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**RUSSIA:
ARMS CONTROL, DISARMAMENT AND
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

IMEMO SUPPLEMENT
TO THE RUSSIAN EDITION
OF THE SIPRI YEARBOOK 2015

Preface by Alexander Dynkin

Editors
Alexei Arbatov and Sergei Oznobishchev

Editorial Assistant
Tatiana Anichkina

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The volume provides IMEMO contributions to *the Russian edition of the 2015 SIPRI Yearbook: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. The contributors address issues involving US-Russian cooperation on Syria, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran, North Korean nuclear and missile programme, NATO-Russian relations, peacekeeping operations in Ukraine. This year's edition also highlights issues of US military responses to international crises, military threats in the Arctic, Russia's defence budget, international cooperation on information security, relations between Russia and CIS/CSTO countries, and activities of the Islamic State.

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PREFACE

The Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations presents the 16th edition of *Russia: Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security* – its Special Supplement to the Russian edition of the SIPRI Yearbook traditionally compiled by the Institute's leading experts.

The chapters of this volume focus on cooperative trends in strengthening regional and international security. The trends indicate that first attempts have been made at improving international relations in the aftermath of the most devastating Ukrainian crisis.

So far the results of such cooperation have been mixed. The US-Russian collaboration on Syria is one of the examples discussed in the Supplement. It vividly illustrates the complexity of the current situation in which the great powers actively compete and at the same time have to cooperate in areas where their interests partly converge.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action signed on July 14, 2015 between Iran, the P5+1 (the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, China), and the European Union came as a notable diplomatic compromise reflecting the parties' political interests in a form of technical requirements. This agreement was intended to settle the issue of Iran's nuclear programme that in the previous years had reached a critical level that could prompt a military solution. The Supplement provides an in-depth analysis of both the document itself and issues related to its implementation today and in the future.

Unlike this crisis in which long-lasting and steady efforts of the international community finally produced an ambitious deal, the problem of the North Korean nuclear and missile potential has recently become even more complicated. The Supplement provides expert assessments of DPRK's capability to develop and produce nuclear weapons and delivery systems, as well as possible ways to overcome the deadlock in the six-party talks on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula since 2009.

Decades long NATO expansion to the east was an important factor contributing to the sharp deterioration of relations between Russia and the West. Therefore the analysis of the Alliance's

evolving policy and increasing military activity appears to be very relevant and timely. Practical suggestions aimed at reducing tension in the NATO-Russia relations provided in the volume are of special interest.

The Supplement analyzes many other relevant topics including the issues of peacekeeping in the wake of the crisis in Ukraine, US military response to international crises, assessment of military threats in the Arctic, analysis of Russia's military budget and the difficulties of implementation of the 2020 State Armaments Programme, prospects of international cooperation on information security, cooperation between Russia and the CIS countries, and major trends in the activities of the Islamic State.

This volume also provides a summary of key Russian national security and arms control laws and regulations passed in 2015. This information would be particularly useful to experts looking for source material.

The Supplement is a result of a major collective effort. I would like to express my gratitude to Academician Alexei Arbatov and Marianna Yevtodyeva for compiling and editing this volume. Special thanks go to Tatiana Anichkina who did the immense work on the English version of the texts.

A word of appreciation is also due to those who contributed articles for this volume –Alexei Arbatov, Natalia Bubnova, Stanislav Ivanov, Alexander Nikitin, Sergei Oznobishchev, Lyudmila Pankova, Natalia Romashkina, Dmitri Trenin, Vadim Vladimirov, Victor Yesin, and Andrei Zagorski.

I also gratefully acknowledge the lasting support of this project by the Swiss Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sports.

Academician Alexander Dynkin, Director,
Primakov National Research Institute of
World Economy and International Relations,
Russian Academy of Sciences
June 2016

ACRONYMS

AF	– armed forces
AME	– armaments and military equipment
ASEAN	– Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BMD	– ballistic missile defence
BRICS	– Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CBM	– confidence- and security-building measure
CFE	– 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CIA	– Central Intelligence Agency of the USA
CIS	– Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	– Collective Security Treaty Organization
CTBT	– Comprehensive Nuclear–Test–Ban Treaty
CW	– chemical weapons
DIC	– defence-industrial complex
DPR	– Donetsk People’s Republic
EEU	– Eurasian Economic Union
ELWR	– experimental light water reactor
FC	– Federation Council of the Russian Federation
FSB	– Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation
FTP	– federal target programme
GBI	– Ground Based Interceptor
GDP	– gross domestic product
HEU	– highly enriched uranium
IAEA	– International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	– intercontinental ballistic missile
ICT	– information and communication technologies
IIS	– international information security
INF Treaty	– 1987 Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate- Range and Shorter-Range Missiles
IRBM	– intermediate range ballistic missile
IRI	– Islamic Republic of Iran
IS	– Islamic State
ISAF	– International Security Assistance Force
ISIL	– Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JCPOA	– Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
LAS	– League of Arab States
LEU	– low-enriched uranium

LPR	– Luhansk People’s Republic
MFA	– Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
MIRV	– multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle
MTC	– military-technical (technological) cooperation
NATO	– North Atlantic Treaty Organization
New START	– 2010 Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms
NFC	– nuclear fuel cycle
NGO	– non-governmental organization
NPT	– 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NRC	– NATO–Russia Council
NRF	– NATO Response Force
OSCE	– Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SAP	– state armament programme
SCO	– Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SD	– State Duma of the Russian Federation
SDO	– state defence order
SLBM	– submarine-launched ballistic missile
SMM	– OSCE Special Monitoring Mission
SNF	– spent nuclear fuel
START	– Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
SZRF	– Sobranie zakonodatelstva Rossiiskoy Federatsii (Statute Book of the Russian Federation)
TLE	– treaty-limited equipment
TNW	– tactical nuclear weapon
UAV	– unmanned aerial vehicle
UN	– United Nations
UNCLOS	– United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNSC	– United Nations Security Council
WMD	– weapons of mass destruction

PART I. ANALYSES, FORECASTS, DISCUSSIONS

1. Russian-American partnership on Syria: cooperation in the midst of confrontation
2. The Iran deal and the prospects of strengthening of the NPT
3. North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile ambitions
4. Russia and NATO: from the Ukrainian crisis to the renewed interaction
5. Peacekeeping issues and the conflict in Ukraine

1. RUSSIAN-AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP ON SYRIA: COOPERATION IN THE MIDST OF CONFRONTATION

Dmitri TRENIN

Russian-American cooperation on the Syria issue is one of the most interesting and controversial subjects in international relations today. It reflects the complexity of a situation in which Russia actively challenges the US over the character and structure of the global system while also inviting it to cooperate in areas of mutual interest. In this context, cooperation itself takes the form of competition.

Since the start of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, Russian-American relations have been in a state of confrontation. Given the difference in the two states' might and international status, this confrontation is clearly asymmetric. Having failed to find its place in the US-centered global system in the 25 years after the end of the Cold War, Russia shifted toward defending its interests and openly challenging US global dominance.

Many compare the current Russian-American confrontation to the Cold War, and some actually refer to it as the New Cold War. Although some important similarities do exist, here the conditions of the ongoing struggle, its goals and methods are materially different from the situation of the 1940-1980s. Drawing too close parallels between the past and present situation are wrong, both on an analytical and political level.

The Russian-American confrontation is not absolute. Both sides have important goals that can be achieved only if they cooperate. These interests include preventing nuclear war, containing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and

eradicating international extremism that uses terrorism as its main weapon.

Despite the presence of these common interests, it is confrontation that plays the dominant role in current Russian-American relations, while cooperation comes in second. It is cooperation in the midst of confrontation. This cooperation takes place in the context of virtually complete lack of trust between the parties. Unlike at the time of the Cold War, cooperation now involves two clearly unequal players. Finally, and most importantly, Russia is seeking to coerce the United States to cooperate with it on co-equal terms, while Americans are reluctant to engage with Russia on that basis and only do so if strictly necessary.

This is particularly evident in the case of the Syrian crisis. The paper discusses aspects of cooperation between Russia and the United States on the Syrian issue and the preliminary results of the military operation by the Russian Aerospace Defence Force in Syria (September 2015 – May 2016).

US and Russian policies on Syria in 2011-2015: key aspects

The Syrian crisis grew out of a popular uprising against the authoritarian regime of the Assad family, which has been in power in Damascus since 1970. The uprising that broke out in 2011 against the backdrop of the Arab Spring drew moral and political support from the West, especially the United States. By the spring of 2011, when the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes had already fallen, the Barack Obama administration had made an ideological and political choice to align itself with the victory of anti-authoritarian revolutions in the Arab world. Washington saw the removal of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria as particularly desirable, considering the close alliance between Damascus and Teheran, the main opponent of the United States in the Middle East for decades.

For the Russian leadership, the Arab Spring appeared to be a modification of the concept of ‘color revolutions’ – the technology that, the Kremlin believes, the United States has used since the early 2000’s to eliminate undesirable regimes and promote its interests in different regions of the world, including the Balkans and the post-Soviet space. Moscow, however, simultaneously believed that

Washington will not be able to cope with the forces unleashed by the Arab spring. In Moscow's view, the collapse of the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East would bring in Islamist rule rather than democracy.

The fact that by the early 2010's Syria had remained the last vestige of the once sprawling Soviet system of geopolitical alliances in the Middle East was not overlooked in Moscow. Damascus continued buying Russian weapons, used the services of Russian military advisors and was generally on friendly terms with Russia without being its ally, even informally.

As the protests inside the country turned into a full-blown civil war, Moscow and Washington have taken opposite stands on the Syrian conflict. The United States declared the Assad regime illegitimate¹, and President Barack Obama predicted its speedy collapse. Americans started helping the Syrian opposition. Russia, on the other hand, after a number of unsuccessful attempts to steer Bashar al-Assad toward compromise with his opponents, decided to extend military and diplomatic aid to the Assad regime. As a result, the two powers found themselves indirectly involved in the Syrian conflict as adversaries.

While the Obama administration was seeking change in the Middle East, it tried to stay away from the front lines, relying on its allies and clients instead. This approach became evident during the 2011 conflict in Libya, when the United States was leading from behind the operation on Muammar Qaddafi's removal, leaving much of the bombing and fighting to its European NATO allies and Arab states.

Washington's policy was aimed at removing Assad from power and replacing him with the Sunni opposition that included 'moderate' Islamists supported by the United States and its allies – Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. Washington believed that regime change in Damascus would seriously weaken the Iranian influence in the region and complicate matters for Hezbollah, the Lebanon-based military and political faction and Iran's other ally. Such an

¹ White House, President Obama: The future of Syria must be determined by its people, but President Bashar al-Assad is standing in their way, 18 Aug. 2011, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/08/18/president-obama-future-syria-must-be-determined-its-people-president-bashar-al-assad/>>.

outcome would enhance the security of Israel, a key ally for the United States. Jerusalem was most fearful about the growth of Iranian influence in close proximity to Israeli borders. Thus, it welcomed the battle between the Sunni and the Shia forces within the Islamic world as an obstacle to creating a unified front against Israel.

The Russian leadership also had its own hierarchy of goals on the Syrian front. On the global level, Moscow was trying to restore the supremacy of the UN Security Council, where Russia has veto power, on the issues of war, peace, and international security. At the same time, Russia wanted to reaffirm the concepts of national sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of states enshrined in international law. This was particularly relevant in connection with the 2011 Libya events, when the UN Security Council mandate² for a humanitarian operation, also approved by Moscow, was improperly used by NATO to remove the ruling regime.

On the regional level, Russia sought to strengthen bulwarks against the growing global chaos in the Middle East and prevent radical Islamists from toppling a secular regime in one of the key countries in the region. Finally, Moscow wanted to preserve Syria as its friend, the point of entry to the Middle East, and a potential stronghold for Russian political and military presence there. The fact that Syria has had a significant Christian community since the biblical times also played some role from the perspective of the Kremlin's 'traditional values'.

It seemed like Moscow and Washington could come to an agreement as long as the reset policy was still nominally in place. In 2012, the two sides worked together to draft the Geneva Communiqué, which called for the end to the Syrian conflict and establishment of transitional authority. However, this agreement failed because of the disagreements about Bashar al-Assad's future. The United States insisted on his immediate resignation, while Russia opted for leaving the issue to the Syrian people. Essentially, Moscow's stance allowed Assad to stay in power and actively

² The UN Security Council Resolution 1973 (2011), 17 Mar. 2011, <<http://www.un.org/ru/documents/ods.asp?m=S/RES/1973%282011%29>>.

influence developments in his country during the crucial transition phase, which was unacceptable to the United States.

The failure of the Geneva agreement led to the escalation of the Syrian conflict and its continuing internationalization. In addition to Russia and the United States, regional players increased aid to their Syrian clients in an attempt to resolve the crisis in their favor by military means. However, the appointment of the new US Secretary of State in early 2013 offered new horizons for more active Russian-American cooperation.

John Kerry, who replaced Hillary Clinton at State, focused on trying to resolve the Middle East's hot-button issues: the Iranian nuclear problem, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Syrian conundrum. As a prominent and autonomous political figure, Kerry essentially got a *carte blanche* from Barack Obama to engage in vigorous diplomatic efforts within the framework of the president's overall agenda aimed at reducing excessive US involvement in the region. Among other things, Kerry's mandate allowed him to cooperate with Russia on the issues concerning Syria.

In May 2013, John Kerry made his first visit to Moscow as Secretary of State. He met for a substantive dialogue with Russian President Vladimir Putin. During the discussions in the Kremlin, Putin outlined³ Russia's approach to cooperation with the United States on Syria: Moscow and Washington should make a concerted effort to take charge of resolving the Syrian crisis and put pressure on the parties to work out a compromise. In essence, Putin offered the Americans the Dayton scenario but with one important correction: rather than act alone, both the United States and Russia would co-chair and guarantee the peace process – *Dayton à deux*⁴.

The Obama administration could neither accept the proposal nor even take it seriously. In Washington's view, Russia had no right to aspire to the position and the role equal to those of the United States in one of the world's key regions. Washington basically wanted Moscow to do just one thing: stop supporting Assad, make him capitulate, or at the very least not stand in the way of his ouster. In exchange, the United States was prepared to agree

³ Meeting with US Secretary John Kerry, Moscow, 7 May 2013, <<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18041/>>.

⁴ 'Dayton for two' (translation from Latin).

to preserve some Russian interests in Syria: a standing in the arms bazaar, the Tartus naval base facility, etc.

As a result, the parties found themselves at an impasse. The Russian-American summit scheduled for early September 2013 on the eve of the G20 summit in St. Petersburg was canceled because of the Edward Snowden affair (Russia had just granted political asylum to the American whistleblower). However, U.S. diplomats admitted that the decision to cancel the summit was also significantly influenced by the lack of progress on the main issues on the negotiating table – primarily, on Syria.

Then came the use of chemical weapons in a Damascus suburb in late August 2013. The United States immediately pointed its finger at the Syrian army. Thus, President Obama, who had previously said that the use of chemical weapons in Syria would be a ‘red line’ that would trigger a military strike by the United States found himself in a predicament. He was not about to directly involve the United States in the Syrian conflict but could not afford to ignore the negative consequences of the US refusal to act on its threat, either⁵.

Vladimir Putin was quick to take advantage of an unexpected opportunity. He was able to persuade Bashar al-Assad to give up the chemical weapons that Damascus had been stockpiling for years as a deterrent against Israel. Assad agreed to these conditions, since the United States essentially made clear that it would not attack his regime. In addition, Western powers de facto recognized the Syrian authorities that they would have to cooperate with on the issues of removing chemical weapons from Syria⁶. For his part, Barack Obama could now make a strong case for failing to carry out his threat and get the laurels for ridding Syria of chemical weapons.

President Putin, for his part, cared more about involving the United States in the process of eliminating the Syrian chemical weapons than about the broad international recognition of his

⁵ Goldberg, J., The Obama Doctrine, *The Atlantic*, Apr. 2016, <<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>>.

⁶ US Department of State, Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons, 14 Sep. 2013, <<http://m.state.gov/md214247.htm>>.

peacemaking efforts. In September 2013 in Geneva, Minister Lavrov and Secretary Kerry signed an agreement on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal. This was feted in Moscow as the first Russian-American agreement signed on equal terms since the end of the Cold War. The process was successfully completed in 2015 despite all the difficulties involved in removing chemical weapons from a war-torn country.

The removal and destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons had remained the only tangible Russian-American achievement in the Syrian conflict up until the fall of 2015. In fact, the Ukraine crisis brought the relations between the two countries to a state of confrontation in early 2014. The United States sought to isolate Russia politically and imposed economic sanctions against it. Direct clash between the two countries appeared possible if the armed conflict in southeast Ukraine were allowed to escalate.

Nevertheless, much to the surprise of many in the West, Moscow continued to cooperate with the United States and the other permanent members of the Security Council and Germany on the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme. As a result, an interim agreement between the P5+1 states and Iran was signed in late 2014, and the final agreement followed in 2015. Thus, despite all its seriousness, the new Russian-American confrontation visibly allowed for cooperation between Moscow and Washington on the issue of mutual interest. This was emerging as a new pattern.

The Iranian agreement did not usher in an era of détente. Russia and the United States were still acting at cross purposes and supporting adversarial forces on other issues, including the Syrian one. Moscow provided military, military-technological and diplomatic support to the Assad government, while Washington armed and financed the opposition. Military hostilities in Syria dragged on, increasing the death toll and the number of refugees and forced migrants.

By the middle of 2014, a group of jihadists on the Iraqi territory, which formerly made up the Al Qaeda core in that country, announced the creation of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, subsequently known as IS)⁷. The IS forces quickly

⁷ Al Qaeda splinter group declares Islamic 'Caliphate', *Reuters*, 29 Jun. 2014, <<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-syria-crisis-iraq-idUKKBN0F40SD20140629>>.

took over large swaths of territory in Iraq, including the main northern city of Mosul, and started threatening Baghdad. The US-trained and armed Iraqi army proved incapable of confronting the troops headed by the officers of the former army of Saddam Hussein.

The IS soon expanded into Syria's eastern regions and made the provincial city of Raqqa its capital. Thus, armed struggle in Syria became ever more intense and complicated. Assad was facing a real prospect of losing control over Damascus, which could have become the capital of the self-proclaimed IS caliphate.

The United States, which had created a coalition⁸ for the armed struggle against ISIS, remained rather passive. A number of Washington's allies – Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar – maintained contacts with ISIS for various reasons, hoping to use the group to further their geopolitical goals, primarily to weaken the positions of the Shiite forces in the region – Tehran, Baghdad, and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah.

In a situation where past restrictions on the use of force were swept aside as a result of the Ukraine crisis, Putin decided to directly involve Russian forces in the Syrian conflict. As Russian weapon supplies to Damascus poured in, the Russian contingent that included elements of the Air Force, Navy, air defences, artillery, special forces, as well as military specialists and advisors, started to take shape in Syria in the summer of 2015. The Russian military surge in the region came as a surprise to the United States. Moscow's strategy and objectives were not immediately clear even to US government experts.

The final stage of Russian preparations to the military operation in Syria coincided with the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, which drew to New York most heads of state, including the Russian president. The Obama administration did not plan a meeting between the Russian and US presidents in New York, since it would be contrary to Washington's policy of Russia's

The terrorist organization 'Islamic State' is banned in Russia and several other countries.

⁸ US Department of State, The Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, 10 Sep. 2014, <<http://www.state.gov/s/seci/>>.

political isolation. However, Russian actions in Syria forced the White House to revise its approach.

Given the presence of the US airpower and special forces in Syria, the Russian surge there posed so many questions before Washington that skipping the meeting with the Russian leader would have been seen as highly irresponsible. Obama simply could not avoid meeting Putin in person. In other words, the Russian president forced direct contact with his American counterpart, effectively demonstrating that the policy of Russia's isolation does not work. During their New York meeting, Putin informed Obama of his decision to start a Russian military operation in Syria⁹.

Not only was it the first Russian military intervention in the Middle East in history, but the country entered an armed conflict that also involved the United States. Moscow's and Washington's objectives overlapped only in part: both the United States and Russia named the IS as their enemy. In his UN General Assembly speech, Putin called for the creation of a broad international coalition against international terrorism, akin to the anti-Hitler coalition of World War II era that included the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain¹⁰. This was a strong propaganda move on Putin's part.

Russian military operation in Syria: objectives and outcomes

Accompanied by a number of diplomatic moves, including some in the sphere of Russian-American relations, Russian military operation in Syria essentially turned the Middle East into the training grounds for testing Russia's ability to return to the global stage as one of the leading players. At the same time, Vladimir Putin had several other important goals in mind.

⁹ Obama, Putin spar over Syria, *Reuters*, 29 Sep. 2015, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-assembly-obama-idUSKCN0RS1TC20150929>>.

¹⁰ Speech by Vladimir Putin at the plenary meeting of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, 28 Sep. 2015, <<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50385>>.

- Restraining and weakening Islamic radicalism and extremism, whose influence might expand to the Russian territory, as well as other neighboring post-Soviet states.

- Supporting friendly factions and regimes in the region and creating long-term geopolitical alliances.

- Maintaining Russia's limited military presence in the region and on its borders.

- Expanding Russian presence on regional markets as it relates to arms, nuclear fuel, oil and gas, food and some other areas.

- Attracting investments into Russia, including the investments by rich Persian Gulf states.

- Maintaining the stability of energy prices through coordinated efforts with the key oil and gas suppliers in the Persian Gulf.

This list of Moscow's high-priority goals in the Middle East can be continued. Some other priorities that Moscow set for itself include: cooperating with the US on the peaceful resolution of the Syrian crisis; expanding and strengthening ties with Iran as sanctions against it are being loosened; maintaining close relations with Egypt, Iraq, and the Kurds – both in Syria and in Iraq; creating an axis of allies from Tehran to Cairo; forging pragmatic relations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, to the extent possible; coordinating one's steps with Israel. Ensuring the internal stability inside the Russian Federation also plays an important part. Russia seeks to stem the spread of radical Islam on its own territory¹¹ in light of the fact that Muslims comprise 12% of the country's population and the majority of the population in several Russian republics. Besides, the number of Muslim labor migrants in many regions is on the rise.

The military operation in Syria significantly increased Russia's importance in the region. Russia intervened in the conflict directly when it became clear that the Assad regime may fall at the hands of the Islamic State. The Islamic extremists' victory in Syria

¹¹ Here is how Vladimir Putin expressed his position when he issued an order to commence the military operation in Syria. He believes that Islamic extremists would attack Russia even if it had not intervened in Syria and Iraq. 'If the fight is inevitable, you have to strike first', the Russian president said at the meeting of Valdai International Discussion Club, 22 Oct. 2015, <<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50548>>.

might have seriously strengthened the support for their cause across the Islamic world, including Russia's Muslims.

Moscow has pursued a reasonable but risky strategy. First, it would help Assad to overpower his enemies outside of Islamic state, who are referred to as 'moderate opposition' in the West. Second, as soon as the opposition offensive weakens, the parties would sign a ceasefire agreement, and Russia and the United States would oversee the Syrian-Syrian negotiations. Third, Moscow would act as a mediator and a guarantor of a peace agreement between various Syrian forces. Fourth, it would forge a broad coalition that would include Russia, the US, European countries, and regional powers (Iran, Iraq, and Syria) to combat and vanquish the Islamic State.

The United States did not welcome the Russian direct military involvement in Syria, but Washington just could not condemn the Russian attack against the very same adversary the Americans themselves were combatting for over a year. The Americans mostly criticized Russia for bombing moderate opposition forces instead of ISIS installations. Besides, Obama and his team believed that Russia would get bogged down in the 'new Afghanistan' quagmire¹², suffer painful losses, and be embroiled in the Sunni-Shiite conflict on the Shiite side, which could have domestic consequences for Russia, where Sunni Muslims make up the majority of Islam adherents.

Meanwhile, Moscow had a new task on its plate. Having secured the White House and the State Department, it now sought to force the Pentagon to cooperate with Russia's Defence Ministry. In conjunction with Iraq, Iran, and the Syrian regime, Russia established a military coordination center in Baghdad¹³, where the United States had demonstrated its global military dominance with the defeat of Saddam Hussein's forces in 2003. A representative of Russia's Defence Ministry at the center requested a meeting with the US military attaché in Iraq to inform him of the immediate start

¹² Dove, E., Putin risks a new Afghanistan, Obama warns, *Politico*, 12 Feb. 2015, <<http://www.politico.eu/article/putin-risks-a-new-afghanistan-obama-warns-cop21-isil/>>.

¹³ Russia, Syria, Iraq and Iran established a center in Baghdad for coordination of the fight against IS, *Interfax*, 26 Sep. 2015, <www.interfax.ru/world/469401>.

of Russian airstrikes against targets on the Syrian territory¹⁴. The US military was told by the Russians not to enter that zone to avoid incidents.

Just as in the case of Barack Obama in New York, Moscow's calculations worked, though only up to a point. The Pentagon was forced to start talking to the Russian Defence Ministry about preventing incidents between the military forces of the two countries in Syria. However, it was not a complete success. Just as the US political leadership rejected the Russian entreaties to create the anti-terror coalition, the US military command went no further than discussing technical details to prevent incidents.

Nevertheless, limited Russian-American cooperation in Syria has become a reality. Secretary Kerry, who sincerely sought the end of the Syrian conflict, should take significant credit for bringing about a reduction of the level of violence in Syria through his diplomatic efforts and establishing close contact with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov.

On the whole, Moscow successfully carried out the first stage of its initial plan from September 2015 to March 2016 and is now working on implementing its second and third stages. Russian Aerospace and Naval Forces have performed better than many expected; their combat casualties for the entire span of the operation were minimal¹⁵. Despite Washington's ominous predictions, Moscow did not get bogged down in Syria, as it once did in Afghanistan, nor did it get embroiled in the Shia-Sunni conflict. At the same time, it managed to improve its ties with the Kurds, maintained its dialogue with Saudi Arabia and Qatar¹⁶, and

¹⁴ Russia Launches Airstrikes in Syria, ABC News, 30 Sep. 2015, <<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/us-confirms-russian-airstrikes-syria/story?id=34146198>>.

¹⁵ As of mid-May 2016, nine Russian servicemen lost their lives in Syria.

¹⁶ At this point, Russia and Saudi Arabia disagree mostly on Syria, particularly, on the Saudi support of the Syrian opposition. Nevertheless, Moscow and Riyadh have quite close diplomatic contacts. Both sides pursue a pragmatic approach, concentrating on common interests – for instance, on the support for Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi government in Egypt and the hope for the stabilization and growth of the oil prices. However, the ties between the two countries are unlikely to become especially close given the deep distrust between them (Riyadh is believed to sponsor the re-islamization of the post-Soviet space and the spread of Wahhabism there).

continued to strengthen its relations with Egypt¹⁷. In November 2015, two weeks after the Russian military campaign in Syria got underway, Turkey downed a Russian jet on the Syrian border, while Moscow reacted by imposing economic sanctions against Ankara¹⁸.

Conclusions

Considering Russia's serious political and financial limitations, the Kremlin was able to achieve a number of significant results with rather modest forces. The cost of the Syrian operation (at present, around 500 million dollars)¹⁹ is comparable to the cost of a large-scale military exercise – it did not even require a separate budget. Apart from its military involvement in the conflict, Russia has also started offering diplomatic support to the Egyptian, Syrian, and Iranian governments, supplementing it with offers of arms contracts and other export deals. When the war is over, Russia is prepared to offer Syria some assistance in rebuilding its war-torn territories; the reconstruction of Grozny illustrates Russia's abilities in this regard.

However, all these initiatives can only come to life if Russia successfully fulfills its international obligations to seek a peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict. If its diplomatic efforts fail, and the war resumes, the price of resolving the Syrian conflict may

¹⁷ The cooperation between Russia and Egypt substantially improved after General AbdelFattah Al-Sisi came to power in 2013. Vladimir Putin believes Al-Sisi to be capable of restoring some degree of stability in the largest Arab state. Thanks to the Saudi financing, Egypt was able to resume large-scale purchases of Russian arms in 2013-2014. Even though security problems at the Sharm-el-Sheikh airport resulted in the explosion of the Russian jet with 224 passengers and crew members on board over the Sinai Peninsula in October 2015, the incidents didn't significantly affect the bilateral relations.

¹⁸ This led to a substantial change in the relations between the two countries – effectively, an active regional partnership gave way to economic and military and political competition. One of the reasons for the change is the Russian military involvement in Syria, which seriously weakened Ankara's positions vis-à-vis its neighbors and really hurt its interests in Syria.

¹⁹ Solopov, M., RBK Investigates: How Much Is Russia Spending on the War in Syria?, *RBK*, 28 Oct. 2015, <<http://www.rbc.ru/investigation/politics/28/10/2015/562f9e119a79471d5d7c64e7>>.

increase significantly – especially since the collapse of the Assad regime will deal a heavy blow to Moscow's reputation. It is very important for Russia that Syria remain its friend and allow it to preserve its naval and air bases even if Bashar Assad is out of power.

As for US-Russian cooperation on Syria, by the early summer 2016 it seems to have had only limited political and diplomatic effect. The Syrian peace process led by the United States and Russia got a fresh new start in Vienna in October 2015. Damascus and the opposition began their discussions in Geneva in January 2016, and an agreement on the 'cessation of hostilities' was reached in Munich in early February 2016. According to John Kerry, the agreement reduced the level of violence in Syria by 85-90%²⁰, though later significant backsliding occurred.

