

On the Struggle for Peace

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THE U.S.'S WITHDRAWAL from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate- and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF) may prove useful – however, only if it gets normal people throughout the world and, most importantly, many of us Russians to come out of years-long hibernation. This hibernation could be described as strategic parasitism.

There has not been a large-scale war in the world for more than 70 years now. Over the past three decades, relative peace has been accompanied by a rapid increase in living standards for billions of people. People have begun to think that this state of peace is not only normal but will also stay with us forever.

Meanwhile, 95% of it is the result not of our responsibility and peacefulness, but the fear of a nuclear apocalypse and hope for mutual nuclear deterrence. However, reliance on it is becoming increasingly fragile. In recent years, strategic stability (this term usually refers to the level of the threat of nuclear war) is rapidly deteriorating. I will venture to say that the current level of threat is comparable to the time right after the Cuban missile crisis that almost led to a global catastrophe. Prior to it, in the 1950s, the situation was perhaps even worse than it is now: an uncontrolled arms race and bitter hostility. Nevertheless, the vector of development is toward the 1950s. Russia's policy needs reviewing. The struggle to avert war should become the most important vector of this policy.

A New Strategic Situation

I WILL BEGIN by describing not military and technical, but political and psychological factors. During the first four decades after World War II,

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states were ruled by people who remembered its horrors and were really afraid of war, especially a nuclear war, with reckless adventurers and radicals being consistently sidelined. As a person who has studied the history of the Cold War, I can affirm that after the 1940s, the most menacing doctrines were a bluff, albeit a dangerous one, designed to enhance the deterrence effect and intimidate the adversary, and of course, serve the interests of military-industrial complexes. I can even prove that the Americans, despite all of their statements, had no plans to use nuclear weapons in the event of war in Europe so as not to provoke a retaliatory strike against their territory.

Soviet military plans have not yet been declassified, but I am convinced that they were primarily aimed at avoiding war. N.S. Khrushchev was replaced not least because he brought about the Caribbean crisis. The Soviet leadership, which had emerged from the Great Patriotic War, was doing all it could to avoid such a repetition. (They even overdid it, turning the USSR into a mechanism for servicing a giant military machine, which in the end overstrained it.)

You can mock that generation's "struggle for peace," but it kept the peace. These days, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who fought are at the helm; the fear of war is increasingly disappearing, and there are more and more bellicose statements. Taking peace for granted, forgetting the horrors of war, and the seemingly innocuous computer war games or certain TV serials – all this is also weakening the resistance of societies. The disturbing uncertainty that exists in the minds of both the elites and the masses encourages simple solutions.

The situation is aggravated by the sharply deteriorating quality of the ruling classes over the last two or three decades, especially in the West. The American problem is out in the open, for all to see. As for Europe – it is enough to compare the Old World leaders of 30-50 years ago with current ones. The situation is only partially helped by the generally higher standards of emerging "new" actors. However, so far, they are not playing a leading role in defining the vector of development with regard to international security, except in Russia.

The unprecedentedly rapid changes in the lineup of forces in the world that have occurred over the past 15 to 20 years are a powerful destabilization factor. Until just recently, it seemed that the West won the final victory. However, at present, it is on the defensive. The U.S. is trying to counterattack, pursuing an "America First" economic policy and undertaking a major rearmament program. It looks like the slogan of past

decades – “How to deal with the rise of the new” – has to give way to another slogan: “How to deal with the decline of the old.”

Two globalist ideologies of the 20th century – communism and liberalism – have collapsed. The vacuum is being rapidly filled by nationalism. This trend is being intensified by the rise of Asia, a continent of nation states. Old conflicts are being unfrozen

there or new ones are emerging right before our eyes: Japan and its neighbors, China and India, Pakistan and India, and Sunni monarchies and Iran.

The situation in the military-technical sphere is disturbing. There was a new round of nuclear proliferation. A series of attacks against countries that have abandoned nuclear weapons, primarily Iraq and Libya, greatly strengthens the position of those who want to acquire such weapons. Furthermore, this is becoming technologically easier. The U.S.’s withdrawal from the Antiballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2002, its recent exit from the Iran nuclear deal and now also from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate- and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF) are cutting the ground from under the nonproliferation regime, a key component of which was the commitment to reduce arsenals.

