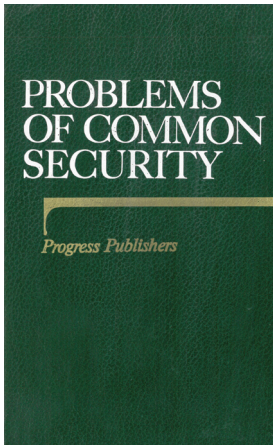


## A Soviet View

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*Published two years after the Palme Commission report, Problems of Common Security is a comprehensive exposition of Soviet thinking at the time. This publication of an edited version of Alexander Kalyadin's essay on 'Nuclear-Free Zones' is not an endorsement of the work in which it is contained, but a demonstration of the seriousness with which the concept of such zones was taken in the USSR and a contribution to recovering and explaining them.*

### **The Concept of a Nuclear-Free Zone**

Washington's massive arms build-up, the Pentagon's plans of "limited" and "protracted" nuclear wars in various regions of the globe, the establishment of US nuclear bases on foreign territories, and the attempts to involve numerous countries in US military plans have lately given a new impetus to the idea of creating nuclear-free zones [i.e. geographic zones where nuclear weapons are to be neither developed, nor deployed]. Its advocates believe that the further strengthening of their countries' nuclear-free status would guarantee their non-involvement in a nuclear conflict. This idea enjoys broad popularity, which is evidenced by the relevant proposals from a number of governments, its support by the UN and other international organisations, and the mass anti-nuclear demonstrations, whose participants increasingly call for creating nuclear-weapon-free zones. The viability of this idea has also been confirmed by practical experience in securing a nuclear-free status for the Latin American countries, a status that was formalised by the 1967 Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco).

The issue of nuclear-free zones has been a subject of discussion by the United Nations for a number of years. UN General Assembly resolutions and other UN documents have formulated and agreed upon concrete provisions making up the concept “nuclear-weapon-free zone”, or “nuclear-free zone”. These documents have, above all, formulated some general principles of the concept, consisting essentially in that states included in such zones shall promise neither to purchase and develop nuclear weapons, nor to admit foreign nuclear weapons into those zones, while states that already possess nuclear weapons shall in turn promise to strictly respect the nuclear-weapon-free zone status and refrain from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against states situated in such zones. The UN General Assembly resolutions favouring the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the globe and adopted in recent years with the backing of an overwhelming majority of UN members helped to make this idea become more popular.

Significantly, today’s massive anti-war movement throughout the world is showing growing interest in the idea of nuclear-free zones. Calls for the creation of such zones have become an essential element in the slogans of mass anti-war demonstrations. In some countries there are movements for creating nuclear-free zones both on a national and local scale. It is not by chance that this movement has become especially widespread in Western Europe. It was, in effect, a response to the NATO leaders’ decision to deploy new medium-range US nuclear missiles in several West European states and to the readiness of US strategists to use the territories of their West European NATO allies as a theatre of war involving the use of nuclear weapons. The abrupt upsurge in the anti-nuclear movement in Western Europe was chiefly motivated by the West European peoples’ increased awareness of the danger of these actions. The participants in the movement demand more resolutely than before that their governments alienate themselves from the dangerous nuclear plans of the United States and NATO, remove nuclear weapons from their territories and proclaim them nuclear-free zones. In some countries, the movement for nuclear-free zones has spread to municipal bodies.

As a result of a powerful anti-nuclear movement, many towns, settlements and other administrative centres in Britain, The Netherlands, Belgium and West Germany were declared nuclear-free zones, where local authorities prohibit the deployment, transportation and production of nuclear weapons. And though their national governments have declared they would ignore such resolutions, their moral and political significance is great for they symbolise the rejection by the broad masses of population of nuclear weapons, the nuclear arms race, and the strategy of nuclear intimidation, and show the desire of those masses to make a concrete contribution to the struggle for eliminating the threat of nuclear war and for curbing the nuclear arms race ...

[I]t was the Soviet Union which tabled, on 27 March 1956, a proposal at the UN Disarmament Commission to create a zone of limitation and inspection of armaments in Europe ... The proposal suggested that an agreement be reached to ban the deployment of nuclear-armed units and all other types of atomic and hydrogen weapons in a zone that would include the territories of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, and also their neighbouring states. In fact, this proposal contained the contours of future plans for creating nuclear-free zones. It was further elaborated in Poland's proposal (1957) [The Rapacki Plan] to create a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe. Under the Polish plan, the participants (Poland, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, and the FRG) were to have undertaken not to produce, purchase or deploy nuclear weapons on their territories. The nuclear powers were to have promised not to hand over nuclear weapons to the participants, not to deploy them there, or use them against the territory of the said nuclear-free zone. The Polish plan also provided for measures to control the implementation of such an agreement. The USSR declared its support for the Polish proposal and expressed readiness to adhere to its commitments. A similar statement was made by Czechoslovakia and the GDR.

