

# **Nuclear Identity in Central Europe**

Erzsébet N. Rózsa and Anna Péczeli

August, 2013

## **Outline**

Executive Summary .....	2
Introduction .....	3
I. Nuclear Identity during the Cold War .....	4
1) The Warsaw Treaty Organization and the Question of Nuclear Weapons .....	5
2) Nuclear Energy .....	9
II. The Post-Cold War Period .....	11
1) NATO Accession .....	13
2) The Nuclear Policy of NATO .....	14
3) Continuity in Nuclear Energy Dependence .....	16
III. Non-Nuclear Pro-Activism .....	17
1) The Role of Central European countries in Nuclear Non-Proliferation .....	17
Conclusion: Continuity or Change in Non-Nuclear Pro-Activism? .....	19

## **Abbreviations**

CCD	Conference of the Committee on Disarmament
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DDPR	Deterrence and Defence Posture Review
ENCD	Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament
NNWS	Non-Nuclear Weapon State
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NPT AP	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Additional Protocol
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NWFZ	Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone
NWS	Nuclear Weapon State
TNCD	Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament
WTO	Warsaw Treaty Organization
ZAC	Zangger Committee

## **Executive Summary**

For more than 60 years, the nuclear identity of the four states of the Visegrad Group (V4) – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – was mostly influenced by the international security environment and the undertakings of the military alliances they belonged to. During the Second World War, Poland and Czechoslovakia fought on the side of the Allies, while Hungary was a member of the Axis powers. After the Axis powers' defeat, the 1947 Paris Peace Treaties obliged Hungary to renounce nuclear weapons.<sup>1</sup>

The Cold War, however, very soon redrew the frontlines in Europe and brought all Central European states under the same military alliance. As members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO), Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland were all covered by the Soviet nuclear umbrella. This, on the one hand, made it unnecessary to think of the nuclear option; and on the other hand, ruled out the possibility of engaging in nuclear developments. The dependence of the satellite states on the Soviet Union regarding conventional and nuclear energy helped to keep this situation unchallenged.

With the end of the Cold War, the changed international security environment erased nuclear weapons and nuclear threats from the public as well as the political thinking of these nations. The NATO membership, the debate on which did include nuclear elements, but which received considerable support in the public opinion polls, brought the countries (by then a separate Czech Republic and a Slovakian state) under the nuclear umbrella of a – considerably different – military alliance, thus non-necessity and constraint featured again.

Inactivity in the nuclear weapons field was matched with activity in nuclear non-proliferation and in the verification of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, where the foreign policy of satellite states could move relatively freely even under the Soviet system. Since these were fields of common interest between the nuclear weapon states (NWS), the Soviet Union supported an active role by its allies. This active role dates back to 1960 when Czechoslovakia and Poland became members of the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament (TNCD), succeeded by the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENCD). In 1968 all three nations signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and one year later Hungary also joined the Geneva based ENCD successor Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD). As a result, all these states have become increasingly involved in non-proliferation and verification. These activities reached their peak around and after the great political changes in Central and Eastern Europe. This coincided with the increase of the importance of non-proliferation in the Euro-Atlantic integrations, which the former members of the Eastern Block desperately wanted to be a member of. This desire to belong to the West could partly explain why pro-active Central European states have become so cautious on NATO-related

---

<sup>1</sup> 1947. évi XVIII. törvény a Párisban 1947. évi február hó 10. napján kelt békeszerződés becikkelyezése tárgyában (Paris Peace Treaty with Hungary 1947), <<http://www.1000ev.hu/index.php?a=3&param=8265>>

nuclear issues, the possibility of nuclear weapon deployments in their respective territories and the Central European nuclear-weapon-free-zone (NWFZ).

## **Introduction**

The basic determinant factor of the security situation in Central Europe is the diversity of the region: its peoples are mixed ethnically, linguistically, religiously and culturally to the extent that it is almost impossible to draw clear lines separating one group from the other, i.e. the chances of an ethnically homogenous nation-state are very weak. Among the different Slavic, German and Romanian groups Hungarians stand out as a group related to none of the others ethnically and linguistically. To add to this diversity, Central Europe historically was always on the route of migration from the east towards the west, therefore different Turkic peoples also left their impact. Religiously, this is the place where the dividing line between Roman Catholicism (and its Protestant branches) and Greek Orthodoxy runs. Jewish presence has also been considerable, while several Muslim groups are still prevailing on the neighbouring Balkans.

The geographical situation of Central Europe – on the periphery of the ‘developed’ Europe, the ‘West’ – has left a deep impact on the thinking of the peoples, who identify themselves as Europeans. European identity has been a prevailing question in the region, especially after 1989-1990, when Central Europeans wanted to manifest that they do not belong to the ‘East’, i.e. Russia (the Soviet Union) any more. In a way, the periphery position, being the defender of the ‘West’ for centuries, has strengthened this sense of belonging to Europe. That is why it is an emotional question for Central Europeans when the ‘West’ considers them as outsiders, being somewhere on the far Eastern periphery of Europe.

This historically developed diversity and the European identity were put an end to after the Second World War, when the whole region came under the unifying force of the Soviet Union. In the name of “socialist internationalism” former ideologies, religious beliefs, conflicts and tensions were artificially subdued. The changes of 1989-1990 proved that this was superficial, never affected the roots and was only of a temporary nature. When the unifying force withdrew from the region, the old-new threats of nationalism, ethnic conflicts and territorial claims reappeared. Nationalism, which was considered non-existent during the communist period, was one of the main driving forces of the Central European transformations. It served as a unifying factor in the societies against the political and military domination of the Soviet Union, but it was also a reaction to the internationalist ideology of the communist movements.<sup>2</sup> This way it was a very positive phenomenon.

---

<sup>2</sup> Pál Dunay, ‘Whence the threat to peace in Europe?’ in *Chaillot Paper 20*, ed. Ian Gambles, ‘*A Lasting Peace in Central Europe?*’ (Paris: Institute for Security Studies of WEU, October 1995) pp.40-60.

With the Soviet withdrawal, however, nationalism took on other dimensions. Soviet rule tore out Central Europe from the mainstream of European political and intellectual developments. Independence now meant, that – among others – nationalism continued where it was left off forty years ago. The states of the region had to redefine their identities, while in the process of transformation some states disintegrated and new states were formed, for some of which this was the first chance in history to build a nation-state. Their search of identity was all the more vehement.