An extremely dangerous cyber arms race has begun. Certain states may already have strategic cyber weapons – i.e., the capability to destroy economies and societies. About 15 years ago, Russia and China proposed that cyber weapons and the entire cyber sphere be placed under control. The United States refused, hoping to maintain its leadership in this area. Now the genie is out of the bottle, and it is unlikely that the situation can be placed under control. Meanwhile, cyber weapons are perhaps the cheapest means of mass destruction. The question is: How will they get into terrorists’ hands and when, and how will it be possible to distinguish between terrorist attacks and attacks by states? And how to deter such attacks, which will most likely be covert?

A new generation of nonnuclear weapons has been developed or is being developed. They are essentially strategic, blurring the distinction between nuclear and conventional warfare. As for the U.S., just as during Cold War years (at that time, there was a bazooka with a nuclear warhead and a “neutron bomb”), it plans to develop and deploy super-low-yield nuclear weapons under the pretext of making nuclear deterrence more

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reliable and credible. However, the result is the same – namely, the nuclear threshold is lowered, and the threat of war increases. It is quite likely that this path will be followed or is already being followed by other nuclear powers, which are keeping their projects tightly under wraps.

The ongoing wave of smart robotic weapons programs is highly disturbing. It blurs the line between war and peace and weakens political control and the responsibility of leaders for their actions.

The arms control regime, established in the 1970s and 1980s and extended into the past decade with regard to strategic offensive forces, had certain flaws. It was more beneficial to a party that had a propaganda advantage, setting its own rules. From day one, this was the U.S. Very often, the negotiation process imposed or even provoked the buildup of arms and military spending in order to accumulate so-called bargaining chips. The arms control process was also used to militarize politics and thinking. It was based mostly on an artificial criterion, namely, the parity or numerical equality of the parties' armaments and armed forces. It was particularly senseless in the context of negotiations on the conventional armed forces in Europe, where Napoleon invariably routed large armies and 300 Spartans held back the 100,000-strong Persian army.

However, in the past, the arms control process was generally useful. It helped improve the political climate, was conducive to greater predictability and reduced distrust. At some point (in the 1970s), it helped halt the buildup of strategic potentials, which had long been unnecessary for both parties. (There were tens of thousands of warheads.)

Be that as it may, this process is practically dead now. At first, NATO refused to modernize the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, although the armed forces of the former Warsaw Pact countries, as well as of some Soviet republics, ended up on its side and the bloc gained numerical superiority. The U.S.'s withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in 2002 in the hope of achieving superiority dealt a fatal blow to the process.

This treaty was the foundation of the entire strategic arms limitation concept. Predictably, the US failed to achieve superiority. Russia sprang into action and began to modernize its strategic and substrategic forces, developing a new generation of systems that can assuredly penetrate any conceivable missile defense system. Vladimir Putin spoke about these weapons in his well-known address to the Federal Assembly on March 1, 2018. They preemptively devalue the U.S.'s huge investment plans. There is good reason to say that so far Russia is winning the arms race without even becoming involved in it.

The current administration has once again cast itself in the role of a Herostratus, announcing the withdrawal from the INF Treaty. It seems that the turn of the last strategic arms limitation treaty – i.e., the New START Treaty – will also come, sooner or later. There are several goals. First of all, to try once again to restore military superiority on which the West's 500-year domination in the global political and economic system, as well as in culture and ideology, was based. An even more obvious goal is to pave the way for the planned massive modernization of strategic systems in order to fuel the strategic nuclear weapons segment of the military-industrial complex that has somewhat run out of steam over the past three decades.

The U.S. is making no secret of its intention to get Russia and China involved in the arms race. This would be beneficial for the U.S., which so far is richer. I am convinced that there is also an expectation that by provoking Russia and China into creating new-generation intermediate-range systems, the United States will deepen their mutual suspicions. After all, such systems can be regarded as being directed against each other. A part of the American strategic community also has plans to provoke a new "missile crisis" in Europe modeled on the 1970s and the 1980s, which heightened tensions on the subcontinent and deepened its split.