The Syrian conflict lingers. The Islamic State still controls much of the country. The outcome of the Geneva negotiations, just as the future of Syria itself, is up in the air.

The Russian-American cooperation under the framework of the peace process and in the context of the parallel struggle both countries wage against the IS has become a fact that characterizes a new facet in the relations between the two countries. US-Russian cooperation, however, allows us to draw the following conclusions:

- Cooperation between Russia and the United States in the context of their continuing confrontation can take place, but it does not eliminate nor soften the confrontation.

- While offering and even imposing cooperation on the United States, Moscow is mainly concerned about restoring its great-power status on the international arena, as well as about increasing its influence in certain regions, such as the Middle East.

- Despite being forced to accept Moscow as a partner, Washington does not intend to weaken its pressure on Russia and revise its general approach towards relations with Moscow. While Syria is more important to the United States than Ukraine, Washington is not prepared to offer concessions on Eastern Europe

²⁰ US Department of State, Remarks Before Meeting With Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, John Kerry, Secretary of State, 24 Mar. 2016, <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/03/255068.htm>>.

in exchange for greater cooperation with Moscow on the Middle East.

– Even when their interests are close or identical, the Russian-American cooperation is characterized by virtually complete mutual distrust and resolute rejection of each other's basic policies.

– The presence of a common enemy – international terrorism personified by the IS or Al Qaeda is only a local factor leading to a minimum level of cooperation between Russia and the United States.

2. THE IRAN DEAL AND THE PROSPECTS OF STRENGTHENING OF THE NPT

Alexei ARBATOV

On 14 July 2015 in Vienna, Iran and P5+1 states (Russia, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, PRC and the representative of the European Union) agreed on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) intended to resolve the issue of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The document is extremely complex and includes a set of technical conditions that represent a diplomatic compromise reflecting the parties' political interests. The JCPOA will have long-term implications for Iran and its relations with other countries, and for regimes of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

First, the deal includes a package of limitations, the most important part of which concerns Iran's gas centrifuge capability for uranium enrichment. The gas centrifuge capability is the main subject of international concern as it represents the quickest way to producing a nuclear weapon. One set of centrifuge cascades can be used to produce uranium fuel for nuclear power plants (enriched to 3–4% U-235) and weapon-grade uranium (enriched to over 90% U-235). What is more, the same centrifuges can convert the stock of low-enriched uranium (LEU) intended for nuclear power plants to weapon-grade highly-enriched uranium (HEU), with this

conversion taking much shorter time than obtaining weapon-grade material from natural uranium.

The NPT does not prohibit the parties from creating atomic energy enrichment complexes, neither does it require the parties to provide any reasoning if such complexes have been placed under the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) safeguards. Iran that has been a party to the Treaty since 1970 has consistently referred to this.

Nevertheless, as experience from around the world has shown, the facilities of the nuclear fuel cycle (NFC) intended for uranium enrichment and plutonium separation from irradiated fuel are only present in countries that possess nuclear weapons (and have, in fact, initially developed the NFC for this particular purpose) or in countries that have extensive nuclear energy programmes. Indigenous uranium enrichment capability is economically pointless unless a country has an extensive nuclear energy capability, especially with low enriched uranium widely available at the global market.

At present, 12 countries besides Iran possess (or possessed) uranium enrichment complexes, of which the United States, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, China, India, Pakistan, and DPRK have nuclear weapons and initially developed nuclear fuel cycle in order to produce nuclear weapons. Brazil also initially developed enrichment capability for military purposes, yet opted for foregoing them. In addition, there are non-nuclear-weapon states that have advanced nuclear energy programmes and possess uranium enrichment capability. Those are Japan (54 reactors), Germany (18 reactors) and Netherlands (4 reactors). *The latter two operate NFC plants within a multilateral URENCO company (co-owned also by the United Kingdom and the United States)*²¹.

The situation of Iran is unique, as the country blankly denies having ambitions to develop nuclear weapons yet has no large-scale civilian nuclear industry. To date, Iran has one old research reactor in Tehran, one power reactor at the nuclear power plant in Bushehr that has been put in operation recently, and a research reactor in

²¹ Feiveson, H.A., Glaser, A., Mian, Z., Von Hippel, F.N., *Unmaking the Bomb. A Fissile Material Approach to Nuclear Disarmament and Nonproliferation* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 185-188.

Arak that is still under construction. The Bushehr reactor is the most powerful of them, yet under Iran's contract with Moscow, certified fuel for this reactor is to be supplied by Russia. Two additional reactors are to be built in Bushehr, for which Iran has signed a contract with Russia, and subsequently six more units may be constructed, but this is a long-term prospect. There are no civilian needs that would justify creating large-scale enrichment facilities well in advance, especially taking in consideration that following previous practice the fuel for the new nuclear power plants will also be supplied by Russia throughout the reactors lifetime²².

The fact that Iran had constructed its enrichment facilities secretly and counter to the NPT provisions on the IAEA safeguards also caused serious suspicions. These facilities were detected thanks to intelligence sources. By the time the JCPOA was signed, Iran had already had about 19,000 centrifuges installed at two facilities and a stock of about 10 metric tonnes of the low-enriched uranium produced using that centrifuges. Experts roughly estimate that with all of that Iran could produce about 25 kilograms of weapon-grade uranium sufficient for one nuclear weapon in two to three months after the relevant political decision has been made and the country has denied IAEA verification²³.

The deal agreed in July 2015 requires first and foremost that Iran should reduce its enrichment capacity at the Natanz facility not to exceed 6104 first-generation IR-1 centrifuges, with only 5060 of that centrifuges to be used for uranium enrichment in the next 10 years. The rest of the centrifuges should be phased out and stored under continuous IAEA monitoring. For 15 years Iran will carry out uranium enrichment under the IAEA safeguards exclusively at the Natanz enrichment facility and will be prohibited from having other uranium enrichment facilities. During this period Iran is also prohibited from enriching uranium to above 3.67% uranium-235. Its stockpile of LEU cannot exceed 300 kilograms. The excess quantities of LEU (over 9 tonnes) are to be down-

²² Transcript of a Meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov. Center for Energy and Security Studies (CENESS), 14 Aug. 2015, <http://ceness-russia.org/data/page/p1494_1.pdf>.

²³ Perkovich, G., Hibbs, M., Acton, J.M., Dalton, T., Parsing the Iran Deal, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <<http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/08/06/parsing-iran-deal/iec5>>.

blended to natural uranium level or sold based on international prices and delivered to the international buyer (it is understood that Russia will be such buyer²⁴) in return for natural uranium delivered to Iran.

Another important package of limitations of uranium enrichment is related to the Fordow underground nuclear facility. The JCPOA envisages a 15 years' ban on uranium enrichment, uranium enrichment R&D and storage of any nuclear materials at this site. This facility is to be converted into an international cooperation nuclear physics and technology centre.

On the whole, after the mentioned steps aimed at reduction and limitation of Iran's uranium enrichment activities, capacities and the stockpile of LEU are implemented, Iran's objective capability to produce nuclear weapons irrespective of its political intentions will become considerably lower. According to the experts' average estimates, in the hypothetical case of Tehran making a political decision to produce nuclear weapons, break out from the JCPOA and sever its relations with the IAEA, the amount of time Iran would need to produce enough enriched uranium for one nuclear weapon would be increased from between two to three months today, to twelve months²⁵.

As a result the United Nations Security Council or certain interested states will have considerable time to be warned of Iran's forthcoming crossing of the nuclear threshold, in order to respond with political or other measures.

The *second* key section of the JCPOA has to do with another way to obtain nuclear weapons, that is through accumulation of weapon-grade plutonium into which uranium is transformed in the nuclear reactor (first and foremost, the U-238 isotope predominant in natural uranium), and which can be separated from irradiated fuel of nuclear power plants. Neither plutonium production technology and activities, nor international cooperation in the development thereof are prohibited under the NPT.

So far, Iran has no technology for plutonium separation, but is was constructing an IR-40 heavy water research reactor in Arak

²⁴ Transcript of a Meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov. Op. cit.

²⁵ Perkovich, G., Hibbs, M., Acton, J.M., Dalton, T. Op. cit.

in which natural uranium can be used. The reactor is designed to produce about 10 kg of plutonium a year, which is sufficient for one or two nuclear warheads. Like in the case of uranium enrichment, in this project Iran referred to its civilian needs and the lack of prohibition on such activities under the NPT. Meanwhile, like in the case of uranium, global experience has shown that plutonium separation technology and capability are required either for nuclear weapons, or for nuclear energy production using mixed uranium-plutonium fuel. Iran does not possess and is not planning to possess such nuclear energy programme. At the moment, 10 states have plutonium production technology. Those are the United States, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, China, Israel, India, DPRK, Pakistan, and Japan. Nine of them have already produced or are developing plutonium-based nuclear weapons, although the former five have declared that they are no longer separating plutonium for military purposes. Japan that also possesses such technology uses plutonium to produce mixed fuel (MOX fuel) for its reactors²⁶.

Under the deal, Iran must restructure its heavy-water reactor in Arak based on the agreed design to use low-enriched uranium rather than natural material, which would result in lower concentration of plutonium in spent nuclear fuel. This rebuilding is to be implemented through international partnership. The reactor will support civilian nuclear research and radioisotope production for medical and industrial purposes. The rebuilt reactor in Arak is to yield about 1 kilogram of plutonium a year (as compared to the 10 kilograms it was to yield under the previous design). The spent nuclear fuel from Arak is to be shipped out of Iran throughout the lifetime of the reactor.

In the next 15 years Iran may neither construct additional heavy-water reactors, nor accumulate heavy water. Irradiated nuclear fuel from all existing and future power and research nuclear reactors is to be shipped out of Iran for civilian use or disposal, for which contracts are to be concluded with other countries. Furthermore, Iran undertakes not to reprocess irradiated nuclear fuel and not to develop plants for such reprocessing, except for medical and industrial isotopes, during this time.

²⁶ Feiveson, H.A., Glaser, A., Mian, Z., Von Hippel, F.N. Op. cit., pp. 185-188.

All these provisions, should they be strictly observed, would reliably prevent Iran from taking the plutonium path to the nuclear bomb for the mentioned time.

Iran has been bound by one more important obligation, that is, an obligation not to engage in the development of nuclear explosive devices, including not to engage in uranium or plutonium metallurgy activities.

The third pivotal section of the JCPOA concerns Iran's compliance verification regime, and that can justly be called a diplomatic breakthrough. First and foremost it was agreed that consistent with the respective roles of the President and Majlis (Parliament), Iran will provisionally apply the 1997 Additional Protocol to its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with IAEA. The elaboration of this Additional Protocol in 1997 was a major step towards strengthening the NPT. Under this Protocol, IAEA was authorised to verify whether Iran's nuclear activities in reality matched with what it had declared, as well as to inspect non-declared facilities in order to discover covert nuclear activities. Iran signed the 1997 Additional Protocol in 2003, yet has never ratified it due to the subsequent exacerbation of international tensions related to its nuclear programme. Ever since, Tehran's refusal to adhere to the 1997 Additional Protocol has been a subject of major disagreements between Iran and IAEA and foreign countries. Under the JCPOA Iran undertook to start ratifying the Protocol within the specified time-limits.

It is also important that Iran is obliged to comply with the modified Code 3.1 of the Subsidiary Arrangements to its Safeguards Agreement. Code 3.1 requires the states to inform the Agency of all planned future activities in the nuclear sphere immediately after the relevant decision has been made, rather than 180 days before the delivery of nuclear materials to the facilities, as per the previous version of the Subsidiary Arrangements. Before the July deal was reached, Iran had refused to comply with this requirement.

The accession of states to the 1997 Additional Protocol and Code 3.1 is a key way to strengthening the NPT and the whole global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Therefore reaching an agreement with Iran on these issues was of paramount importance.

The JCPOA includes another notable point, Iran's obligation to fully observe the 'Road-map for the Clarification of Past and Present Outstanding Issues regarding Iran's Nuclear Programme'

agreed with IAEA. These issues concern Iran's previous activities that had caused suspicions as to their possible military nature that Iran had always denied.

In general, Iran has agreed to unprecedented monitoring of the measures envisaged in the JCPOA throughout their duration, including the 25 year's IAEA monitoring over uranium ore concentrate at all Iranian uranium ore concentrate facilities; containment and surveillance of centrifuge rotors and bellows for 20 years; use of IAEA approved and certified modern technologies including on-line enrichment measurement and electronic seals; and a reliable mechanism to ensure speedy resolution of IAEA access concerns for 15 years.

The fifth major section of the JCPOA covers reciprocal P5+1 states' obligations assumed in exchange for concessions made by Iran. In accordance with the UNSC resolution endorsing the new instrument, the provisions of previous resolutions on the Iranian issue, that is, resolutions 1696 (2006), 1737 (2007), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008), 1835 (2008), 1929 (2010), 2224 (2015) are to be terminated as the IAEA has verified that Iran has taken the actions in the nuclear field.

The European Union undertook to lift all economic and financial sanctions related to Iran's nuclear activities as soon as IAEA has verified Iran's compliance with the deal, as did the United States. In addition, the P5+1 and Iran will agree upon the measures to ensure access of the latter to trade, technologies, finance and energy, including export credits for facilitating trade and investments in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

For dispute resolution, the JCPOA establishes a Joint Commission composed of representatives of the seven countries and the European Union that concluded the deal. If the commission is unable to resolve the issue referred to it by a country in fifteen days, the matter can be referred to the foreign ministers of the states on the commission, who would have another fifteen days to resolve it. In case of failure, the party concerned can refer the matter to the UN Security Council or cease to comply with its commitments under the deal. In this case the sanctions are automatically reimposed in 30 days, unless the UN Security Council makes decision to keep the sanctions lifted (which may be vetoed by any permanent member of the Council). Thus, a mechanism of deterrence against breaching the JCPOA has been established. The Joint Commission is

authorised to control Iran's import of nuclear and dual-use technologies and materials in order to prevent covert violation of the JCPOA and ensure a mechanism of transparency of Iran's international cooperation in this sphere.

In addition to the deal, two more issues were resolved. UN Security Council resolutions required Iran to forego its missile programme and prohibited supplies of certain types of weapons to Iran, yet the talks have yielded nothing in terms of ceasing Iran's missile programme. As a result it was decided to establish 'authorization regime' of supplies of conventional arms and military equipment to Iran for the term of five years (which implies that supplies should be authorized by the UN Security Council) and extend the missile technologies embargo for eight years.

No doubt, the JCPOA of 14 July 2015 can become a major positive breakthrough in the diplomatic settlement of Iran's nuclear issue and the prevention of a new Gulf war with catastrophic consequences for both the region and the world in general. It may also become a historic contribution to strengthening of the NPT and the whole nuclear non-proliferation regime and mechanisms. All of that can only be achieved if all participants in the JCPOA strictly adhere to it and resolve all disputes that will inevitably arise in the course of its implementation in a constructive manner.

The balance of interests of the participants

The impact of the JCPOA can be assessed both in the narrow context, that is, as an impact on Iran's nuclear programme, and in a broader context, as an impact on regional and global nuclear non-proliferation issues.

From the first perspective, the deal considerably limits, reduces and restructures Iran's nuclear technical complex, its development programme, the stockpile and quality of Iran's nuclear materials, and prohibits nuclear activities with possible military dimension. It establishes an unprecedented transparency regime and IAEA monitoring system extending far beyond the Agency's previous practice. Whatever subjective intents Tehran may have, for the next 10 to 15 years its capability to acquire nuclear weapons, or even engage in any significant military nuclear activities is objectively practically excluded. From this perspective, the JCPOA

considerably expands restrictive NPT provisions as applied to the case of Iran.

The concessions by Iran were determined by the economic crisis that was caused by external sanctions and the ensuing change of power at presidential level in 2013 and the new leadership's genuine willingness to reach a compromise. Although Russian officials affirm that the success became possible only when the 'US and EU colleagues realized the misguided and unproductive nature of their sanctions policy'²⁷, most likely, the contrary was the case. Otherwise, the lifting of sanctions would have preceded the deal, rather than was planned to take place as Iran complied with its obligations, not to mention the mechanism for automatic reimposition of sanctions in case of non-compliance.

The fact that the P5+1 remained united at the talks with Iran despite the crisis in Ukraine and the confrontation between Russia and the West, proved exceptionally important. To the United States' and their allies mind, the purposes of limiting Iran's nuclear programme as rigidly as possible and lifting sanctions in exchange for these limitations did not conflict with each other. China saw no major dilemmas either.

Russia's situation was much more complex. If a deal with Tehran was reached, it would enable Iran to export its oil, and subsequently gas, which would cause global energy prices to fall, negatively influencing Russia's economy and finance (mineral resources account for 30% of Russia's GDP and 50% of its federal budget revenue). In addition, Iran had already hinted that it can to a great extent substitute for Russia as a source of oil and gas supplies to Europe, that is weaken Russian powerful bargaining instrument in its relations with the EU and Ukraine.

As a matter of fact, Russia was never much concerned over Iran's nuclear programme and always believed it (at least officially) to be exclusively peaceful. As it has stated, its ultimate goal is restoring confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, rather than strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime²⁸. Yet, it took a three-fold reduction of Iran's

²⁷ Transcript of a Meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov. Op. cit.

²⁸ Ibid.

enrichment capabilities, the rebuilding or closure of a number of key facilities and a drastic reduction of the scale of nuclear activities to 'restore' such 'confidence'.

Despite the mentioned circumstances, of all the motives, Russia opted for taking part in key multilateral negotiations and influencing their outcome, preventing a new Gulf war and expanding economic and military and technical cooperation with Iran after the sanctions have been lifted. Although at final stages the US – Iran dialogue was of first importance, Russia did help resolve a number of issues (removal of excessive LEU in return for natural uranium, rebuilding of the Fordow facility, transparency modalities, the adoption of UNSCR 2231, etc)²⁹.

There was another political factor that contributed to the deal. As Islamic extremists advanced in Syria and Iraq, Iran engaged in the fight against them as an objective ally of the West, not to mention Russia.

As for the substance of the case, a number of provisions of the Joint Plan of Action of November 2013 approved in order to subsequently incorporate them in the final document has never been fully implemented or has remained unclear. The main one required determining mutually agreed parameters for the uranium enrichment programme consistent with Iran's practical needs. Neither Iran's current, nor expected demand for nuclear fuel would be enough to justify any indigenous uranium enrichment capability by economic considerations. The demands of nuclear power plant in Bushehr and the planned additional units should be satisfied by a foreign supplier (Russia), and those of the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR), by the remaining stockpile of LEU or the material purchased at international market price abroad.

The authorization to keep 5,060 of 19,000 centrifuges at the Natanz facility for the next 10 years is a diplomatic compromise between what the parties to the talks initially sought. Paradoxically, this number of centrifuges is insufficient to supply fuel for the nuclear power plant (even if Iran relied on domestic fuel production). Yet that would be sufficient to produce an atomic bomb should there be enough LEU and time to obtain weapon-grade material from it. The enrichment capability Iran is allowed to

²⁹ Ibid.

have may serve a technological base to be built up and upgraded in the future.

There is also an important point that concerns the Fordow facility. Iran will keep an underground hardened facility there, in ten years it will be able to operate centrifuges for uses other than uranium enrichment, while in fifteen years it will be able to use them for uranium enrichment to any enrichment level³⁰.

The main dilemma of assessing the JCPOA is how it will influence Iran's long-term plans. To be more precise, will Iran renew its dual-use programmes limited and dismantled in accordance with the deal, will it preserve the transparency regime after the JCPOA has expired (in 10-15 years) and after it has improved its economic situation and strengthened its regional political domination due to the lifting of the sanctions? So far Tehran has declared that it will renew the programme and bring it to an even larger scale after the expiration of the JCPOA. This might bring about a new crisis in the region, yet it is impossible to forecast how the situation will develop, as too much depends on how the situation inside Iran and in the regional and global politics will evolve, including on whether the great powers retain their unity in this matter.

The mentioned shortcomings of the JCPOA do not make it less valuable as a whole. Realistically, a better document appears a less likely alternative to the deal than a total failure of negotiations and all the negative consequences that would have ensued. However, one should keep in mind what has been mentioned above as they might give rise to possible future differences and hence be the subjects of additional arrangements on the implementation of the JCPOA.

Prospects of nuclear non-proliferation

Assessing the deal *in a broader context* of its influence on regional and global nuclear non-proliferation issues is a more complicated task. The very fact that the deal was reached contributes to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, as a

³⁰ Perkovich, G., Hibbs, M., Acton, J.M., Dalton, T. Op. cit.

new Gulf war or Iran's crossing the nuclear threshold would deal a severe blow to the NPT.

At the same time, Iran's retaining certain enrichment capability and the possibility to expand it after the JCPOA has expired sets a precedent for other countries, including those within the region. They will have grounds to pursue their own economically unnecessary dual-use nuclear reactors and nuclear fuel cycle facilities. This was one of the reasons for criticism of the document on the part of the US opposition, the leadership of Israel, Saudi Arabia and other states³¹.

To avoid these consequences, nuclear technologies and materials might be supplied to such states on condition that the application of the JCPOA precedent is accepted. Yet there emerges another issue, the issue of universalization of the restrictive provisions and the transparency regime agreed under the deal as the norms of strengthening of the NPT.

Russia has consistently stated that the JCPOA is a solution intended exclusively for Iran and cannot be applied to other states, which is enshrined in the document. It is indicative that commenting on the document, senior officials hardly ever mentioned the strengthening of the NPT³². It appears that Moscow believes it to be sufficient that the letter of the Treaty is observed and opposes enhancing its limitations and measures of control. It believes that such measures are based on subjective approaches and are aimed at edging it out from the global nuclear technologies and materials market³³. Meanwhile Russian diplomacy aims at maximum expansion of the country's nuclear exports³⁴.

³¹ Sharon, A.D., Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs: Iran Deal a 'Huge Blunder', <http://www.jns.org/jns-blog/2015/7/17/f8x9oov6xcyvyynwxute75727su754#.Va0dX_IViko=>>.

³² Transcript of a Meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov. Op. cit.

³³ Statement by the Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation, Ambassador-at-Large Grigory Berdennikov at the Symposium on International Safeguards: Linking Strategy, Implementation and People, <https://www.iaea.org/safeguards/symposium/2014/images/pdfs/Russian_Statement.pdf>.

³⁴ Meeting with Russian Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives in International Organizations, 9 July 2012, <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15902>>.

The position of China is unclear, yet it seems that like on many other subjects it pursues an intermediate course between those of the West and Russia. Chinese officials have stressed Beijing's role in the success of the talks and expressed cautious hope that the deal with Iran will contribute to resolving the nuclear issue of DPRK³⁵.

The US and their allies will most probably try to use the JCPOA provisions as a precedent to be applied to other countries developing nuclear energy and research. The prospect of expanded application of the principles and norms of the JCPOA will determine its regional and global impact on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

No doubt, the provisions of the NPT cannot be subjected for revision. Yet at the same time the Treaty itself and the nuclear non-proliferation regime in general need strengthening through reaching additional common understandings and agreeing upon common interpretations of its provisions. In fact, this is what was done in previous years, for example through expanding and enhancing the IAEA safeguards (the 1997 Additional Protocol, modified Code 3.1 of the Subsidiary Arrangements), agreeing upon export controls in the Zangger Committee that merged with the Nuclear Suppliers' Group in 1992, etc. The same is true of the efforts to establish international rather than national uranium enrichment centres, LEU reserves and banks, withdraw HEU from countries operating research reactors and convert such reactors to LEU fuel. It is especially important that this course should be pursued due to the fact that the global nuclear power production is expected to grow (by 2035, the nuclear power generation is expected to increase by 45%³⁶) and the nuclear technologies and materials are likely to spread in unstable regions of Asia and Africa.

Such work should rely on a common position shared by all great powers and non-nuclear-weapon states committed to the goal of non-proliferation. The NPT was elaborated almost half a century

³⁵ Mengwei, Ch., Iran Deal 'Not Right Blueprint' for Korean Peninsula, *China Daily*, 29 July 2015, <http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2015-07/29/content_21440075.htm>.

³⁶ Chestney, N., World Nuclear Capacity Set to Grow by 45 Percent by 2035, *Reuters*, 10 Sep. 2015, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/10/us-energy-nuclear-idUSKCN0RA14220150910>>.

ago and many of its key terms need clarification, first and foremost, the term ‘nuclear weapons’. There is no common understanding of what precisely the languages ‘to deny any transfer of nuclear weapons’ and ‘not to receive the transfer of nuclear weapons’ (Articles I and II) mean³⁷. It is unclear what is meant by ‘cessation of the nuclear arms race’, not to mention ‘nuclear disarmament’ (Article VI). The Treaty does not specify how it would be determined whether a country possibly breaching the Treaty in the future is a ‘nuclear-weapon state’ (Article IX) (is it a country that has conducted a full-scale test or would information on covertly developing nuclear weapons be enough). There are no detailed provisions describing the procedure of withdrawal from the Treaty and justification of such withdrawal by ‘extraordinary events’ (Article X). Most importantly, the NPT makes no clear distinction between peaceful and military uses of nuclear energy, especially with regard to technologies and materials of the nuclear fuel cycle³⁸.

As the experience of Iran, North Korea and other countries has shown, it is inadmissible that the principle ‘everything which is not forbidden is allowed’ is applied to the NPT. Any non-nuclear-weapon state should be explicitly obliged to justify any of its potential dual-use activities and programmes by peaceful needs, and such reasoning should be credible and accepted by IAEA. This is the area in which the deal of 14 July 2015 sets a valuable precedent, in addition to addressing certain specific issues, although the deal itself could go farther in implementing it. No doubt, many of the JCPOA provisions related to limiting nuclear programmes and establishing transparency regime should be further developed into general principles and used to strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation system and regimes.

³⁷ A typical contradiction of the kind is related to the presence of the US tactical nuclear weapons in Europe and the US’s training its NATO allies to use this weapons, which consists breaching of the NPT in Russia’s opinion.

³⁸ Burnes, W.J., *The Fruits of Diplomacy with Iran*, *The New York Times*, 3 Apr. 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/03/opinion/a-good-deal-with-iran.html?ref=opinion&_r=0>.

3. NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND MISSILE AMBITIONS

Victor YESIN

In April 2012, the Constitution of North Korea was amended in order to confirm the country's nuclear weapons status³⁹. The fourth nuclear test conducted on January 6, 2016 and launching into orbit a second space craft a month later demonstrated that the North Korean authorities had a clear intent to further enhance country's nuclear capabilities coupled with the creation of long-range ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

This article evaluates the DPRK's potential to develop and produce nuclear warheads and delivery systems, as well as suggests a way out of the impasse reached in 2009 at the six-party talks on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula⁴⁰.

³⁹ This amendment was supported in February 2013 by North Korea conducting its third nuclear test at Kilju (also known as Punggye-ri) testing site situated in Hamgyong-do province. According to the Russian Defence Ministry, the yield of the nuclear explosive device was from 10 to 20 kt. The first North Korean test of a nuclear explosive device was held in October 2006, the second – in May 2009. See: *Korean nuclear crisis: prospects for de-escalation*, ed. by A.G. Arbatov, V.Z. Dvorkin, S.K. Oznobishchev (Moscow: IMEMO, 2013), p. 27.

⁴⁰ These six-party talks began in Beijing in August 2003 on the initiative of China. The participants were China, the United States, Russia, Japan, South Korea and the DPRK. The talks were suspended in 2009 by North Korea. See: *SIPRI Yearbook 2011: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Moscow: IMEMO, 2012), pp. 419-420.

North Korea's potential of developing and producing nuclear weapons

At present, the DPRK's nuclear industry has a limited capacity for producing weapons-grade nuclear materials and nuclear weapons. The country has only one nuclear facility at Yongbyon located 86 kilometers north of Pyongyang. Its industrial complex consists of the following operating facilities:

- a gas-graphite reactor with electric power of 5 MW (thermal power of 25 MW) which produces weapons-grade plutonium⁴¹;

- a nuclear fuel plant supplied with the raw material by two uranium mills with the total capacity of up to 150 tonnes of uranium concentrate per year⁴²;

- a radiochemical plant extracting plutonium from spent nuclear fuel (SNF)⁴³;

- an uranium isotope enrichment plant which, according to available estimates⁴⁴, is able to produce up to 26 kg of weapons-grade uranium per year⁴⁵.

⁴¹ This reactor was put into service in 1986. At the end of 1994, its operation was suspended after the conclusion of the Framework Agreement between the DPRK and the United States. The reactor was restarted in February 2003 and stopped again in 2007 followed by the partial dismantlement of the equipment. The reactor operation was resumed for the third time in September 2013, upon the completion of its restoration started in March of the same year. Currently, the reactor operates at partial capacity and with frequent breaks. It is estimated to produce 3 to 4 kg of weapons grade plutonium a year (while its design capacity is 6 to 8 kg of weapons-grade plutonium per year). See: *Korean nuclear crisis...* pp. 20, 28-31; Yongbyon: Monitoring Activities during Shutdown of 5 MW Reactor, 5 Dec. 2014, p. 2, <http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/Yongbyon_December5_2014_Final.pdf>.