## I. Nuclear Identity during the Cold War

In the Cold War, the Warsaw Treaty Organization provided a security framework for the whole region but other than the Soviet Union and its military leadership WTO members had very little say in the guidance of security-related matters. Soldiers from Central European states for example never had access to concrete operation plans,<sup>3</sup> they had predetermined tasks to fulfil, which did not always match the equipment and training of the given states' army. The primary role of the Central European military and defence industry "*was to contribute to the military might of the Warsaw Pact. They acted only in relation to, and as a component of, the Soviet military. Military economic decision-making, direction and co-ordination were all done by Moscow. The development of the defence industry was also carried out in line with the Soviet military doctrine to serve Soviet military and defence interests.*"<sup>4</sup>

The strongest element of the Soviet security system was the WTO's nuclear component. What exactly this security framework and the nuclear umbrella meant, however, was not always clear. The Cuban missile crisis showed that WTO members had reason at least to wonder if the Soviet Union would defend them or would withdraw in the face of a nuclear threat. It was not an alliance in the western sense, since it was a regime imposed on these nations they did not choose themselves and it behaved more like an empire, where foreign and security policies of the members were mostly directed from the centre.

While the WTO seemed to establish security among its members by stifling all the internal conflicts, it created new threats in which the member states were "innocent", non-active players. Membership in the WTO automatically implied being exposed to the other Cold War antagonist, the NATO, with having practically no say in WTO policies. But the

---

<sup>3</sup> Colonel Tibor Kőszegvári in 'A magyar harci feladat a VSZ-ben. Merre kalandoztunk volna?' (The Hungarian fighting task in the WTO: In which direction should we have gone?) in *HVG*, July 12th, 1997, pp.70-73.

<sup>4</sup> Réka Szemerényi, 'Civilianisation of Armaments Industries for Social Development: Economic, Political and Technical Dimensions. The Central European Case.' A paper read at the FRIENDS International Seminar on Nuclear Disarmament and Conventional Arms Control Including Light Weapons, October 28-30, 1996, Islamabad, Pakistan, p.2.

biggest threat to the members proved to be the alliance leader Soviet Union itself. Apart from the imposed domination, the Soviet Union was involved in all international military conflicts affecting the region between 1953 and 1968 (e.g. the Hungarian revolution in 1956 or the Prague Spring in 1968),<sup>5</sup> even though no nuclear weapons were used or threatened to be used in these conflicts.

### *1) The Warsaw Treaty Organization and the Question of Nuclear Weapons*

Before 1989 there was no debate at all on nuclear issues, which, together with other foreign and security policy issues, was directed by Moscow. Being non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS) of the NPT and members of the WTO, excluded the nuclear weapon option entirely for the Central European states. The Soviet Union, however, reserved the right to deploy its own nuclear weapons on their respective territories, in order to protect its strategic interests in case of a nuclear war in Europe.

The deployment of the Soviet nuclear weapons in Central Europe happened under considerably different circumstances than in the case of NATO. While US nuclear weapon deployments were codified in bilateral nuclear sharing agreements with the hosting states, Moscow did not ask for the permission of its allies and tried to limit their knowledge on the exact parameters of the deployment as much as possible. In the Eastern Block, the nuclear issues of a military nature were not even debated until the end of the Cold War. Open discussions in the public and in the media – mostly limited to factual revealings – only started after the withdrawal of the nuclear weapons was completed and the Soviet Union was disintegrated.

The first official recognition of these deployments happened in late October, 1990 when General Mikhail Moiseyev, Chief of Staff of the Soviet Army made a statement in Brussels, that the Soviet Union had withdrawn all nuclear weapons deployed in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.<sup>6</sup> This statement was later confirmed by the Speaker of the Soviet Ministry of Defence who admitted that in the framework of the Warsaw Pact – even if in insignificant quantities – the Soviet Union stored nuclear weapons in Central Europe.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union altogether 3,000 Soviet nuclear weapons were withdrawn from Central Europe – 2,100 warheads for ground forces and 900 for the air force, among them SS-21, Scud and SS-23 missile warheads; nuclear artillery; and nuclear bombs. Moscow started the deployment of these weapons in the late 1960s. The majority of

---

<sup>5</sup> Pál Dunay, 'Whence the threat to peace in Europe?' p.46. – footnote 2

<sup>6</sup> 'Moiszejev bejelentése Brüsszelben: Magyarországon nincsenek többé atomfegyverek' (Moiseyev's announcement in Brussels: There are no nuclear weapons in Hungary anymore), in *Magyar Nemzet*, October 27th, 1990, p.5.

Soviet nuclear weapons were stationed in East Germany (16 sites) but there were nuclear weapons in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, as well.<sup>7</sup> Nuclear weapon deployments started with Germany, most probably Czechoslovakia or Poland was the next, and Hungary the last Central European country to receive Soviet nuclear weapons. Although several documents have been revealed since the 1960s, there is still a kind of secrecy around the Central European deployments and only a very limited number of sources provide – sometimes contradictory – data on the exact details of stationing.

After East Germany, probably Czechoslovakia was the next Central European state to host Soviet nuclear weapons. Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union only concluded a treaty in August 1961 and February 1962 which entitled the Soviet Union to dispatch nuclear weapons to the country's territory in case of an emergency. After the Cuban missile crisis, these treaties were replaced by a much broader arrangement, "*Treaty Between the Governments of the USSR and CSSR on Measures to Increase the Combat Readiness of Missile Forces*". It was signed by Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Rodion Malinovsky and his Czechoslovak counterpart, Army-General Bohumir Lomsky, in December 1965.<sup>8</sup> This treaty served as the legal framework for the Soviet Union to station nuclear tipped missiles in the territory of Czechoslovakia and set the ground to construct three nuclear storage facilities for Soviet nuclear warheads. The stationing of Soviet nuclear weapons allegedly started in 1968 as "*brotherly assistance to help keep the communist hardliners in power*".<sup>9</sup> The stationing, however, was kept as secret as possible, and only after the Cold War did it receive confirmation from Eduard Vorobyov, the last commander of the Soviet forces in Czechoslovakia. In 2008, the last Czechoslovak communist Chief of General Staff and the first democratic Defence Minister, General Miroslav Vacek also admitted that Czechoslovakia hosted Soviet nuclear weapons during the Cold War.<sup>10</sup> These nuclear weapons were supposedly removed from the country in May 1990, followed by the East German withdrawals in August 1991 – the latest ones in the region.<sup>11</sup>

According to documents, released by Dziennik<sup>12</sup> and Gazeta Wyborcza, Soviet nuclear weapon deployments in Poland started in 1970. These sources suggest that altogether three sites in Northwest Poland hosted Soviet nuclear weapons and they were planned to be used by

---

<sup>7</sup> 'Nuclear Notebook – Where the Weapons Are', in *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, November 1991, p.49.

