 11, www.pism.pl.

⁵*Ibidem*, p. 11.

⁶See: "Responsibility for a Strong NATO," Declaration of the Visegrad Group, 18 April 2012.

⁷J. 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.

⁸Ľ. Kulesa, "Polish and Central European Priorities on NATO's Future Nuclear Policy," *BASIC NATO Nuclear Policy Papers*, issue 2, 2010, p. 5.

⁹J. Durkalec, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

¹⁰E.M. Grossman, "Seeking Kremlin Engagement, NATO Weighs Next Nuclear Posture Steps," *Global Security Newswire*, 13 September 2012, www.nti.org/gsn.

deterrence and disarmament policies in relation to the Ukrainian crisis, growing tensions between NATO and Russia, and the 2014 NATO summit in Wales.

NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT EFFORTS IN THE GLOBAL ARENA

During the NPT review process, Slovakia has fully associated itself with statements delivered by the European Union.¹¹

In national statements, Slovakia has advocated for “work towards a framework of mutually reinforcing legally binding instruments, which would create conditions for achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons.”¹²

Slovakia was also one of 20 countries that submitted a working paper “Building blocks for a world without nuclear weapons” at the 2014 NPT Preparatory Committee. The paper has outlined a series of “practical,” multilateral, plurilateral, bilateral and unilateral disarmament measures, based on the 2010 NPT Action Plan. These measures include, inter alia, entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), creation of new nuclear weapons-

free zones, reductions of nuclear weapons of all categories, reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines, and dismantling or conversion of facilities producing fissile material for nuclear weapons.¹³

The paper on building blocks has also called for the promotion of “disarmament and non-proliferation education, including on the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.”¹⁴ Slovakia has taken part in all three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, in Oslo in March 2013, in Nayarit, Mexico, in February 2014, and in Vienna in December 2014. Slovakia has also emphasised the importance of the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament, stating that it “certainly underpins the Treaty and adds to reasons why we need to move the NPT process forward.”¹⁵

¹¹ “Statement by H.E. Mr. František Ružička, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations at the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster I: Nuclear Disarmament,” New York, 2 May 2014, p. 1.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 1.

¹³ “Building blocks for a world without nuclear weapons,” working paper submitted by Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine, Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 15 April 2014.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

¹⁵ “Statement by H.E. Mr. František Ružička...,” *op. cit.*, p. 2. Also quoted in: J. Nielsen, M. Hanson, *The European Union and the Humanitarian Initiative in the 2015 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Cycle*, Non-proliferation Paper No. 41, EU Non-proliferation Consortium, December 2014, p. 11.

Nonetheless, Slovakia 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.¹⁶ Slovakia has argued that such ban would not be effective without the participation of those states possessing nuclear weapons which have opposed such an idea.¹⁷ It has also pointed out the importance of security considerations related to disarmament. Both the Slovak national statements and the “Building blocks” paper endorsed the total elimination of nuclear weapons, but envisaged such a goal as a conclusive step in a longer process, which requires multilateral efforts to build an international environment based on common trust.¹⁸

Slovakia has called strongly for the immediate commencement of the negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices (Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty—FMCT). It is also a member of the Conference

on Disarmament (CD) and has stressed the need for revitalisation of work within that body.¹⁹

Slovakia has advocated for the entry into force of the CTBT, and has engaged in cooperation on the CTBT verification regime with the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO). In 2001, Slovakia hosted an “On-Site Inspection Field Exercise” to test aftershock equipment deployment, and has subsequently hosted other training events related to on-site inspections.²⁰ In October 2014, Slovakia and the CTBTO decided to strengthen cooperation in that matter.²¹

Slovakia has vocally supported the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, while stressing that any such arrangements should be realised in compliance with the highest standards of nuclear non-proliferation, safety, and security. In the Slovak view, the Additional Protocol, together with full-scope IAEA safeguards, comprise a verification standard, and should be universalised and reinforced.²²

¹⁶ Ľ. Kulesa, “The nuclear weapon ban is inevitable—too bad that it won’t bring disarmament,” European Leadership Network, 9 December 2014, www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org.

¹⁷ “Statement by H.E. Mr. František Ružička...,” *op. cit.*, p. 2; “US rejects proposed nuclear weapons ban,” *The Local*, 9 December 2014, www.thelocal.at.