⁴² These uranium enrichment mills are located in Pakchon and Phensan regions (70 km north and 95 km south-east of Pyongyang, respectively). There are also uranium ore mines there. Uranium reserves in North Korea are estimated at 15-20 thousand tonnes. See: *Korean nuclear crisis...* p. 20.

⁴³ This plant is able to process up to 110 tons of spent nuclear fuel per year. See: North Korea Yongbyon Nuclear, A report by Seifried S. Hecker, 20 Nov. 2010, <http://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/publications/north_koreas_yongbyon_nuclear_complex_a_report_by_siegfried_s_hecker>.

The construction of a nuclear power plant with experimental light water reactor (ELWR) of North Korean design is also underway at Yongbyon. Its estimated electric capacity will range from 25 to 30 MW (thermal capacity –over 100 MW)⁴⁶. It may be able to produce up to 20 kg of weapons-grade plutonium per year⁴⁷. In 2013 the construction of this reactor was frozen, and it is not clear when it can become operational⁴⁸.

In addition to the manufacturing facility the Yongbyon nuclear center also has a scientific research area with a research light water reactor IRT-2000 (electric power – 2 MW, heat capacity – 8 MW)⁴⁹ and a number of research laboratories equipped with a betatron, cobalt gamma system, and other scientific and technical equipment provided by the Soviet Union in the 1960-1980s.

By the end of 2014, the North Korean accumulated stockpile of weapons-grade plutonium amounted to over 30 kg⁵⁰. As for the

⁴⁴ Nuclear Proliferation Case Studies, Safeguards Information Paper, Nov. 2014, <<http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Safety-and-Security/Non-Proliferation/Appendices/Nuclear-Proliferation-Case-Studies/>>.

⁴⁵ In 2013-2014, the production area of this plant was doubled and additional centrifuges were installed. When entered into service they are expected to increase the plant's production capacity up to 60 kg of weapons-grade uranium a year. See: Nuclear Proliferation Case Studies. Op. cit.

⁴⁶ According to some foreign non-governmental experts, the electric power of the reactor could reach 100 MW (thermal capacity – 300 MW). However, this estimate is highly questionable since the North Korean specialists have no experience in building nuclear reactors of such capacity.

⁴⁷ Albright, D., Walrond, C., North Korea's Estimated Stocks of Plutonium and Weapon-Grade Uranium, Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS). 16 Aug. 2012, <http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/dprk_fissile_material_production_16Aug2012.pdf>.

⁴⁸ Presentation of A.V. Khlopkov, the director of the Russian Center for Energy and Security Studies, at the US-Russian conference 'Security and Nuclear Challenges on the Korean Peninsula: Finding a Solution', Monterey, California (USA), 9 Apr. 2016.

⁴⁹ IRT-2000 reactor was built with the assistance of the Soviet Union and put into operation in 1966. Since that it has undergone a several rounds of modernization and it cannot produce weapons-grade plutonium in significant quantities. See: *Korean nuclear crisis...* p. 28.

⁵⁰ According to experts of the Russian Institute of Strategic Stability of the Rosatom state corporation, a total of 40-42 kg of weapons-grade plutonium have been produced from all the spent nuclear fuel extracted from the North Korean

North Korean stores of highly enriched uranium (HEU), there are no reliable expert assessments as there is no clarity on the commission dates and capacity of uranium enrichment facilities operating in the DPRK⁵¹. Some foreign experts assume that by the end of 2012 the country could have developed between 20 to 320 kg of weapon-grade HEU⁵². The upper limit, however, is too high. Most likely and given the fact that certain enrichment capacities are used to produce low-enriched uranium (LEU) required for production of nuclear fuel for the ELWR under construction, by the end of 2014, North Korea could have no more than 200 kg of weapons-grade HEU⁵³.

The above-mentioned stock of weapons-grade nuclear material is believed to be enough to make 10-16 implosion-type nuclear warheads of simplified design (6-8 plutonium warheads and 4-8 weapons-grade uranium warheads)⁵⁴. These warheads are used for air bombs to be delivered by Chinese H-5 strike bombers⁵⁵ or modified military transport aircraft⁵⁶.

5 MW gas-graphite reactor. A little more than 10 kg of weapons-grade plutonium was used to manufacture the nuclear explosive devices tested in 2006, 2009, and 2013. See: Yesin, V.I., *Prospects for the development of North Korean nuclear-missile potential / Korean nuclear crisis...* p. 32.

⁵¹ It is not without a reason that already in 2002 the US suspected that the DPRK was engaged in uranium enrichment. Therefore, it is possible that North Korea has at least one more enrichment facility which carried out testing of the centrifuge technology (otherwise it is impossible to explain a relatively modern uranium enrichment plant at the Yongbyon nuclear center). This argument, in particular, is supported by the report prepared in 2011 by a group of UN Security Council experts on North Korea. See: *SIPRI Yearbook 2013: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Moscow: IMEMO, 2013), pp. 377-378.

⁵² Albright D., Walrond C. Op. cit.

⁵³ In addition to the author, the same estimate of North Korean weapons-grade HEU stocks is shared by researchers of the US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University. See: Wit, J.S., Ahn, S.Y., *North Korea's Nuclear Futures: Technology and Strategy*, Feb. 2015, <<http://38north.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/NKNF-NK-Nuclear-Futures-Wit-0215.pdf>>.

⁵⁴ Wit, J.S., Ahn, S.Y. Op. cit.

⁵⁵ This bomber is equivalent to the Soviet Il-28 frontline bomber which was certified as a carrier of nuclear bombs up to 3,000 kg placed on the internal suspension of the bomb bay. See: *Korean nuclear crisis...* p. 32.

⁵⁶ These aircraft can be used for nuclear bombing if the weight of a nuclear air bomb is more than 3,000 kg.

There is no reliable data on the amount of weapons-grade nuclear material produced in North Korea in 2015 though a value in the range of 30 and 60 kg of weapon-grade HEU is a safe assumption. With regard to weapons grade plutonium, the amount produced may be about 6 kg (including reprocessed SNF discharged from the Yongbyon gas-graphite reactor in the late 2014).

The DPRK conducts research and development activities aimed at reducing the weight and size of nuclear warheads with the ultimate goal to create a warhead small enough to be installed on a ballistic missile. One of the areas of such activities, known to the expert community, is the development of pulsed neutron source for a nuclear warhead which will significantly increase explosion yield⁵⁷. Thus it will allow to reduce the weight and size of a nuclear warhead while maintaining its required capacity.

Apparently, this was the goal of North Korean experts, who, as mentioned, carried out a nuclear test on January 6, 2016. Although the official statement of the DPRK government claimed that it was ‘the first hydrogen bomb of [North] Korea’⁵⁸, it was hardly true. Lassina Zerbo, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), using the data from International Monitoring System, said: ‘Preliminary analysis shows that the event (forth North Korean nuclear test – V.Y.) was similar to that of 2013 (third North Korean nuclear test – V.Y.), not only in terms of location, which is the same location as that of the three previous ones, but also in terms of magnitude. The magnitude was similar, or even lower’⁵⁹. On January 26, 2016 during a press conference the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov confirming Zerbo’s statement said: ‘We are not sure that it was a hydrogen bomb test’⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ *Korean nuclear crisis...* p. 33.

⁵⁸ Cit. by *Nuclear Control*, no 1(474), January 2016, <http://www.pircenter.org/mailouts/view-letter/id/1/letter_id/1055>.

⁵⁹ Lassina Zerbo: ‘Israel and Iran could and should be next to ratify CTBT’, PIR-Center, Jan. 2016, <<http://www.pircenter.org/media/content/files/13/14543269240.pdf>>.

⁶⁰ Sergey Lavrov’s remarks and answers to media questions at a news conference on Russia’s diplomacy performance in 2015, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the

Here we should mention the following very important fact. Historical record of nuclear weapons development and improvement suggests that there can be no breakthroughs on a national level until the country establishes a proper scientific and industrial foundation. According to reputable experts, the DPRK has no basis to create thermonuclear weapons⁶¹. Neither it has a basis to create lower energy nuclear warheads that can generate gamma rays and ‘fireballs’ – the so-called super-EMP weapons (in summer 2014, the former CIA director James Woolsey warned about the threat of North Korea developing such weapons⁶²). It stands to reason that Pyongyang has no resources to create a hydrogen bomb or a super-EMP weapons not only today but in the foreseeable future⁶³.

Therefore, a realistic evaluation of potential North Korean nuclear weapons complex tells us that in years ahead North Korean nuclear experts be focusing primarily on increasing the production of the current type of nuclear warheads along with their simultaneous miniaturization⁶⁴. If the weight of a nuclear warhead is reduced to 1,000 kg it can be installed on the Nodong ballistic missile. But beforehand such warhead will require a live test. So

Russian Federation, 26 Jan. 2016, <http://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2032328>.

⁶¹ See, in particular: Likholetov, A., Hoaxes on both sides of the Pacific Ocean, *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, No 39, 25 Oct. 2013, <http://nvo.ng.ru/armament/2013-10-25/1_kndr.html>.

⁶² On 25 July 2014, the South Korean news agency Yonhap reported that the former director of the CIA James Woolsey in a statement transmitted to one of the committees of the House of Representatives claimed that North Korea would soon catch up with Russia and China in developing super-EMP weapons with nuclear core. See: Likholetov, A., The show must go, *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, No 33, 19 Sep. 2014.

⁶³ It should be noted that North Korea is already under sanctions introduced by the international community in accordance with four UN Security Council resolutions adopted in 2006-2013. Following the adoption of a new UN Security Council Resolution 2270 on 2 March 2016 the sanctions will be tightened.

⁶⁴ In 2014 the South Korean defence ministry published a White Book which stated that ‘the capabilities of North Korea to reduce the size of nuclear weapons apparently reached a substantial level’. See: *RT*, 6 Jan. 2015, <<https://russian.rt.com/article/67884>>.

apparently we should expect another North Korean nuclear test at Kilju nuclear test site⁶⁵.

As part of 'Nuclear Future of North Korea' research the US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University in collaboration with the US National Defense University prepared a forecast of the development of the country's nuclear programme until 2020 and presented it in Washington in February 2015. The forecast argues that by 2020 North Korea's nuclear arsenal may amount to 50-100 warheads⁶⁶. A realistic assumption would be 50-60 nuclear warheads.

North Korea's missile capabilities

According to approximate estimates, by the end of 2015 the North Korean armed forces could have the following deployed missile forces:

- one separate missile regiment and three separate missile battalions armed with Luna-M tactical missiles (a total of 21 mobile launchers on wheeled chassis);
- four separate missile battalions armed with KN-02 tactical missiles (a total of 16 mobile launchers on wheeled chassis);
- one separate missile regiment armed with Scud tactical missiles (28 mobile launchers on wheeled chassis);
- three separate missile battalions armed with Nodong-1 medium-range ballistic missile (a total of nine mobile launchers on wheeled chassis).

Luna-M (its North Korean name is Hwasong-3) is a single-stage solid fuel tactical missile with a starting weight of 2.3 tons equipped with a non-detachable 450 kg warhead and has a range of up to 65 km⁶⁷. North Korea purchased first prototypes of this

⁶⁵ One particular evidence was a statement made on 7 February 2016 by the South Korean news agency Yonhap which citing the national intelligence sources claimed that North Korea was planning a fifth nuclear test. See: *Rambler News Service*, 7 Feb. 2016, <<https://rns.online/military/KNDR-mozhet-provesti-pyatoe-po-schetu-yadernoe-ispitanie-2016-02-07/>>.

⁶⁶ See: *Kommersant*, 25 Feb. 2015, <<http://www.kommersant.ru/Doc/%202674889>>.

⁶⁷ *Korean nuclear crisis...* p. 34.

unguided missile along with its technology from the Soviet Union in the late 1960s⁶⁸.

KN-02 (Hwasong-11) is a single-stage solid fuel tactical missile with a starting weight of 2 tons equipped with a non-detachable 480 kg warhead and has a range of up to 120-140 km. It entered service in 2007-2008. Its prototype was Tochka – a Soviet tactical missile – which was handed over to North Korea by Syria in the mid-1990s⁶⁹. In August-September 2014, DPRK held a series of test launches of an improved modification of KN-02 missile (the media identified it as KN-10 short-range missile)⁷⁰. Its predicted maximum range is up to 200 km⁷¹.

Scud-B (Hwasong-5) is a single-stage liquid fuel tactical missile with a starting weight of 6.4 tons equipped with a non-detachable 1,000 kg warhead and has a range of up to 300 km⁷². It entered into service in 1987. Its prototype – a Soviet-made missile known as 8K14 – was purchased by North Korea from Egypt in 1980. In the late 1980s, North Korea with the help of Chinese experts created an improved Scud-B missile and named it Scud-C (Hwasong-6). Due to extended fuel tanks and reduced weight (to 700 kg) of the warhead the range of this missile increased to 550 km⁷³.

Nodong-1 (Hwasong-7) is a single-stage liquid fuel medium-range ballistic missile with a launch weight of 16 tonnes equipped with a detachable 1,000 kg warhead and has a range of up to 1,000 km⁷⁴. It entered into service in the late 1990s. It was developed by scaling up a Scud type tactical missile⁷⁵. In 2010, during a military parade Pyongyang demonstrated an upgraded

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 33.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 34.

⁷⁰ Foreign military chronicle, *Zarubezhnoye voyennoye obozreniye*, No 11, 2014, p. 95.

⁷¹ *ITAR-TASS*, 23 Sep. 2014.

⁷² *Korean nuclear crisis...* p. 34.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ The propulsion system of Nodong-1 medium range ballistic missile is a cluster of four single-chamber liquid fuel engines of Scud-C tactical missile fixed at a rigid frame. See: Likholetov, A., The show must go on...

version of this missile called Nodong-1M (Hwasong-9)⁷⁶. Compared with the basic model – Nodong-1M missile – it had smaller fuel tanks (1.5 m) and was equipped with a lightweight warhead (500 kg). The estimated maximum range of this missile may reach 1300-1500 km⁷⁷.

All missiles operated today by North Korean missile units are equipped with conventional warheads of two types: high-explosive and cluster. As already noted, Nodong-1 medium range ballistic missile may carry a nuclear warhead.

A new version of a single-stage ballistic missile named Musudan (Hwasong-10) was also shown during the 2012 parade⁷⁸. The missile transported on a wheeled launcher had a diameter of 1.5 m and length of 12 m. It resembled R-27 – a Soviet sea-launched liquid fuel missile (the same body diameter and form of the warhead, but the North Korean missile is 1.5 m longer)⁷⁹. According to recent publications in foreign media, the maximum range of Musudan missiles can be 3,200-4,000 km if a warhead weights up to 650 kg⁸⁰.

According to recent officially unconfirmed information, in April 2016 North Korea conducted two test launches of Musudan both of which ended in failure. Previously there were informal reports about DPRK establishing two separate Musudan missile divisions (a total of 8 mobile launchers) within its armed forces and deploying them near the east coast⁸¹.

In April 2012, at a military parade in Pyongyang North Korea presented its new creation – KN-08 (Hwaseong-13) ballistic missile⁸². It was transported on an eight-wheeled launcher and visually looked like a three-stage solid fuel missile with a diameter

⁷⁶ In the US this missile is called Nodong-2010. See: *Korean nuclear crisis...* p. 35.

⁷⁷ There is no record of Nodong-1M medium range ballistic missile flight tests.

⁷⁸ The US has been claiming that North Korea has the missile 2002. See: *Korean nuclear crisis...* p 35.

⁷⁹ Likholetov, A., The show must go on...

⁸⁰ See: *Ars Technica*, 11 May 2015, <<http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2015/05/north-korea-test-launches-polaris-1-ballistic-missile-from-submarine/>>.

⁸¹ See: *NK News*, 11 May 2015, <<http://nknews.org/2015/05/first-north-korean-slbm-presents-wholly-novel-threat/>>.

⁸² *Korean Nuclear Crisis...* p. 39.

of 2 m and length about 19 m. Its alleged range as an intercontinental missile cannot be confirmed as it has not undergone any test launches yet.

A number of both Russian and foreign experts, such as Michael Elleman from the International Institute for Strategic Studies – Middle East (Bahrain), Markus Schiller and Robert Schmucker of German Schmucker Technologie, state that at the 2012 parade North Korean authorities demonstrated only a mock-up of a KN-08 missile and it will take considerable time before it can be turned into a real prototype⁸³. According to unconfirmed information, in May and October 2014 DPRK conducted fire tests of solid fuel engines for KN-08.

In addition to Musudan and KN-08 ballistic missiles North Korea is implementing another project on developing Taepodong-2, a two-stage liquid ballistic missile. The technology was tested in the course of launches of Unha-2 (April 2009) and Unha-3 (April and December 2012, February 2016) rocket carriers⁸⁴. Their first stage used a four propulsion system of Nodong-1 on a common frame, and the second stage – a liquid fuel engine of Scud-C. Given the successful launches of Unha-3 rocket in December 2012 and February 2016 that resulted in placing into a low Earth orbit of Kwangmyŏngsŏng-3 and Kwangmyŏngsŏng-4 satellites⁸⁵, we can assume that North Korea will be able to finish Taepodong-2 ballistic missile by the end of this decade. The missile is likely to have a launch weight of about 65 tons, length of 32 m, maximum diameter of 2.4 m, and its maximum range may vary from 3,500 to 6,000 km depending on the weight of the warhead⁸⁶. It can also be equipped with a nuclear warhead developed specifically for this missile.

⁸³ Ibid, pp. 36, 39; Likholetov, A., Hoaxes on both sides of the Pacific Ocean...

⁸⁴ For more details see: Korean Nuclear Crisis... pp. 36-38; *Rambler News Service*, 7 Feb. 2016, <<https://ms.online/military/Ekspert-KNDR-pod-prikritiem-kosmicheskoi-programmi-sozdaet-yadernii-nositel-2016-02-07/>>.

⁸⁵ These satellites up to 100 kg were put on a stationary orbit at an altitude of about 500 km but they were unable to stabilize their orientation relative to the Earth's surface, which prevented them from taking pictures of the Earth and sending them to receiving stations on the territory of the DPRK.

⁸⁶ Wit, J.S., Ahn, S.Y., Op. cit.

Since early 2014, in order to prepare for upcoming testing of ballistic missiles under development North Korea has been modernizing and expanding the infrastructure of its Sohae launching site (also known as Tongch'ang-dong), located on the west coast of North Korea in the North Pyongan province⁸⁷. The first stage of the modernization was completed in 2015. It allowed North Korea to resume launches of Unha-3 rocket carriers. The second stage can be finished in 2016. After that, DPRK is expected to resume test launches of ballistic medium and long range missiles from the site.

Development of a submarine carrying ballistic missiles (SLBM) became for DPRK a fundamentally new area of increasing missile capabilities.

First reports on such development appeared in foreign media the late summer of 2014. In particular, in August, the online Washington Free Beacon which specializes in political and military news reported that US intelligence agencies had obtained data on North Korea constructing a submarine capable of launching SLBMs and already possessing such missiles⁸⁸. Later, at the end of October, the website of the US-Korea Institute at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies stated that commercial satellite images had revealed 'a new test stand at the North's Sinpo South Shipyard, probably intended to explore the possibility of launching ballistic missiles from submarines'⁸⁹. In March 2015, sources in diplomatic and military circles of the Republic of Korea reported that North Korea had launched a Sinpo class diesel submarine capable of launching ballistic missiles⁹⁰.

On the morning of 9 May 2015 news feeds 'exploded' with a message from the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) that DPRK test-fired a heavy strategic ballistic missile from a

⁸⁷ North Korea expands the missile launching site, *Interfax*, 30 Jan. 2014, <<http://www.interfax.ru/world/354793>>.

⁸⁸ *Voyenno-promyshlenny kur'yer*, No 32, 3 Sep. 2014.

⁸⁹ See: *38 North*, 28 Oct. 2014, <<http://38north.org/2014/10/jbermudez102814/>>.

⁹⁰ See, for example: *RIA Novosti*, 9 May 2015, <http://rian.com.ua/world_news/20150509/367289996.html>.

submarine⁹¹. This news was accompanied by a video showing a ballistic missile emerging from underwater.

A few days later US and South Korean media published comments on the launch of the North Korean missile citing intelligence agencies of the United States and Republic of Korea. They stated that the launch had been carried out from a submerged barge⁹² rather than from a Sinpo class submarine and that it failed to travel further than 150 m⁹³.

This comments seem plausible as, according to international record, the testing of underwater launch of any SLBM starts with a pop-up test using a test stand immersed in water. It should also be noted that this test launch of SLBM was not staged, as some foreign experts were quick to say⁹⁴. Pop-up tests are routine practice of performance check of both a missile and launching tube at the early stages of flight testing.

As for the SLBM, most reliable unofficial sources said that the tested prototype was a Musudan liquid-fuel IRBM adapted for underwater launch⁹⁵. Its North Korean name is Bukkeukseong-1, South Korean – Polaris-1, and its Pentagon's designation is KN-11⁹⁶.

The test showed that North Korea had moved to developing missile submarines – contrary to the expert assessments of its weapon developing capabilities existed before 9 May 2015. South Korean government officials believe that within five years North

⁹¹ Yesin, V.I., Mysterious aggressor: North Korean nuclear issue cannot be resolved on 'all at once' basis, *Voyenno-promyshlennyi kur'yer*, No 26, 15 July 2015, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/26092>>.

⁹² Apparently, this barge was the test stand which was discovered in October 2014 at a shipyard in South Sinpo.

⁹³ See: *Arms Control Wonk*, 13 May 2015, <<http://www.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/207631/dprk-slbm-test/>>; *NK News*, May 2015, <<http://nknews.org/2015/05/first-north-korean-slbm-presents-wholly-novel-threat/>>.

⁹⁴ See, for example: *Flot.com*, 13 May 2015, <<http://flot.com/2015/194222>>.

⁹⁵ See: *Ars Technica*, 11 May 2015, <<http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2015/05/north-korea-test-launches-polaris-1-ballistic-missile-from-submarine/>>; *NK News*, May 2015, <<http://nknews.org/2015/05/first-north-korean-slbm-presents-wholly-novel-threat/>>; *Arms Control Wonk*, 13 May 2015, <<http://www.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/207631/dprk-slbm-test/>>.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Korea will already have limited missile submarine forces⁹⁷. It is possible that by the end of this period some of the deployed SLBMs may be equipped with nuclear warheads.

However, it should be noted that currently North Korean experts have serious difficulty in development testing the SLBM: its test launch conducted in November 2015 failed (a missile exploded midair after emerging from under water). The footage aired on 8 January 2016 by the North Korean state TV channel on successful testing of the SLBM which, as reported, took place in December 2015 turned out to be fake. The test was unsuccessful: a missile was launched, but then it caught fire, its propulsion system failed, and the missile fell in the sea⁹⁸.

Conclusions

Hopes held by a certain part of the international community that under the pressure of sanctions that were introduced and will undoubtedly be tightened in the near future by the United Nations Security Council and unilaterally by a number of governments hostile to the DPRK⁹⁹, the current North Korean government will give up the implementation of national nuclear and missile programmes seem unrealistic. North Korea has a long record of survival in a harsh environment¹⁰⁰.

The determining factor is that Pyongyang considers its nuclear missile potential to be a key guarantee of national security and survival of the existing political regime. According to the information published in September 2014 by Rodong Sinmun, a major North Korean party newspaper, 'North Korea will continue to build up its nuclear potential for self-defence in accordance with its

⁹⁷ See: *Ars Technica*, 11 May 2015, <<http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2015/05/north-korea-test-launches-polaris-1-ballistic-missile-from-submarine/>>.

⁹⁸ See: *The Diplomat*, 11 Jan. 2016, <<http://thediplomat.com/2016/01/how-far-along-are-north-koreas-submarine-launched-ballistic-missiles/>>.

⁹⁹ Among such states are most notably the United States and its NATO allies as well as Japan and South Korea.

¹⁰⁰ See, inter alia, Ramm, A., Military satellite put into orbit by North Korea proves the ineffectiveness of the international isolation strategy, *Voyenno-promyshlennyi kur'yer*, No 5, 10 Feb. 2016.

legitimate right to protect the state and the nation'¹⁰¹. The above events occurred in January and February 2016 suggest that the DPRK policy to build nuclear missile capabilities has not undergone any changes.

As Joel Wit, a leading researcher at the US-Korea Institute, rightly pointed out 'today Kim Jong-un (the present North Korean leader – V.Y.) increasingly forces a choice on the international community – either to accept the fact that North Korea has nuclear weapons or face a sporadic instability and tensions on the Korean peninsula'¹⁰². Such North Korean challenge is certainly hard for the international community, but it has to be a starting point in a search for a way out of the current nuclear impasse. Therefore, the revival of the six-party talks on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula suspended in April 2009 appears to have almost lost its meaning. Today we need new approaches appropriate for the existing realities.

The international community should accept the fact that the DPRK, as India, Pakistan and Israel before it, will not voluntarily give up its nuclear missile potential. Therefore, international diplomacy should focus – through the normalization of relations with North Korea, especially in the US-DPRK format – on stopping the buildup of North Korean nuclear missile potential and stabilizing the situation on the Korean Peninsula to prevent the outbreak of a new war which is likely to lead to the use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

The international community should not expect that the North Korean authorities will agree to stop building up or limiting its nuclear missile potential in exchange for lifting of the sanctions imposed on the country. DPRK will demand certain preferences – their nature and scope is the subject of international agreements. Such preferences should not be regarded as a unilateral concession to Pyongyang. We believe that they will be negligible compared to the importance for the international security of the stability on the Korean Peninsula to be ensured as a result of such a deal. It is an entirely different matter whether it will be possible to persuade Kim

¹⁰¹ *Zarubezhnoye voyennoye obozreniye*, No 9, 2014, p. 98.

¹⁰² See: *Kommersant*, 25 Feb. 2015, <<http://www.kommersant.ru/Doc/202674889>>.

Jong-un and his entourage to agree to the deal. There is no guarantee, but it is worth a serious try as so far there is no other way out of the current impasse in the six-party talks.

If the above deal is agreed upon, it will create favorable conditions for achieving the key long term goal of the six-party talks – complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Yet today the most critical task at hand is to stop North Korea from building up its nuclear missile potential and firmly stabilize the situation on the Korean peninsula. Without solving this issue, it will be impossible to move towards complete denuclearization of the peninsula.

4. RUSSIA AND NATO: FROM THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS TO THE RENEWED INTERACTION

Sergei OZNOBISHCHEV

The Ukrainian crisis brought about a confrontation between the Russia and the NATO unseen since the times of the Cold War, stopping the bilateral cooperation in all areas. Beside other immediate negative consequences the crisis provided justification for increased level of Alliance's military-political activity for years to come.

Evolution of the NATO policy after the Cold War

The end of the Cold War had a direct impact on the NATO policy as the military component of the Alliance began to decrease substantially in the 1990s. Within a decade after the signing of the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), despite the increase in the number of the NATO member states from 16 to 19, the stockpiles of the treaty-limited equipment (TLE) decreased dramatically. The number of Alliance's tanks was reduced by 1.8 times, armored combat vehicles and artillery systems – 1.4 times, combat aircraft – 1.5 times, helicopters – 1.1 times¹⁰³.

¹⁰³ Calculated by the author according to: Khranchikhin, A., What we after all should do with NATO, *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, 15 Oct. 2010, No 39 (636), <http://nvo.ng.ru/concepts/2010-10-15/1_nato.html>.

This process then continued – the number of member states grew and the number of armaments decreased. As a result, in the early 2010s the ‘ceilings’ of the NATO countries on tanks and armored combat vehicles in Europe (not including Turkey, which increased the number of armored vehicles for reasons of regional security) were slightly over 50% of the national permitted levels. The ‘ceilings’ on tanks were filled, however, to less than 30%¹⁰⁴. In the post Cold War period the US presence on the European continent as a NATO member reduced sharply. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, about 450 thousand American military personnel were deployed in Europe, today this number has dropped by more than 80% to 64 thousand servicemen¹⁰⁵.

The British contingent of 15,500 military personnel deployed in Germany was planned to withdraw gradually by 2019. But after the Ukrainian crisis this plan was put on hold.

The reorganization of the defence structure in Europe can be explained by the fact that European NATO allies no longer considered serious scenarios of offensive operations requiring heavy armored equipment. The claims of NATO overwhelming superiority in treaty-limited armaments and equipment continuously made by Russia are based on comparisons of the treaty ‘ceilings’ rather than on the actual numbers.

For a long time European political and expert circles thoroughly discussed withdrawal of about 200 US tactical free-fall nuclear bombs kept on the territory of Europe. But after 2014 the predominant mood was that the chance to return these bombs to the American continent disappeared for long. It proved to be true. The United States announced plans to substitute some of these bombs by a modernized B61-12 version that could be used not only by the US F-16 but also by German Air Force Tornado aircraft. So the long-term programme of modernization of the NATO’s nuclear arsenal in Europe was initiated.

Despite the indications of relaxing tensions in the NATO-Russian relations, Russian media continue an anti-NATO campaign

¹⁰⁴ Calculated by the author according to: The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2011).

¹⁰⁵ Stavridis: Europe Remains Strategically Vital to US, 15 Mar. 2013, <<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=119541>>.

which sometimes takes extreme forms, for instance in political TV talk-shows.