<sup>8</sup> Petr Luřák, 'New Evidence in Cold War Military History – Planning for Nuclear War: The Czechoslovak War Plan of 1964' in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Fall/Winter 2001, Issue 12/13, p.297.

<sup>9</sup> Jan Richter and Olga Kalinina, 'Soviet nuclear arsenal in Czechoslovakia' in *Radio Praha*, 2008 <<http://www.radio.cz/en/section/talking/soviet-nuclear-arsenal-in-czechoslovakia>>

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> 'Nuclear Notebook – Where the Weapons Are', p.49. – footnote 7

<sup>12</sup> 'Polska miała arsenał broni nuklearnej' (Poland had a nuclear arsenal), in *Dziennik*, October 12, 2007, <<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/polityka/artykuly/198972,polska-miala-arsenal-broni-nuklearnej.html>>

the Polish Army during a conflict with NATO. By the mid 1980s the deployed arsenal counted 178 nuclear warheads – free-fall bombs as well as ballistic missiles, tipped with tactical nuclear warheads, pointed at Western European targets. The weapons were kept under the custody of Soviet troops. The Polish newspapers also claim that during the 1960s the Soviet Union was seriously considering the option of invading Western Europe, in case of which Poland would have been a primary site of nuclear confrontation. Nuclear weapons were finally withdrawn from Poland by early 1990.<sup>13</sup>

In terms of uncertainties, the Hungarian case was no different than the others. Budapest signed a military agreement with Moscow on May 27, 1957 controlling the legal conditions of the Soviet troops stationed in Hungary. Rtd General János Sebők claimed that “if this agreement included the provision of the operation conditions of the missile units, no separate permit was necessary to bring in nuclear warheads.”<sup>14</sup> According to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, the first Soviet nuclear weapons arrived in Hungary around 1974, which corresponds to the claims of General Sebők, Commander of the Hungarian Missile Unit who argued that the presence of Soviet nuclear weapons could not possibly have been a secret, since the unit participated in the April 4th parade in 1975 with the nuclear warhead capable missiles.<sup>15</sup> He also added that Hungary had always been an operational area for the Soviets and that where there were missiles and missile launchers, there were nuclear warheads, as well.<sup>16</sup> There were several allegations as to the location of the storage site, but finally most sources agreed that it must have been somewhere around Tótvázsony and Kabhegy in the Bakony hills north from Lake Balaton.

Among the Central European countries, the Hungarian government was the first to request that Soviet nuclear weapons should be withdrawn from its territory. In his interview with Népszabadság<sup>17</sup> Károly Grósz (the First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party from 1988), claimed that he first asked the withdrawal of the nuclear weapons from

---

<sup>13</sup> ‘Nuclear Notebook – Where the Weapons Are’, p.49. – footnote 7

<sup>14</sup> ‘Nagyvázsonynál bújtatták az atomot?’ (They were hiding the atom at Nagyvázsony?), in *Népszava*, April 23rd, 1991

<sup>15</sup> ‘Atomrakéták Magyarországon’ (Nuclear missiles in Hungary), in *Köztársaság*, April 22nd, 1991 and ‘Szupertitkok’ (Supersecrets) in *Reggeli Kurír*, May 3rd, 1991, p.7.

Although it is important to note that Rtd General Béla Király, later Member of Parliament put the date much earlier and said that he had received the information from international sources that the Soviet Union deployed medium range nuclear missiles in Hungary already in the mid 1950s. He argued that this was one of the main arguments by the Soviet military leadership in 1956 against the military withdrawal from Hungary.

‘Észak-olaszországi célpontokra irányítva az ötvenes évek óta lehettek Magyarországon nukleáris rakéták’ (There could have been nuclear missiles targeted on Northern Italian cities in Hungary since the 50’s) in *Magyar Nemzet*, April 25th, 1991

<sup>16</sup> ‘Nagyvázsonynál bújtatták az atomot?’ (They were hiding the atom at Nagyvázsony?) – footnote 14

<sup>17</sup> ‘Volt szovjet atomfegyver Magyarországon’ (There were Soviet nuclear weapons in Hungary), in *Népszabadság*, April 22nd, 1991

Hungary when he met Gorbachev in Moscow early July 1988. Gorbachev agreed and “*much later I was informed that this had been performed.*” General Sebök put the withdrawal on June 27th, 1990, i.e. the time of the departure of the Soviet missile units.<sup>18</sup> Another source put the date a little bit earlier, on June 19th, 1990, when Lieutenant-General Shilov, the last Commander of the Southern Army Unit left Hungary, together with rows of well-covered trucks.<sup>19</sup>

Besides the development and deployment of nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union enjoyed a privileged position in handling nuclear weapons-related foreign policy issues, as well – from which satellite states were mostly shut out. The Cuban missile crisis, “the hottest moment of the Cold War” was a good example of how a foreign policy issue with a nuclear dimension was handled in a Soviet way.

The most striking feature of the Cuban crisis was that not only the public, but also the political elites in all Central and Eastern European countries were ignorant of the happenings. It was even more striking that sometimes the most involved Soviet officials were left ignorant, too.<sup>20</sup> This necessarily meant that the socialist states were not prepared. Only the highest circles of the political leadership understood that something was gravely wrong, no one realized that “*we were in the last seconds before pushing the button.*”<sup>21</sup> In the relevant units of the military, upon command from the Warsaw Pact Joint Armed Forces Headquarters, the advanced ready for combat state was only gradually introduced, starting with October 22nd.