¹⁸ “Delegation of Slovakia—Talking Points,” Conference on Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, Nayarit, 8–9 December 2014; “Delegation of Slovakia—Talking Points,” Conference on Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, Vienna, 8–9 December 2014; “Building blocks...,” *op. cit.*, pp. 1–3.

¹⁹ “Statement by H.E. Mr. František Ružička...,” *op. cit.*, pp. 1–2.

²⁰ “Country Profiles—Slovakia,” CTBTO Preparatory Commission, www.ctbto.org; “Slovakia and CTBTO to Strengthen Their Cooperation on Training Activities,” CTBTO Preparatory Commission, www.ctbto.org.

²¹ “CTBTO and Slovakia Agree to Strengthen Cooperation,” CTBTO Preparatory Commission, www.ctbto.org.

²² “Statement by H.E. Mr. František Ružička, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations at the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate,” New York, 30 April 2014, p. 2.

Slovakia participates in safeguard related cooperation with the IAEA through the Member State Support Programmes.

Slovakia participates in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).

NUCLEAR SECURITY

The 2014 NTI Nuclear Materials Security Index ranked Slovakia as sixth out of 151 countries without weapons-usable nuclear materials. Slovakia ratified the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), along with the 2005 amendment. Slovakia participates in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT).

Slovakia currently operates four nuclear reactors, two at Mochovce and two at Bohunice power plants. Two additional units at Mochovce are expected to begin operation in 2016–2017. There are also plans to launch a new reactor at Bohunice in the 2020s.²³

Slovakia has been engaged in nuclear security related cooperation with the IAEA and other international partners. Cooperation has covered areas such as international expert missions, exercises, audits and organisation of events. For example, Bratislava hosted the “National Workshop on Nuclear Security Culture” in February 2013, and the National Workshop on Security in Transport of Nuclear Material” in January 2015.”²⁴

Since 2006, Slovakia has cooperated with the U.S. Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) within the “Second Line of Defence” programme, aimed at countering nuclear material smuggling.²⁵

²³ “Nuclear Power in Slovakia,” World Nuclear Association, www.world-nuclear.org.

²⁴ “Statement of Honorable Ms. Marta Ziakova, Chairperson of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic at the International Conference on Nuclear Security,” Vienna, July 2013; “Meetings, conferences and symposia: Meetings on Nuclear Safety and Security,” International Atomic Energy Agency, www.ns-iaea.org.

²⁵ “United States and Slovak Republic Cooperate to Thwart Nuclear Smuggling,” National Nuclear Security Administration, 29 October 2007, <http://nnsa.energy.gov>.

MISSILES

MISSILE DEFENCE

Slovakia supports the establishment of a NATO ballistic missile defence (BMD) capability along with the U.S. European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) as a part of the Allied system.²⁶ Slovakia is not scheduled to host any BMD installations. Slovakia neither possesses nor plans to acquire its own BMD assets.

Slovakia was, however, at odds with some of its Allies during the earlier debate related to plans of the George W. Bush administration to deploy U.S. X-band long-range tracking radar in the Czech Republic, along with 10 ground based interceptors in Poland.²⁷ The initiative was vocally criticised by Robert Fico, who served as a prime minister in Slovak government from July 2006 to July 2010. The Slovak administration questioned the necessity for deployment of a European pillar of the system, which, according to the U.S. administration, would protect the United States and Europe from limited long-range ballistic attacks from the Middle East.²⁸ Furthermore, the Slovak prime

minister stressed that the establishment of the system would strain Slovakia's relations with Russia and even put Slovak security at risk, since Russia perceived the system proposed by Bush as a threat to the Russian strategic nuclear deterrent and threatened to target nuclear weapons against missile defence installations in Poland and the Czech Republic, countries directly bordering Slovakia. Consequently, Fico argued that, instead of bilateral U.S.–Polish and U.S.–Czech talks, missile defence should be discussed within the NATO framework and with the inclusion of Russia.²⁹

The Slovak stance changed partially in September 2009, after the newly-elected U.S. president, Barack Obama, shelved plans of the previous administration and introduced the EPAA. The EPAA scrapped the radar deployment in the Czech Republic, while initial stages of the programme envisaged the placement of shorter-range interceptors in southern Europe, instead of long-range

²⁶ J.E. Barnes, "Slovak Foreign Minister Chides Romney on Missile Defense," *The Wall Street Journal*, 26 July 2012, www.wsj.com.