It is not accidental that the idea of creating a nuclear-free zone was initially suggested in regard to Central Europe, a region where the need to prevent nuclear confrontation had become especially urgent already at that time. However, the United States and its NATO allies took a negative stand towards this issue, showing no desire to undertake any commitments not to deploy or use nuclear weapons in Central Europe.

In subsequent years, the idea of creating nuclear-free zones to strengthen regional security was backed by many countries. It was amplified in various projects for establishing nuclear-free zones in respective continents, regions and countries. These projects reflected the specific features of the military-political situation in individual regions, the stands of individual governments and the public, and changes in the world situation as a whole.

In determining its attitude to the establishment of nuclear-free zones in specific regions, the USSR proceeds from the assumption that the main task of any nuclear-free zone is to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons on a regional scale, and to protect the states of the region in question from becoming involved in a nuclear conflict.

In assessing concrete projects, the question that naturally arises is what should be the prerequisites for creating an effective, totally nuclear-free zone. There can, of course, be no single model. Every region has its own specifics, which should be taken into account in drafting a relevant agreement. However, this does not exclude the need for working out certain general criteria for a nuclear-free zone, ensuing from the tasks facing such zones and

from their role within the system of international security.

These criteria stem primarily from the principal tasks any nuclear-free zone is called upon to resolve. They include a pledge by the participating states not to produce and purchase nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, not to exercise direct or indirect control over such arms, and also not to allow the presence of foreign nuclear weapons in the zone. It is also important for such a zone to be really free of nuclear arms; the relevant agreement must not have any loopholes that would make it possible to violate the zone's nuclear-free status. On their part, the nuclear states would have to strictly respect the zone's nuclear-free status and not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against its participants. An agreement on a nuclear-free zone would have to conform with the existing norms of international law. An important factor in making a nuclear-free zone effective would be the establishment of a reliable mechanism to control the fulfilment of commitments undertaken by the nations participating in such a zone. Being a regional measure, a nuclear-free zone must have its distinctive features as compared with global measures. However, inasmuch as it is assumed that the nuclear states would have to undertake definite commitments in regard to the states participating in a nuclear-free zone, the need for the former to take part in relevant talks is obvious ...

As for the geographical limits of nuclear-free zones, as is apparent from the proposals put up by various governments, such zones may include entire continents, geographical regions, groups of countries, and individual states. In any case, such limits must be distinctly specified by consent of all the parties concerned ...

### **Regional Projects for Nuclear-Free Zones**

In Europe, the movement for establishing nuclear-free zones is mounting, and concrete actions are being taken in this direction by various governments. This is seen, among other things, in a number of European states' initiative to officially formalise their nuclear-free status, strengthen the regime of nuclear non-proliferation, and consolidate regional stability.

*Northern Europe* is a region where such possibilities are rated highly. Unlike Western Europe now living literally on a nuclear volcano, Northern Europe is still free of nuclear weapons. The countries of Northern Europe have achieved a relatively high level of good-neighbour relations, albeit Norway and Denmark are NATO members, and Finland and Sweden are not. The four are signatories to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. They are aware of the dangerous consequences of the new US and NATO nuclear missile plans in Europe, especially those that may result from the recent deployment of US medium-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe. This increases the danger

of their involvement in a nuclear conflict and makes the task of establishing a nuclear-free zone in Northern Europe especially urgent ...

As a result, social and political circles in Norway and Denmark are showing an increasing tendency towards formalising the nuclear-free status of the Scandinavian region within the framework of an international agreement so as to protect the region from the danger of being involved in a nuclear conflict and in NATO's nuclear strategy.

Finland came out in active support of the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Northern Europe. On 28 May 1963, the Finnish President proposed that the Scandinavian countries create such a zone and confirm by means of mutual commitments the absence of nuclear weapons in the area without damaging the security of those countries or violating the balance of forces in the world. In May 1978, the President developed this concept by proposing to work out a Scandinavian arms control agreement which would be chiefly aimed at protecting the Scandinavian countries from the potential consequences of a nuclear strategy, in general, and from new nuclear technology, in particular. The Finnish government made proposals to begin appropriate talks between the Scandinavian states with the participation of nuclear states in the talks. This has launched a discussion among socio-political circles in the Scandinavian countries, in the course of which various aspects of the question of establishing such a zone were examined. The discussion has noticeably concretised the idea of establishing a nuclear-free zone in Northern Europe ...

In 1982, over 2.5 million Danes, Finns, Norwegians and Swedes put their signatures under the Appeal for a Nuclear-Free North. And despite the increased activity of forces seeking to prevent the implementation of this plan, it meets with response and support among people who side with different political parties and mass public organisations, and also among government circles in the Scandinavian countries. The struggle for consolidating the nuclear-free status of Northern Europe remains a major trend in the political life of the countries of the region.

