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# Arms Control – the ultimate challenge: Perspective from Slovakia

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# Preface

For several years now, the distrust and hostility in the security environment have led to violations and the significant weakening of the pillars of arms control and the non-proliferation regime. The challenges to these regimes exist on multiple levels. States are violating or withdrawing from arms control frameworks and agreements, new weapons technologies are being developed and geopolitical competition is on the rise. All this is occurring in the absence of political leadership of the arms control system. The European security architecture will be seriously weakened by these challenges, and restoring strategic stability and strengthening the global arms control architecture will be crucial to maintaining peace and security in and around Europe.

From the Slovak perspective, these challenges may seem more global and remote; nonetheless, their implications could have a significant impact on the security environment. Therefore, Slovakia has to start focusing on foreign and security policy in relation to arms control. The chapters that follow are based on ideas presented at an international expert seminar held in Bratislava, titled “*Arms Control—the ultimate challenge.*” Its main aim was to map current trends in arms control at the international level, and consider the emerging challenges. It also had the related aims of exploring Slovak perceptions of arms control at the political level and understanding Slovakia’s position and role in the control of conventional weapons, as this continues to be a priority agenda in questions regarding Slovakia’s strategic position.

*Kludia Tóth*

# Current trends and developments in arms control

*Kludia Tóth*

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After years of peace and a cooperative security system, Europe once again finds itself in a new arms race. On the one hand, systems and frameworks for arms control and disarmament – aimed at reducing the possibility of military conflict and at building strategic stability – have been violated, terminated or may not be prolonged. The two states with the biggest nuclear arsenal – the United States and Russia – have no overarching agreement limiting their arsenals. On the other hand, the arms control regime is being undermined by rapid technological developments and their potential application in warfare, but also by new actors with international reach who are building nuclear arsenals unrestricted by arms control treaties.

## *Lack of political leadership*

In international relations, we have seen how countries that built the arms control system after the Cold War have begun moving away from it and questioning its fundamental pillars. Although the United States and the Russian Federation were able to make several important decisions together, and consequently reduced nuclear arsenals on both sides and achieved greater predictability, they no longer consider these relevant to national security.

The first occasion on which the bilateral arms control system came under threat was in 2002, after the September terrorist attacks, when George Bush declared, “the greatest threats to both our countries come not from each other, or other big powers in the world, but from terrorists who strike without warning, or rogue states who seek weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>1</sup> The remarks heralded the United States’ unilateral withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty. Signed in 1972, the treaty had limited the deployment

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<sup>1</sup> “U.S. Withdrawal From the ABM Treaty: President Bush’s Remarks and U.S. Diplomatic Notes,” Arms Control Association, 2001. Available online: <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2002-01/us-withdrawal-abm-treaty-president-bush%E2%80%99s-remarks-us-diplomatic-notes#bush> (accessed on November 4, 2019).

of anti-ballistic missile systems against missile-delivered nuclear weapons. The Russian Federation responded shortly thereafter, when Vladimir Putin, the new president, withdrew from START II (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty).

Positive momentum was achieved with the new arms control policy initiated by newly elected US president Barack Obama. He believed that cooperation in arms control could provide the stimulus to rebuilding US–Russia relations. His belief was borne out with the negotiation and signing of the New START Treaty in 2010, which aimed to reduce the overall number of nuclear warheads, strategic missiles and aircraft carriers. But, even this positive move did not last long, and further changes followed the reelection of Vladimir Putin as Russian president. Putin declared that he did not support tightening up arms control and that Russia would continue to employ the concept of MAD (mutual assured destruction).

Another, fatal, wound was inflicted on the arms control system this year, when the United States decided to withdraw from the INF Treaty (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) after long-standing violations by the Russian Federation. The INF Treaty had been one of the main pillars of arms control since 1987 and had led to the reduction of medium- and short-range missiles (with a range of 500 to 5,500 km) and the destruction of 2,592 missiles. However, despite the United States and the European Union urgently calling on the Russian federation to respect the agreement, the treaty could not be saved.