Some established clichés describing the character of relations with Western countries and dated back to the Soviet times have proved to die hard. Thus there are constant allegations that the circle of the NATO bases grows and clenches around Russia¹⁰⁶. However, if ‘base’ means facility used by a number of NATO states, such bases exist only in Afghanistan and will be destroyed after withdrawal of NATO troops from the country. In fact, there are military facilities in Europe which host troops of non-European member countries. For example, US units are deployed in more than twenty bases and several smaller sites.

In addition, plans of the European missile defence deployment seriously complicated relations between US/NATO and Russia. After the announcement of the plans most Russian military, politicians, and experts declared that the missile defence system was directed against Russia. Official NATO statements that ‘NATO missile defence was intended to defend from potential threats emanating from outside the Euro-Atlantic area’ and that this system was ‘not directed against Russia and would not undermine Russia’s strategic deterrence capabilities’ failed to convince the Russian side¹⁰⁷.

The general spirit in Russia did not change even after parameters of the European missile defence were modified twice – and the last time significantly – in order to limit its capabilities. In 2009 the US abolished the plan to deploy GBI strategic interceptors and a radar in Poland and the Czech Republic. In March 2013 Pentagon abandoned the forth phase of the programme – deployment in Europe and on board of ships of the modified SM-3 Block IIB missile interceptor which due to its characteristics was considered by Russian experts as a critical element weakening retaliation potential of the Russian ICBMs.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example: What stands behind the anti-Russia politics in the Baltic states, *Zvezda TV and Radio*, 20 Apr. 2016, <<http://tvzvezda.ru/schedule/programs/content/201509181148-ykon.htm/201604201827-szg4.htm>>.

¹⁰⁷ Chicago Summit Declaration. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Chicago on 20 May 2012, <http://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natolive/official_texts_87593.htm>.

Nevertheless largely because of the Western position, a substantive dialogue on the issue did not take place. The unwillingness of the US to alleviate Moscow's concerns, i.e. provide technical, administrative or legal obligations to guarantee that the system was not directed against Russia, led the negotiations to a deadlock.

Speaking on 15-16 October 2014 at the Saint-Petersburg International Economic Forum President Putin stated the position of the Russian side: 'Let us sign at least a worthless document, a legal document that it is not directed against us. You will write down on a paper what you say'. But according to him, American counterparts 'flatly refused' to do that. 'Where is the dialogue then?', concluded Putin¹⁰⁸.

Russia and NATO policies in the context of the Ukrainian crisis

Russia's strong reaction to the prospects of Ukraine changing its economic and political course – Kiev's declared intention to sign an association agreement with the European Union – was one of the underlying reasons of the Ukrainian crisis. From the Russian perspective, that intention would shortly be followed by Ukraine joining NATO.

The crisis was largely a consequence of post-Cold War relations between Russia and the West growing number of negative factors and unresolved contradictions. NATO enlargement policy perceived by most Russian politicians and military as a threat to national security was, in our opinion, a key permanent destructive element of these relations.

NATO leadership refused to enter into a meaningful dialogue with Moscow on this issue (as well as to discuss the prospect of Russia joining the organization) stressing that its enlargement did not threaten Russia.

Such Brussels' position made a compromise impossible and fueled the suspicions of those in Russian who considered NATO an enemy or at least a potential rival. The situation was further

¹⁰⁸ Putin blamed the US with the refusal to sign even worthless document on BMD, *NTV*, 23 May 2014, <<http://www.ntv.ru/novosti/984877/>>.

aggravated by the speculations of Ukraine joining NATO which was alliance's constant refrain since 1997 Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the NATO and Ukraine including at the 2008 high level meeting in Bucharest where the member countries agreed that Ukraine 'in the future may become the member of NATO'¹⁰⁹.

NATO official documents constantly reiterated that the door to the alliance was open for Ukraine and that there were special relations between the two in the form of 'special partnership' as well as within the NATO-Ukraine Commission and practical cooperation through the 'annual national programme'¹¹⁰. Though later Ukraine declared that it will pursue 'non-block policy' and adopted the relevant legislation, certain Ukrainian politicians and parties continue to raise the above matter.

All those steps led to the deepening of anti-West mood among the Russian elites. After the forced overthrow of the legitimate government in Kiev in February 2014 the perception of NATO as a direct threat in combination with the fear that the alliance would 'absorb Ukraine' pushed Moscow to act in Crimea as well as to support anti-Kiev groups in the southeast Ukraine.

Rapid development of events in Ukraine took the NATO leadership off guard and revealed that the alliance was unprepared to react quickly to such emergency situations. During the summit in Wales on 4-5 September 2014, NATO leaders attempted to take some essential decisions and coordinate further actions. Many experts and politicians expected the summit to be a turn to a 'new' – or rather a return to an 'old' – Cold War policy. Nevertheless, the decisions taken at the summit, as well as NATO broader reaction to the Ukrainian crisis, despite the constant pressure on the part of new members (mostly those countries bordering Russia) could be described as a 'soft scenario'. Particularly serious concerns of NATO members have so far been resolved within the organization, while the solutions which could lead to aggravating relations with Russia have not been adopted or included into joint documents.

¹⁰⁹ NATO-Russia relations: the facts, May 2015, <http://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natolive/topics_111767.htm>.

¹¹⁰ Lisbon Summit Declaration. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Lisbon, 20 Nov. 2010, <http://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natolive/official_texts_68828.htm>.

NATO Secretary General in an interview after the summit emphasized that he did not want 'a new Cold War'. Speaking about the future he expressed confidence that 'the constructive partnership between Russia and NATO' was necessary¹¹¹.

The Ukrainian crisis planted doubts among the leading Western politicians concerning the expediency of Ukraine's access to NATO. For example, such European leaders as the president of France F. Hollande and the German foreign minister F.V. Steinmeier spoke against the idea of Ukraine joining the alliance. Since preventing Ukraine from membership in NATO has been one of the Russian foreign policy tasks, one can say that its implementation in the short term – given events in Donbass – is quite realistic. However for Russia its costs have turned out to be very high.

More frequent and undoubtedly expanded NATO manoeuvres in the countries bordering Russia did not start suddenly and were not a result of a surprise rise of aggressiveness of the alliance. When the Baltic states joined NATO despite Moscow's remonstrance in 2003, there was no any rise of military activity on their territories. In fact only four NATO jet fighters began patrol missions over these three countries in order to 'show the military presence'. And this situation preserved unchanged up to the start of the Russian campaign in Crimea.

The objective analysis leads to the conclusion that the present rise of the military activity near Russian borders is the reaction to the Russia's accession of the Crimea and its active support of the formation and military activities of Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republics and Russian volunteers there – with the view of establishing a so called 'Novorossia'. As of today, due to many reasons the realization of the 'Novorossia project' has proved to be problematic, but at the same time Russia's neighbours expressed concern upon the possible repetition of 'the Ukrainian scenarios' in regard to themselves and began to exert serious pressure on Brussels. NATO bureaucratic structures such as

¹¹¹ The constructive partnership between Russia and the NATO is necessary – the NATO Secretary General A. Fogh Rasmussen told 'Kommersant' about the crisis in relations with Russia, *Kommersant*, 10 Sep. 2014, <<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2563623>>.

military and civil personnel of different levels also stepped up since they received an unexpected ground for justification for the increase of financing of their own activities which they could hardly expect in other situation.

Moscow claimed many times that Russia did not have any aggressive intentions. But such statements did not reassure the neighbouring countries. They believed that the state once committed an ‘annexation’ (as they call the accession of Crimea) of a part of the neighbouring territory and violated sovereignty of the state (in connection with the support of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk Republics) could later repeat the scenario. This fear was further fuelled by massive exercises of the Russian army and naval forces near their borders.

A large-scale combat readiness exercise of the Russian armed forces took place at the beginning of the Ukrainian conflict in February and March 2014. According to the Russian Defence Ministry, the exercise involved about 150,000 military personnel, 90 aircraft, 120 helicopters, 880 tanks and up to 80 warships¹¹². According to the experts of the well-known independent organization – European Leadership Network for multilateral nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, on 26-29 March 2014 Russia conducted exercises involving 10,000 troops and a simulation of ‘massive and simultaneous use of nuclear weapons’¹¹³.

During the winter and spring of 2015, amidst the Ukrainian crisis as it was reported at a collegial meeting of the Russian Defence Ministry, Russia held a particularly large number of exercises – more than two thousand (approximately 20 of them were large scale exercises). The units of the Western Military District, Northern and Baltic fleets participated in the exercises. During this period on the High North 38,000 personnel, 3,360 pieces of military and special equipment and weapons, 41 warships,

¹¹² Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, <http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11905664@egNews>.

¹¹³ Major Russian exercises conducted since 2014 in its European territory and adjacent areas. Kulesa, Ł., Towards a New Equilibrium: Minimising the risks of NATO and Russia's new military posture, European Leadership Network, 8 Feb. 2016, <http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/towards-a-new-equilibrium_3497.html>.

15 submarines, more than 120 military aircraft and helicopters were involved in the maneuvers¹¹⁴.

Military exercises during the Ukrainian crisis were also held in many other Russian regions, including the Arctic where Russia established six new military bases in 2015. In March 2016, Chechen SWAT units conducted their exercises near the North Pole.

As it was noted above, the Ukrainian crisis gave NATO an excuse to intensify its military activity. In particular, military exercises near the Russian borders expanded considerably. In the same period – from the early 2014 till late 2015 – NATO conducted more than 20 large-scale exercises.

The largest of them – Allied Shield exercises – were held in June 2015. About 15,000 personnel from 19 NATO member states and three partner states participated. Allied Shield was an umbrella name for four smaller size military maneuvers: BALTOPS 15 – an exercises involving more than hundred ships in the Baltic Sea, Saber Strike 15 – a regular exercises run by the US Army in Poland and the Baltic states, Noble Jump – first test deployment of elements of the so-called Very High Readiness Joint Task Force recently created by NATO (allegedly in response to the Russian actions) and Trident Joust – an exercise aimed at improving command and control and communication capabilities¹¹⁵.

The military activity of Russia and NATO directed against each other intensified very quickly. And every next step on the way to further escalation of tensions the both parties undertake as a reaction – under the pretext of the opponent having intensified its military activity.

Rapidly rising deterioration of the military-political relations has become one of the important trends in the relations of Russia with its neighbors. Lack of dialogue between yesterday's partners on the European security – Russia and NATO – leads to a conclusion that the way back to decreasing tensions and mutual distrust and restoring cooperative relations will not be simple or quick.

¹¹⁴ Gavrilov, Yu., Two thousand exercises, *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 29 May 2015, <<http://rg.ru/2015/05/29/manevri-site.html>>.

¹¹⁵ Kulesa, L. Op.cit.

So far, despite very active political and a PR campaign conducted by Moscow positions and actions of Russia with regard to Crimea and Ukraine have not found much understanding within NATO. The difference between the member states is only that some countries show extreme concern and demands drastic measure from NATO while others continue to demonstrate restraint.

As a result, the North Atlantic alliance has taken a compromise position – it has once again emphasized its readiness to guarantee security to its members and at the same time readiness to interact with Russia. The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg noted in this regard that ‘there is no contradiction between strong defence and political dialogue’¹¹⁶. A meeting of the NATO-Russia Council in April 2016 – after a two-year break – became a sign that the tensions somewhat lessened. There are reasons to believe that the meeting, despite all the contradictory statements that have followed it, is the first step to renew a constructive dialogue.

Prospects for normalization of the relations

Russia-NATO relations have been frozen more than once. For the first time it happened in the late 1994 when the Russian government realized that NATO’s eastward expansion was inevitable. For the last time – in 2008 after the Georgian crisis. Thus, the parties seem to be used to on-again-off-again cooperation and are quite sure that the breaks are temporary. But the Ukrainian crisis has become a new milestone – it is the largest and deepest conflict of interests between Russia and the West after the Cold War. Never before since the end of the Cold War and its most dangerous episode – the Cuban missile crisis – the world has approached so close to the brink of confrontation turning into an armed conflict between Russia and Western countries.

Such an armed conflict could occur when the opposite armed forces got too close to each other while their nuclear forces increased combat readiness at the early stages of the events in

¹¹⁶ NATO Secretary General discusses global security challenges, transatlantic partnership at Brussels Forum, 18 Mar. 2016, <http://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natohq/news_129401.htm?selectedLocale=ru>.

Crimea. It could also happen as a result of rapidly aggravating relations with Turkey in which Istanbul tried to involve NATO. The danger still remains as a result of intensive military maneuvers which NATO and Russia hold along the common borders.

However with the start of the Minsk process signs of restoration of the dialogue began to appear. Appointment of Boris Gryzlov, a close associate of Vladimir Putin, as a plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation at the negotiations, was an evidence of Moscow's commitment to the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

On the US part, Secretary of State John Kerry's visit to Sochi in May 2015 and unprecedentedly long negotiations first with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and then with President Vladimir Putin were perceived in the same way. Within ten months after that Kerry visited Russia two more times within the similar, extremely rare in the bilateral relations format of negotiations.

In the midst of the Russian air force operation in Syria in October 2015 Moscow tried to send to the US a Russian delegation headed by Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev to discuss cooperation on Syria. Though the idea was declined by Washington, it demonstrated that the Russian side sought to restore dialogue with the US. Later the Russian prime minister and Lavrov attended the annual Munich Security Conference (February 2016) to emphasize particular importance that Russian government attributed to the dialogue with the West.

At the Munich conference Sergei Lavrov, having accused NATO and the European Union of refusing 'full cooperation with Russia', creating an enemy image, and deploying weapons, declared nevertheless that 'the baffling complexity of entwined conflicts and expanded conflict areas require a coherent mutual approach'¹¹⁷.

Dmitri Medvedev built his speech in the same way: first he criticized the West, and then stressed the need of dialogue as the only possible way out. He emphasized that 'the mechanisms that allowed us to promptly settle mutual concerns had been cut off. Moreover, we had lost our grasp of the culture of mutual arms

¹¹⁷ Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's speech at the ministerial panel discussion during the Munich Security Conference, 13 Feb. 2016, <http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2086892>.

control, which we used for a long time as the basis for strengthening mutual trust. Partnership initiatives... were expiring one by one'. But after that the Russian prime minister pointed out that 'in this context, we needed to launch an intensive dialogue on the future architecture of Euro-Atlantic security, global stability and regional threats more than ever before'¹¹⁸. Thus, both senior Russian representatives not just stated unsatisfactory character of Russia-West relations, they also mentioned the Cold War as the lowest reference point and indicated the need to return to dialogue and cooperation.

By that time the NATO leadership had formulated its position on the formula of 'defence and dialogue' which was announced at the Munich conference by Secretary General J. Stoltenberg. He made clear that the Alliance did not seek confrontation or want a new Cold War but would respond firmly and such a response would consist in 'more defence and more dialogue'¹¹⁹. NATO also offered to resume the meetings of the NATO-Russia Council¹²⁰.

Moscow, in return, emphasized that such relations had to be built 'exclusively on the basis of equality and implementation of arrangements concerning ensuring of equal and indivisible security for all countries of the Euro-Atlantic area'. At the same time Lavrov announced in his speech that 'NATO was a reality', and that Russia 'had no interest to provoke confrontation with this organization'¹²¹.

It is obvious that 'provoking confrontation', besides other negative consequences, would increase chances of returning to the arms race. Russia has repeatedly declared at high-level meetings that it is not interested in such an outcome. Influential Western politicians, including the NATO secretary general, also oppose to unleashing a new arms race.

¹¹⁸ Dmitry Medvedev's speech at the panel discussion. Munich Security Conference, 13 Feb. 2016, <<http://government.ru/en/news/21784/>>.

¹¹⁹ NATO Secretary General calls for more defence and more dialogue, 13 Feb. 2016, <http://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natohq/news_128069.htm?selectedLocale=en>.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Lavrov: Russia is ready to restoration of equal relations with NATO, TASS, 1 Apr. 2016, <<http://tass.ru/politika/3169594>>.

Besides, both Russian and Western politicians and military acknowledge the existence of common threats and challenges – first of all, terrorism and WMD proliferation – that require cooperative counteraction. The remaining common views on important elements of the modern world order create a basis for expansion of interaction in security sphere between Russia and NATO and the West as a whole.

Considering extreme danger of increasing military-political tensions between the two parties it is necessary to take **urgent preventive measures**. The most important and urgent ones seem to be the following:

- to take measures to stabilize the situation on Russia's western border. To reduce intensity of maneuvers, abstain from maneuvers near borders, create the special 'force free' zone on both sides of the border (the same as Russia's border areas with China). For this purpose it is necessary to develop and sign an agreement (or a set of agreements) which would include confidence-building (for example, obligations not to create a security threat for the other party) and transparency (mutual informing on the purposes of maneuvers, presence of observers at exercises and maneuvers near border, etc.) measures and concrete restrictions on military activities of the parties (reducing the armed forces at the borders, regulating the number of maneuvers). The parties should also consider lowering the threshold of notification on exercises in accordance with the 2011 Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures;

- to take urgent measures to prevent incidents and dangerous military activities. For this purpose Russia and the US should reaffirm their obligations according to the 1989 Agreement Between the Government of the USSR and the USA on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities and 1972 Agreement Between the Government of the USSR and the Government of the USA on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas. If necessary, the parties should work out a similar agreement between Russia and NATO;

- to resume work of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) on a regular basis and to mandate it with seeking a resolution of the crisis in the bilateral relations and in Europe. The parties should not forget that NRC was created as an 'all-weather' forum not only for coordinating positions in favorable international environment but

also for regulating crisis situations. The ‘freezing’ of its activities which unfortunately has become regular, destroys its original purpose;

- to work out details and specific parameters (with indication of time limits, the number of weapons and staff) of the obligations taken by the Alliance according to the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act providing that its security shall not be ensured ‘by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces’¹²². Defining and observing quantitative parameters will help to stabilize the situation on the borders and alleviate concerns of Russian military, politicians, and experts related to any potential NATO attack;

- to reduce, on a mutual basis, accusatory rhetoric on both sides, restrain from representing the opponent as an enemy in the public domain and media and exploiting the idea of military response to the opponent’s actions, a large-scale military confrontation, ‘third world war’, or the use of nuclear weapons. Filling the media space with such ideas increases public hostility towards the opponent which, in return, puts pressure on political process and political decisions;

- to review NATO short-term planning. The matter of crucial importance is to achieve an understanding, acceptable both for Russia and NATO, that Ukraine and Georgia’s joining NATO should be postponed for some distant future.

Only when the current tension decreases, the parties will be able to start developing **long-term measures** to improve Russia-NATO relations and security in Europe.

In addition, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) continues to be among the focal points for NATO. In 2007, Russia ‘partially suspended’ its participation in the treaty, and in 2015 it ‘completely halted’ its participation in it. At the same time Moscow did not withdraw from the treaty. Without going into details of what Russia’s wording means – which is not immediately clear even for experts, – it should be noted that the process of further reduction of armed forces in Europe has its own inertia and

¹²² Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, 27 May 1997, <http://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm>.

it is still in demand. Despite the crisis of the CFE Treaty, it seems that the principles underlying the latest agreements – that each state determines the level of the conventional arms and equipment limited by the treaty necessary to meet its security needs – are absolutely viable.

The issue of tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) deployed in Europe remains a noticeable destabilizing element in Russia-NATO relations as well. Its European deployment destabilizes situation by changing the notion of a threshold to use nuclear weapons.

As a result of NATO enlargement process the alliance has gained numerical superiority over Russia which Moscow perceives as a growing threat. In these conditions, Russian military and politicians consider national TNW a necessary means to offset such superiority in Europe. If the favorable conditions for negotiations emerge, one of the options will be to link the issue of TNW reductions and revival of the CFE process with measures on limiting NATO further expansion¹²³.

Amidst the marked aggravation of relations between Russia and NATO (and the West in general) when the alliance is increasingly perceived by Moscow as an enemy, a serious political impulse is needed to move to a broad positive agenda – both in bilateral relations and in strengthening of the European security.

While waiting for such an impulse to generate, experts on both sides can begin consultations on a wide range of issues pertinent to European security. Such idea was expressed by President Putin at the St. Petersburg Economic Forum in June 2016 as a means to recover from stagnation trade and economic relations between Russia and the European Union. The idea can also be effectively applied to military-political relations between Russia and NATO in order to find solutions to the current crisis and create steady cooperation.

The present situation with its lack of dialogue at the official level makes expert discussion of Russia-NATO relations and – in wider context – modernization of the European security system particularly relevant. Such a discussion would facilitate an open exchange of concerns of all the parties not constrained by official

¹²³ More on TNW see in: *Russia and Dilemmas of Nuclear Disarmament*, ed. by A. Arbatov, V. Dvorkin, S. Oznobishchev (Moscow, 2012), p. 127.

positions, as well as of suggestions on how to alleviate them and develop practical recommendations for politicians. An expert dialogue can become the first and major step towards a new 'détente' in Europe and restoration of a dialogue between Russia and NATO. This dialogue can be organized at the initiative of any European country (or the OSCE) and its broad agenda will present more chances to reach consensus and compromise on the key issues of the European security.

The profound crisis in the relations between Russia and the West indicates a need to review the European security system that has failed to prevent it. The crucial element in moving further in this direction is undoubtedly the 'Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements' signed in February 2015.

To support such a review both parties can consider returning to discussions on the European security agreement proposed by Moscow in 2008 and convening a new Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe ('Helsinki-2') along with strengthening of the OSCE and its transformation into a 'European UN'. These ideas can help to remove the inconsistency between the Russian approach and the 'NATO-centric' security structure which has been under construction in Europe until recently.

5. PEACEKEEPING ISSUES AND THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

Alexander NIKITIN

The scale and consequences of the conflict in Ukraine are comparable with the precedents of other countries in which the international community was forced to interfere and the UN or regional organizations had to deploy peace operations to disengage the parties and stop deaths and destructions. As the Council of European Union states, the conflict in Ukraine has generated over 900,000 internally displaced persons and over 600,000 refugees forced to leave the zones of hostilities or even driven out of the country¹²⁴. According to the data of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, from August 2015 to April 2016 the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine documented 25493 deaths and serious injuries and 1200 persons missing in the southeast of Ukraine¹²⁵. Yet the issues of possibility, admissibility, and legitimacy of peace operation in Ukraine remain the subject of heated political discussion.

¹²⁴ Outcome of the Council of the European Union meeting on Foreign Affairs, 3369th Council meeting, EU Document 5755/15, p. 5.

¹²⁵ Report of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, UN HCHR Document, 15 Aug. 2015, p. 8.

Possible use of peace operations mechanisms in the context of the crisis in Ukraine

During 2014-2016, widely diverging opinions were shaped and expressed in Ukraine, Russia, Western countries and international organizations concerning the use of peace operation mechanisms to settle the crisis in the southeast of Ukraine.

In May 2014 deputy commander of Russian airborne troops for peace operations Major General Alexander Vyaznikov stated at a press conference of the Ministry of Defence that the Blue Helmets of the airborne troops stood ready to take part in an operation in Ukraine if a relevant political decision was made¹²⁶.

Chair of the Defence Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Admiral Vladimir Komoedov supported 'introducing the peacekeeping interposition force' in the southeast of Ukraine in 2015. However, he did not specify whether the peace operation should be conducted under the auspices of the UN, OSCE, CIS or CSTO.

In March 2015 Lieutenant General Alexander Sinaisky, Secretary of the Council of the Ministers of Defence of the CIS (who has combat experience having lead Russian peace troops during the UN operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina) stated that 'a peace operation conducted by the CIS Collective Peace Force would be a most appropriate option if a peace mission in the southeast of Ukraine is to be deployed. The CIS peacekeepers have an experience of successful planning, deploying and completing peace operations in the conflict zones in the territory of the former Soviet Union'. Alexander Sinaisky referred to the positive experience of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force in Tajikistan and the operation with the CIS mandate conducted in Abkhazia in 1990s, and added that 'the peacekeeping experience of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force in this format could very well be applied to stabilize situation in the southeast of Ukraine'¹²⁷.

¹²⁶ See: *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 May 2014, <http://www.ng.ru/armies/2014-05-26/2_generaly.html>.

¹²⁷ See: *Voyenno-politicheskoye obozreniye*, 20 Mar. 2015, <<http://www.belupo.com/ru/50153.html>>.

It should be noted, however, that the mentioned statements by the military officials and MPs were ‘unofficial’ and reflected their personal opinions. The official position of the Russian Foreign Ministry was different. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Gennady Gatilov (to whom the Legal Department of the Ministry reports) stated at the high-level meeting on possible OSCE peace operations in October 2015 that the launch of any peace operation in Ukraine would but hinder the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. The Deputy Foreign Minister stressed, ‘with regard to the Ukraine conflict, we are convinced that at the moment we should focus on supporting the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) that de-facto has already performed the main tasks that peace operations typically perform, including the monitoring of ceasefire, verification of withdrawal of forces and the important function of containment’¹²⁸. Gennady Gatilov underlined that the experience of launching of the OSCE SMM had debunked a widespread belief that the OSCE decision-making bodies were cumbersome and slow, and stressed that the SMM format was optimum in terms of current legal status of the OSCE.

Denis Pushilin, head of delegation of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) in the Contact Group on Ukraine also believes that the deployment of peacekeepers is virtually impossible in present conditions. As he explains, ‘There is a package of measures to implement the Minsk Agreements, which was signed on 12 February 2015, and its paragraph 3 entrusts the monitoring and verification to the OSCE SMM. It does not envisage any representatives of either the United Nations or any other peacekeeping organization’¹²⁹. According to the leadership of the self-proclaimed republics the Ukrainian side directly violates the Minsk Agreements inviting the UN peacekeeping mission. After Ukrainian parliament applied to the UN, Alexander Zakharchenko, head of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic stated that

¹²⁸ MFA of Russia: peace operation in Ukraine would hinder the implementation of the Minsk Arrangements, *Kommersant*, 1 Oct. 2015, <<http://kommersant.ru/doc/2822569>>.

¹²⁹ See: *Gazeta.ru*, 19 Jan. 2016, <http://gazeta.ru/politics/2016/01/19_a_8030495.shtml>.

the armed forces of DPR reporting to him would not admit the UN peacekeepers to the territory they control.

Meanwhile, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko continues to insist that the OSCE mission should be viewed as a preface to the deployment of a large-scale UN mission. The OSCE monitors have no full access to the territory of the DPR and LPR. ‘The OSCE mission is vital for us, but it is not enough. That is why we believe that peacekeeping forces are necessary’, Petro Poroshenko said¹³⁰. Ukrainian envoy to the United Nations Volodymyr Yelchenko went even further and cited the strength of the mission desirable for Ukraine: ‘To cover the occupied and uncontrolled parts of the territory of Ukraine, at least 25,000 troops should be deployed’¹³¹.

In September 2015, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko explained that a UN peacekeeping mission in Donbas could become ‘highly instrumental in promoting the Minsk Agreements’¹³². It should be noted that before that, in February 2015, when a part of Ukrainian armed forces was entrapped near Debaltseve, Petro Poroshenko suggested that the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine (NSDCU) consider deploying international contingent in Ukraine in the format of a European Union police mission. However, following the international practice, police missions are typically launched after the conflicting parties have been disengaged.

Before the Minsk Agreements were concluded, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko had repeatedly suggested that a peacekeeping operation should be conducted to settle the crisis in Ukraine. An initiative to deploy peacekeepers authorised to use force in Ukraine was on some occasions put forward by Chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ilkka Kanerva (Finland). In particular, he said, the OSCE is present in southeast Ukraine as a civil unarmed organization. Has not the time come to prevent the escalation and the spread of war, to hold a serious international

¹³⁰ Kiev explains why the UN is reluctant to deploy peacekeepers in Donbass, *Regnum News Agency*, 23 Dec. 2015, <<http://regnum.ru/news/2042740.html>>.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² See: *Gordon.ua*, 29 Sep. 2015, <<http://gordonua.com/news/politics/poroshenko-uchastie-ukrainy-v-mirotvorcheskih-operaciyah-oon-daet-nam-pravo-rasschityvat-na-takuyu-zhe-pomoshch-100032.html>>.

discussion of the need to conduct a peacekeeping or crisis operation in order to avoid increasing destruction and victims?¹³³

In one of his interviews former Swedish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Carl Bildt drew a parallel between the peace operation in Eastern Slavonia (former Yugoslavia) where Slobodan Milosevic had finally consented to the deployment of the UN troops, and possible peacekeeping operation in the southeast of Ukraine. Carl Bildt expressed certainty that potential peace operation in Ukraine was possible and ‘could then ensure the real implementation of the political provisions of the Minsk II agreement’¹³⁴.

International law and the applicability of peace operation mechanisms in Ukraine

The policy-makers’ opinions differ, as there remains a number of outstanding international law issues related to the possibility of deploying a peace operation in Ukraine. Those can be divided in some groups.

First, the parties disagree on who, and along what line the potential peacekeeping troops are to disengage. As both the Charter of the United Nations and the practice of traditional peace operations were designed to settle relations only between such international actors as (recognized) states, it would be more acceptable and natural for the United Nations to deploy the disengagement force along the official border between Ukraine and Russia. This is the vision of the operation of the Ukrainian side. Indeed, it insists that Russia should be recognized as a party in conflict and does not consider the LPR/DPR as competent subjects. Kiev believes that the deployment of any disengagement troops along the Russian-Ukrainian border would make it possible to suppress and prevent Russia from providing arms and munitions to

¹³³ The OSCE leadership proposes a peace operation in Donbass, 25 Jan. 2015, <<http://www.segodnya.ua/politics/pnews/v-rukovodstve-obse-predlozili-provesti-na-donbasse-mirotvorcheskuyu-operaciyu-586869.html>>.