²⁷ On G.W. Bush's missile defence system see: S.A. Hildreth, C. Ek, *Long-range Ballistic Missile Defence in Europe*, CRS Report, RL34051, 26 April 2010.

²⁸ "Poland to consult with Russia on U.S. missile shield," *The New York Times*, 1 February 2008, www.nytimes.com.

²⁹ S. Wagstyl, "Slovak leader wants talks on missile bases," *Financial Times*, 13 June 2007, www.ft.com.

missiles in Poland.³⁰ Fico welcomed the revamped plans, but also stated that he would never allow the deployment of missile defence installations on Slovak territory.³¹

In June 2010, Slovakia elected new centre-right government, which took a much more favourable stance towards missile defence. As the U.S. administration announced its intention to deploy some elements of the EPAA in Central and Eastern Europe, Slovakia supported the potential establishment of an early warning centre in the Czech Republic and hinted that it could also join the EPAA project.³²

After Fico took office for his second term in April 2012, the Slovak position towards the debate on the 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review (DDPR) report seemed

consistent with overall stance of other CEE states, which supported NATO-Russia cooperation and dialogue regarding missile defence, but also stressed that the Alliance should proceed with development of its own BMD system.³³

Along with other members of the Visegrad Group, Slovakia issued a declaration in April 2012, which described missile defence as “another core element of our collective defence that will contribute to the indivisible security of the Alliance.” The document also called for a declaration of the BMD’s interim operational capability during the NATO summit in Chicago in May 2012.³⁴ At the same time, Slovak officials underlined the need for talks with Russia on missile defence issues.³⁵

BALLISTIC AND CRUISE MISSILES

Slovakia does not currently possess, produce or host ballistic or cruise missiles on its territory.³⁶ Slovakia has not expressed

an intention to acquire such capabilities. Slovakia is a subscribing state to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile

³⁰ “White House Debuts Four-Phase Plan for European Missile Defense,” *Global Security Newswire*, 18 September 2009, www.nti.org/gsn.

³¹ “PM Fico says he will never agree to anti-missile shield in Slovakia,” *The Slovak Spectator*, 23 October 2009, spectator.sme.sk.

³² “The Evolution of Ballistic Missile Defense in Central Europe,” STRATFOR, 3 August 2010, stratfor.com; J. Boyd, “No problem with US anti-missile defence, says Dzurinda,” *The Daily Slovakia*, 30 July 2010, www.thedaily.sk; “Czech Republic Ready to Host U.S. Missile Warning Center,” *Defense News*, 30 July 2010, www.defensenews.com.

³³ J. Durkalec, *op. cit.*, pp. 7–8.

³⁴ “Responsibility for a Strong NATO,” *op. cit.*

³⁵ J.E. Barnes, *op. cit.*

³⁶ However, Czechoslovakia was in possession of numerous types of Soviet-made short and tactical-range ballistic missiles, including conventionally-armed SS-23 missiles that were supplied by the USSR in the mid-80s. Six SS-23s inherited by Slovakia were dismantled by 2000. Czechoslovakia also hosted Soviet units armed with nuclear-capable missiles, including SS-12 systems. All Soviet missiles were withdrawn and dismantled by May 1991. See: “Slovakia Completes Destruction of SS-23s,” Arms Control Association, 1 December 2000, www.armscontrol.org; “OTR-23 (SS-23),” *Missile Threat*, www.missilethreat.com; “Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces [INF] Chronology,” Federation of American Scientists, www.fas.org; A. Smale, “Soviet Missiles Leave Czechoslovakia, East Germany,” *Associated Press News Archive*, 26 February 1988, www.apnewsarchive.com.

Proliferation and has unilaterally pledged to Technology Control Regime.
comply with the Guidelines of the Missile

CHEMICAL

Slovakia does not possess or pursue Slovakia is also a member of the Australia
chemical weapons. Slovakia is a member Group (AG).
of the Organisation for the Prohibition of
Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and a party to In January 2013, Slovakia decided to
the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). donate €100,000 to the OPCW Trust Fund for
the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons.³⁷

BIOLOGICAL

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

³⁷ "Slovak Republic Contributes to Destruction of Syria's Chemical Weapons Arsenal," Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, 8 January 2014, www.mzv.sk.