One such attempt was already made a few years ago, when a number of pro-Atlantic and pro-American European figures proposed the idea of launching negotiations on the reduction of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, of which Russia has more. (These weapons are necessary to compensate for NATO's conventional superiority, as well as for other purposes.) The plan was to create an artificial gap that would justify the deployment of new U.S. systems and militarize European politics. However, Russia, despite persistent calls from certain domestic arms control experts, who wanted to go back to the good old days, did not walk into the trap.

Maybe there are already genetic weapons, including the capability to covertly infect seed material, causing a catastrophic drop of harvest, livestock losses, and ultimately even to affect ethnic and social groups.

Against the backdrop of these dangerous strategic and political shifts, a vicious propaganda war has been unleashed, with the demonization of the opposing side, especially Russia. This propaganda cannonade is strongly reminiscent of psychological preparations for war, although it may have other roots, primarily domestic. This is particularly evident in

the United States. The sum total of the abovementioned factors points to an unequivocal conclusion: This is an acute prewar situation.

Russia's Policy

IF THIS DESCRIPTION is correct, Russia's policy does not fully measure up to current challenges. Of course, our contribution to international security is more than tangible. In addition, I will venture to say that Russia is its most important source in the world, especially since restoring its active strategic deterrence capability. Let us recall how, during the period of Russia's political, economic, moral, and military weakness, the "defensive alliance of democratic states," i.e., NATO, believing that it had complete freedom of action, like a mad dog on the loose, committed a series of aggressions – against Yugoslavia, Libya and Iraq (with the participation of most of its member countries).

In Syria, Russia stopped a series of "color revolutions" that destabilized entire regions and destroyed the normal life of countries and peoples. In Ukraine, NATO expansion, threatening a big war, was also stopped, albeit belatedly. Through our cooperation with China, we maintain stability, development and peace in Central Eurasia.

However, in recent years, Russia's foreign policy (except for its most important, purely military and Middle Eastern components) has been clearly losing traction. It has lost its fervor and momentum.

Russia has failed to put forward an attractive concept of the world order that it would like to create in conjunction with its partners. The concepts of multipolarity or opposition to the U.S.'s attempts to regain its dominant position are basically correct but pointed to the past, do not lead forward and have no appeal anymore. Russia put forward the idea of creating a greater Eurasia and received formal support for it from Beijing but did not develop it or flesh it out. It may suffer the same fate as the 1990s ideas of creating a new all-European security system based on the OSCE or the new European security treaty initiative of the 2000s. Russia proclaimed them and then drew back, allowing its partners/rivals, who were afraid of change, to bury those ideas.

Together with our partners, we created and launched the Eurasian Economic Union. It made a lot of headway in the first two or three years of its existence, but then it got stuck. It seems that there are no new ideas or the will to promote them. A "pivot to the East," to new promising markets was announced. However, it will also run out of steam if it remains

purely economic, is not backed up by humanitarian, cultural and educational components, remains a development project for just one, albeit important region, i.e., the Russian Far East, and does not become nationwide, unless it includes other Siberian regions.

It is also necessary to review the concept for the development of Russia's eastern regions, taking into account changes on Asian markets. There is a pressing need for efforts to put in place a regional security system in Northeast Asia. We proclaimed our goal and it looked like our partners agreed. But then, we apparently forgot about it. However, relations between countries in the region are strained. Russia is the only country that has more or less acceptable relations with all of them.

Considering the crisis of the European project and the fact that most European elites are preoccupied with its salvation, as well as with their own salvation, not much can be achieved in Europe so far. Nevertheless, it is possible and necessary to work with people, corporations and countries. It is essential to propose long-term co-development projects to the Europeans – evidently in a Eurasian format. One reason for the failure of the previous round of rapprochement with Europe was the lack of a common co-development goal or its lackluster promotion (the so-called four spaces of close cooperation between Russia and the EU).