¹³⁴ Bildt, C., Peacekeepers in Ukraine? It’s possible, *The Globe and Mail*, 21 July 2015.

the separatists, sending military advisers and volunteers (that the Ukrainian party believes to be disguised members of Russian regular military formations) to the southeast of Ukraine. Russia is not ready to consider this scheme, as it does not believe itself to be a party in conflict, and the deployment of foreign troops along the border between Ukraine and Russia's Rostov region and the adjacent territories will by no means stop the confrontation and violations of ceasefire that take place 100 km to the west, along the real line of contact of the conflicting parties, that is, the armed forces of unrecognised LPR/DPR, on the one hand, and official Ukrainian military and special formations, on the other hand.

On the contrary, Russia contends (in which it is supported by the leadership of unrecognized LPR and DPR) that the parties should be disengaged on behalf of the international community along the actual line of contact of the conflicting troops of Kiev and the separatists, that is the actual line of contact that they fought for and that is mentioned in the Minsk Agreements. This line is different from the state border, yet it was used as a point of reference in the Minsk Agreements, and thus was de-facto recognized as the line of conflict. It is along this line where the ceasefire is constantly breached and people keep dying. Certainly, this means that potential peacekeepers, should they be sent to the conflict zone, will find themselves deep inside the official territory of Ukraine. Then their presence will 'freeze' the current division of the territories, which will prevent the Ukrainian Armed Forces from conducting any operations involving the use of force to restore their control over the territories of the LPR and DPR. Understandably, deployment of peacekeepers along this line is unacceptable for official Kiev.

The second group of international legal issues related to the deployment of the UN operation concerns the way such operations are legitimized. There are two major types of the UN operations in terms of their legal approval. The first one includes peace-keeping operations proper that are conducted based on the principles enshrined in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. These require a written consent of the legitimate leadership of the parties in conflict to the interference of the international community and specifically the UN. In this case the operation may be conducted including by the regional intergovernmental organizations (their right to do so is set forth in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the

United Nations) in coordination with the UN or independently, with the UN SC mandate desirable but not obligatory.

The second type includes peace enforcement operations that are conducted based on principles of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations governing armed interference of the international community represented by the United Nations in conflicts or internal affairs of states, including against the will of the legitimate leadership of states in whose territories the conflict is taking place. Such operations can be conducted only and exclusively in accordance with the decision (mandate) of the UN Security Council. This kind of operations are called the 'UN political missions', as they usually involve coercive use of force and unlike peace-keeping operations are led by the UN Political Department, rather than the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In such operations the UN itself sets political goals with regard to conditions of conflict settlement and the parameters of the post-conflict situation in the conflict zone.

In the case of the Ukraine crisis a Chapter VI operation could be conducted if a number of conditions is observed: the authorities in Kiev should give the United Nations a written consent to the conduct of such operation, the leadership of unrecognised separatist territories should also express consent to the UN interference on behalf of the international community, at the same time the plan of such operation (if the issue is referred to the Security Council) should not be vetoed by Russia who is a permanent member of the Security Council, or, the operation should be delegated to a regional organization (for example NATO or the OSCE) bypassing the UNSC with a reference to the written consent of the conflicting parties.

On the contrary, the conduct of the Chapter VII 'UN political mission' with elements of coercion (i.e. peace enforcement operation) is only possible if there is a corresponding UNSC mandate, which can be obtained with the consent of Russia (who can veto the UNSC decisions) and other permanent (and the majority of non-permanent) members of the UNSC, yet requires no consent on the part of either LPR/DPR or even Kiev. As an example of such UN operation involving the use of force one can cite operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya; all of them were conducted on the UNSC decisions against the will of the leadership of the states where conflicts took place and involved

considerable military components and coercive actions. However in the present conditions when the ceasefire is in force (despite its constant violations) the approval of a UN mandate for an enforcement operation is highly unlikely. At the same time, in case of the ceasefire breakdown and the renewal of open hostilities, the possibilities of the UN considering scenarios involving peace enforcement operation will increase.

The third group of issues is linked to who might provide peacekeeping troops for the operation in Ukraine. Representatives of the LPR/DPR leadership (in particular head of DPR Alexander Zakharchenko) have repeatedly said that the deployment of Russian troops as peacekeepers would suit them, to which the Ukrainian side has categorically objected. As for the involvement of the NATO troops with the UN mandate (as was the case with former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Libya) would provoke a negative response and objections from Russia. It should be reminded that usually the UN deploys the troops of countries that have no vested interests in the conflict zone.

The possible involvement of the CSTO Collective Peacekeeping Forces (established in 2012-2014 and having a strength of 3600) would most likely suit the leadership of unrecognized entities yet is refused by Kiev due to Russia's political domination in the CSTO. What is more, the deployment of CSTO Collective Peacekeeping Forces will almost certainly not receive the consensus support of the leadership of the CSTO countries, primarily those who have active or latent problems with separatists in their own territories. Meanwhile, some experts say both Kiev and Moscow would find it suitable that Belarus and Kazakhstan provide their military personnel (not through the CSTO but as individual troop contributors for operations with the UN mandate), as these countries have demonstrated mediation skills and given explicit support to neither of the parties in conflict¹³⁵.

¹³⁵ See, for example, the analytical summary at *Nashe Mnenie*, 26 Mar. 2015, <<http://nmnby.eu/news/analytics/5745.html>>.

OSCE Special Monitoring Mission

The OSCE SMM acts as the major international representation in the zone of conflict in the southeast of Ukraine. The Special Monitoring Mission started working on 21 March 2014 and in 2015-2016 had a strength of 600–700 (varying from month to month) unarmed civil observers. The mandate of the Mission allows the increase of personnel to 1,000 observers and applies to the whole territory of Ukraine (with this language the OSCE stressed that it also applies to the Luhansk and the Donetsk regions). The Mission works in 10 largest cities of Ukraine: Dnepropetrovsk, Donetsk, Ivano-Frankovsk, Kiev, Luhansk, Lviv, Odessa, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Chernovtsy, with 400 observers out of 600 deployed in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. However, in practice the movements of the mission members in the territory of LPR/DPR are limited, in particular, they are periodically denied access to a number of settlements along the Russian-Ukrainian border.

Ukraine insists that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission should be admitted to the whole territory of unrecognized LPR/DPR and to the Russian-Ukrainian border, and especially that Kiev's control over this border should be restored. Irina Gerashchenko, Ukrainian President's Plenipotentiary on peace settlement has repeatedly named this as a condition for the transition to the next stage of the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Establishing 'full and effective control over the part of the Russian-Ukrainian border' in the zone of conduct of anti-terrorist operation (that is in the territory of unrecognised LPR/DPR was called for by Ukrainian experts as the main provision of the mandate of hypothetical peacekeeping mission¹³⁶ and thus they stressed that they believe that the main purpose of the operation consists in suppressing possible reinforcement of separatists with the help of Russia, rather than disengaging the troops of the conflicting parties.

Kiev believes that the issue of restoring Ukraine's control over the whole Russian-Ukrainian border is a key to resolving the crisis. It is notable that alongside with the Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, following the agreements reached in the July 2014 in Berlin (in the Normandy format) the OSCE had earlier deployed

¹³⁶ Ibid.

other monitoring mission, a mission in the checkpoints of Donetsk and Gukovo at the Russian-Ukrainian border in Russia's Rostov region¹³⁷. When the Berlin round of talks took place, those were the only checkpoints not controlled by the Ukrainian side, and therefore were to be monitored by the OSCE. The agreement authorised the OSCE to deploy monitors on the Russian side of the border for the term of three months that was subsequently prolonged. However, the Russian sided refused to extend the mandate of the mission to other parts of the border when Ukrainian border service lost control of them. As OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier (Italy) says, 'we are not able to monitor the borders as we would like to. We are episodically reaching them, but we don't have systematic control of the borders'¹³⁸.

The interview by the OSCE Secretary General has a rather symbolic title, 'In Ukraine, the OSCE is Practically a Peacekeeping Operation'. Lamberto Zannier stresses the broad nature of the OSCE SMM mandate that started from monitoring of the ceasefire, observation, and reporting and subsequently may be extended to include issues of economic stabilization, post-conflict rehabilitation, restoring peaceful life and launching political process. The OSCE Secretary General also notes that the OSCE SMM is tightly linked with the European Union: 70% of the operation is paid by the EU, and 70% of the staff of that operation, roughly, is from EU countries. The OSCE mission has managed to accumulate and engage state-of-the-art equipment, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) for aerial observation, fixed cameras mounted high up on mobile vehicles, and with the help of the EU the mission got access to satellite imagery.

¹³⁷ OSCE 1012th Plenary Meeting Decision No.1130 Deployment of OSCE Observers to Two Russian Checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian Border, 24 July 2014, OSCE document PC.DEC/1130.

¹³⁸ Interview by Lamberto Zannier to EurActiv's Senior Editor, Georgi Gotev, 28 Jan. 2016, <<http://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/interview/zannier-in-ukraine-the-osce-is-practically-a-peacekeeping-operation/>>.

Ukraine's formal appeal to the UN and EU on the conduct of peace operation

The permanent members of the UNSC other than Russia (in particular the PRC, France and the UK) were rather sceptical about Ukraine's – who was a new non-permanent member – proposal to deploy UN peace mission in Ukraine stressing the lack of clarity as to the tasks and prospects of such mission as compared to the already existing and active OSCE monitoring mission. In recent two decades the UN has repeatedly officially (in its Secretary-General's statements and the resolutions of the General Assembly) supported transferring the ownership for the settlement of regional conflicts to regional interstate organizations. From this perspective, the OSCE is a regional political international organization with universal membership¹³⁹ for Europe to which Ukraine belongs. Therefore the transfer of authority from the UN to the OSCE or supplementing the OSCE mission with a UN mission could become relevant only in case the situation slides to hostilities and it becomes obvious that a shift from monitoring to use of force to disengage the parties is necessary.

At the same time, there has been certain 'division of labour' on Ukraine between the OSCE and the UN. In addition to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, a permanent UN monitoring mission has been operating in Ukraine, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

In accordance with the Constitution of Ukraine the decision on the conduct of a peace operation involving armed forces of other states in the territory of Ukraine must be made by the Verkhovna Rada (the parliament). On 17 March 2015, Verkhovna Rada adopted the relevant appeal to the UN Security Council and the Council of the EU¹⁴⁰. The appeal to the Council of the European

¹³⁹ The OSCE with a membership of 57 states represents all countries of the European region and a number of countries situated outside Europe. From this perspective the OSCE has rights equal to those enshrined in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and can independently launch conflict settlement within the region, just like the African Union can in the African continent, and the Organization of American States in the American continent.

¹⁴⁰ This decision was supported by 341 MPs while only 226 votes were required, yet it was far from unanimous.

Union was formulated as a request for a 'EU police mission'. Soon after that Russian envoy to the EU Vladimir Chizhov said that Kiev's initiative to launch an EU police mission was not supported by the leadership of the European Union¹⁴¹. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergey Lavrov underlined in one of his interviews that 'the EU would by no means go anywhere, whether in the southeast of Ukraine or anywhere else, unless the conflicting parties consent to such mission'¹⁴². Indeed, as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland Erkki Tuomioja stated after the EU foreign ministers' meeting, everyone agreed that the idea of peacekeepers was unrealistic, everyone agreed that we needed to support the OSCE and enhance the OSCE presence and expand its capabilities, including technological ones. And we do not want the EU to compete with the OSCE¹⁴³. However, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Pavlo Klimkin in the discussion of the situation in the country with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 24 February 2015 justified Kiev's request for a UN mission by the OSCE mission's failure to monitor the ceasefire.

After Verkhovna Rada decided to apply to the United Nations, Ukraine tried to take one way or the other to go through typical stages of preparing of UN peace operation. First Kiev tried to reap political dividends from Ukraine's becoming a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for two years since January 2016 to late 2017. Relevant decision was made at the UN General Assembly session on 15 October 2015. Ukraine's Permanent Representative to the UN also changed. Former Ukraine's Ambassador to Russia (and before that, in 1997–2001 Ukraine's Permanent Representative to the UN) Volodymyr Yelchenko replaced Yuri Sergeev who had headed Ukrainian mission for the previous eight years. In his first statement the new Ukrainian Envoy appealed to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and invited an assessment mission of the UN Secretariat to Ukraine to study the possibility of deploying a full-scale UN peace mission in Donbas. He also put forward another proposal suggesting that the UN should open an office in Ukraine to support the

¹⁴¹ See: *Vzglyad*, 6 Apr. 2015, <<http://vz.ru/news/2015/4/6/738406.html>>.

¹⁴² See: *Vzglyad*, 21 Mar. 2015, <<http://vz.ru/news/2015/3/21735668.html>>.

¹⁴³ See: *Vzglyad*, 6 Mar. 2015, <<http://vz.ru/news/2015/3/6/733216.html>>.

implementation of the Minsk Agreements. This office could inter alia coordinate the demining project in the southeast of Ukraine (the UN has a vast experience of humanitarian demining in conflict zones).

Ukrainian envoy started discussing with representatives of France and the UK the issue of sending a group of permanent representatives of countries members of the UN Security Council to Donbas. On 23 February 2016 the UNSC raised the issue of the prospects of deployment of peacekeeping forces or political mission in the east of Ukraine. Kiev called that consultations required by the procedure in order to organize an assessment mission. However the Ukrainian side has indulged in wishful thinking. Despite reports of various Ukrainian media, no 'UN assessment mission' (such missions are sent as a second stage after consultations in the UNSC when peacekeeping operations are prepared) was sent to Ukraine. It was a small group of members of the UN Development Programme, UNICEF and UN Mine Action Service sent for two weeks by the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs to collect information on possible engagement of the UN in solving humanitarian issues in the southeast of Ukraine whom the Ukrainian media mistook for or deliberately tried to present as the UN assessment mission.

Revision of the UN peacekeeping principles and its impact on the discussion of applicability of the peacekeeping principles in Ukraine

The United Nations' approach to the conduct of peacekeeping operation in conflict zones is constantly evolving and undergoing considerable revision. In 2014-2015 the UN Secretary-General launched a *High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*¹⁴⁴ composed of 16 experienced diplomats and military officials from different countries. In June 2015, the Independent Panel on Peace Operations presented its report to the UN and the general public; that report contained extensive and rather decisive

¹⁴⁴ *High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, mandated by the UN Secretary General.

recommendations and was titled *'Uniting Our Strengths – Policy, Partnerships, People'*¹⁴⁵.

The report names the growing gap between the expectations of the international community (that believes that the very fact that the UN has interfered in the conflict should in principle guarantee its resolution) and the failure of operations that last for decades to ensure political resolution of conflicts in reality as one of the major issues of contemporary peacekeeping. Often, peacekeeping operations 'are deployed in an environment where there is little or no peace to keep'¹⁴⁶. In this context the report provides reasoning for one of its core recommendations that could be described as a call for 'politicization' of conflict settlement. The former approach to peacekeeping implied that the task of the international community represented by the UN was relatively passive and consisted in 'freezing' any conflict, ceasing bloodshed, disengaging the parties, and providing the parties with 'time and place' for settling the conflict and subsequently reaching a political solution to it. At the same time, the United Nations itself in accordance with principles of impartiality and equidistance from the parties in conflict should not take any political positions with regard to the conflict or support any of the political actors involved in the conflict.

In contrast, the report by the Independent Panel on Peace Operations suggests that the UN should play a much more active role and lead political settlement. Rather than 'supporting' the emerging weak signs of conciliation, it should consistently and deliberately take leadership in the process of negotiations, elaboration of compromises and political solution. In other words, as the authors of the report say, the UN should not waste efforts and means on conflicts in which the conflicting parties prevent the UN from playing the leading part in the settlement. If the UN does not act as the leading mediator, the ceasefire environment created by the UN could be lost, with the uncertainty and pending nature of the conflict lasting for years and decades, and the UN who spent

¹⁴⁵ *Uniting Our Strengths – Policy, Partnerships, People*. Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. UN Document A/70/95-S/2015/446.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. vii.

enormous money and means will be unable to either wait the conflicting parties to solve the conflict on their own, or to scale down the operation properly. ‘Whenever the United Nations has a peace operation on the ground, it should lead or play a leading role in political efforts prior to and during peace processes and after agreements are reached. Absent a major role in supporting a peace process, the success of a United Nations mission may be undermined’¹⁴⁷.

One has to recognize that such approach diminishes the prospect of UN’s interference in the form of full-scale peace operation in the context of the crisis in the southeast of Ukraine. A clear proper UN’s line and the imposition of UN’s plan of political settlement would be more appropriate in case of a conflict in poorly governed African countries where the parties in conflict are politically weak, and the UNSC members have a strong common position to exercise pressure. However this is definitely not the case in Ukraine, where there is no unity among the members of the UNSC, and the conflicting parties have political ambitions to pursue and would be unwilling to consent to unquestioned UN leadership. Both Kiev and LPR/DPR would rather see the UN and OSCE as tools that can potentially help pursue their own political agenda, which diminishes the prospect of a peace operation conducted in Ukraine if the new approach recommended within the UN is to be followed.

The UN peacekeeping organizers find it rather challenging to include tasks related to countering violent extremism or terrorism in operation mandates. The Independent High-Level Panel that analyzed the peacekeeping system, explicitly stresses in its report that ‘United Nations peacekeeping missions, owing to their composition and character, are not suited to engage in military counter-terrorism operations. They lack the specific equipment, intelligence, logistics, capabilities and specialized military preparation required, among other aspects’¹⁴⁸.

This gives rise to a methodological or doctrinal issue related to the conduct of peacekeeping operations. In cases when the situation in the conflict zone requires a major international

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, para. 47.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

interference, the use of heavy weapons or the engagement of counter-terrorist units, the High-Level Panel suggests the involvement of specially trained crisis response units of individual countries or coalitions of states or collective standing armed forces of regional organizations instead of the UN. For example, in 2007 NATO established the Response Force with a strength of 20,000 (subsequently increased) to be rapidly deployed in regions where outbreak of conflicts requires immediate response. The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) established Collective Operational Response Force (CORF) with a strength of 17,000, and Collective Peacekeeping Forces (CPF) with a strength of 3,600 in 2012-2015. Such forces, unlike troops gathered under the UN auspices are regularly trained together, have brigade structure that includes field reconnaissance, transport aviation, infantry, assault force, chemical and radiological reconnaissance units, and rely on infrastructure of general staffs of a number of countries. Therefore the UN suggests that counter-terrorism or offensive tasks are delegated to such coalition units rather than to troops under the UN auspices that have poorer equipment and have never been trained together. The UN slang thus distinguishes between the blue helmets (units contributed to the UN and led by the UN) and the green helmets (member of national armed forces, armed forces of states that are deployed in the zone of hostilities alongside with the UN operation but under national command). As an example one can cite the use of the US troops (reporting to the US military command) in the US-led operation in Afghanistan in 2001-2014 together (and alongside with) the operation conducted by the UN International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

In the case of the Ukraine crisis the whole area controlled by unrecognized LPR/DPR was announced by Kiev 'a zone of antiterrorist operation (ATO)'. However this excludes the United Nations as a potential regulator, or requires the use of combat ready troops provided by regional organizations, rather than UN troops. In fact, three such contingents of green helmets are available in the region: the units of the NATO Response Forces, the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) of the EU, and the Collective Peacekeeping Force of the CSTO.

However, it should be kept in mind that the involvement of the green helmets in stead of the blue ones has its negative side. In particular, unlike the UN personnel, national armed forces usually

receive no training in human rights and humanitarian right; they are rather trained to shoot to kill and not disengage impartially the conflicting parties. The engagement of the green helmets (conventional armed units) instead of UN troops leads to increased risks for civilians, increased number of victims of the conflict and may result in massive violation of human rights. At the same time, one can also understand the proposals of the High-Level Panel who says that blue helmets should not be sent on missions involving the use of force that would better suit military units with corresponding equipment, armament and training. This would lead to more victims among peacekeepers, reduce the likelihood that the mission would be adequately completed and as a result undermine the reputation of the UN.

In recent decade the UN has opted for combining parallel international, national and regional operations. Those are referred to as 'partnerships'. This underlines that any UN peacekeeping operation is in itself a partnership of countries that combine their forces, equipment, troops, and civilian personnel in order to solve common tasks. The development of such partnerships naturally implies the involvement of regional organizations such as OSCE, NATO, EU, African Union, the League of Arab States, CSTO and others, in the settlement. In some cases (as in Afghanistan and Iraq) deployment of national armed units of a group of states under national or coalition command in parallel to the United Nations is welcomed. This increases flexibility of the whole military, police and civilian conglomerate solving a set of different tasks in the conflict zone.

It can be concluded that to complete specific tasks in the context of the conflict in the southeast of Ukraine a typical peacekeeping operation or political UN mission would be insufficient; this conflict would require a tailored partnership of different organizations and possibly certain states. Such partnership could include the political and diplomatic machinery of the United Nations and OSCE, and for guaranteeing disengagement and (forced) withdrawal of heavy weapons of the parties it can rely on readily available components of different crisis response forces that could be provided by NATO, EU and CSTO. As the use of military components of exclusively Western countries (for example NATO) of Eastern countries (for example CSTO) could cause political disagreements between the parties, there remains an elusive

scenario of combining personnels from different countries with the mediation of the UN or OSCE political leadership. CSTO troops that enjoy the trust of the LPR/DPR leadership could be responsible for disengagement and withdrawal of heavy weapons by unrecognised entities, while military components provided by CSTO, EU or NATO could monitor the situation in the corridor between the contact lines described in the Minsk I and Minsk II agreements. Combining military components in such a way would be advisable only for the purpose of completing the Minsk plan of disengagement of the conflicting parties along the contact lines within Ukrainian territory. It would be inappropriate to deploy any military components at the Russian-Ukrainian border (where Kiev believes disengagement by peacekeepers is necessary), as there are no hostilities there, and an unarmed monitoring mission would be enough.

In May 2016 it was reported that the Normandy four, including Russia and Ukraine, may potentially agree on giving some police functions to the OSCE mission, a fact that brings to notice a specific aspect of the evolution of peacekeeping by the UN and regional organizations. The recent years saw certain modernization of the police functions in peacekeeping operations. The overall rate of police deployed as international peacekeepers has topped 20% of the total peacekeeping forces. Permanent reserve police forces were created to be used in peacekeeping operations. The principle of 'many a little', i.e. different countries contributing small police groups, is no longer applied; instead, the participating states now send in entire organized police units that are fully manned and have internal command elements, equipment and armaments, and may immediately embark on missions in the conflict region without wasting time on the adjustment of separate parts of the contingent to each other. Apparently, giving some police functions to the OSCE mission in Ukraine will imply the deployment of such pre-organized police units that can on the one hand be provided by the EU countries (that ensure 70% of the financing and the staffing of the OSCE mission, as has already been said), and, on the other hand, by Russia, using the abovementioned principle applied to forming 'peacekeeping partnerships'. Meanwhile, it should be understood that the parties in the conflict still have contradictions over what the police functions include and where these should be used. What Kiev has in mind is an

international force (in this context, the police units acting under the auspices of the OSCE) gradually gaining control over the territories of the unrecognized republics currently controlled by the armed formations of the LPR/DPR. By contrast, the position of the political leadership of the LPR/DPR is that the police forces should be used primarily to stabilize the situation along the line of contact, i.e. along the border that now de-facto exists deep in the heartland of Ukraine.

Conclusions and prospects

On the whole, we may say that forming and conducting a full-scale disengagement effort by an international organization in Ukraine is a very tricky task. Such an operation was much-needed when the battle contact between the conflicting armed groups was in its active phase, from the second half of 2014 to first half of 2015. Back then, there were many times when the situation cried out for a relatively neutral third party – military groups acting under the political leadership of an international organization or coalition (e.g. when Ukrainian units were enveloped and had to break out of the Debaltseve entrapment) – to intervene and act as an intermediary so as to help defuse tensions, protect the civilian population and prevent the killings and the destruction.

Since February 2015 the OSCE has been charged with monitoring the disengagement of forces and the pullback of heavy equipment as part of the Minsk II accords. OSCE's unarmed civil monitors performed the monitoring functions reasonably well, if somewhat belatedly. However, the delays in the heavy equipment pullback and its recurrent inversions, together with constant massive violations of the ceasefire by each of the two parties, called for a different format of the operation – one that would imply some elements of enforcement measures and the use of military forces of a third party with a reasonably broad mandate authorizing them to create a wide and permanently expanding neutrality zone separating the armed groups of the opposing parties (on the model of many successful peacekeeping operations of the past). Still, even at that stage the political mandate required unanimity in the UNSC, and, failing that, was never agreed upon.

Similarly, Ukraine's request for an operation aimed at restoring its control over the Russian-Ukrainian border in the territories of the unrecognised republics received no support from the UNSC and the EU. Again, the LPR/DPR, with political support from Russia, on the one hand, and the Ukrainian leadership, on the other hand, have quite different areas of operations in mind when they speak of international peacekeeping intervention: for the former, such an intervention means separating the opposing parties along the line of battle contact, whereas the latter believe that it should be aimed at 'sealing' the Russian-Ukrainian border.

As the result, at this stage, both disengagement using force and monitoring will remain the main called-for peacekeeping functions. While the former is (if not all that efficiently) is being performed by the OSCE SMM, the latter may be fulfilled under the political control of the OSCE using the existing peacekeeping units of the EU/OSCE and Russia.

The EU believes that it has to a great extent fulfilled its peacekeeping functions by significant financial and organizational contributions to the OSCE mission and has no intention to deploy its own additional peacekeeping mission. For the CSTO, a constraining factor in terms of sending in its newly-formed Collective Peacekeeping Forces has been the political reluctance of some of its members to set a precedent of interfering into a conflict between the central authorities and separatists.

Though Russia has remained generally negative on the issue of the possibility and necessity to further internationalize the conflict by attracting other international organizations, it has slowly moved towards embracing the possibility of giving some police functions to the OSCE mission and achieving fuller implementation of its monitoring authorities.

On the whole, it is in line with the format of the post-conflict reconstruction operation. This format has established itself in the toolkit of the United Nations and regional international organizations (NATO, EU, African Union) as a top international peacekeeping strategy. The experience of the operations under the UN mandate in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo (where this very strategy used for the operations) has shown that there is a certain 'queueing system' of organizations, in terms of the format of their involvement in the conflict settlement. At earlier stages of a conflict, the operations tend to have a military format, involve

enforcement actions, and require the use of armed military contingents that have wide-ranging authorities. At the subsequent stages, when the ceasefire has been secured, the military component of the operations is gradually replaced by the political and diplomatic component. In addition, the operations are often delegated, for example from the NATO as a leading executor of the UN mandate to the European Union and the OSCE.

This being said, in the conflict in Ukraine's southeast no forced disengagement by a third party has been achieved so far. Meanwhile, we should proceed from the assumption that the frozen conflict situation in southeast Ukraine may persist for a relatively long time (as has often been the case with other unrecognized states and frozen conflicts in Moldova/Transnistria, Northern Cyprus, Nagorno-Karabakh, etc.). In the changing political environment, the result may be that the issue of a peacekeeping intervention in various formats by world powers, their coalitions or international organizations will once again come to the forefront of the global agenda.

PART II. EXPERT INSIGHTS

6. US military responses to international crises in the post-Crimea world
7. Military threats assessments in the Arctic
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6. US MILITARY RESPONSES TO INTERNATIONAL CRISES IN THE POST-CRIMEA WORLD

Natalia BUBNOVA

At the start of his first term in the White House, Barack Obama declared that international politics should renounce power pressure and the right of the strongest, cut back on use of military operations, build cooperation-based relations and strengthen the international security institutions. In a recent interview with 'The Atlantic', President Obama emphasised that he had not changed these views and that 'real power means you can get what you want without having to resort to force'¹⁴⁹.

Obama said that he learned his biggest foreign policy lesson from Libya, where US military operations – which exceeded the UN Security Council Resolution's mandate – essentially left the country's statehood destroyed and turned it into a haven for extremists and centre for arms trafficking. After the Libyan debacle, Obama planned to limit American military intervention abroad to cases where, as he put it, there was an 'existential threat' to the United States. But though the White House has indeed shown greater commitment to settling conflicts and some restraint in the use of military force, this has not always been clear and consistent.

Russia and the United States pursued cooperation in several important areas during most of Obama's two terms in office: conflict resolution in Afghanistan, the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programmes, and chemical weapons in Syria. Political mistakes and differences of interests on both sides have increasingly

¹⁴⁹ Goldberg, J., The Obama Doctrine, *The Atlantic*, Apr. 2016, p. 59.

perturbed relations however, and led to direct confrontation since the start of the crisis in Ukraine.

The Ukraine conflict and US–Russian confrontation

The reincorporation of Crimea by Russia came as a shock to politicians in the United States and Western Europe, who did not recognise the results of the referendum held among Crimea's residents. Russia's actions first in Crimea and then in South-East Ukraine were interpreted as Moscow's pursuit of an aggressive policy of restoring its empire by subjugating neighbouring countries and flagrantly violating international law and the agreements it had signed. US sources described the events of February 2014 in Ukraine as a popular uprising of people seeking integration with Europe¹⁵⁰, while Russia viewed them as a coup d'état carried out with the West's assistance which led to a civil war.