The imminent danger of the nuclear war was very slowly realized by the political leadership and the lack of information was well reflected in the press, as well. Up to October 23rd, 1962, the evolving Cuban missile crisis was just another piece of news deserving one article on the middle pages of the leading dailies. From the 24th on, the full 1st and 2nd pages, with most of the 4th and the 5th were devoted to the crisis, usually emphasizing the efforts of the Soviet Union to defend Cuba from an aggressor – it was widely discussed and

---

<sup>18</sup> ‘Szupertitkok’ (Supersecrets) – footnote 15

<sup>19</sup> ‘Atomrakéták Magyarországon’ (Nuclear missiles in Hungary) – footnote 15

<sup>20</sup> The fact that even the most deeply involved people were not informed on the most important events, was so general and characteristic. When the Soviets decided to withdraw the missiles they forgot to inform Fidel Castro, who later recalled: “*There was no consultation, no notification. When the news arrived, we realized that Cuba was, in the end, only a bargaining chip.*” in ‘Four Days with Fidel: A Havana Diary’ by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. in *The New York Review*, March 26th, 1992, p.25.

The Hungarian chargé d'affaires accredited in Washington, János Radványi asked Anatoliy Dobrynin, the Soviet ambassador to the United States on October 23rd, and again on the 26th, “*if the Soviet Union was heading toward a major confrontation with the US, and would the Soviet ships turn back or run the blockade? Dobrynin replied once again that he still had no information.*” in János Radványi: *Hungary and the Superpowers. The 1956 Revolution and Realpolitik*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1972, pp. 131-132.

<sup>21</sup> József Szepesi: ‘Kubai válság magyar módra’ (Cuban crisis in a Hungarian way) in *Top Gun*, 1991/11, pp.27-29.



explained why the blockade was equal to an aggression –, and to secure peace. Another substantial part was made up by articles from all over the world showing how peace-loving peoples of the world were standing beside the Soviet Union. Yet, the full implications of the situation, the possibility of getting involuntarily involved in a full-scale nuclear war were rarely mentioned.<sup>22</sup> By October 31st the crisis was over, so was the media attention in most satellite states. The Cuban missile crisis went back to the middle pages and gave only the deductive lesson: “*The world could see who was threatening and who was defending world peace*”.<sup>23</sup>

For the shocked and panic-stricken Central and Eastern European leaderships – who were informed on the full story only at the dinner on October 30th in Washington given by Anastas Mikoyan, first Soviet trouble-shooter for the Communist ambassadors – “*the fear of becoming involved in a worldwide nuclear confrontation automatically and involuntarily did not subside completely. On the contrary, it became the prime concern of Eastern European communist leaders.*”<sup>24</sup> In the political elites the question “*would they have defended us if we were in such a situation?*” was high on the agenda. “*They began to ask the Soviet Union for more guarantees of security against nuclear attack and for a greater voice in the planning of the Warsaw Pact nuclear strategy. Following the crisis, the Soviet Union and its allies endeavoured to coordinate their policies more closely and to synchronise their propaganda.*”<sup>25</sup>

## 2) Nuclear Energy

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union did not only monopolize nuclear weapons-related issues but it also established a one-sided dependency with most of its satellite states in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Moscow actively participated in the construction of nuclear reactors and provided nuclear fuel, as well. As a result of this, all of the Central European states introduced designs, based on Soviet reactor technology.

In 1956 Moscow offered each member state of the so-called peace camp a nuclear reactor and a fastener. Hungary accepted the reactor only, which was built in 1957-1958 at the Central Research Institute of Physics (KFKI).<sup>26</sup> The only Hungarian nuclear power plant situated at Paks – some 100 km from Budapest – was also supplied by the Soviets. The Paks

---

<sup>22</sup> “*We could feel through the family that the public of the country has not even the faintest idea about the huge danger that was threatening us.*” in József Szepesi: ‘Kubai válság magyar módra’ – footnote 21

<sup>23</sup> Hungarian daily newspaper – *Népszabadság*, October 31st, 1962, p.4.

<sup>24</sup> János Radványi, ‘*Hungary and the Superpowers. The 1956 Revolution and Realpolitik*’, p.140. – footnote 20

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> This research reactor underwent a thorough reconstruction at the end of the 1980s and is still in operation.

Nuclear Power Plant provides 43% of Hungary's total domestic electric power production. It has four pressurized water reactors (PWR) of the Soviet VVER-213/440 type, which were connected to the grid in 1982, 1984, 1986 and 1987, respectively. The original electric power of each unit was 440 MW, later upgraded to 500. Besides these two Soviet designs, Hungary also built a 100 kW training reactor at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics in the mid 1970s.<sup>27</sup>

Czechoslovakia started building its first nuclear power plant in 1958, which was a gas-cooled heavy water reactor at Bohunice (which is Slovakia today) – it was completed in 1972 and it ran until 1977. In 1972, the construction of two VVER-230/440 reactors was started at the same site – the reactors were connected to the grid in 1978 and 1980. In 1976, the site was further expanded with two VVER-213/440 reactors, concluded by the mid 1980s. On a second site, in Dukovany (which is the Czech Republic today), construction of a new nuclear power plant started in 1978. The four VVER-213/440 reactors were designed by the Soviet Union and started operating between 1985 and 1987. A third site in Temelin (also Czech territory today) was established in 1982 and the construction of the next nuclear power plant started in 1987. The Czechoslovakian government originally planned to build four VVER-320/1000 units at Temelin but after the regime change, the building of the third and the fourth reactors was suspended. When Czechoslovakia split in 1993, the new Czech government decided to finish the construction of the first two units at Temelin and in 2008 it announced the building of two additional reactors at the site, starting from 2013. The Czech Republic currently has six operating reactors, four at Dukovany and two at Temelin, producing 32% of the country's domestic electric power.<sup>28</sup>

After 1993, the Slovakian government was left with two reactors at Bohunice (of the original four reactors, two were shut down between 2006 and 2008), in addition to which came another two VVER-213/440 reactors at the Mochovce site in 1998 and 1999. The construction of units 3 and 4 at the same site was announced in 2007 and expected to be operational by 2013. The currently operational four units in Slovakia provide altogether 55% of the domestic electric power in the country.<sup>29</sup>

As Poland has the largest reserves of coal in the European Union, it has traditionally been a net electricity exporter, mostly towards the Czech Republic and Slovakia. But as a