By contrast, Russia pursued projects that were no longer relevant. This line must not be allowed to continue. Why keep participating in resurrecting institutions from the Cold War era that have outlived their usefulness? We should not get carried away (like the Americans) with destroying institutions and regimes. However, trying to resurrect the dead is also unnecessary and absurd. Even so, the desire to maintain a political dialogue with NATO is completely incomprehensible. Didn't we take our appeasement efforts a bit too far? With our willingness to maintain an empty dialogue in the past, we legitimized an irrelevant alliance that had outlived its usefulness, and helped it endure and expand. They refused to acknowledge that confrontation was its *raison d'être*. So when it goes away, pro-NATO circles try to restore it, and this is what is happening. Holding on to this function and afraid of European members consolidating their position within the alliance, the NATO bureaucracy refused even to deal with the most pressing problems, namely reinforcing Europe's southern borders. Now the latter is paying the price for that.

Another little known, but originally very important function of the alliance is to impose and support regimes amenable to the U.S. and oriented toward it. This function has now come up to the surface again, as

NATO is drawing in countries that do not face any external threat from anywhere even in theory. Are we interested in such orders being imposed?

If at the initial stages of our engagement with NATO we still entertained the hope that we sought cooperation with a “defensive alliance of democratic countries,” how can we now justify our hope for “equal cooperation” with an alliance that has stained itself with bloody aggression? This line is not only morally flawed, but also impractical, since it encourages the worst in our partners. The societies of NATO member countries, as well as of potential members, should be aware that the alliance is guilty of aggression and war crimes.

Another cause for concern is our desire to come to terms with the United States no matter what and go begging for a meeting with Donald Trump, even though he does not have a positive agenda yet and cannot have one in principle. I am also surprised by the extent to which the situation in the U.S. is being discussed in the Russian media. This fascination with America also comes from something that belongs in mothballs, from the time when Soviet people tried to catch up with the U.S. or at least buy blue jeans there, while new Russia in effect treated the U.S. as a model to emulate. Maximum possible detachment, coupled with dialogue between the militaries, would be a far more productive line to follow. In the future, when the Americans no longer have domestic reasons for hostility, rapprochement may be possible.

What's Next?

MANY ANSWERS are contained in the questions that were asked earlier, or they are not a subject of discussion in this article. I will consider some of the most obvious things.

I will not talk about the lack of an accelerated economic development strategy as the most effective response to the Cold War unleashed against us. I will focus on certain foreign policy areas that, in my opinion, are important and viable.

If political dialogue with NATO is to continue it should necessarily include the issue of reparations and compensation to victims of the bloc's aggression – not only and not so much Crimea or the Donets Basin. Military dialogue – far more active than at present – is indispensable: with the NATO Military Committee and the defense ministries of key member countries. Russia's permanent representative to NATO should be a general, with civilian advisers.

It is advisable to scale down military activity in the west and, as far as possible, not to succumb to provocations that are organized and will continue to be organized by circles interested in restoring the pattern of relations of the past Cold War in the Atlantic world, as well as in relations with Russia. (European elites are trying to retain the American “umbrella” while the Americans, who are pulling out and are not willing to pay for it, would like to leave the subcontinent as divided as possible and its Western part as dependent as possible.)

It is certainly inadvisable to play up our rather modest, albeit relatively effective defensive efforts, constantly stressing instead that military spending in NATO countries is almost 20 times higher than in Russia and that they have far more men under arms.

The best approach is mocking detachment. This is the most that our partners deserve so far.

It would be a good idea to propose a European security dialogue to the EU, which is looking for an opportunity to become a key player in this sphere. We have many common and even aligning interests. Dialogue would also be constructive in preventing this vector from slipping into the old course of confrontation with Russia.

Rapid military-technical response to the U.S.’s withdrawal from the INF Treaty is not the best possible option. This step is bad for all. However, the Americans must pay the maximum price for it, becoming in the eyes of the world community what they really are – namely, the main challenge to international security and strategic stability.

If it becomes necessary to respond with additional armaments, they can be deployed later. The same line should evidently be followed in case Washington does not extend the New START Treaty, which is a likely scenario but is not a foregone conclusion.