From the beginning of the crisis, the United States supported Kiev's military operation in South-East Ukraine. American and European media gave very little information however, on Kiev forces' shelling of Ukrainian towns and said nothing of the civilians killed and the more than two million refugees, nearly half of whom fled to Russia. State Department representative Marie Harf said in June 2014 that the United States did not support calls to investigate the actions of Ukrainian military forces in the country's South-East as it viewed Kiev's operation as legitimate¹⁵¹.

It is thus logical to view the US response to the Ukrainian crisis in the context of the US-Russian confrontation that was unfolding in parallel. The United States accused Russia of supplying ammunition and heavy weapons, including tanks, air defence missiles and artillery systems to the militia forces in South-East Ukraine, deploying troops in the border regions, holding manoeuvres near the border and using artillery to shell Ukrainian

¹⁵⁰ Sakva, R., A New Wall: Myths and Mistakes that Created the Ukraine Crisis, *Polis*, No 4, 2015, p. 47.

¹⁵¹ The United States does not support calls to investigate the actions of Ukrainian military, *RIA Novosti*, 6 June 2014, <<http://ria.ru/world/20140606/1010893446.html>>.

territory, as well as of direct participation of some Russian armed forces units in the conflict.

Yet even though there were periodic calls from various Western politicians for NATO military intervention in the crisis and Russian media have repeatedly carried reports on Western mercenaries and private military companies' detachments fighting in Ukraine, the White House ruled out the use of US and NATO military force in Ukraine. Speaking in Brussels in March 2014, Obama said that the use of force would not return Crimea to Ukraine or deter Russia from further escalation¹⁵².

Nevertheless, the Ukraine conflict has had a significant and long-term impact on US military strategy and on the weapons programmes. It has had an impact both at the regional level, on US policy's aspects directly related to Ukraine, and at the global one encompassing the US military-political strategy and military development in general.

Adapting US and NATO strategy to confrontation with Russia

The Ukraine crisis led to a thorough revision of US and NATO military-political strategy with regard to Russia, with a shift from partnership to a policy of 'containment'. All US-Russian military contacts were suspended with the exception of cooperation on preventing nuclear terrorism, joint efforts to settle the Iranian nuclear issue and some bilateral measures on cyber-security. The Russia-NATO Council – established in 2002 precisely for the purpose of settling potential differences whenever they arose and failing to provide a venue for lifting contradictions in this particular case – had its work stalled. Preventing and countering 'Russian aggression' was mentioned five times among the top priority tasks in the US National Security Strategy adopted in February 2015¹⁵³. At the NATO Summit in Wales, Russia was recognised – for the first time since the Cold War ended – as a threat for the Alliance and for Euro-Atlantic security. The new US National Military

¹⁵² White House, Office of the Press Secretary. Remarks by the President in Address to European Youth, 26 Mar. 2014, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/26/remarks-president-address-european-youth>>.

¹⁵³ President of the United States, National Security Strategy, Feb. 2015, pp. 1, 2, 25, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf>.

Strategy, published on 1 July 2015, stated the need to counter ‘aggressive extremist groups’ and ‘revisionist states that challenge international laws’¹⁵⁴ – a clear euphemism for Russia and China.

The US National Military Strategy, as well as the US Army Special Operations Command’s White Paper titled ‘Counter-Unconventional Warfare’ and the U.S. Army’s new Operating Concept ‘Win in a Complex World’ also focused on ‘hybrid conflicts’. The then defence secretary Chuck Hagel said in 2014 that there is an ever more real threat of hybrid war ‘where America’s adversaries combine the insurgent tactics with the technologies of advanced militaries’¹⁵⁵. The United States has put the emphasis too on modernising its strategic nuclear forces and measures to counter cyber-threats and ensure information security.

Build-up in NATO and US forces in Europe

By way of a practical response to events in Ukraine, Obama announced on 4 June 2014 the European Reassurance Initiative¹⁵⁶, which provided for a reinforced American presence in Europe, more frequent exercises of NATO states and partner countries and increased numbers of additional weapons and military equipment at arms depots in Europe for use in joint exercises. The Readiness Action Plan adopted at the NATO Summit in Wales in September 2014 beefed up the NATO Response Force to 30,000–40,000 people and established a new 6,000-strong Rapid Deployment Force¹⁵⁷. The European Activity Set (EAS), announced by the US Department of Defence in June 2015, included one US armoured brigade combat team’s vehicles and associated equipment to be repositioned on the territory of several NATO allies. Work began

¹⁵⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff. The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015, 1 July 2015, <http://www.jcs.mil/portals/36/documents/publications/2015_national_military_strategy.pdf>.

¹⁵⁵ Harper, J., Hagel sees busy future for Army, facing wider range of threats, *Stars and Stripes*, 15 Oct. 2014, <<http://www.stripes.com/hagel-sees-busy-future-for-army-facing-wider-range-of-threats-1.308427>>.

¹⁵⁶ White House, Office of the Press Secretary. Fact Sheet: European Reassurance Initiative and Other US Efforts in Support of NATO Allies and Partners, 3 Jun. 2014.

¹⁵⁷ For more detail on this see: Bubnova, N., ‘Renewed Standoff With the West: Back to the Future?’ *International Trends*, No 4, Vol 13, 2015, p. 144.

on building eight new military bases in Germany, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and the Baltic countries, where NATO troops are to be stationed on a rotation basis. Additional F-16 fighters, several 5th generation F-22 fighters, around 100 M1 Abrams tanks, as well as AH-64 Apache and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and Stryker armoured personnel carriers have been redeployed to Europe. The number of aircraft patrolling the airspace over Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia has increased several-fold, and the NATO contingent in the Baltic and the Mediterranean has been reinforced.

The limited number and rotation-based mode of these deployments does not change the strategic balance in the region, but is meant to demonstrate US resolve and to respond to concerns among new NATO members about Moscow's possible plans. What is important here is the changing trend: after two decades of weapons reductions in Europe, and US systems in particular, the military arsenals on the continent are now increasing once again and NATO has intensified its military activity on Russia's borders (the overall size of US forces in Europe has not increased though, and Washington continues the programme of scaling back ground forces pursued for the last several years).

In February 2016, the White House published a Defense Department request for a four-fold increase in military spending – from the planned \$789 million to \$3.4 billion – for weapons and supplies for NATO troops in Europe in 2017 in response to, as the document explained, 'increasing attempts by the Russian Federation to constrain the foreign and domestic policy choices of neighbouring countries'¹⁵⁸. The requested funds are intended to be used to deploy a US armoured tank brigade in Europe on a rotation basis. According to British electronic resource aggregating military procurement information, the US budget request foresees that 'tackling Russia's hostilities in Eastern Europe will include investment in various technologies, including air defence systems, unmanned systems, long-range bombers and long-range stand-off

¹⁵⁸ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. Fact Sheet: The FY2017 European Reassurance Initiative Budget Request, 2 Feb. 2016, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/02/02/fact-sheet-fy2017-european-reassurance-initiative-budget-request>>.

cruise missiles¹⁵⁹. Evelyn Farkas, previously responsible for Russia at the Pentagon, noted in this connection that the Russians need ‘to know that we have capable forces ready to respond fast’ if they made a move on a NATO ally¹⁶⁰.

What is most important in this position, however, is the stipulation that the United States will not allow an attack against a NATO state. This is the red line that Obama and his administration members have drawn and repeatedly evoked when arguing against an American armed intervention in the Ukrainian conflict, since Ukraine is not a NATO member. Yet, at the same time, it is precisely in this connection that the tendency for NATO expansion, which had halted for a while (from 2009 till the latest admittance of Montenegro in 2016), has acquired new proponents, especially from among small European nations, concerned about Russia’s actions.

NATO’s renewed interest in nuclear weapons

The Ukrainian crisis and the new tensions in US-Russia relations have put renewed focus on the nuclear component in NATO’s arsenal. NATO has held a number of meetings specifically on this subject. In their public statements, NATO representatives and US and European military commanders have stressed that the renewed interest in nuclear weapons is a reaction to Russia’s actions and declarations. Western governments and experts have noted in particular Russian politicians’ mentions of the actual use of nuclear weapons, and president Vladimir Putin’s statement about Russia’s 40 new nuclear missiles that were to be deployed in 2015¹⁶¹.

At the start of his first presidential term, Obama planned not to commission any new nuclear warheads, but now, the United States plans to replace its freefall nuclear bombs stockpiled in Europe with advanced B61-12 nuclear bombs with self-guiding capability. Overall, the Pentagon plans to replace seven types of

¹⁵⁹ Reshaped priorities: US defence budget 2017, *Army-Technology.com*, 26 May 2016, <<http://www.army-technology.com/features/featurereshaped-priorities-us-defence-budget-2017-4872561/>>.

¹⁶⁰ Capaccio, A., US to Counter Putin by Sending Europe More Tanks, Copters, *Bloomberg*, 9 Mar. 2016.

¹⁶¹ Russia uses nuclear weapons as a deterrence tool, *Gazeta.Ru*, 19 June 2015, <http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2015/06/19/n_7302273.shtml>.

warheads currently in its arsenal with five next generation enhanced models and will begin modernising all three components of the nuclear Triad starting in 2020: strategic bombers carrying nuclear bombs and cruise missiles, intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarines with ballistic missiles. These programmes, which will involve around \$1 trillion in spending over 30 years, could be seen as a regular process of replacement of the obsolete systems with new ones. Yet, such programmes could have been smaller in scale if not for the abrupt worsening in US-Russian relations and the suspension of strategic arms talks. Besides, if previously Obama twice had adapted the European BMD programme with account taken of Russia's concerns, now the programme proceeds at full gear, with new elements being added in Poland and Rumania. The Iran nuclear threat that had previously served as an alleged justification for the European BMD, is no longer relevant after the agreement signed on the Iran nuclear programme, and Washington does not offer a different explanation for the programme which Moscow perceives as targeted against Russia.

Non-lethal military aid for Ukraine

As far as the military aid for Ukraine itself goes, three months after the conflict began, the then speaker of the Verkhovna Rada and former acting president of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov complained that, despite repeated requests, neither the European Union nor the United States had given Ukraine the military aid it asked for. Supporters of a more active US role accused the Obama administration of stalling on the question of supplies just when escalation was at a peak. Later, the United States sent Kiev various types of equipment, vehicles, surveillance, communications and support systems, computers, dry rations and individual first aid kits, but no weapons systems. In November 2014, the United States accorded Ukraine a further \$320 million on top of a \$1-billion loan granted in May that year, for military supplies and 'for carrying out democratic reforms'.

Along with Britain, Poland and Lithuania, the United States also engaged in training Ukrainian military personnel and helping Ukraine carry out military reform, in particular, measures to improve command and communications and computer systems' work and ensure their compatibility with NATO's systems. Yet

despite the efforts of Petro Poroshenko's Government, Ukraine did not receive the status it sought of a 'major ally outside NATO'.

Throughout the entire period of the Ukraine conflict, debate raged in the United States over whether or not to deliver Kiev the lethal weapons¹⁶² the Ukrainian authorities requested so insistently. Supporters of supplying offensive weapons to Ukraine in Washington comprised not only the defence secretary Ashton Carter and other top representatives of the US military commandment, such as the NATO supreme allied commander for Europe Philip Breedlove and commander of the US Army in Europe Ben Hodges, but also most members of Congress, as well as the majority in the US establishment, including Victoria Nuland in charge of European affairs at the State Department. Despite strong pressure and several Congress bills and resolutions authorising arms supplies to Ukraine, including the Ukraine Freedom Support Act and Resolution 758, Obama did not give the go-ahead to providing offensive weapons to Ukraine throughout the almost two years since the beginning of the conflict.

The Military Budget signed by Obama on 25 November 2015 could have become a sort of Rubicon in this respect. The Budget which foresaw \$200 million for military aid for Ukraine for the next year, included provisions for lethal weapons systems: anti-tank weapons, mortars, large-caliber weapons and ammunition, grenade launchers, grenades, and small arms and light weapons. But this document did not become the final watershed after all, as, after it was signed, new media reports suggested that the White House was still applying the brakes on lethal supplies to the Ukrainian armed forces.

The Minsk Agreements: the road to a settlement or a test of each side's intentions?

The Obama administration did not take direct part in their drafting, but supported the first and second Minsk Agreements on military and political settlement in Ukraine. The Agreements set out

¹⁶² For more detail on this see: Bubnova, N., The Ukrainian factor in the US defence policy, *Russia: Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security*, IMEMO Supplement to the Russian Edition of the SIPRI Yearbook 2014 (Moscow: IMEMO RAN, 2015), pp. 94-101.

the procedures for a ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy military equipment and exchange of prisoners.

At the same time, Washington continued its policy of ‘forcing’ Russia to observe the Minsk Agreements, and with each flare-up in violence and renewed shelling, routinely accused Moscow of allegedly having taken action that escalated the tension. Yet it also often failed to acknowledge that it was the government in Kiev that was to fulfil its commitments under the Minsk Agreements, i.e. to carry out an amnesty and amend the Constitution to give the Luhansk and Donetsk regions the special status that would be concerted with their respective representatives. Under the Minsk Agreements’ terms, local elections were to be held in these regions first, and then centralised control of the border was to be returned to Kiev, but the Ukrainian government insists on immediate return of the border to its control and establishment of OSCE observation posts and radars at the border. Yet despite the delays with the Minsk agreements, implementation of which has been extended for a year, they remain important as the only realistic foundation for settling the crisis, as was confirmed by both Russia and the United States during US secretary of state John Kerry’s visit to Moscow in March 2016. The intensification of military activities in Ukraine which happens periodically, including in summer 2016, does not serve the interests of either Russia or the United States.

Syria in flames and Washington’s policy

Since early days of the Syrian conflict, Washington was accusing Bashar Assad’s regime of suppressing the opposition and mass killing of civilians, but this notwithstanding, Obama did not support the doctrine of ‘the responsibility to protect’¹⁶³, which states the need for humanitarian intervention and foreign action to protect the local populace. After withdrawing the corps US contingents from Iraq and Afghanistan and recognising the failure of the operation in Libya, with the chaos that followed, Obama was very

¹⁶³ US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power, this doctrine’s most consistent advocate in the Obama administration, set out the doctrine in her 2002 book *A Problem from Hell*.

cautious about the prospect of intervening in yet another Middle East country. In the spring of 2013, the White House agreed to support Russia's proposal to have Syria's chemical weapons destroyed under international supervision, as this made it possible for him to avoid ordering US intervention and at the same time significantly reduced the chemical weapons threat in Syria¹⁶⁴.

As recently as in early 2014, American intelligence bosses reported to Obama that the Islamic State (IS) did not constitute a significant danger and he seemed to follow their advice by not focusing on the IS threat. But after IS launched an offensive, took Mosul in northern Iraq in late spring and beheaded three Americans in Syria, the United States changed its attitude towards the group and began bombing Syria. A while later, on 10 September 2014, Obama declared in his statement a US strategy on the combat against IS. The strategy, dubbed Degrade and Defeat¹⁶⁵, consisted of four points, including airstrikes, support to regional powers and Syrian opposition groups fighting IS on the ground, measures to prevent IS terrorist attacks and humanitarian assistance for refugees.

But despite these declarations, many US experts noted that the United States does not have any real idea how to defeat IS using military means¹⁶⁶. Unlike Al-Qaeda, IS is a far more numerous and structured organisation, practically a quasi-state, and past US experience that had been efficient in fighting Al-Qaeda has not been of much use in this case¹⁶⁷. Airstrikes against IS forces have been complicated by the fact that the fighters do not live in mountain or desert hideouts, but in towns and villages, intermingled with local civilians. Washington believed that drones had been an efficient

¹⁶⁴ Incidents were reported in 2015 and 2016 of ISIS using nerve gas in attacks against Syrian government forces and a chemical gas-producing plant on the ISIS-controlled territory was destroyed by Coalition air strikes. Yet the scope of the threat of chemical weapons use has been significantly lower than it might have been if the chemical weapons stocks in the country had not been destroyed.

¹⁶⁵ White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Statement by the President on ISIL, 10 Sep. 2014, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/10/statement-president-isil-1>>.

¹⁶⁶ Sanders, P., The Wanderer, *The National Interest*, No 133, Sep.–Oct. 2014, pp. 5, 10; Gelb, L., Obama's Last Chance, *The National Interest*, Nov.–Dec. 2014, p. 11.

¹⁶⁷ For more detail see: Cronin, A.K., ISIS is not a terrorist group, *Russia in Global Affairs*, No 2, 2015, p. 142.

weapon in the fight against Al-Qaeda leaders and, according to US media, they had been used to eliminate 75% of the organisation's commanders¹⁶⁸. But though 120 of IS commanders, according to vice president Biden, have been killed by US drones as of July 2016¹⁶⁹, this has not led to dismantling IS, as its quasi-state structures do not disintegrate as easily if the leaders are taken out – not to speak of the dubious practice of killing individuals abroad conducted outside of the law and justice system.

Coalition of forces and the Coalition's lack of force

In line with Obama's declared stance in favour of multilateral actions through broad alliances, the United States put together a Coalition of more than 60 countries to fight IS. The Coalition included Western powers, many of which participated in airstrikes, and Arab states of the region (with the exception of Syria, which, however, also gave its consent for the airstrikes) and Turkey. The Syrian, Iraqi and Iranian air forces also conducted bombings of IS positions, acting independently of the US-led coalition. Obama declared that American aviation would carry out airstrikes not only against IS, but also against Syrian army's positions. The Coalition's establishment was supposed to legitimise the American strategy and at the same time provide for shared responsibility and the division of the efforts and burden involved.

The US military established close operational contacts with Kurdish detachments fighting IS in the north of Syria and Iraq. According to former US ambassador to Syria Robert Ford, the Kurdish People's Defence Units (YPG) played a particular part in action in northeast Syria. These militia detachments are not formally linked to any political party, but they effectively constitute the military wing of the Party of Democratic Union (PYD), recognised by many countries, including the United States, as a terrorist organisation. American support for Kurdish groups arouse the ire of Turkey, which for nearly 20 years, until the early 2000s, had been engaged in what was essentially a civil war with Kurdish

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Biden, J., Building on Success. Opportunities for the Next Administration, *Foreign Affairs*, Sep./Oct. 2016.

separatists on the Turkish territory – the war that seems to have all but resumed in 2015-2016.

The US operation in Syria also relied on support from Sunnis in IS-controlled regions in eastern Syria and northwest Iraq. At the same time, US military coordinated their actions with Iraqi armed Shiite groups, though this did not extend as far as actual cooperation with the Shiite militias, since the Iranian forces were fighting alongside with the latter.

According to the information published in 2016 by the ‘New York Times’, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and CIA Director David Petraeus had been proposing to Obama plans for supplying weapons to Syrian opposition groups, but, mindful of the Libyan experience, Obama did not give his approval¹⁷⁰. Using space, radar and optical intelligence support and acting in coordination with Kurdish armed groups, US airstrikes succeeded on several occasions in forcing IS militants out of their positions or halting their advance. In September 2015, for example, Kurdish forces, with US air support, had a victory when they liberated the town of Kobani near the Turkish border. But Obama’s critics said that the number of air force sorties over the entire year – around 3,000 – was roughly the same as for a single day of Operation Desert Storm and argued that IS could not be defeated without a large-scale US operation on the ground.

Throughout the first year of airstrikes however, although the United States did send special groups to Syria and Iraq for specific targeted missions, US officials and Obama himself continued to reiterate that there would be no US ground operation against IS¹⁷¹.

The United States also decided to place its bets on training the local forces of ‘moderate opposition’ in Syria. A plan adopted by the Pentagon back in 2013 proposed identifying and selecting fighters from among the Syrian opposition’s ranks over a 3-to-5-month period and then putting them through a year-long training course. Many experts believed, however, that this programme was a failure. On 16 September 2015, the commander of United States Central Command Lloyd Austin presented a report to Congress that

¹⁷⁰ Becker, J., Shane, S., The Libya Gamble, *The New York Times*, 27 Feb. 2016.

¹⁷¹ Obama: No boots on the ground in Syria, *Youtube*, 10 Sep. 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_J4jMdtwMI>.

showed that for the \$42 million that had been spent of the allocated half a billion dollars, only 54 people had actually gone through the training programme, and only four or five of them remained in the fight¹⁷². Many of the ‘opposition representatives’ trained by the Americans subsequently went over to ISIS, which also got hold of large numbers of the rebels’ weapons, adding to the superiority in arms it already possessed in comparison with the Kurdish groups it was fighting.

The Russian operation: a ‘game changer’ in Syria

The situation changed considerably after Russia started its air operation in Syria. The Russian airstrikes, which began on 30 September 2015, were more intensive than Western raids and enabled Assad’s forces to launch an offensive thus forcing other parties to recognise Russia’s action and the establishment of a Russian-led Coordination Centre for combatting the IS (with Syria, Iran and Iraq taking part) as a factor to be taken into account. British newspaper ‘The Guardian’ wrote that ‘the change in US approach in Syria coincided with the Russian intervention against a variety of rebel groups fighting Assad and a decision to invite Iran to the Vienna peace talks’¹⁷³.

How America viewed the Syrian crisis was quite different to the Russian vision, however. The United States, from an early stage of the Syrian conflict, had been calling for Assad’s departure, seeing his as the main evil provoking the violence in the country. Moscow, meanwhile, considered Assad the legitimate Syrian leader and insisted that the forces under his control were the main force combating the Islamists, both local and those sent from abroad.

When the Russian operation started, Obama said that it was a ‘recipe for disaster’¹⁷⁴ and that Russian aircraft were bombing not

¹⁷² Luis Martinez General Austin: Only ‘4 or 5’ US-Trained Syrian Rebels Fighting ISIS, *ABC News*, 16 Sep. 2015, <<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/general-austin-us-trained-syrian-rebels-fighting-isis/story?id=33802596>>/.

¹⁷³ Roberts, D., McCarthy, T., Obama orders US special forces to ‘assist’ fight against ISIS in Syria, *The Guardian*, 30 Oct. 2015.

¹⁷⁴ Obama: Russia action in Syria is ‘recipe for disaster’, *AFP*, 3 Oct. 2015, quoted in *Telegraph*, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/north-america/usa/11909139/Obama-Russia-action-in-Syria-is-recipe-for-disaster.html>>.

just ISIS positions but also the opposition groups. Russian airstrikes have even somewhat helped the ISIS terrorists and Russians will not be an effective partner in the international fight against ISIS until they make a strategic adjustment in terms what they are prioritising in Syria, Obama said¹⁷⁵. American officials also accused Russia of indiscriminate airstrikes that caused many civilian casualties (some asserted that Russian airstrikes had hit hospitals), and said that Russia's actions increased the flow of refugees – though in reality the refugee problem had arisen long before the Russian operation. At the same time however, Western military did not agree to exchange data with their Russian counterparts on the locations of opposition forces and the armed IS units and other radical groups.

Nevertheless, after Russia began its operation in Syria, it managed to get Western countries, above all the United States, to once again engage in dialogue. In early October 2015, Russian and US defence officials resumed contacts that had been suspended since the start of the Ukraine crisis. According to a decision reached by presidents Obama and Putin at their meeting at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 28 September, the two countries' defence ministries reopened their communication lines. They also concluded an agreement on preventing collision of aircraft in Syrian airspace, though this did not help to avoid the tragic incident with the Russian Su-24 attack bomber shot down while returning from its combat mission by a Turkish fighter plane.

The US's 'inactive activation' of military operation in Syria

Testifying in the Senate Armed Services Committee on 27 October 2015, US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter announced an intensification of US programme for combating the IS forces. The program, dubbed 'three Rs' (Raqqa, Ramadi and raids), envisaged that the Coalition forces would retake Raqqa, IS's self-proclaimed capital, and Ramadi, the centre of Iraqi province Anbar, as well as intensified US airstrikes. Carter added, however, that these measures would be pursued within the framework of the continued US strategy of US airstrikes against IS positions carried

¹⁷⁵ Barack Obama. Malaysia Press Conference, AmericanRhetoric, 22 Nov. 2015, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamamalaysia presser2015.htm>>.

out from the Incirlik air base in Turkey, jointly used by Turkey and the United States. Along with military transport aircraft, 12 USF-15 interceptor fighters armed with air-air missiles (even though the IS has no air force) and 6 A-10 assault planes were deployed to Incirlik.

But according to existing accounts¹⁷⁶, Obama opposed numerous proposals put forward by John Kerry and other US officials and military commanders to use drones against select targets on territory controlled by the Syrian government which would be meant to ‘send a signal to Assad’ and obtain advantages at negotiations on Syria’s future.

American media reported that work began on building a US military base 50 kilometres from the base where Russia’s bombers were stationed. The intention allegedly was to intensify and expand the range of airstrikes to provide cover for Syrian opposition forces on the ground and, as the ‘New York Times’ suggested, potentially limit Russia’s military operations. London’s ‘Financial Times’ meanwhile, citing sources in the Coalition’s command, stated that Russia’s operations in Syria derailed prospects for a no-fly zone in the country, the decision on which had almost been reached among the Coalition members.

After the Russian operation began, the US announced plans to provide weapons to the Syrian ‘moderate opposition’ (previously, the United States had officially supplied only military equipment, not weapons). Yet Washington still continued to refrain from delivering to the opposition fighters portable surface-to-air missile systems, which could have posed a threat to Russia’s aircraft. Such ‘restraint’ earned Obama constant criticism from Pentagon officials and from the Republican-controlled Congress.

Special operations, yet no ‘boots on the ground’?

A decision was taken to send to Syria from October 2015 5,000 US special forces as ‘advisers’. Military advisers from the 3,000-strong marine contingent in Iraq were also to be redeployed to Syria, where they were to plan Kurdish militia and ‘moderate opposition’ operations against IS. Over the following months, repeated media reports appeared on US special forces groups, from

¹⁷⁶ Goldberg, J., Op. cit.

50 to 200 people, sent to Syria, with the most common explanation being that they were going to ‘assist Kurdish groups in the fight against IS’.

Many experts noted the discrepancy with US promises not to take part in the ground operations in Syria. Defense Secretary Carter said, however, that the United States was not taking on a ‘combat role’ and that each new operation was just a continuation of the ‘advise-and-assist mission’¹⁷⁷. But when yet another group of soldiers went off to Syria, he admitted they could also be used for future special operations against IS on Syrian territory. This, if anything, eroded the line between military action and training and substantially transformed the generally accepted perception of what ‘aid provision’ is all about.

During the winter of 2015-2016, Carter, but not Obama, made repeated statements about US forces’ readiness to begin an offensive in Iraq and Syria. The Russian media frequently interpreted these statements as signalling the effective start of a US ground operation. Yet the Pentagon continued insisting that the military deployments to Syria, as before, consisted only of instructors, special forces personnel and technical specialists. In an article in the magazine ‘Politico’ on 22 January, Carter unveiled plans to deploy in Iraq the 1,800-strong 101 Airborne Division, ‘armed with a clear campaign plan to help our allies deliver the barbaric organisation a lasting defeat’¹⁷⁸. He said that the Coalition’s ground forces goals were to recapture Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria. But he went on to explain that the US military would play an enabling role to facilitate the local forces to liberate Mosul from the terrorists: ‘We are enabling local, motivated forces with critical support from a global coalition wielding a suite of capabilities – ranging from airstrikes, special forces, cyber tools, intelligence, equipment, mobility and logistics, training, advice and assistance’¹⁷⁹. This ambiguous wording made it difficult, once again, to clearly identify US role as either training or combat. In

¹⁷⁷ Briefing Room, Obama Admin: Americans Fighting in Iraq... Are Not Fighting in Iraq, 26 Oct. 2015, <<http://www.gopbriefingroom.com/index.php?topic=184039.0>>.

¹⁷⁸ Carter, A., Ash Carter: It’s Time to Accelerate the ISIL Fight, *Politico*, 22 Jan. 2016, <www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/ash-carter-isil-fight-213554>.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

June, Carter announced that the US would raise its troop level cap in Iraq by 560 and may authorise further troop deployments under the same formula of ‘enabling role’ in ‘helping support the retaking of the Iraqi city of Mosul’¹⁸⁰.

Turkey, meanwhile, expressed willingness to start a ground operation in Syria if the United States took part in it, but said that it would not launch an offensive all by itself. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also expressed their readiness to begin a ground operation in Syria. Saudi Arabia reached agreement with Turkey on possibly taking part in military actions to liberate Raqqa and redeployed fighter planes closer to the Turkish border. Media reports appeared about both the United States exerting pressure on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to convince them to send troops into Syria, and, at the same time, on these two countries’ attempts to persuade the United States to participate in a ground operation. The problem was that Iran, Assad’s ally, would have been indignant if Saudi troops entered Syria, while Obama, unlike his predecessors, hoped to end the policy of one-sided support for Saudi Arabia in its historical confrontation with Iran¹⁸¹.

Meanwhile, in the spring of 2016, Syrian government forces with support from the Russian air force made considerable gains. According to Russian official information, they liberated 10,000 square kilometres from IS and, by mid-April, increased this to 40,000 square kilometres. The Syrian government troops’ advances achieved with Russia’s backing, as well as the successful actions of Kurdish groups in the north of the country, set the conditions for a new readiness to look for compromises and a political solution.

The new agreements: light of peace at the end of the tunnel?