---

<sup>27</sup> 'Budapest Research reactor' <<http://www.kfki.hu/br/indexen.htm>>

'Paks Nuclear Power Plant webpage' <<http://paksnuclearpowerplant.com/>>

'Training Reactor of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics' <[http://www.iki.kfki.hu/radsec/irradfac/pub/Training\\_Reactor.pdf](http://www.iki.kfki.hu/radsec/irradfac/pub/Training_Reactor.pdf)>

<sup>28</sup> World Nuclear Association, 'Nuclear Power in Czech Republic', July 31, 2013, <<http://world-nuclear.org/info/Country-Profiles/Countries-A-F/Czech-Republic/#.Uh5TVdLv8E>>

<sup>29</sup> World Nuclear Association, 'Nuclear Power in Slovakia', July 31, 2013, <[http://world-nuclear.org/info/Country-Profiles/Countries-O-S/Slovakia/#.Uh4\\_CtLv8E](http://world-nuclear.org/info/Country-Profiles/Countries-O-S/Slovakia/#.Uh4_CtLv8E)>

result of the growth of domestic consumption and the environmental standards of the EU, it has decided in 2005 that the country would also introduce nuclear energy in its energy mix, having the first operational power plant by 2020.

During the Cold War, the Eastern Block's nuclear industry was characterized by a relatively low consciousness with regard to environmental issues, and "carelessness" implied in all fields of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Chernobyl disaster was a sad example of this phenomenon on April 26, 1986. Only a couple of days later, all over the Socialist Bloc people were celebrating May 1st in the open air, especially that it was a nice sunny day. Since for most of the people the celebration was not so much a demonstration any more, but rather open air picnics reaching back to the old traditions, there was no reason to stay inside. After the disaster was officially confirmed, part of the hysteria was naturally connected to the food, especially to the fresh vegetables, which were coming into season. Another factor was the reaction of pregnant women: many asked for the permission to have an abortion in the fear of having a disabled child. The socialist way of handling the catastrophe – for several days no information, then hesitant acknowledgement and soothing explanations – was not very convincing either. In spite of that, the Chernobyl catastrophe did not generate a major dislike in the Eastern Block towards nuclear energy.

In general, other issues like the deposition of nuclear wastes or the privatization of the energy sector after the regime changes, if it was not coupled with the raise of the price of electrical energy, did not get much public attention in any of the Central European states.

## II. The Post-Cold War Period

In spite of the ambiguities of the Soviet system, upon the dissolution of the WTO many were concerned about their national security and spoke of a "security vacuum". In the new situation, the countries of the region – after decades of dictate – had to find a way to provide for their own security, which, with the instabilities in the Soviet Union, the aborted coup and the civil war in Yugoslavia, was very urgent. They could choose of two options: to join the western security and defence institutions or to nationalize defence. Joining the western integrations was, however, not a one-sided choice. The situation resembled the 'Catch 22': *"the more instability there was in and around a country, and hence the greater its need to integrate in security institutions and seek security guarantees, the less likely it is that its quest for integration will be successful."*<sup>30</sup>

Despite the growing instability in some neighbouring countries, political, economic and security considerations all suggested that only the first option was viable for Central Europeans and they had to pursue Western integration no matter how difficult it seemed. The

---

<sup>30</sup> Pál Dunay, 'Whence the threat to peace in Europe?' p.44. – footnote 2

Hungarian case was actually true for all other states in the region. “A *small country as regards both its economic and military potential, Hungary, left to its own devices, has never been and never will be able to guarantee its security by military means. The country has recognized that a security conception relying on an individual country’s own military strength to respond to threats from outside will lead to inversion and a false sense of security: to pursue this policy is to enter a blind alley, regardless of whether it is practised by one country or a group of countries.*”<sup>31</sup>

In light of all this, states of the region without exception chose the first option and turned towards Western integrations – a choice further strengthened by their old desire to belong to the West. In the early 1990s they started to increase their activities in pursuing security guarantees within international organizations and they got increasingly involved in the activities of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, the WEU and NATO's Partnership for Peace, parallel to which, they also began showing more understanding for similar efforts by their regional partners. With NATO accession becoming a possibility, the option of making up a national security system was mostly limited to debates over the comparison of the costs of the NATO accession. In July 1997 at the Madrid summit of NATO, three Central European states – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland – were invited to negotiate membership in NATO, but the door was claimed left open for others who desired to join, as well.

However, both the Central Europeans themselves and these cooperations failed to draw up a specific security program or framework for the management of intra-regional conflicts, especially those that were the most peculiar in Central Europe, i.e. the re-emerging ethnic conflicts and territorial claims which were only artificially subdued by the Soviet system. The aim of the Stability Plan, first proposed by French Foreign Minister E. Balladur tried to remedy exactly that. The basic principle of the Pact was that the Central European states should conclude a series of bilateral or regional treaties among themselves on good neighbourly relations, settling once and for all the questions related to borders and minorities. The Hungarian-Slovakian and the Hungarian-Romanian bilateral treaties fitted into this framework. The Stability Pact, inactive by now, provided neither enforcement nor monitoring measures to guarantee the observance of minority rights, but the greatest doubts as to its usefulness were directly about its existence: “*it is doubtful whether it made any sense to focus the Pact on the nine countries of Central Europe. Regulating these issues in Central Europe by treaty cannot further eliminate a military risk that did not exist in the first place.*”<sup>32</sup> In reality, Central European security, although affected, but was not threatened by any of these conflicts or tensions.

---

<sup>31</sup> Pál Dunay, ‘Hungary: defining the boundaries of security’ in Regina Cowen Karp (ed.), ‘*Central and Eastern Europe: The Challenge of Transition*’, SPIRI, Oxford University Press, 1993, p.125.

<sup>32</sup> Pál Dunay, ‘Whence the threat to peace in Europe?’ p.57. – footnote 2

As regards nuclear threats, the region has never witnessed a direct confrontation between the WTO and NATO in its territory – it has never been directly threatened by nuclear weapons and with the end of the Cold War, the threat of a nuclear war between the superpowers also disappeared entirely. In this sense, the security environment has not changed much – in the last two decades the states of Central Europe still have not seen a real nuclear threat from any directions, not even from Russia, which in response to NATO enlargement, threatened to deploy nuclear weapons on its western borders.