However, in any case, there will be a change in the general approach toward the role of the arms limitation process in ensuring global security. Restoring it to its old form is impossible: both because of the U.S.’s destructive position and because the military-technical situation has become more complicated. How to count and what to count – this was extremely difficult even in the past. However, today, this is becoming simply impossible because of the complexity of modern weapons systems, the blurring of boundaries between them and the increasing number of strategic players.

It is imperative to move away from the parity principle. A part of the strategic capability inherited from the past – specifically sea- and ground-

launched intercontinental ballistic missiles with multiple reentry vehicles, as well as strategic aviation – should be maintained, modernized and upgraded. They are needed to maintain the status quo and keep the other side in fear of the inevitability of massive retaliation for aggressive actions. In this context, submarines, i.e., torpedoes with giant warheads that can “sleep” for years off the coast of countries pursuing hostile policies, and new heavy missiles that can counterattack from any direction are highly valuable assets.

Then it is essential to move into the “gray zone.” In theory, openness is useful for avoiding mistakes and making the strategic environment more predictable. However, so far, it is beneficial primarily for the richer party that has the capability to stay ahead in the arms race, setting its pace and its vector. The Soviet Union tried to catch up, among other things, by maintaining “parity,” and overstrained itself. If the other side follows a policy of hostility, once again chooses to pursue the chimera of superiority and disregards the existing agreements, playing by the old rules is counterproductive. It is better to put more emphasis on asymmetric, partially concealed and cheaper options. If it proves impossible to halt the arms race, then it is better to win this race with ability, not with numbers. The concept of “strategic ambiguity” – i.e., a situation where, hypothetically speaking, the opposite side does not know what you will pull out if you reach in your pocket: a handkerchief or a handgun – would also be helpful.

Of course, the proposed course of action is not optimal. It increases risks. Nevertheless, continuing to move further along the old path of the arms race, with its restrictions and limitations, is senseless and prohibitively expensive, especially with partners who cannot be trusted after what they did.

In the future, a partial alternative to the old arms limitation process could be dialogue between Russia, China and the U.S. on international strategic stability measures. Other strategically important powers – nuclear and threshold states – could be invited to join this forum.

Such a format should be backed up by strengthening a network of hot-lines between top military officials and politicians in major powers in order to avoid war, accidental escalation or provocation.

Treaty-based arms limitations and reductions could subsequently be replaced with coordinated unilateral steps.

Efforts should be made to limit certain areas of the arms race, in particular outer space and genetic weapons. Such efforts are unlikely to yield

results but can lay the groundwork for the future. So far, arms control efforts are producing no results. We are at a historical point where “losers” are using all tools at their disposal – military, political, economic, and informational – to stop or reverse the course of history, while “winners” are not sure of their victory, its meaning or its benefits.

The main thing now is to prevent a new large-scale war, which is increasingly likely and can destroy both “winners” and “losers” in the history of humankind.

Therefore, the key policy area for all responsible forces and countries, above all Russia, should be the struggle for peace – through effective deterrence, by establishing multilateral military and political communication systems and exposing forces and countries responsible for escalating confrontation and a new arms race. It is vital to rouse humankind from the lethargy of strategic parasitism, activate its protective functions and form the broadest possible peace coalitions. Naturally, this old/new struggle should be conducted with the use of modern methods and technologies. As for how it should be conducted, I believe PR and propaganda experts should think about that. This struggle is a worthy application of their professional skills. However, the decision to begin it should be made by society and the state, getting as many countries and community groups as possible involved in it. Still, a positive agenda is by far the most important thing here.

At present, the new struggle against the growing threat of war is being urged almost exclusively by worthy “old men” who prevented a nuclear disaster in the past, but also failed to create a reliable security system after the last Cold War, and “lost peace.” New age groups, social and professional groups, which are currently asleep, should be involved in this struggle.

The struggle for peace is not about nostalgia for younger days. I am thoroughly disgusted with Cold War lies and hatred. However, our stupidity, naivety and faith in good luck during the postwar period are equally shameful. These days, our relative passivity against the backdrop of what I regard as a very dangerous situation is also very disturbing. No one except us will be able to protect our interests or vital global interests.

Key words: INF Treaty, AMB Treaty, New START Treaty, co-development goals, dialogue between Russia, China and the U.S.