Another important treaty is under threat, New START, which as we have seen limits the nuclear arsenals of both the United States and Russia and establishes a compliance monitoring regime. US President Donald Trump has still not confirmed his willingness to extend the treaty beyond 2021, and thus far his statements point to a negative future for New START.

Alongside these negative shifts, which clearly weaken and undermine the arms control system, the United States and Russia have repeatedly declared a desire to modernize their arsenals and produce new weapons.

Steps taken by President Donald Trump have long indicated that he is trying to make America a great leader by modernizing its nuclear and military capacities among other things. It is clear from the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review<sup>2</sup> that Trump's intention differs from that of his predecessors. While the fundamental principles of US deterrence policy remain unchanged, efforts to build low-yield nuclear capability, the rejection of future arms control agreements, and plans to increase the United States' nuclear weapons production capability are new. The report claims that in

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<sup>2</sup> For more information see: „2018 Nuclear Posture Review,” U.S. Department of Defense, 2018. Available online: <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872888/-1/-1-1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW.PDF> (accessed on November 4, 2019).

order to defend US citizens against new external threats, it must improve its arsenal and increase its modernization budget, and the US administration is already doing this.

On the other side, Vladimir Putin has also taken steps that counter the logic of arms control. Firstly, Russia has demonstrably violated the INF Treaty by developing the new SSC-8 cruise missile with a maximum range of in excess of 500km. According to statements by the Russian administration delivered in spring 2018, Russia is also developing new nuclear weapons – a nuclear-powered cruise missile, also known as SSC-X-9 Skyfall; the intercontinental hypersonic missile Avangard; and a new heavy intercontinental ballistic missile called Sarmat, among other things. It is hard to say to what extent the statements are true or how far Russia is in developing these weapons. But the fact is Putin is strongly determined to expend great efforts and money on building modern and technologically advanced military capacities, and that could ratchet up the arms race to a new level.<sup>3</sup>

### *New actors in the nuclear arms race*

The actions of Russia and the United States stem from the arms race against each other, but also from the appearance of new states with international reach that have begun building and developing their nuclear potential. Regional powers such as China, North Korea and – following the US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – Iran are building their own nuclear and conventional arsenals and present a challenge to the international security environment. In addition threats are posed by actors engaged in regional disputes who demonstrably or incontrovertibly possess some type of nuclear weapon – such as India and Pakistan competing for Kashmir, or Israel which feels threatened by Iran, but also Saudi Arabia, which is close to acquiring or building a nuclear weapon.

All this means the nuclear arms race is no longer bilateral but multilateral, and so the existing arms control regime is no longer adequate. Treaties regulating US–Russia relations cannot be made multipolar, and so there is no effective framework for restricting, monitoring and verifying the actions of armament actors.

At the same time, none of these new actors have shown any willingness to be the new leaders of arms control, who could then propose ways of effectively rebuilding and modifying the existing regimes. On the contrary, they are more interested in spending money on developing their armies, be they nuclear or conventional. And, as we have seen, the traditional nuclear

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<sup>3</sup> “Putin Boasts of New Russian Nuclear Weapons,” Associated Press, 2018. Available online: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_9tRDQ-6aRo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9tRDQ-6aRo) (accessed on November 4, 2019).

powers have not been idle either and, in pursuit of greater deterrence, they have been increasing their military presence and the deployment of missiles in the regions.

### *New technological developments*

The threat posed by the unpredictability of national action is exacerbated by the number of new technologies that have potential military application. As the risks and consequences of the new weapon technologies are not fully known and any potential military use is not covered by international conventions, it is difficult to predict the extent to which they could shape the future of arms control. What we can say, however, is that states are making increasing efforts to develop and use new technologies, and that the arms race is gaining new importance.