### 1) NATO Accession

The possibility of Central Europeans joining NATO was first mentioned on October 5th, 1991 when the foreign ministers of the Visegrad Group met in Krakow and declared that “... *the present formula of the ‘diplomatic relations’ needs to be widened considerably in order to create conditions for direct involvement of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Republic of Hungary and the Republic of Poland in the activities of NATO.*”<sup>33</sup>

After 1991, with Russian troops withdrawn and the dissolution of the WTO completed, the states of the region could finally openly claim their intention of becoming full members of NATO. The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia all joined the Partnership for Peace program in 1994, but most leaderships already at that time were very critical as to its extent and declared that this kind of co-operation – although most welcome – would not satisfy them and that the final aim was full membership. This desire was also strengthened by public opinion – in the 1999 round of NATO enlargement, Hungary was the only country to organize an official national referendum on the NATO accession, which received an 85% public support,<sup>34</sup> but similar results were shown by Polish public opinion polls,<sup>35</sup> as well.

Joining NATO did also improve public opinion about the military. The developments within the army, the re-arrangement of the armed forces raised a lot of sympathy.<sup>36</sup> The change of the Cold War general staff and the new cadre of military leaders, who frequently appear in public, give a good impression. With the NATO accession, the military has unavoidably come more to the limelight. While there are positive developments in the

---

<sup>33</sup> Annex II Statement Made at Cracow on 5 October 1991 by the Three Ministers of Foreign Affairs Concerning Cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, A/C.1/46/7, p.7.

<sup>34</sup> ‘Hungarian referendum on NATO accession’, November 16, 2007, <[http://www.valasztas.hu/hu/onkval2010/52/52\\_0.html](http://www.valasztas.hu/hu/onkval2010/52/52_0.html)>

<sup>35</sup> NATO, ‘Polish public opinion 1989-99 and NATO’, <<http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/99-01/mlyniec.pdf>>

<sup>36</sup> E.g. such stories when a military officer has to give up his flat and move to another part of the country, because his unit is moved there permanently. In countries, where people are not too mobile, because flats are privately owned and there are huge differences between certain parts of the country in prices, and where the wives are usually working, but it is not sure at all that at the other place they could get a job, etc., such a move causes huge social problems.

public's view of the army, there is still a crucial point: the finances. At the moment, none of the Central European countries meet the 2% NATO requirement for defence spending – in 2012 the Czech Republic spent around 1.2% of its GDP on military, Hungary 0.9%, Poland 1.95% and Slovakia 1.1%.<sup>37</sup>

## 2) *The Nuclear Policy of NATO*

Probably the biggest change in terms of nuclear issues which the Central European states had to get accustomed to was the considerably different guidance of defence policy under NATO as compared to the WTO. The nuclear component of NATO is the most important asset in the Organization's military capabilities. It is based on the concept of nuclear sharing and guarantees the security of the allies through the positive security assurance of Article 5, while it also serves as a deterrent against potential opponents of NATO. The Organization's most recent Strategic Concept declares that "*the supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States; the independent strategic nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France, which have a deterrent role of their own, contribute to the overall deterrence and security of the Allies.*"<sup>38</sup> It basically means that member states are under a nuclear umbrella which provides the same assurances for everybody through the nuclear arsenal of the US (and probably the UK and France, as well). In addition, all NATO members are equally involved in nuclear decision making and strategic planning. For this purpose, NATO established the Nuclear Planning Group in 1966 which serves as a forum for defence ministers to review NATO's nuclear policy and decide over nuclear-related matters. As NATO requires consensus in policy decisions, it guarantees an equal say to all member states – which is again a huge difference compared to the Soviet times. NATO regularly reviews the guidelines of its defence policy in its Strategic Concepts and it also issues a more specific Deterrence and Defence Posture Review (DDPR) document.

When the Central European states joined the Organization, the first nuclear-related question, which emerged in the minds of people, was the possibility of the forward deployment of US tactical nuclear weapons in the territory of new NATO member states. Moscow tried everything in its power to prevent such a deployment, and formulated extremely harsh threats against it. The option of a Central European deployment, however, did not receive much consideration in NATO circles. The Clinton administration continued the disarmament process of both the strategic and the non-strategic US nuclear arsenals and it was not interested in upsetting Moscow at all in foreign policy issues. Moreover, in 1997 the

---

<sup>37</sup> NATO, 'Secretary General's Annual Report 2012', January 31, 2013, <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_94220.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_94220.htm)>

<sup>38</sup> NATO, 'Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of The Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation', 2010, <<http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf>>

Alliance and Moscow already concluded the NATO-Russia Charter on the non-deployment of nuclear weapons to new NATO member countries. Despite this agreement, when Central European states joined NATO – although not willing to host US nuclear weapons on their territory – they failed to explicitly reject this option.<sup>39</sup>

Besides their greater influence on nuclear strategy, the other interesting realization for Central Europeans was connected to their relatively similar priorities in most security-related matters. While the 2010 Strategic Concept and the 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review were drafted, states of the region were mainly of the same opinion, with only minor disagreements, stemming from somewhat different threat perceptions and national interests.

Central European states seemed to share the fear that the DDPR process, mandated by the 2010 Lisbon Summit of NATO, might trigger undesired changes in NATO's military capabilities, the elements of which they consider essential without any exception. They were all cautious about dramatic changes in the deterrence mix and preferred maintaining the status quo. While Central European deployment of US tactical nuclear weapons would probably not have been supported by either Washington or the new members, they still insisted that US tactical nuclear weapons, already deployed in Germany, Italy, Turkey, the Netherlands and Belgium should not be withdrawn because it would hurt their security interests. As neither of them could name any specific opponent to be deterred by NATO's nuclear capabilities, US tactical nuclear weapons were primarily considered as a guarantor of the transatlantic link and a political tool to realize reciprocal reductions in the Russian tactical nuclear arsenal. Regarding negative security assurances, Central Europeans did not really get involved in the debate but they seemed to support the traditional viewpoint of France that NATO should not limit its nuclear policy by any unilateral declarations. In the field of conventional forces, they all asked for "visible assurances", while they seemed to be pleased with the current NATO/US presence in their countries. Ballistic missile defence was perceived as an important guarantor of permanent US presence in Europe, this however should not substitute any other component of the deterrence mix.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the consensus on all major fields, some minor differences still came to light during the review process. Among the four Central European states, Poland seemed to be the most open to changes. First, it was not entirely against the idea of implementing a negative security assurance in NATO's declaratory policy. Second, Poland was an active proponent of the gradual disarmament of US tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, provided that Russia takes reciprocal steps.<sup>41</sup> The most probable explanation of the latter is the Polish threat perception

---

<sup>39</sup> 'Hungary' in Harald Müller (ed.), *European Non-Proliferation Policy 1993–1995*, European Interuniversity Press, Brussels, 1996. pp.296–297.