On 17 December 2015, the UN adopted a Resolution setting out a programme for a political solution to the Syrian crisis. The United States, which had drafted the Resolution, reached agreement on it with Russia during secretary of state John Kerry’s visit to Moscow. The United States ceased insisting on Assad’s immediate

¹⁸⁰ Read, R. US May Deploy More Troops To Iraq To Help Liberate Mosul From ISIS, *Daily Caller*, 12 June 2016, <<http://dailycaller.com/2016/07/12/us-may-deploy-more-troops-to-iraq-to-help-liberate-mosul-from-isis/#ixzz4I49IY2ff>>.

¹⁸¹ Goldberg, J., *Op. cit.*, pp. 46–47.

departure and agreed to a political process that was supposed to lead to elections in Syria and choosing the country's next president. For a long time, the debate stumbled over which groups would be allowed to take part in the negotiations and the subsequent elections. Consequentially, IS and Jabhat al-Nusra did not take part in the talks in Vienna and Geneva, but nor did the Kurds, on whose participation Russia had been insisting. Lengthy talks in Munich and Geneva resulted in a ceasefire agreement on 12 February 2016 (though the ceasefire was not achieved immediately) and approval of a plan for political settlement, based on the UN Resolution.

A Russian–US Joint Statement on a Cessation of Hostilities in Syria was drafted on 22 February and came into force at midnight on 27 February. Hostilities were to stop on the territories under the control of groups that had signed up to the ceasefire agreement, and the parties took on the commitment to ensure humanitarian aid could be delivered to those in need. A Russian–US Ceasefire Taskforce was established to exchange information on groups supporting the agreement, in order to draw up a common list indicating these groups' geographical locations. Russian and US military also established joint communications lines and specific procedures to monitor implementation of the ceasefire regime. The agreement did not extend to Islamic State, Jabhat al-Nusra and other terrorist groups recognised as such by the UN Security Council and those that refused to lay down their arms.

But meanwhile, as the 'Wall Street Journal'¹⁸² reported, senior CIA and Pentagon officials came out to insist on the need for a 'Plan B' in the event cessation of hostilities in Syria would be derailed through Russia's fault. If this were to happen, the plan would be to increase covert support for militant groups whose positions were coming under attack from Russian airstrikes, examine possibilities for introducing new economic sanctions against Russia and intensify intelligence support for militants from the 'moderate opposition' fighting with Syrian government troops. White House officials denied the existence of such a plan, but a couple of months later, the same newspaper, citing anonymous government officials, said that if the ceasefire failed, the CIA and its

¹⁸² Entous, A., Pentagon-CIA Chiefs Don't Think Russia Will Abide by Syria Cease-Fire, *The Wall Street Journal*, 23 Feb. 2016.

regional partners were preparing to deliver modern weapons, including portable air defence systems, to ‘moderate opposition’ groups¹⁸³. This would increase by a factor the risk of incidents in the airspace, given that both Syrian and Russian planes were carrying out operations. The context of the publication, however, suggested that in this case it was largely a matter of attempting to put pressure on Moscow and Damascus.

On 15 March 2016, Russia announced that it was withdrawing most of its troops from Syria. Judging by the reaction of the White House press secretary Josh Earnest and numerous other commentators, this decision took Washington by surprise. Many US analysts expressed the hope that this development would facilitate a political settlement and make Assad more inclined to hold talks with the opposition¹⁸⁴. On 24 May, Lavrov and Kerry had a telephone conversation in which they agreed to not just exchange information but also to coordinate counterterrorism activities in Syria. The intensification of Russian air raids in Syria in August 2016 was criticised in Washington as was Russia’s use of Iran’s base Hamadan for its strategic bombers Tu-22M3 and frontline bombers Su-34 to carry out strikes in Syria.

US response to the Russian-Turkish crisis

On 24 November 2015, the Turkish air force shot down a Russian Su-24 attack bomber. Though concerns had been raised before over potential encounters between Russian and NATO planes, yet few experts thought that this would involve Turkish aircraft. Neither the United States, nor NATO, following this tragic incident, expressed direct condemnation of Turkey’s action. This lack of open criticism however was only to be expected, given Turkey’s status as a NATO member. Yet many evidences showed that the event came very much out of the blue for Turkey’s NATO

¹⁸³ Entous, A., US Readies ‘Plan B’ to Arm Syria Rebels, *The Wall Street Journal*, 12 Apr. 2016.

¹⁸⁴ Crowley, M., Toosi, N., Did Putin once again outfox Obama?, *Politico*, 14 Mar. 2016, <<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/03/vladimir-putin-syria-outfox-obama-220745>>.

allies. Thus, NATO defence ministers called an urgent unplanned meeting in Brussels to discuss the situation. Following the meeting, NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg appealed for ‘calm and de-escalation’ and declared that the NATO allies ‘stand in solidarity with Turkey’, yet the meeting did not pass a general resolution and Stoltenberg was effectively speaking on his own behalf.

Reports in a number of media indicated that the United States watched closely Russia’s actions over the following days and weeks: deployment of the cruiser Moskva, equipped with guided missiles, in the Mediterranean, not far from the Syrian coast, and stationing of modern Russian S-400 Triumph anti-aircraft missiles at Syria’s Hmeimim air force base. At the same time, many American experts suggested that Turkey’s downing of the Russian Su-24 was an action out of proportion and a number of US media outlets published reports stating that American surveillance data that captured the Su-24’s heat trail allegedly showed that the plane had not actually entered Turkish airspace.

Following this incident, Washington undertook what could be interpreted as certain steps towards Russia, but these occurred in parallel to activation of US military cooperation with Turkey. A number of measures to enhance communications were taken after a conversation between chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey and Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu. The day after the incident with the Su-24, the newly posted information in the US Federal Register indicated that contracts between the US government and Rosoboronexport for supplies of spare parts, repair and service of Mi-17 helicopters destined for assisting the Afghan armed forces, had been taken off the sanctions list.

Yet at the same time, NATO allies adopted a package of ‘security guarantees’ to Turkey which included setting up surveillance of the Turkish airspace using AWACS aircraft, patrolling the skies in the region and beefing up the NATO naval group in the Mediterranean. Additional A-10 attack planes and F-15 fighters were deployed to Incirlik air base and the withdrawal of Patriot air defence systems deployed in Turkey since spring 2013 by the United States, Germany and the Netherlands was halted and reversed.

Some experts, however, saw these actions as rather an attempt to ‘restrain’ Turkey in its confrontation with Moscow, since

the United States was all too aware of the dangers of having Turkey get itself drawn into conflict with Russia.

Meanwhile, as Russian-Turkish relations remained consistently low throughout almost eight months following the incident with Su-24 (until Turkey offered an apology and president Erdogan visited Moscow in August 2016), the US-Turkish relations also became tenser. When Turkey ignored Iraq's resolute protests and sent its forces into northern Iraq in December 2015, allegedly to train Iraqi military personnel, the United States put pressure on Ankara and obtained the withdrawal of these Turkish 'instructors' from Iraqi territory. Later, in February 2016, when the Kurds launched an offensive in northern Syria, Turkey accused the United States of arming and supporting the Kurdish YPG, which, as already mentioned, Turkey considers a terrorist organisation. President Erdogan also felt let down by the US, when during a failed coup attempt against him in July 2016, the United States did not wholeheartedly back him. But regardless of the mood of US-Turkish relationship, Washington is interested in keeping Turkey as an ally in resolving the Syrian dilemma as well as in dealing with the flow of refugees into Europe.

* * *

US foreign policy in the post-Crimea period has been largely reactive and has taken form in response to events in various hotspots around the world. The US administration has not followed a uniform strategy for resolving the different conflict situations. Obama's policy has not been entirely consistent, but he has nonetheless shown moderation, limiting himself to political and non-lethal military support for Poroshenko government in the Ukraine crisis and measured use of the US air force in the Syrian conflict. He has also attempted to share the responsibility for settling conflicts by establishing coalitions, though this has been sometimes done by bypassing existing international organisations responsible for conflict resolution. When shaping its military policy, the United States has continued to take into account, as an important factor, its NATO allies as well as influential regional powers, such as, in the case of the Syrian conflict: Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, and to an increasing extent Iran, too.

Obama ruled out from the start the possibility of US armed intervention in the Ukrainian conflict and for a long time went against the opinion of the majority of the American political establishment not giving his consent for supplying lethal arms to Kiev. But Russia's reincorporating of Crimea, Russian actions in Ukraine and the perception shared by many in Washington about a possible danger of a Russian intervention into one of the neighbouring countries cause real concern in Washington. By carrying out limited programmes to build up its military potential in Europe, the United States is trying reassure NATO allies of its security guarantees. The United States is reviving Cold War-era concepts such as limited containment and forward-based defence, and it is also developing new strategies to respond to the emergence of 'non-state aggressive formations' and 'hybrid wars' and to counter cyber-threats. At the same time, as Washington is forced to realise the significance of Russia's actions in Syria and the growing threat posed by IS, it is increasingly willing to interact with Russia on the Syrian issue, all the more so since the United States itself does not have a military solution to the problem. This does not preclude the American political elite's largely negative attitude towards Russia, but it nevertheless creates certain premises for a joint search for political solutions to the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine. As for Russia, it, arguably, perceives as of principal importance that Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and other non-NATO post-Soviet countries preserve a neutral status, and it also wants to ensure that its interests in the post-Soviet region will be taken into account. In this situation, as Henry Kissinger said, all that 'remains' to be done now is to reconcile Western necessities with Russia's concerns¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸⁵ See: The Interview: Henry Kissinger, *The National Interest*, 19 Aug. 2015.

7. MILITARY THREATS ASSESSMENTS IN THE ARCTIC

Andrei ZAGORSKI

Before 2014

Prior to the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, regional states assessed military threats in the Arctic as relatively low¹⁸⁶. Military conflict in the region was believed to be unlikely¹⁸⁷. Studies conducted during the last ten years independently from each other¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ See: Danish Defence Agreement 2013-2017, Copenhagen, 30 Nov. 2012, <<http://www.fmm.dk/eng/allabout/Documents/TheDanishDefenceAgreement2013-2017english-version.pdf>>; The High North. Visions and strategies. Meld. St. 7 (2011-2012), Report to the Storting, White Paper (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011), p. 68, <http://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/a0140460a8d04e4ba9c4af449b5fa06d/en-gb/pdfs/stm201120120007000en_pdfs.pdf>; Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy. Exercising Sovereignty and Promoting Canada's Northern Strategy Abroad (Ottawa, Government of Canada, 2010), p. 8, <http://www.international.gc.ca/arctic-arctique/assets/pdfs/canada_arctic_foreign_policy-eng.pdf>; Arctic Strategy, Department of Defense, Nov. 2013 (Washington, Secretary of Defense, 2013), pp. 2, 4, <http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2013_Arctic_Strategy.pdf>.

¹⁸⁷ US Navy Arctic Roadmap. October 2009 (Washington, Department of the Navy, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, 2009), pp. 6, 13, 14-15, <<http://greenfleet.dodlive.mil/files/2010/08/US-Navy-Arctic-Roadmap-11-10-09.pdf>>; Byers, M., *International Law and the Arctic* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 5, 249.

¹⁸⁸ See: inter alia: Zagorski, A.V., Military security in the Arctic. In *The Arctic Region: Problems of international cooperation: Collection of texts in three volumes*, ed. by I.S. Ivanov, vol. 1, pp. 253-268; Khramchikhin, A.A., Military-political landscape in the Arctic and scenarios of eventual conflict. In *The Arctic*

did not identify any significant reason for inter-state conflict or signs of a beginning arms race.

Eventual disputes were not excluded in the future, resulting particularly from overlapping claims of coastal states with regard to their extended continental shelf in the central basin of the Arctic Ocean. However, prospects for such disputes to escalate to military conflict were considered low as long as all states concerned remained committed to peaceful and orderly settlement of such disputes in accordance of provisions of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as long as they abided by specific agreements to this effect, and as long as bilateral and multilateral cooperation prevailed in the region¹⁸⁹.

Publication by members and observer states of the Arctic Council of their Arctic strategies, progress of regional cooperation, meetings of five coastal states, informal dialogue on the platform of multiple high level forums, intensification of research and experts work, a dense network of international research projects, policy relevant projects, conferences and workshops were instrumental to overcome initial mutual suspicion.

Although many politicians and experts continued to predict a forthcoming 'race' for the Arctic¹⁹⁰, the rhetoric concerning militarization of the region started to vanish. Major concerns of Arctic states concentrated on challenges to ecologic and human security resulting from climate change, as well as the expansion of economic activities in the region – exploration and extraction of offshore resources, and intensification of vessel traffic. They increasingly shifted their focus toward raising preparedness to natural and man-made disasters, oil spills, as well as toward

Region: Problems of international cooperation: Collection of texts in three volumes, ed. by I.S. Ivanov, vol. 1, pp. 338–342; Mière, Ch. le, Mazo, J., *Arctic opening: insecurity and opportunity* (Abingdon; New York, Routledge, 2013), pp. 77–94; Wezeman, S.T., *Military capabilities in the Arctic*, SIPRI Background Paper, 2012.

¹⁸⁹ See, inter alia: *The High North. Visions and strategies*, pp. 36, 59–60, 68; *Report to Congress on Arctic Operations and the Northwest Passage*, p. 8.

¹⁹⁰ See, inter alia: Apanasenko, V.M., *A new World War may begin in the Arctic*, 29 Nov. 2012, <<http://inforos.ru/ru/?module=news&action=view&id=32583>>; Konyshov, V.N., Sergunin, A.A., *Remilitarization of the Arctic and security of Russia*. In *The Arctic Region: Problems of international cooperation: Collection of texts in three volumes*, ed. by I.S. Ivanov, vol. 1, pp. 284–302.

strengthening capabilities for aeronautical and maritime search and rescue¹⁹¹.

Some countries abandoned plans for upgrading their naval capabilities in the Arctic adopted in the middle of the last decade after these plans did not adequately match new challenges emanating from transnational organized crime, including eventual terrorist activities¹. The most obvious example is Canada, which has shelved but in fact has abandoned plans for the construction of eight ice capable patrol vessels, announced in 2007, after it turned out that those ships were not fit to meet new security challenges posed by non-governmental actors¹⁹².

Most Arctic states abstained from heavily investing into military infrastructure in the region and made their choices in favour of fostering regional cooperation¹⁹³. Dialogue of defence and law enforcement agencies was in the process of institutionalization. Annual meetings of chiefs of defence conducted for the first time in 2012 were supposed to play a central role in this process. Cooperation on responding to non-military threats was promising in terms of gradually transcending fault lines in the region inherited

¹⁹¹ Gudev, P.A., Non-military threats to the Arctic Security, *MEiMO*, No 2, Vol 60, 2016, pp. 72–82; Dynkin, A.A., International Cooperation in the Arctic: Risks and Opportunities, *Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences*, No 3, Vol 85, 2015, p. 201; Zagorski, A.V., International Political Environment for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation – Programme of the Presidium of the RAS ‘Pilot Fundamental Scientific Research in the Interest of the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation’. Publication of 2014 findings, pp. 8–9, <<http://www.ras.ru/FStorage/Download.aspx?id=d72d9bd7-d33f-4a34-bfc4-2c4b165077ee>>; Konyshev, V.N., Sergunin, A.A., Washington’s Arctic ambitions, *Observer*, No 9, 2013, pp. 59–67; Kraska, J., Baker, B., Emerging Arctic Security Challenges. – Center for a New American Security Policy Brief, Mar. 2014. See also Arctic strategies of regional states (note 1).

¹⁹² See: Byers, M., *Who owns the Arctic? Understanding sovereignty disputes in the north* (Madeira Park, Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), pp. 63–64; Byers, M., *International Law and the Arctic*, p. 249.

¹⁹³ Arctic Strategy. Department of Defense. Nov. 2013; United States Coast Guard Arctic Strategy. May 2013. Washington, USCG, 2013, <https://www.uscg.mil/seniorleadership/DOCS/CG_Arctic_Strategy.pdf>; Danish Defence Agreement 2010-2014.

from the Cold War (five of eight Arctic Council' member states are members of NATO)¹⁹⁴.

Against the background of the Ukraine crisis

Debates over a forthcoming militarization of the Arctic resurfaced against the background of the Ukraine crisis, which lead to a crisis in relations between Russia and the West¹⁹⁵. In the course of sanctions adopted by the West joint naval exercises with Russia are suspended. From 2014 onwards, chiefs of defence of Arctic Council's member states no longer come together.

The tenor of discussing military-political issues has changed, and rhetoric has strengthened. *Military threats assessments in the region are no longer based exclusively on projected intentions but, rather, increasingly concentrate on military capabilities, activities and build-up of coastal states in the Arctic.* All states closely watch exercises conducted here and other military activities while calculating worst-case scenarios. Regional arms race expectations are fueled by the coin cadence of the Ukraine crisis with the active phase in the implementation of far-going plans for modernization of military infrastructure and expansion of military presence in the Russian Arctic.

In December 2014, the Russian Joint Strategic Command 'North' was established based on the Northern Fleet. 13 military airfields, an aviation polygon, 10 locations of radar stations and

¹⁹⁴ See: Zagorski, A., Russia's Arctic governance policies. In *The New Arctic Governance*, ed. by L. Jakobson, N. Melvin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 99–104.

¹⁹⁵ See, for example: Mukhin, V., Cold War in the Arctic. Combat capabilities of the Northern Fleet so far remain inferior to the capabilities of the USA and other NATO member states in the region, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 7 Aug. 2015, <http://www.ng.ru/armies/2015-08-07/1_arctica.html>; Hamilton, D.S., Rude awakening: security challenges in Northern Europe. In *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2015*, ed. by N. Hvidt, H. Mouritzen (Copenhagen, Danish Institute for International Studies, 2015), p. 30; Axe, D., Russia and America prep forces for Arctic war, *Reuters*, 5 Oct. 2015, <<http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2015/10/04/russia-and-america-prep-forces-for-arctic-war/>>; Myers, S.L., US is playing catch-up in scramble for the Arctic, *The New York Times*, 30 Aug. 2015, p. 1.

aviation guidance units are being restored or erected¹⁹⁶. Later in 2014, the 80th separate (Arctic) motorized rifle brigade was established in Alakurtti, Murmansk region, in the proximity of the border of Finland¹⁹⁷. At an earlier stage, in 2012, the separate Pechenga motorized rifle brigade stationed on the Kola Peninsula was subordinated to and integrated into the Northern Fleet¹⁹⁸. A third Arctic brigade is expected to be formed in the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous district in 2016.

The 99th tactical group has been formed on the island Kotelný (Novosibirsk islands) including onshore missile and anti-aircraft missile units, surveillance and logistical units¹⁹⁹. Groups of forces deployed on Novaya Zemlya, Novosibirsk islands, Wrangel island and Cape Schmidt from a joint tactical group which began its combat duty in October 2014²⁰⁰. The formation of the Russian Arctic group of forces is expected to be completed in 2018²⁰¹.

With the formation of the reinforcement infrastructure in the Russian Arctic, training voyages of the Northern Fleet ships resumed in 2012, and the scale of exercises increased. The largest readiness exercise of the Arctic group of forces, involving combat ships of the Northern Fleet, individual units of the military district 'West' and airborne units totaling 38 thousand servicemen, 3360 units of military equipment, 41 combat vessels, 15 submarines, 110 aircraft and helicopters, took place in March 2015²⁰².

¹⁹⁶ Large-scale military exercises started in Russia, *Weacom*, 17 Mar. 2015, <<http://weacom.ru/news/russia/politics/161225>>.

¹⁹⁷ 80th motorized rifle (Arctic) brigade of the Northern Fleet-Joint Strategic Command 'North' received combat banner, *Livejournal*, 18 Jan. 2015, <<http://bmpd.livejournal.com/1139162.html>>.

¹⁹⁸ A motorized rifle brigade will appear in the Northern Fleet, *Arctic Info*, 26 Nov. 2012, <<http://www.arctic-info.ru/News/Page/v-sostave-severnogo-flota-poavitsa-motostrelkovaa-brigada>>.

¹⁹⁹ 99th tactical group Northern Fleet, 25 Sep. 2014, <<http://eagle-rost.livejournal.com/226577.html>>.

²⁰⁰ Large-scale military exercises started in Russia...

²⁰¹ Shoygu: RF will finalize the formation of the Arctic group of forces by 2018, *TASS*, 22 Oct. 2015, <<http://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/2368965>>.

²⁰² Snap readiness exercise of the Arctic group of Armed Forces of Russia began, *Voenny obozrevatel*, 16 Mar. 2015, <<http://waronline.info/rossiyskaya-armiya/nachata-vnezapnaya-proverka-boegotovnosti-arkticheskoy-gruppirovki-voorzhenich-sil-rossii.html>>.

All these activities evolve against the background of no significant changes in military activities and posture of other Arctic states²⁰³. Western states (the US, Canada, Denmark, Norway, not to speak of Iceland) do not have surface capabilities for naval operations in the Arctic Ocean taking into consideration its inhospitable climate conditions. Nor do they plan to develop such capabilities. In this respect, the operational environment in the Arctic contrasts the current situation in the Baltic or Black seas. Today, the Russian Federation is the single state, which deploys powerful naval forces in the Arctic and invests significant resources into the erection of reinforcement infrastructure in the region.

This makes many in the West, including senior defence establishment representatives, to conclude that the Russian Federation provokes arms race in the Arctic²⁰⁴. Statements of non-official Russian sources stipulating that the development of the Russian defence infrastructure serves the strategic purpose of ‘maintaining Russia’s absolute superiority in the region’²⁰⁵, do not help to alleviate those concerns.

It is important to recall in this regard that, from the very beginning, senior Russian military representatives were aware of the fact, that the formation of Arctic forces may have negative consequences in the region. In October 2012, for instance, the Chief Commander of the Russian Army, colonel-general V. Chirkin, stressed while discussing prospects for establishing Arctic brigades: ‘So far we approach this issue with sensitivity, in order not to rush ahead of events and *not to militarize the Arctic* ahead of time’ (*emphasis added*)²⁰⁶.

²⁰³ See: Zagorski, A.V., International Political Environment for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation,.. p. 9; Khramchikhin, A.A., The impact of the Ukraine crisis on the military-political situation in the Arctic, Arctica 2015, VIth All-Russia maritime applied science conference, Murmansk, 13-14 May 2015, pp. 96–98.

²⁰⁴ 25 Feb. 2016: General Breedlove, House Armed Services Committee Transcript, p. 10.

²⁰⁵ Absolute superiority: Western media recognizes Russia’s victory in the Arctic, *Zvezda TV and Radio*, 19 Apr. 2016, <http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201604191851-slwi.htm>.

²⁰⁶ Army’s Chief Commander: We address the establishment of Arctic brigades with sensitivity, *Arctic-Info*, 1 Oct. 2012, <http://www.arctic-info.ru/News/Page/glavkom-sv--mi-s-ostorojnost_u-podhodim-k-formirovaniu-arkticeskih-brigad>.

Nevertheless, *the current international crisis – at least so far – did not prompt western countries to reconsider their generally benevolent assessment of the military-political developments, postures or military activities in the region.*

Many experts express moderate assessments and do not identify a threat of arms race while analyzing the evolution of the Arctic landscape. They emphasize the length of the Russian maritime borders in the region and the strategic role of the Northern Fleet²⁰⁷. Projections of a beginning arms race in the Arctic sharply contrast official assessments of the military-political developments in the region by western coastal states: those assessments have not changed so far despite the generally unfavourable international environment.

For instance, in 2015, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark M. Lidegaard stated: ‘The Arctic continues to be a region of low tension. We must work to ensure that things stay that way by continuing cooperation in the Arctic Council and elsewhere. Spill-over from conflicts elsewhere should be avoided’²⁰⁸. Danish Defence Minister N. Wammen reconfirmed that there was no clear and present danger to the Danish territory²⁰⁹.

Admiral Papp – the US Arctic envoy – plays down the mounting debate over the expansion of Russia’s military activities in the region. Responding to questions concerning the escalating ‘race for the Arctic’, he establishes that there are no battles, wars or conflicts in the region. Responding to critics of Russia’s policy, he reminds that, following the dramatic reduction of Russian presence

²⁰⁷ See, inter alia: Depledge, D., Hard security developments. In *Arctic security matters*, ed. by J. Jokela, p. 62; Haftendorn, H., Wettrüsten im Ewigen Eis – Eine Gefahr für die internationale Stabilität?, *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik*, No 1, Vol 9, 2016, pp. 101-120; Melvin, N., Bergh, K., The new Arctic governance. In *The New Arctic Governance*, ed. by N. Melvin, L. Jakobson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 1; Klimenko, E., Russia’s Arctic Security Policy. In *Still quiet in the North?* SIPRI Policy Paper No 45, Feb. 2016.

²⁰⁸ Lidegaard, M., The International Situation and Danish Foreign Policy 2014. In *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2015*, ed. by N. Hvidt, H. Mouritzen (Copenhagen, Danish Institute for International Studies, 2015), p. 15.

²⁰⁹ Wammen, N., Danish Defence Policy 150 years after the Defeat of 1864. In *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2015*, ed. by N. Hvidt, H. Mouritzen (Copenhagen, Danish Institute for International Studies, 2015), p. 22.

in the Arctic after the end of the Cold War, any activity can be interpreted as a build-up. Acknowledging the responsibilities of Russia for developing support infrastructure in its territorial waters along its lengthy coastal line and northern shipping routes, he points to legitimate reasons for the modernization of Russian bases and communications in the region. As for the reorganization of the Northern Fleet, he recognizes its importance as a strategic asset, which can be applied elsewhere in the world and concludes by stating that he does not observe any ongoing destabilization in the Arctic. Although any surge in military activities in the Arctic should be closely watched, he does not see any need to overreact²¹⁰.

Prospects

At this stage, the leadership of western countries has obviously decided not to dramatize Russia's military build-up in the Arctic. The region is of peripheral importance for their defence, political and economic interests. However, this policy may change as a consequence of ongoing review of threats assessments, as well as simply as a result of a regular change of government in Arctic states.

For this reason, it is important to *exercise restraint while developing military infrastructure and exercising military activities in the Arctic*, agree on a set of measures to restore and build confidence in order to alleviate mounting concerns. In the process of further implementation of plans for restoring and upgrading military infrastructure in the Russian Arctic, it is important not only to exercise but also to demonstrate restraint by avoiding excessive rhetoric over alleged military threats in the region. In particular, it is worthwhile to notify other Arctic states of Russia's forthcoming military exercises in the region, invite observers and organize visits to restored locations of military infrastructure on Arctic islands and lands.

It is important to fully utilize the remaining opportunities for bilateral and multilateral cooperation and regularly conduct joint

²¹⁰ Admiral Papp: I am upset when, speaking of the Arctic, they use the word 'war', *Interfax*, 13 Jan. 2016, <<http://www.interfax.ru/world/489243>>.

exercises within the frameworks of Arctic states' agreements of on cooperation on aeronautical and maritime search and rescue (2011) and on cooperation on marine oil pollution preparedness and response in the Arctic (2013). The Arctic Coast Guard Forum established in 2015 – a rare example of continued pan-Arctic security cooperation not affected by western sanctions – can be instrumental in encouraging this work.

It is of no lesser importance to keep policies of Arctic states predictable, particularly as regards such sensitive issues as establishing outer limits of continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean. Such predictability is achieved by adherence to specific agreements, as exemplified by predictable and reassuring responses to the recent Arctic continental shelf claims submitted by Denmark and Russia.

In 2008, coastal states confirmed their commitment to 'the orderly settlement of any possible overlapping claims'²¹¹ following relevant provisions of the UNCLOS. In 2014, Russia, Denmark and Canada agreed through diplomatic noted exchange that they will cooperatively settle any issues related to the establishment of outer limits of their continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean. In particular, they agreed not to object to the Commission on the Limits of Continental Shelf considering any of their submissions and making recommendations on them with the understanding that the recommendations made by the Commission shall be without prejudice to their rights and shall not prejudice the delimitation of the continental shelf between them²¹².

In 2014 and 2015, all states concerned lived up to this commitment and notified the UN accordingly after Denmark and Russia had submitted their claims to the Commission²¹³. Notably,

²¹¹ The Ilulissat Declaration. Arctic Ocean Conference. Ilulissat, Greenland, 27-29 May 2008, <http://www.oceanlaw.org/downloads/arctic/Ilulissat_Declaration.pdf>.

²¹² Partial Revised Submission of the Russian Federation to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in Respect of the Continental Shelf of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Ocean. Executive Summary. 2015, p. 11, <http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/rus01_rev15/2015_08_03_Exec_Summary_English.pdf>.

²¹³ The Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations. Note No 1361, New York, 29 Dec. 2014, <http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/dnk76_14/2014_12_29_CAN_NV_DNK4_001_en_15-.pdf>; Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, № 2764/H, New York, 21 July

the U.S. response to the 2015 Russian claim was exclusively positive²¹⁴. It dropped critical questions, including those of scientific nature, which had been raised by the US in a similar note in 2002²¹⁵. On its part, Russia confirmed in its 2015 submission that the final delimitation of its continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean with Denmark (Greenland), Canada and the U.S. shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Article 83 of UNCLOS after the adoption of Commission recommendations on the submission of the Russian Federation²¹⁶.