Among the most important technological innovations that have the potential to change the conflict and significantly affect the arms control system are artificial intelligence, autonomous weapons and hypersonic weapons. These technologies appear to be most developed in terms of military application and at the same time pose the greatest threat to the security architecture, as their use would create uncertainty, unpredictability and increase the scope for miscalculation and misunderstanding.

Despite general statements about combining AI and nuclear weapons, we have yet to witness any real development; nonetheless it is very likely that this technology will be used in modernizing arsenals. Attention will be focused on the use of AI in autonomous weapons systems (AWS), which can detect, track and attack the enemy on their own. These so-called killer robots have great potential to disrupt nuclear stability. While there is the possibility of a second strike in a world without AWS, the deployment of such weapons systems would undermine deterrence policy and also make the launch of a first nuclear strike more likely.

Hypersonic weapons present a similar threat, as they operate at five times the speed of sound and can be armed with nuclear or conventional warheads. Moreover, anti-missile systems may not be able to track and avert an attack by hypersonic cruise missiles. These weapons exacerbate crisis instability as their acquisition could increase the possibility of first-strike disarming attacks.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Klare, M. T., “The Challenges of Emerging Technologies,” Arms Control Association, 2018. Available online: <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2018-12/features/challenges-emerging-technologies> (accessed on November 4, 2019).

## Conclusion

It is clear that the arms control system faces a set of new challenges that also requires the attention of countries not involved in the arms race. Europe is not a direct actor in a potential arms race but would be at risk. That is why it should play a more prominent role in launching a dialogue on future strategic stability.

First of all, it is essential to convince both the United States and Russia of the need to engage in a dialogue on future arms control. It is important that they realize that withdrawal from and violation of existing treaties brings neither party an advantage. On the contrary, returning to an effective arms control system should be the priority in the near future if we are to avoid conflict with fatal consequences. However, this will require the greatest possible efficacy, which can only be achieved through the establishment of clear monitoring and verification mechanisms.

It is likely that we will be unable to garner the political will required for the major powers to negotiate and sign a new agreement, and so we should focus more on smaller steps. The threat posed by the military use of new technologies should be countered by including these threats in arms control treaties. This will require a great deal of effort and collaboration from experts and institutions, who will have to discover ways to curb and combat something as abstract as AI or cyber-attacks. At the same time, it will be necessary to escalate the debate to the political level and to explore ways of preventing states and other actors from incorporating these technologies into their arsenals.

We must realize that this dialogue has to be multilateral. The actors in the new arms race will not be limited to the existing signatories of the main arms control agreements (US and Russia), but will include new actors that have emerged. Therefore, it is important to hold a wide-ranging international debate on what strategic stability means and how we can return to the elements of a comparative security system. States must also realize that, for their own national security, it is preferable to have an effective multilateral arms control and disarmament regime, rather than invest in the modernization of arsenals.

# Slovakia and arms control

*Andrej Matisák*  
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According to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry of Defense, the Slovak Republic is committed to supporting the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and has long supported maintaining effective international regimes for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Slovakia is party to all the important multilateral treaties relating to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and has joined the relevant export control regimes. Slovakia's support for an effective arms control system is also laid out in its most recent Security Strategy. The strategy was approved by the Slovak government in 2017, but not by the Slovak parliament. Nonetheless, Slovak diplomats argue that the Security Strategy and its principles still apply, regardless of not having been approved by parliament. The Security Strategy states that Slovakia is committed to pursuing an active policy of global arms control and to disarmament being a priority aimed at combating the proliferation of WMD and preventing their means of delivery from falling into the hands of non-state actors (terrorist groups) and failing states and associated technological developments.<sup>1</sup>

## *Challenges for Slovakia*

Although the Security Strategy assumes the greatest threat is WMD falling into the hands of non-state actors, we are witnessing another phenomenon: the possibility that the arms race will be re-established and conventional and nonconventional weapons will proliferate among new state actors with international reach.

With the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, it is highly possible that the United States and Russia will quickly accelerate production of short medium-range and intermediate-range missiles, and perhaps their deployment. In the United States' case, this applies especially to the Indo-Pacific region, but maybe also to Europe.