<sup>40</sup> Jacek Durkalec, 'NATO Defence and Deterrence Posture: Central and Eastern European Perspectives' in *PISM Policy Paper*, May 2012, No.29.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

towards Russia. All the Central European states seem to agree that Russia is no longer an imminent threat, and political and economic cooperation is in their best interest (especially provided their energy dependency on Russia). Poland, on the other hand, is seriously concerned about the Russian threats to deploy Iskander missiles in the Kaliningrad Oblast in response to the deployment of NATO's ballistic missile defence system. On top of it, Russian suspension of the implementation of the CFE Treaty, its aggression in Georgia and the total lack of transparency further strengthen these fears. Besides Poland, the Czech Republic is the second country which seems to be more sensitive about Russian threats, while Hungary and Slovakia (probably due to their distance from Russia) did not have any major disagreements with Moscow on issues of a military nature over the last couple of years.<sup>42</sup>

## 2) *Continuity in Nuclear Energy Dependence*

As mentioned before, member states of the Eastern Block have become dependent on the Soviet Union in terms of their nuclear energy supply, as well. This has only partly changed with the end of the bipolar system which is well represented by the Hungarian case study.

During the Cold War, nuclear fuel elements were produced in Russia, then sold to its allies and the spent fuel rods were returned to Russia for reprocessing, after 5 years of cooling in spent fuel ponds. In 1989, when the former socialist countries introduced hard currency payments in intra-COMECON trade, several countries built storages of their own – this was the solution chosen by Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and East Germany. Hungary, on the other hand, decided that it would continue to return the spent fuel elements to the Soviet Union for reprocessing. In 1992, however, the Russian Parliament passed the law on environment protection which forbade the import of dangerous wastes. As the clause ensuring the return of the spent fuel<sup>43</sup> was missing from the original Soviet-Hungarian agreement concluded in 1966 on the purchase of the Paks Nuclear Power Plant, the Hungarian government found itself in a difficult situation. After several rounds of negotiations, in December 1992 a tripartite agreement was concluded among the governments of Russia, Ukraine and Hungary for the transport of the spent fuel elements. From time to time new negotiations have been necessary to make sure that Russia accepts the spent fuel.

This difficulty seemed to be solved, when in April 1994 Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin paid a visit to Hungary. He signed a supplementary protocol, in fact an interpretation of the former Soviet-Hungarian agreement, which ensures the continued return

---

<sup>42</sup> Jacek Durkalec, 'The Future of NATO's Defence and Deterrence Posture: V4 Perspective' in Lukasz Kulesa (ed.), 'The Future of NATO's Defence and Deterrence Posture: Views from Central Europe', PISM Report, December 2012, <[www.pism.pl/files/?id\\_plik=12567](http://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=12567)>

<sup>43</sup> This clause is included in every agreement concluded between the other socialist countries and the Soviet Union on the purchase of nuclear power plants.



of the spent fuel from Paks to Russia as long as the power plant is in operation. However, upon Chernomyrdin's return to Russia the ratification of the protocol has been strongly challenged and objected to by the Russian Minister of Environment Protection and by the relevant civil organizations. In the meanwhile, an interim dry repository for the storage of spent fuel elements was built at the Paks site, designed to cope with the spent fuel for 50 years. Yet, at least one shipment of spent fuel was sent back to Russia even in 1998. The experts' opinion is that such elements should be sent back to Russia as long as possible, in spite of the storage place at Paks. This is way, Hungary has produced a case of "reversed positions", when a country, which could have tried to keep the spent fuel, since it had no legal obligation to give it back, wants to get rid of it; while Russia, which should make special efforts to take it back to exclude the possibility of the option, is reluctant.

### **III. Non-Nuclear Pro-Activism**

#### *1) The Role of Central European countries in Nuclear Non-Proliferation*

Nuclear non-proliferation issues are also pursued in a responsive, cooperative and multilateral way. In this regard, the main asset of Central European states is that they are "one more" actor among the many in the international non-proliferation regime. While they were usually in the mainstream of developments, the responsive nature of their non-proliferation policy was clearly evident, when their main foreign policy aims were perceived to be at stake: in the process of NATO accession, Central European states failed to explicitly reject the possibility of the deployment of US nuclear weapons on their territory (although Washington already made a promise to Moscow to prevent this situation) and they refrained from supporting the Central European Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone proposal at 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

Declaring Central Europe a NWFZ was first proposed by Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki in 1957. He envisaged a zone, covering the area of Poland, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, prohibiting both the stockpiling and the production of nuclear weapons.<sup>44</sup> The proposal was repeated again by Poland in 1969 (although it only aimed at a freeze on nuclear weapons). Then, in 1982 the Palme Commission suggested a battlefield nuclear weapon free zone in Central Europe, with the potential to extend the zone to a corridor from the Baltic to the Balkans.<sup>45</sup> The key obligations were a complete ban on atomic demolition mines, nuclear artillery and missiles

---

<sup>44</sup> Zoltán Maruzsa: 'Denuclearization in Central Europe? The Rapacki Plan during the Cold War', in *Öt kontinens* (Eötvös Lóránd Tudományegyetem, 2008), <<http://tortenelemszak.elte.hu/data/20376/Maruzsa.pdf>>

<sup>45</sup> 'Common Security', Report by the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (also known as the Palme Commission after its first Chairman Olof Palme), Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982, p.147.

with a range up to 1000 km. Besides, the proposal also contained obligations to eliminate storage sites for nuclear munitions and a cease on all manoeuvres which simulated nuclear operations. After the Cold War, Belarus and Ukraine took over the initiative but their efforts did not enjoy the support of Central European states any more. While Central European states were active advocates of the idea under the Soviet rule, they did not dare to support it in their quest for NATO membership. They feared that this would require a change in NATO's nuclear doctrine and it would stand in the way of their accession.<sup>46</sup> As a result, plans to establish a sub-regional NWFZ in the middle of Europe disappeared from the global non-proliferation agenda.