The *Balkans* is also a region where more favourable prospects have recently come to light for establishing a nuclear-free zone. The political climate has significantly improved there, and in the present-day tense international situation life in the Balkans is relatively quiet. The Balkan countries show a strong desire not only for the results of detente to be preserved, but also multiplied to give a positive political impetus to Europe ...

Following the victory of the democratic forces at the October 1981 parliamentary elections in Greece, the new cabinet formed by the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) declared the Greek intention to turn the Balkans into a nuclear-free zone and to reject the deployment of nuclear arms

on Greek territory. This has opened up new prospects for establishing that zone. When Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu visited Sofia in 1982, it was noted that the initiative to turn the Balkans into a nuclear-free zone met the interests of the Balkan peoples and helped to improve the international climate and to gradually turn Europe into a continent free of nuclear weapons.

Concrete steps have been made in this direction. In 1982, Bulgaria proposed holding a Balkan summit meeting to discuss the proposal for turning the Balkans into a nuclear-free zone. The Bulgarian initiative met positive responses in Yugoslavia, Romania, and Greece. It should be remembered, however, that today the Balkan Peninsula is where the line of direct contact between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO countries passes and where external imperialist forces, seeking to destabilise the situation and preserve the foreign military bases, are active. These factors complicate the task of establishing a nuclear-free zone there, but at the same time they make this task especially urgent and politically significant ...

The *Mediterranean*. In 1963, the USSR suggested a project for turning the entire Mediterranean area into a nuclear-missile-free zone. The Soviet government declared its readiness to pledge not to deploy nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles in the Mediterranean implying that similar pledges would be made by other states, too. The USSR also proposed that, after that region has been declared a nuclear-free zone, the USSR and the United States should give joint "reliable guarantees that in the event of any military complication, the Mediterranean Sea area would be regarded as being outside the sphere of nuclear weapons." Subsequently, the USSR supplemented this proposal with new ideas, such as reaching international agreements on:

- extending to the Mediterranean the confidence-building measures in military matters that have already proved effective in international practice;
- co-ordinating the reduction of armed forces in the area;
- withdrawing nuclear weapons carriers from the Mediterranean;
- refusing to deploy nuclear weapons on the territories of non-nuclear Mediterranean countries;
- undertaking that the nuclear states refrain from using nuclear weapons against any Mediterranean country that does not allow other nations to deploy such weapons on its territory ...

Earlier, we have spoken of the 25-year-old plan of the socialist countries to establish a nuclear-free zone in *Central Europe*. The plan was rejected by the United States which preferred to start building nuclear bases in West Germany and turning it into America's chief nuclear arsenal in Europe. This has resulted in the greater saturation of Central Europe with nuclear weaponry. The US

nuclear arms build-up in the region following the well-known NATO missile decision of 12 December 1979 has aggravated the tense situation of nuclear confrontation in Central Europe. In this situation, the Swedish government proposed that the Warsaw Treaty countries and the NATO members establish in Europe a zone free of "theatre nuclear weapons", which would be approximately 300 km wide, i.e. extend for 150 km on both sides of their line of contact. Sweden proposed starting appropriate talks on the type of nuclear weapons deployed in Europe and in the seas around Europe. The USSR supported the Swedish proposal and spoke in favour of expanding the geographical limits of the zone free of theatre nuclear weapons so that those talks would really be an effective measure for reducing the nuclear threat.

Taking into consideration the main characteristics of the existing types of nuclear weapons (range, velocity, etc.), the increasing range of tactical missiles, and the capability of tactical aviation (one of the major components of the theatre nuclear weapons), the USSR suggested the establishment of a 500-600-km-wide zone, i.e. extending 250 to 300 km west and east of the line of contact of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO countries.

The USSR suggested that the establishment of this zone could be started in Central Europe within the framework of the Vienna talks on reducing armed forces and armaments in the region. The USSR declared readiness to take part in talks concerning the establishment of that zone, including its geographic dimensions and control measures ...

Yet, the Swedish proposal, which would have made it possible to significantly lower the level of military confrontation in Europe, had not become the subject of talks because of the negative attitudes of the United States and some NATO countries. They showed no interest in restricting tactical nuclear weapons, which would have had major significance for alleviating the tense situation of nuclear confrontation in Europe, for lessening the nuclear threat and for securing mutual trust among nations ...

[The] United States and the other Western nuclear powers have actually refused to commit themselves to pledges that would open the way to a real solution of the above-mentioned issues. Because of their negative stand, there is also no progress at the talks on strengthening security guarantees for the non-nuclear states. The US and NATO ruling circles seek to have a choice of options for retaining their nuclear weapons on foreign territory, deploying them in places where they are still absent, and eventually using them.

This stand naturally reduces the possibility of finding generally acceptable solutions to establishing regional nuclear-free zones and formalising agreements concerning a nuclear-free status of specific countries. This also hampers the gradual lowering of the level of nuclear confrontation, both global and regional, and the elimination of the danger of a nuclear conflict.