There is also the possibility New START will not be prolonged. It limits the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550 on the US and Russian sides. However, the US–Russian agreement may last only until 2021

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<sup>1</sup> “Security Strategy of the Slovak republic,” 2017. Available online: <http://mepoforum.sk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/N%C3%A1vrh-BS-SR-schv%C3%A1len%C3%BD-vl%C3%A1dou.pdf> (accessed on November 4, 2019).

– in 2017 US President Donald Trump told his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, that the New START treaty was one of several bad deals negotiated by the previous Obama administration, which favored Russia. If the decision is taken not to extend the treaty, there will be no proper framework for the nuclear arms reduction regime.

In the United States, there is also rare bipartisan alarm about reports the Trump administration may abandon the Open Skies Treaty. As Patrick Tucker, technology editor of the specialist website Defense One, points out the treaty, put into effect in 2002, allows the United States, Russia and 32 other countries to conduct short-notice flights over each other's territories to monitor military deployments. The pact's advocates emphasize that the Open Skies Treaty helps NATO allies monitor Russian moves and that technical limitations prevent Russia from exploiting the obtained imagery for espionage purposes and so it is worth keeping.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the deepening lack of trust between the US and Russia over arms control, the presence of new states in the arms race is problematic. The appearance of new actors in the arms race, such as China, could have serious consequences for European security architecture and for Slovakia as well. China is not party to any major treaty that would limit its arsenal or prevent it from modernizing its medium-range missiles and missile defense system.

The Security Strategy also refers to the threat of new technologies and their impact on arms control. The question is, how far can we apply the principles of the arms control regime to the cyberspace military domain? Slovakia, together with its allies, needs to focus more on cyber defense as a part of collective defense. Therefore, it is important to establish a predictable and secure, norms-based cyberspace.

### *What can Slovakia do?*

As noted in the Security Strategy, Slovakia supports the principles of effective arms control and the nonproliferation regimes established at the end of the Cold War. Firstly, as the Security Strategy declares, Slovakia supports the principles and activities of arms control pursued by the international organizations to which Slovakia belongs. At the same time, Slovakia emphasizes that it is important to follow the principles of multilateralism. One of the most recent examples is the foreign ministry's reaction to the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. It stated that Slovakia is concerned by the US

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<sup>2</sup> Tucker, P. "Why Open Skies Is An Old Fashioned Treaty Worth Keeping," Defense One, 2019. Available online: <https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2019/10/why-open-skies-old-fashioned-treaty-worth-keeping/160496/> (accessed on November 4, 2019).

decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal and remains convinced that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) continues to meet its intended purpose, which is to guarantee the exclusively peaceful character of Iran's nuclear program.

Slovakia has also declared that it will be actively involved in international initiatives aimed at preventing the illegal acquisition of hazardous materials and dangerous goods. It will strengthen export controls on military material and goods and dual-use technology by actively collaborating with the associations of the relevant industries.

In addition to these declaratory statements, however, Slovakia can influence directions within the arms control regime, as it currently holds the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Slovakia's OSCE position might prove helpful to efforts to bring the problem of the crumbling international arms control regime to the table. The OSCE brings together all the actors in the Eurotransatlantic region, crucially the United States and Russia. As chairman, Slovakia can play the role of honest broker.

Slovakia is largely a consumer of cooperative security as regards international arms control, and the threat is global so goes beyond the region of Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore one can hardly expect such a small country to play a crucial role in building the arms control architecture. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the role of smaller states, such as Slovakia. Smaller states can play an important role in perhaps trying to save what is left of the arms control architecture and in drawing attention to new challenges, especially in cyberspace. One step forward would be to establish a coalition of willing, like-minded (smaller) countries who could adopt these topics and make them a foreign policy priority. Slovakia could contribute to an alliance of this nature, focusing on maintaining a functioning multilateral world order.

