

“The Power of Weak States in International Politics”

The Inaugural Fulbright Professorship Lecture

by László Borhi

Monday, March 25th, 4:00pm

Walnut Room, IMU

The role of weak states in the international system is ambiguous and their role in shaping international politics is underappreciated. They are often pawns, but they can occasionally be policy makers. In the 20th century profound domestic changes in weak powers led to major changes in the international regime. Power in international politics, therefore, may not always be determined by military and economic factors alone.



Austrian FM Alois Mock and Hungarian FM Gyula Horn cutting the barbed wire separating East and West in Sopron, Hungary, 27 June 1989

This talk examines the weak states of East Central Europe in the 20th century. These include instances when powerful actors shaped the destinies of the weak states and also examples of how small countries were able to occasionally even shape the course of international politics. Three critical periods will be investigated: the aftermath of World War I and the creation of the new European order; the diplomacy of the Cold War that established the division of Europe immediately before and after 1945; and finally the collapse of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe in 1989.



László Borhi is a Fulbright Visiting Professor at Indiana University and a Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, who focuses on the history of the Cold War and international relations in the interwar period. He was a fellow of the Woodrow Wilson Center, guest researcher of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, the Russian Academy of Sciences and George Washington University. In 2006 he was awarded the Gold Cross of Merit of the Hungarian Republic.