Despite their failure to stand up for a Central European NWFZ, the states of the region proved to be successful in their non-nuclear pro-activism on the different international disarmament fora. The roots of this "tradition" can be traced back to 1960 when Czechoslovakia and Poland became members of the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament (TNCD), succeeded by the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENCD). In 1968 all three nations signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and one year later Hungary also joined the Geneva based ENCD successor Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD).<sup>47</sup> As a result, all these states have become increasingly involved in non-proliferation and verification issues. Since nuclear non-proliferation and verification were fields of common interest among the nuclear weapon states, and there were not too many actors at the different disarmament fora, the foreign policy of the Central European states could move relatively freely to represent their own interests, sometimes even against expressed Soviet or other WTO-member interests.<sup>48</sup>

After 1989 these activities in non-proliferation and verification became more intense in the realization of the importance of such issues for the Euro-Atlantic community, and as such contributed to the aim of western integration. Central European states all signed the CTBT in 1996, signed and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Treaty on the Elimination of Landmines, and they also played a constructive role in the new programs of the IAEA, the Additional Protocol of which was also signed and ratified by all. In the same trend, they also joined the great export control regimes<sup>49</sup> and drawn up an entirely EU-conform national export control system.

---

<sup>46</sup> 'Hungary' in Harald Müller (ed.), *European Non-Proliferation Policy 1993–1995* – footnote 39

<sup>47</sup> United Nations Office at Geneva, *Conference on Disarmament*, <[http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/\(httpPages\)/BF18ABFEFE5D344DC1256F3100311CE9?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/(httpPages)/BF18ABFEFE5D344DC1256F3100311CE9?OpenDocument)>

<sup>48</sup> Personal interview with Ferenc Gajda, one of the Hungarian officials in the non-proliferation field between 1968-1995.

<sup>49</sup> Harald Müller – Janusz Prystrom (ed.), *Central European Countries and Non-Proliferation Regimes.* Polish Foundation of International Affairs, Warsaw, 1996.

Table 1. Central European states' accession to nuclear-related agreements and organizations

	Disarmament Committee	NPT	ZAC	NSG	CTBT	NPT AP	NATO membership
<b>Czech Republic</b>	1960 (TNCD)	1968	1974	1976/1977	1996	1999	1999
<b>Hungary</b>	1969 (CCD)	1968	1974	1985	1996	1998	1999
<b>Poland</b>	1960 (TNCD)	1968	1974	1976/1977	1996	1997	1999
<b>Slovakia</b>	1960 (TNCD)	1968	1974	1976/1977	1996	1999	2004

## Conclusion: Continuity or Change in Non-Nuclear Pro-Activism?

Central European countries, non-nuclear weapon states of the NPT and members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization till 1991, were not in a position to try to develop nuclear weapons, nor did they have the need to do so. Non-nuclear pro-activism within the limits set to their foreign policy by the Soviet Union suited the propaganda of the communist bloc well, yet gradually it developed into a conscious, increasingly independent dimension. Parties to the NPT since 1968 and members of the consecutive Committees on Disarmament, the Central European states became increasingly active in the different disarmament fora, verification and export control regimes. They all joined the Zangger Committee in 1974 and the NSG in 1977 (Czechoslovakia and Poland) and 1985 (Hungary). After signing their full-scope safeguards agreement with the IAEA, they conducted a conscious co-operative policy in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well.

Based on these “traditions”, the changes that took place in the region in 1989-1990 resulted in three different developments.

1. As a direct consequence of the new foreign policy orientation, *conformity with western priorities*, among them nuclear non-proliferation, became increasingly important. This was supported by the realization that free flow of information and technology in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was among their main interests. Therefore, they pursued a very energetic policy in the activities of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, in the different export control regimes and also in EU non-proliferation practices. These activities, while performed by a relatively limited group of experts and diplomats, have been carried out consciously and continuously, with the full support of the political leadership, both before or after 1989.
2. *Public awareness* both of the military and of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy started to increase as transparency in the decision-making process on such issues became more evident and the press revealed more information on such and related topics. The discovery that there had been nuclear weapons in the territory of these countries caused a small scale scandal in the early 1990s, but the public remained practically uninterested since it had no direct relevance any more. Environmental concerns due to the possible effects of nuclear

energy have, as yet, appeared on a local or at best on a regional level only, which, even with the effects of the Chernobyl accident did not turn the public against nuclear energy.

3. NATO accession generated a public debate, which had a nuclear dimension, but even the firm opposition on the public's side as to the deployment of nuclear weapons in the territory of these countries, could not alter the general public support for NATO. That NATO accession had another side-effect, namely that Central European states felt the necessity to reject even the consideration of a sub-regional Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone, and thus had *a break in their up to now unbroken non-nuclear pro-activist policy*, remained mostly out of the public's knowledge.

On the basis of the above, the future of the Central European non-nuclear stance still seems firm: rejection of nuclear weapons and promotion of nuclear disarmament – within the limits allowed to the countries by the clearly recognized international realities. In the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy they will probably be in the forefront of activities, as they have been up to now. With regard to nuclear disarmament, Central European position will probably vary from issue to issue. In cases like a sub-regional NWFZ or the possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear weapon states, Central Europeans will be very cautious not to antagonize their allies, especially those who integrated them into organizations, where decision making processes provide them with a chance to formulate common nuclear strategy and guarantee an equal say at the table. In other cases of nuclear disarmament, where it hurts no such interests, Central European states will probably continue to play a relatively active role. This, however, cannot be expected to raise much public interest in these countries.

---

*Erzsébet N. Rózsa is Academic Director and Senior Research Fellow at the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs in Budapest and also a senior lecturer at the National University of Public Service. She holds an MA in Arabic and Semitic Studies, Iranian Studies, and English Studies from the Eötvös Lóránd University of Budapest. She has a PhD in International Relations from the Corvinus University of Budapest, where she is an Honorary Professor. Her fields of research are the Middle East, nuclear non-proliferation, and Euro-Mediterranean cooperation frameworks.*

*Anna Péczeli is an Adjunct Fellow at the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs. From December, 2012 she spent a 3-month visiting research fellowship at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt and in October, 2013 she starts a 6-month visiting Fulbright fellowship at the Nuclear Information Project of the Federation of American Scientists in Washington DC. She holds an MA in International Relations from the Corvinus University of Budapest and is presently working on her PhD. The topic of her PhD dissertation is the nuclear strategy of the Obama administration.*