### *Political aspects*

Of course, this cannot happen in a political vacuum. If the Slovak foreign ministry was interested in directing some personnel and perhaps financial resources at greater engagement in arm control topics, it would require political support and understanding. It is unlikely to be a popular topic among the general public in Slovakia, but all Slovak political parties need a more global foreign policy vision. Slovakia is a member of all the important international organizations, and has a very open and export-orientated economy. Its political future and economic prosperity depend on avoiding global conflict scenarios, and the total breakdown of the arms control architecture and non-proliferation regimes could contribute heavily to such nightmare events.

Dragging Slovak political parties into the arms control debate was one of the aims of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association when organizing its seminar on Arms Control—the ultimate challenge. Despite the lack of direct participation by the current coalition parties, the panel did stimulate debate among the political parties predicted, based on the opinion polls, to have a good chance of being elected to the national parliament and form the government following the election in February 2019.

All the political parties engaged in the debate agreed that an effective arms control system is essential to the European security architecture and peace in Europe and Slovakia, and that Slovakia should invest more in strengthening the arms control regimes. The political party *Za ľudí*; Tomáš Valášek, Slovakia's former Ambassador to NATO; and Gen (Ret) Pavol Macko, senior member of the political party *Spolu* and the *Progressívne Slovensko/Spolu* opposition coalition pointed out that arms control and non-proliferation treaties have played a crucial role in keeping inevitable rivalries in check and that the potential collapse of the arms control regime should worry Slovaks greatly as it is one of the key pillars that has kept Slovakia's neighborhood stable. There are different factors contributing to the erosion of the treaties – Russia is becoming a revisionist power and the current state arms control architecture is old and does not reflect technological progress, but, as Valášek also pointed out, the US is in the strange position of being both guarantor of and a problem for European security.

Jaroslav Nad' member of the political party *OLaNO* drew attention to another aspect of arms control, the arms trade. In his opinion, the arms control regimes do not work at all, and all the major players do what they want in terms of arms sales. Slovakia should therefore follow all the legal international obligations, but not be shy about selling weapons to anybody, so long as it is not prohibited and there is no broad consensus against it among Slovakia's allies.

At the end of the day, all the speakers agreed that Slovakia should be more active in the global discussion about arms control and contribute to building strategic stability. First, it should support nuclear weapons disarmament and the arms control regime by emphasizing transparency and confidence-building measures in defense and security, by supporting an effective verification and monitoring mechanism and by helping initiate negotiations on modernizing the arms control architecture. Secondly, Slovakia needs to build up its own expertise in arms control. Thirdly it will have to work on its reputation if it wishes to be taken seriously by allies.

# New trends in conventional arms control – the Slovak perspective

*Zsolt Pastorek*

*Head of the Slovak Verification Centre*

Over the past decade, every arms control debate, whether at the diplomatic or expert level, has led to the same conclusion – the arms control regime must be modernized or renewed. When thinking about the future arms control regime and Slovakia's role in it, we have to consider the following: weapons restrictions (quantity and positioning), the information regime (mutual exchange of information) and verification of the information exchanged. As was stated at the Annual Security Review Conference<sup>1</sup>, support must be found for bilateral agreements that foster dialogue and therefore build trust. Nevertheless, we should stand firm on these bases when developing our position and contributing to the European security system.

## *Challenges for Slovakia*

The development and implementation of conventional arms control will be the core agenda in the midterm plans for the development of the armed forces and Slovakia's strategic position, and in the coming decade of arms control.

The first challenge is to develop a *new definition of the major weapon systems*. Armaments have changed in line with technical developments and the evolving nature of warfare. New types of military equipment have been developed with highly modular armaments.

One example is the difficulties encountered when attempting to classify MRAP (Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected) vehicles. These vehicles have many different uses and so the challenge is whether to classify them under support, transport or combat vehicles. Similar problems may occur with future modifications to TATRAPAN vehicles and possibly helicopters (Are these support vehicles, combat support vehicles or combat vehicles?). The simple solution is to establish a Slovak Major Weapon Systems catalogue. But it is complicated because weapons belonging to the Slovak armed forces have to be classified in the same way as the same weapons belonging to other participating states. A list of conventional arms has been drawn up by Working

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<sup>1</sup> Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, June 25–27, 2019

Group A of the FSC<sup>2</sup>, but only for the purposes of improving implementation practices. Its remit does not cover potential new groups of weapons systems for the future arms control regime<sup>3</sup>.

Policies and strategies for dealing with new categories of weapon systems are being drafted. Several forums are involved in this, such as the last LMG<sup>4</sup> meeting in October 2019. However, these draft proposals are incomplete, and can only indicate the possible direction of travel. Thus far, as a minimum, they propose:

- using the conventional arms categories in existing arms control tools, like the Dayton Peace Agreement, as a baseline,
- unifying the definition of the main weapon systems with UN standards, such as UNROCA (UN Register of Conventional Arms),
- extending the existing categories to include unmanned aerial combat and combat support vehicles,
- extending the existing categories to include missiles that have a strategic impact due to their destructive power,
- extending the existing categories to include MANPADS (Man-Portable Air Defense System).

The proposals are still being developed and there is much to be considered. For example, given an essential role of arms control, we could argue against including MANPADS on the list as they do not indicate the capacity to launch a surprise attack or initiate large-scale offensive action. Conversely, extending the list to include drones capable of firing subsonic and hypersonic missiles seems sensible. Despite the challenges mentioned above, it is reasonable to fully support such efforts on the international stage. Slovakia is a small country and the size of its armed forces reflects that; nonetheless, it could benefit from the extended information regime and gain militarily as well. Having to obtain the same amount of information by other means or from other resources would be far more difficult.

Besides the attempts to renew the weapons catalogue, the participating states are engaged in efforts to *extend the information regime to include certain logistics and operational capabilities*. This would give us a more accurate picture of changes in the combat capabilities of individual actors, making it

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<sup>2</sup> The FSC, the Forum for Security Cooperation, is working to improve military security and stability in Europe and covers some of the most important politico-military agreements of the OSCE participating states.

<sup>3</sup> More detailed information on the Major Weapon and Equipment System data exchange can be found in FSC.DEL/49/19, the OCSE's Swiss Food for Thought Paper on the exchange of information regarding major weapon and equipment systems among participating states.

<sup>4</sup> Like-Minded Group of high-level government experts from 24 countries making recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to a new conventional arms control architecture in Europe.

easier to maintain balanced forces. The use of qualitative indicators would provide a valuable picture of the current distribution of foreign forces; however, revealing some aspects of the Slovak armed forces would be counterproductive to Slovak defense. Our task is to make available the proposed scope of information exchange without compromising Slovakia's military power. Therefore, the best approach would be to establish a framework for including the appropriate command, control and communication systems (what should and should not be included in the information exchange), to limit the exchange of information on logistics to transport capabilities and to eliminate any sharing of information on areas such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense (CBRN).

The latter two points accurately encapsulate the direction in which arms control is headed. With the recent technological developments and greater efficiency of the new weapon systems, arms control is shifting from a quantitative level (e.g. limiting the amount of conventional arms) to a qualitative level (destructive force of weapons, accuracy, command structure, mobility, etc.).

Qualitative methods are also used to assess *the information regime on military exercises*. It relates not only to planned exercises with live fire and engaged troops, but also to combat readiness exercises/tests (Snap Exercises). This broadening of the information regime is welcome, but putting it into practice requires much greater involvement and cooperation between the Slovak Verification Centre and the planning and operational components of the Slovak armed forces in planning exercises. While certain steps have already been taken at the NATO level, such as the release in October 2019 of a newly updated Allied Command Operation document on the implementation of verification activities in phases of planning and the execution of international military exercises. In Slovakia, coordination is still in the initial phases.

### ***Broader view of arms control***

If we leave aside the limits of the framework for conventional armed forces for the moment and look at arms control in a broader sense, additional areas come into play, such as further commitments and related challenges. These concern mainly current (and future) obligations under Hague Law. Regarding the CCW<sup>5</sup>, Slovakia has accepted all the obligations arising from the protocols. Slovak experts were also closely involved in developing the detailed Reporting Template for CCW Protocol V. Furthermore, Slovakia has disposed of its anti-personnel landmines under the Ottawa Convention and is fulfilling its commitments under the Cartagena Action Plan, focusing on the effective use of anti-personnel mines that were retained to develop and

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<sup>5</sup> Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

research demining capabilities. The Cluster Munition Convention is currently attracting the attention of professionals. Under the Cluster Munition Convention, Slovakia is obliged to destroy all its stocks of cluster munitions by 31 December 2023, including those that could have a serious impact on the environment when destroyed. The solution is to use foreign delaboration capacities through the NSPA (NATO Support Procurement Agency).

Although Slovakia is not a global player in the field of nuclear disarmament, it is able to contribute by training CTBTO (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization) inspectors at Slovak training facilities. The Provisional Technical Secretariat has prepared a multiyear On-Site Inspection Exercise Plan for 2016–2020. In line with the strategic direction for On-Site Inspection, the purpose of the Built-Up Exercises in 2019–2020 is to support the further development of operational capabilities to prepare the CTBTO to conduct effective On-Site inspections once the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty comes into force. In 2020 two phases of Built-Up Exercises will take place at the Lešť Training Center (June and September 2020). These exercises get bigger each year and are gaining in international recognition.

Much the same can be said about the training of OPCW (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) inspectors. It is worth noting that these exercises are carried out on a voluntary basis and at the interdepartmental level. It has been suggested that a branch office of an important international organization (or other permanent presence) could be located in Slovakia in the future. Attempts have been made, but unfortunately with little success so far.

### *The way ahead*

Slovakia fully support arms control in all its dimensions and has successfully implemented the commitments arising from various international conventions. Nevertheless, existing capabilities in arms control must be maintained if the standard is to be upheld. This means adopting solutions in the following areas:

1. Finance – modernization under the Vienna Document of 2011 alone would require an extra €15–20,000 per year to cover implementation costs<sup>6</sup>. Unfortunately, there are no guarantees the funds will be made available in the future, despite the political rhetoric on improving, strengthening and supporting the arms control regime.
2. Personnel – the establishment of a systematic solution for recruitment and training. Implementation and expert levels are fully covered by

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<sup>6</sup> Germany produced a “Cost analysis of the Vienna Document 2011 proposal on Inspection and Evaluation Quotas” (HLTF-N(2019)0043(INV)), which indicates that the additional cost will amount to €27,400.

the MOD through the Slovak Verification Center, but there is an acute need to ensure stable staffing levels at the Center and undertake further recruitment. The Slovak Verification Center is one of the most important bodies involved in the adoption and implementation of obligations relating to arms control. The verification center structure (and within the Ministry of Defense structure) must be able to support solid career paths so experts are retained within the system. Financial resources also need to be allocated for education/training and personal development. These processes are time consuming and require sustained effort.

3. Technology – this relates primarily to the implementation of the Open Skies Treaty (OST). An MOD expert group is currently being set up to assess alternative means of implementing OST in Slovakia. At the moment, Slovakia is renting a Ukrainian aircraft (type An-30) for Slovak-led Open Skies missions. But there is a shortage of the film used in the analog camera (part of the equipment of the Ukrainian aircraft), and most countries are transitioning to digital imagery so the agreement will need to be terminated.

Once satisfactory solutions to the problems outlined above have been adopted, we can proceed to the next step, which is the development of capabilities such as:

- restoring the ability to carry out data analysis in arms control – the Slovak Verification Centre is only able to archive the data. Prospective experts require three years of verification practice before they can be trained to analyze the data provided under the arms control mode,
- developing the control regime competences required in the qualitative control of the armed forces capabilities. This would require verification personnel to learn other methods for assessing the armed forces.