As long as all Arctic coastal states act in accordance with their obligations under UNCLOS and remain committed to specific agreements defining how they shall proceed with the delineation and cooperative delimitation of outer limits of continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean, this process will remain predictable and manageable. Conflict may only occur if any state would seek to establish the limits of its shelf bypassing the UNCLOS provisions.

2015, <http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/dnk76_14/2015_07_21_RUS_NV_NV_001_15-00554.eng.pdf>; Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations. Ref.No. 2015-14962, New York, 7 Oct. 2015, <http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/rus01_rev15/2015_10_07_DNK_NV_UN_001_15-00785.pdf>; The Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations. Note No 2328, New York, 30 Nov. 2015, <http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/rus01_rev15/2015_30_11_CAN_NV_en.pdf>.

²¹⁴ United States Mission to the United Nations. New York. Diplomatic Note, 30 Oct. 2015, <http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/rus01_rev15/2015_11_02_US_NV_RUS_001_en.pdf>.

²¹⁵ United States of America: Notification regarding the submission made by the Russian Federation to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, 28 Feb. 2002, <http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/rus01/CLCS_01_2001_LOS_USAtext.pdf>.

²¹⁶ See note 27, pp. 11-12.

8. 2016 RUSSIAN DEFENCE BUDGET: KEY PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Lyudmila PANKOVA

Russia's 2016 defence budget is one of the most difficult and challenging for implementation within the Fourth State Armament Programme (SAP) 2011-2020²¹⁷ which promised to be one of the most effective Russian defence programmes after the collapse of the Soviet Union²¹⁸. It should be noted that implementation of the first half (2011-2015) of SAP-2020 was overall quite successful and efficient. It demonstrated high level of implementation of the state defence order (SDO) and of defence budget spending, as well as a increasing progress in equipping the Russian Armed Forces with modern weapons and military equipment.

The reason that the 2016 budgeting cycle proceeds with difficulties lies in the fact that for the last two years (starting from March 2014) the implementation of the 'National Defence' budget programme has been held in new economic, political and military-political conditions. And these conditions (both external and internal) do not correspond to the projections made during the

²¹⁷ Further, in abbreviated form – SAP-2020.

²¹⁸ About SAP-2020 see: Pankova, L.V., The dynamics of modernization of the Russian armed forces. In *Russia: Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security. IMEMO Supplement to the Russian Edition of the SIPRI Yearbook 2014* (Moscow: IMEMO RAN, 2015), pp. 141-156; Pankova, L.V., Russia: defence spending and armaments programmes. In *Russia: Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security. IMEMO Supplement to the Russian Edition of the SIPRI Yearbook 2011* (Moscow: IMEMO RAN, 2012), pp. 145-161.

budget planning for 2014-2016. These conditions include the fall in oil prices, introduction of economic sanctions, slowdown of the Russian economy, partially due to numerous structural imbalances, urgent diversion of resources to the development and implementation of import substitution programmes, as well as a corresponding increase in situational uncertainty, expanding range of possible risks, etc.

The Russia's military operation in Syria did not have a significant destabilizing effect on its defence budget since, according to officials, the operation was covered by current expenditures earmarked for military exercises, and thus did not exceed the budget of the Ministry of Defence (MoD)²¹⁹.

To a certain extent 2016 is – and 2017 apparently will be – a critical period that defines the ways and possibilities of further development and modernization of the Russian armed forces. It is quite clear that the overall focus of improving and modernizing the Russian army remains unchanged. Although the implementation will likely undergo adjustments and changes, perhaps, in the pace of rearmament.

Issues and problems of defence budgeting and GPV-2020 implementation

1. The main issues of SAP-2020 in the current year relate primarily to the decrease of funding for defence projects.

According to the 2016 draft budget submitted to the State Duma in late 2015 (see Table 1), programmes within Section 02 'National Defence' of the federal budget were supposed to receive about 3145.1 billion rubles. The share of military expenditures in the national budget was reduced from 20.2% in 2015 to 19.6% in 2016 (see Table 1). The share of military expenditure in GDP did

²¹⁹ President Putin said that the Russian military operation in Syria cost 33 billion rubles. According to RBC estimates, for example, the figure is 38 billion rubles which is consistent with the official statement. See: *RBC*, 17 Mar. 2016, <<http://www.rbc.ru/politics/17/03/2016/56ea8cd59a79476ecabf7f28>>.

not exceed an average share of military spending in the Russian GDP in times of peace and according to the draft was 4%²²⁰.

Table 1. 2016 federal budget spending on 'National Defence', million roubles

	2015	2016 (draft)
Total	15 486 433.3	16 098 658.7
including:		
National defence	3 119 576.6	3 145 090.7
% of GDP	4.2	4.0
% of total spending	20.2	19.6

Source: Report on the draft Federal Law 911755-6 'On the federal budget for 2016' No 147/1.1., Defence Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, 30 Oct. 2015.

As for the structure of the 'National Defence' budget section and its subsections (see Table 2), there are no significant changes: the main share of spending – 80% – accrues to the programme. Overall there are seven programmes: the armed forces, mobilization and reserve military training, mobilization preparation of the economy, nuclear weapons complex, implementation of international obligations in the sphere of military-technical cooperation, applied research in the field of national defence, and other issues in the field of national defence.

However, compared to the previous year (see Table 2) there is a decline in the share of expenses on 'Armed Forces' subsection in the country's GDP (from 3.3% to 2.8%) and in the federal budget (from 15.6% to 13.9%), as well as a marked increase in similar indicators on 'other issues in the field of national defence' (from 0.5% to 0.7% of GDP, from 2.2% to 3.3% of the total federal budget).

²²⁰ The draft budget: defence spending in Russia in 2016 will amount to 4% of GDP, *RIA Novosti*, 24 Oct. 2015, <<http://ria.ru/economy/20151024/1307503105.html>>.

Table 2. 2016 federal budget spending on 'National Defence' divided into subsections, million rubles

	2015	2016 (draft)
National defence	3 119 576.6	3 145 090.7
% of GDP	4.2	4.0
% of total spending	20.2	19.6
including:		
Armed forces	2 410 795.9	2 233 643.9
% of GDP	3.3	2.8
% of total spending	15.6	13.9
Mobilization and reserve military training	5260.0	5427.6
% of GDP	0.01	0.01
% of total spending	0	0
Mobilization preparation of the economy	4636.2	3834.9
% of GDP	0.01	0.005
% of total spending	0	0
Nuclear weapons complex	44 575.6	48 370.1
% of GDP	0.1	0.1
% of total spending	0.3	0.3
Implementation of international obligations in the sphere of military-technical cooperation	9823.7	9492.6
% of GDP	0.01	0.01
% of total spending	0.1	0.1
Applied research in the field of national defence	298 036.4	311 181.7
% of GDP	0.4	0.4
% of total spending	1.9	1.9
Other issues in the field of national defence	346 448.8	533 139.9
% of GDP	0.5	0.7
% of total spending	2.2	3.3

Source: see Table. 1.

For the first time over the past few years, the budget was drafted for only one year (instead of three as before). There was also a delay with the approval of the defence budget for 2016. At the end

of last year, the Russian government resisted pressures to reduce the military budget²²¹. The national defence expenditures in the 2016 federal budget was supposed to grow by 0.8% as compared to 2015 (Tables 1, 2). By late February 2016 it became apparent that the reduction in defence spending in 2016 could not be avoided. According to the Deputy Defence Minister T. Shevtsova, the so-called forced reduction of the defence budget in 2016 would not exceed 5%²²².

In 2015, Russian military spending was reduced by 3.8%²²³. After adding to this reduction the 5% cut projected for 2016 (as mentioned above), the military spending this year will decrease by nearly 7% compared to 2014 (as planned in 2013).

As a result of ‘forced’ reductions and slowing-down dynamics of defence spending alongside with depreciation of the national currency, the Russian position in the world’s ranking of military expenditures changed. According to SIPRI estimates, in 2014 Russia’s share (\$84.5 bln)²²⁴ in the global military spending was 4.8%, and in absolute terms Russia was on the third place in the world. In 2015 the share of Russia (\$66.4 bln)²²⁵ in the global military expenditures fell to 4%. As a result, it moved in the world ranking from the third place (in 2014) to the fourth one (in 2015) after the United States, China, and Saudi Arabia. The share of these countries in global defence spending in 2015 amounted to 36, 13 and 5.7%, respectively²²⁶. Although a number of Russian experts disputed Russia’s fourth place. In particular, R. Pukhov, the director of the Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, told the ‘Vzglyad’ newspaper: ‘It was obvious the United States and China

²²¹ See: *Pronedra*, 24 Oct. 2015, <<http://pronedra.ru/weapon/2015/10/24/voennyj-byudzh-et-rossii/>>.

²²² Russian defence budget may lose 5% in 2016, *ABnews*, 5 Mar. 2016, <<http://abnews.ru/2016/03/05/oboronnyj-byudzh-et-rossii-mozhet-poteryat-5-v-2016-godu/>>.

²²³ Military spending in 2016 will be reduced by 5%, *Vedomosti*, 19 Feb. 2016, <<http://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/articles/2016/02/19/630702-voennye-rashodi-2016>>.

²²⁴ Trends in world military expenditure 2014, SIPRI Fact Sheet, April 2015, p. 2.

²²⁵ Trends in world military expenditure 2015, SIPRI Fact Sheet, April 2016, p. 2.

²²⁶ World military spending resumes upward course, says SIPRI, *SIPRI*, 5 Apr. 2016, <<https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2016/world-military-spending-resumes-upward-course-says-sipri>>.

were well ahead of the rest. As for the so-called third to sixth places which were occupied by Saudi Arabia, Russia, Britain, France, and – on some positions – India, one could not estimate them in absolute terms²²⁷. The expert believed, and quite reasonably, that it was more correct to calculate military spending in terms of purchasing power parity. Floating exchange rate of national currencies further complicated the assessment of military spending.

Speaking about Russia's place in the global military economy one should take into account such factors as the country's capacity for producing weapons and military equipment²²⁸, Russia's second place in the global arms trade (\$14.5 bln in 2015), and its unique opportunities in a number of strategic areas.

According to most experts, 2015-2016 cuts in Russian military spending are not critical for the defence and security of the country and do not affect the combat readiness of its armed forces²²⁹. But at the same time, as R. Pukhov noted, 'further reduction of the costs at the same pace would put the defence industry in a difficult position and endanger defence potential'²³⁰.

Ongoing development and implementation of import substitution programmes (a total of about 30) face certain financial and technological difficulties.

The first priority is to replace the Ukrainian components that are used in 186 Russian weapons²³¹. By the midyear, the electronic, optic, and avionic components produced by Ukraine are expected to be replaced²³². However, to fully overcome the dependence on Ukrainian producers for such as items as helicopter engines and

²²⁷ Saudi Arabia is ahead of Russia on military expenditure, *Vzglyad*, 5 Apr. 2016, <<http://vz.ru/economy/2016/4/5/803530.html>>.

²²⁸ For example, Saudi Arabia, purchases almost all weapons and military equipment.

²²⁹ See: *ABnews*, 4 Apr. 2016, <<http://abnews.ru/2016/04/04/minoborony-rossii-sokrashhenie-byudzheta-ne-skazhetsya-na-boegotovnosti-armii/>>.

²³⁰ Military spending in 2016 will be reduced by 5%...

²³¹ See: *News-front*, 22 Mar. 2016, <<http://news-front.info/2016/03/22/importo-zameshhenie-kak-dvigatel-ekonomiki-andrej-knyazev/>>.

²³² According to N. Kolesov, General Director of the Radio-Electronic Technology Consortium, *RIA Novosti*, 08 July 2015, <<http://ria.ru/economy/20150708/1120450692.html>>.

ship propulsion systems will be possible only by 2018 as substitution of these components requires three to four years²³³.

While Ukraine's share in the total volume of purchased parts used in Russian military hardware is estimated at 22%, the share of such items purchased in the EU and US is about 78%.

Such a large percentage of Western components in the total volume purchased abroad can to a large extent be explained by a recent global trend for development of various forms of cooperation, 'internationalization' of arms and military equipment, spread of offset transactions.

By 2018, it is planned to replace only 89% (571 units) of components purchased in the EU and US and used in 640 models of Russian military equipment, mainly in optics, automatics, and electronics²³⁴. Russia purchases not only components for various types of military equipment, but also means of production: even the most closed Russian military research institutes buy machines and equipment in the West²³⁵.

If the active implementation of SAP-2020 continues, consideration and adoption of the new SAP 2016-2025 (or SAP-2025) will be postponed till about 2018 mostly due to the uncertainty of the overall economic situation. Initially, 2016 was planned as a start year for the implementation of SAP-2025. Currently, the launch of the new arms programme is postponed to 2018 and, most likely, it will be not a ten but eight year long programme – SAP 2018-2025. Initially, the cost of new SAP programme was estimated at 55 trillion rubles. In the late 2014, the Russian Ministry of Defence assessed the use of advanced weapons and equipment with similar performance specifications and cut

²³³ According to Victor Murakhovski, an expert member of the chairman board of the Military-Industrial Commission, *Voyennyye materialy*, 18 July 2015, <www.warfiles.ru/show-92183-rossiyskiy-vpk-i-zapad-problemy-importozamesheniya.html>.

²³⁴ Voronov, V., Import substitution for Rogozin, *Radio Svoboda*, 10 Jan. 2016, <<http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/27477140.html>>.

²³⁵ This, in particular, was mentioned by A. Khranchikhin. See: Import substitution in the military: Russia will find a new market, *Ekonomika segodnya*, 8 July 2015, <<http://rueconomics.ru/74985-importozameshhenie-po-voennomu-rossiya-naydet-sebe-novyye-ryinki>>.

down the financing of SAP-2025 to about 30 trillion rubles²³⁶. It is possible that this amount can further decrease to 20 trillion rubles²³⁷.

Significant problems are resulted from high interest rates on bank loans. Defence industry funding comes, in the first place, from the state budget, and secondly, from credit resources. In times of economic instability, the relations between the defence industry and banks change despite the fact that the banks that work with MoD are mainly those with state participation. However, some of them, as First Vice Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Rogozin noted, unilaterally changed the terms of contracts. 'Interest rates on bank loans increased by 20-25%. There was no country in the world which could boost production in such circumstances'²³⁸.

There is a rise in prices for basic raw and strategic materials. Although the cost of raw materials is not the main component of the price for sophisticated high-tech products, 'even 1-2% growth of the cost is a huge amount'²³⁹. In addition, since Russia still purchases components for its industry abroad (according to most experts, for the moment it is, unfortunately, inevitable), as a result of depreciation of the exchange rate such purchases are now twice as expensive as they used to be²⁴⁰.

The situation when the lack of transparency of data, in the opinion of both foreign²⁴¹ and Russian²⁴² experts, only gets worse, leads to increased risk of financial corruption and less efficient

²³⁶ See: The cost of the state armaments program will be reduced from 55 to 30 trillion roubles by 2025, *Interfax*, 19 Dec. 2014. <<http://www.interfax.ru/russia/414347>>.

²³⁷ Races between robots and weapons, *Novyye vedomosti*, 21 Jan. 2015, <<http://nvdaily.ru/info/40046.html>>.

²³⁸ See the speech of Dmitry Rogozin at the interagency meeting in support of the defence industry at the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Rogozin: the defence industry needs academic science, *Russkaya vesna*, 19 Mar. 2015, <<http://rusvesna.su/future/1426707855>>.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Russian defence is considered insufficiently transparent, *Kommersant*, 16 Nov. 2015, <<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2852228>>.

²⁴² Stenin, A., Russia overtook the United States in the share of defence expenditures, *Finmarket*, 28 Mar. 2014, <<http://www.finmarket.ru/main/article/3666352>>.

budgeting process. In addition, foreign countries are concerned by the uncertainty of Russia's total military spending. At the same time the growing deficit of information is also related to the uncertainty about financing of the Russian military sector. Given the connection between the 'openness' of the military budget and security (since certain members of the State Duma believe that free access to the closed items of the budget can undermine national security)²⁴³, it creates additional difficulties and calls for a balanced approach.

According to the Transparency International UK, in 2014 around 58.8% of Russian military expenditures were closed to public, whereas in 2013 this figure was estimated at 30%. Russian experts also support the conclusion on the increasing level of secrecy in almost all subsections of the 'National Defence' budget section. In particular, according to the Gaidar Institute of Economic Policy²⁴⁴, in 2005-2014 for 'Armed Forces' subsection the above change is estimated at 33.1% to 54.3%, while for 'Other issues in the field of national defence' subsection – at 2.5% in 2005 to 53.8% in 2014. The increase in information transparency was observed only for 'Applied research in the field of national defence' subsection – from 98.4% in 2005 to 94.2% in 2014.

A crucial question is the efficiency of many of the largest Russian defence enterprises. According to most Russian experts, the current pricing formula adopted by the defence industry does not encourage enterprises to reduce production costs. As a result imperfect infrastructure and personnel in conjunction with other factors lead to industry's lowering efficiency²⁴⁵.

Finding optimal modernization solutions for the Russian armed forces

According to experts, Russian armed forces' logistics, maintenance and construction expenses appear to be affected the

²⁴³ See: *Newsru*, 13 Nov. 2015, <www.newsru.com/world/13nov2015/corruption.html>.

²⁴⁴ According to a study by V. Zatsëpin, the head of the Laboratory of Military Economy of the Institute of Economic Policy. See: Stenin, A., Russia overtook the United States in the share of defence expenditures...

²⁴⁵ Rogozin: the defence industry needs academic science...

most as a result of the 5% reduction of the Russian defence budget²⁴⁶. At the same time, the Russian Ministry of Defence was able to protect the weapons programme – one of the most expensive articles (up to 55% of the military budget) – from sequestration²⁴⁷.

The bulk of the expenditures in the ‘National Defence’ section in 2016 is the cost of the state defence order, i.e. procurement and research and development of new weapons, maintenance and modernization of the operational weapons systems. These expenditures account for 68% or about 2.14 trillion rubles of total national defence spending (according to the 2016 draft budget). Initially, the state defence order was expected to bear the bulk of reductions (about 150 billion rubles.). However, it was later decided that the money allocated for the implementation of the state defence order would remain intact. Apparently, this decision was based among other factors on the Ministry of Defence’s study of the multiplier effect of defence spending, its stimulating effect on the civil sector of the national economy. Thus, the Deputy Defence Minister Tatyana Shevtsova stressed that the money for the state defence order went to defence industrial enterprises situated virtually in all regions of Russia: ‘This money would go among other things to pay salaries to numerous employees of the defence industrial enterprises and would return to the state in the form of tax revenues... In fact, more than half of the state defence order funding returns back into the national economy, and the economy of the Russian regions... This budget article should not be cut. Indeed, it contributes not only to the strength the army but, by and large, it is a serious investment in the economy of the country’²⁴⁸.

The development of modern high-tech weapons and military equipment will certainly have long-term positive impact on the industrial sector. However the state should *find an optimum balance and facilitate effective interaction of military and civilian sectors of the national economy with a steady innovative growth* in both sectors. Today, according to estimates of Russian experts, despite

²⁴⁶ Russian defence budget may lose 5% in 2016...

²⁴⁷ Tatyana Shevtsova: social payments in the army will not be cut, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 3 Apr. 2016, <<http://rg.ru/2016/04/03/tatiana-shevcova-socvyplaty-v-armii-ne-sokratyat.html>>.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

the rise in demand for engineering products in connection with the increase in defence spending in the first half of this decade, the overall negative dynamics remain unchanged²⁴⁹.

At the same time it should be noted that modern economics can not always give a straightforward and clear answer to the question whether defence spending is a locomotive of economic development.

Another important point is the efforts of the Ministry of Defence to optimize military expenditure which also plays a significant role in terms of further modernization of the armed forces. In particular, the Ministry can use the following means: to validate and prioritize projects; cut the funding for secondary programmes; postpone and scale down the resource allocation to development and procurement; slow down the rearmament in some areas (for example, according to some experts, there is no urgent need for development of railway missile complex, introduction of new nuclear submarines can be put off, etc.)²⁵⁰.

There is also a debate on slowing down the increase in arms procurement costs while reducing defence spending (in particular, Minister of Finance A. Siluanov advocates the initiative²⁵¹), as well as on freezing projects in the development or testing stages²⁵².

In this regard, there are indicative reports on the need to prepare the Russian defence industry to conversion. According to President Putin²⁵³, the peak in orders will come in 2016 and 2017 and will be followed by a decline (on the other hand, some experts believe that the current structure of the state armament programme indicates that the peak is likely to come in 2019-2020). At the same

²⁴⁹ Conclusion report of the Higher School of Economics national research university on 2016 draft law on federal budget, <www.hse.ru>.

²⁵⁰ Military spending in 2016 will be reduced by 5%...

²⁵¹ Siluanov: Russia will spend its reserves by 2018, if it does not revise the budget, *Finanz.ru*, 26 Dec. 2014, <<http://www.finanz.ru/novosti/aktsii/siluanov-rf-potratit-rezervy-k-2018-godu-esli-ne-peresmotrit-byudzheth-1000434107>>.

²⁵² See the interview of S. Chemezov, the general director of the Rostech State Corporation, to 'The Wall Street Journal', TASS, 11 Mar. 2016, <<http://tass.ru/ekonomika/2730416>>.

²⁵³ See the statement of Vladimir Putin at a congress of the Russian Engineering Union, Vladimir Putin: starting from 2018 we plan to reduce orders for the defence industry, *Torg94*, 20 Apr. 2016, <<http://torg94.ru/stat/7306.html>>.

time, according to Vladimir Putin²⁵⁴, Russia has some surplus capacity which can be used for a conversion. This idea, in our opinion, needs a thorough, careful, and detailed study on the effective use of defence industry best practices for the civilian sector, as well as a mechanism for developing and applying dual-use technologies and innovations.

A study of measures to streamline the defence spending, especially when it comes to SDO, is underway. On 1 September 2015, the Federal Law on the State Defence Order became operational (it came into force on 1 July 2015) which included amendments to allow creation of an interagency budget monitoring system to place and implement a state defence order – this system integrated the Defence Ministry, the Federal Antimonopoly Service, Federal Financial Monitoring Service, Audit Chamber, and Bank of Russia²⁵⁵. With the adoption of amendments to the Federal Law on the State Defence Order the Russian Defence Ministry in addition to the previously existing responsibility to control target use of budgetary funds got levers of control over the financial resources allocated for the state defence order and a set of tools to prevent misuse of budgetary funds²⁵⁶. The law established an institute comprising nine authorized banks, special accounts system designed to serve only the SDO, assigned a unique identification number to each contract that allowed to keep track of all movements of money, components, materials, and finished products.

By the mid 2016, in order to improve budget efficiency the government planned to establish a system of strict control over the movement of funds between co-operating defence enterprises under the overall coordination by the Collegial board of the military industrial complex and with participation of the Federal Antimonopoly Service²⁵⁷.

However, according to many experts and business leaders, the practical implementation starting last fall of the above-

²⁵⁴ Ramm, A., President's direct response, *VPK*, 20 Apr. 2016, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/30318>>.

²⁵⁵ There are no prerequisites for reducing SDO in Russia, *VTC*, No 15, 2016, p. 15. The analysis of law enforcement practice on the amendments to the Federal Law 'On State Defence Order' is now underway.

²⁵⁶ Tatyana Shevtsova: social payments in the army will not be cut...

²⁵⁷ Rogozin: the defence industry needs academic science...

mentioned amendments to the Federal Law on the State Defence Order has revealed a number of flaws inherent in the new legislative mechanism for the control of financial flows related to the SDO. On the one hand, not all credit institutions were ready to move to a new SDO control system. On the other hand, for SDO contractors the system of financial monitoring proved to be extremely costly and inconvenient²⁵⁸. Obviously the new system of SDO financial control requires improvement.

Overall, the search for conditions and reserves to increase the efficiency of budget spending and budgetary policies to ensure the sustainability and stability of military-economic development is carried out in a fairly broad format.

In 2016, the Russian Defence Ministry put forward a proposal for a new approach to its budget process. It proposed to separate essential funding for the short- and long-term military development and expenditures on emergency military operations. In fact, this structure is similar to the Pentagon's budget, which has base discretionary spending and Overseas Contingency Operations fund. The Ministry also started an effort to develop benchmarks for the Russian military budget 'which would strictly coordinate timeframes, activities, and funding'²⁵⁹.

There is growing interest in research on balancing self-sufficiency in military production and dependence on the global market of arms and military equipment. Accordingly, the search for reliable and efficient partners becomes an urgent task which is particularly important due to the sanctions regime and, as a consequence, the need to address import substitution issues.

The presence of the Russian defence industry on the international market is indispensable and necessary but should be carefully calibrated. The processes of 'internationalization' and globalization, development of offset transactions inevitably result in a certain level of dependence on foreign suppliers. There is a growing need to identify the key principles on what, with who and

²⁵⁸ Matyushkin, S., Useless SDO – part I, *VPK*, 18 May 2016, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/30670>>.

²⁵⁹ Sharkovskii, A., Defence Ministry budget will be sequestered, *NVO*, 29 Jan. 2016, <http://nvo.ng.ru/realty/2016-01-29/1_sequestr.html>.

to what extent Russian MoD should cooperate when developing weapons and military equipment²⁶⁰.

Further, there is sustained attention to the defence R&D which currently receives 15-16% of the SDO annual funding²⁶¹. To some extent, the attention has been sparked by the successful operations of Russian Aerospace Forces in Syria which showed the importance of the new high-precision weapon systems.

The GPV 2018-2025 which is now under consideration, will, apparently, expand military-oriented research and development. The Russian Academy of Sciences and defence industry strengthen their cooperation. At the interdepartmental meeting on 19 March 2015 on supporting military industrial complex under sanctions, President of the Russian Academy of Sciences Vladimir Fortov²⁶² noted that the Academy had traditionally provided foundation for development of the military industrial complex. Today support for the defence industry by the national science community is especially important.

At the meeting with the Russian Academy of Sciences, leading Russian universities, defence industry enterprises, and military administration agencies at the National Defence Control Center on 1 April 2016, Deputy Defence Minister Yuri Borisov said²⁶³ that the new state armaments programme for 2018-2025 should be based on results of R&D on weapons based on new physical principles, materials engineering, hypersonic technologies, etc. This, however, will require increasing role and importance of fundamental science. At the meeting it became clear that fundamental knowledge and the demand on the part of the Ministry of Defence had little overlap. There was a need to determine ‘what

²⁶⁰ The Government Decree 1224 of 24 December 2013 ‘On the establishment of ban and restrictions on importing goods originating from foreign states, works (services) performed (provided) by foreign entities for the purpose of procuring goods, works (services) for the needs of defence and national security’ entered into force on 1 January 2014.

²⁶¹ The Russian Ministry of Defence may spend 270-290 billion rubles on the development of new weapons, *NG*, 12 Mar. 2015, <<http://www.ng.ru/news/496582.html>>.

²⁶² Rogozin: the defence industry needs academic science...

²⁶³ Gundarov, V., Ministry of Defence asked for help from academics, *NVO*, 1 Apr. 2016, <http://nvo.ng.ru/nvoevents/2016-04-01/2_acad.html>.

highly specialized tasks institutes of the Academy of Sciences could undertake in the interest of the Ministry of Defence²⁶⁴.

The 2016 state defence order already outlined a series of R&D projects which the Academy of Sciences would conduct under the contract with the Defence Ministry.

The new SAP envisages a major breakthrough in science, but according to experts, it will take to adopt another programme of fundamental research in the interests of the armed forces, defence and security²⁶⁵. The corresponding research and development will lay the foundation for a new phase of rearmament which, as Russian experts say, would be ‘adjusted for contactless, hybrid war’²⁶⁶.

The government also makes efforts to improve the military planning system. In 2013, the first in the Russian history Defence Plan was adopted. According to SAP-2020 regulations, the document should be adjusted every five years²⁶⁷. However, the delay with development of SAP-2025, as mentioned above, will apparently lead to the review of the 2013 Defence Plan. In November 2015, President Putin signed a Decree 560 on putting into effect the Defence Plan of the Russian Federation for 2016-2020 (starting from 1 January 2016)²⁶⁸ which included the implementation of SAP-2020.

The first Defence Plan outlined potential risks and threats to national security, the armed forces development plan, implementation of armaments programmes, mobilization training, and territorial defence. Among the goals of the Defence Plan was to ensure the timely placement and strict execution of the SDO and to implement a set of benchmarks for modern weapons and military equipment.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Falichev, O., Thanks to grandfather for a missile. Soviet intellectual heritage has been exhausted, the Russian military-industrial complex is still under construction, *VPK*, 16 Mar. 2016, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/29706>>.

²⁶⁶ Semenchenko, I., Falichev, O., Higher school of fooling, *VPK*, 27 Apr. 2016, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/30420>>.

²⁶⁷ Frolov, A., Brake for carrier, *VPK*, 16 Mar. 2016, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/29697>>.

²⁶⁸ A large group of officials from 49 ministries and departments worked on the Defence Plan.

In fact, the Defence Plan is a complex of military planning documents²⁶⁹ which integrates programmes on rearmament and mobilization, as well as plans of various ministries and agencies²⁷⁰. At the same time, according to Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army Vladimir Gerasimov, the new Defence Plan gives priority to enhance the capacity of the strategic nuclear forces²⁷¹.

Finally, the government considers using new approaches to the development of various types of military hardware. For example, for the first time in the Russian history several leading design offices such as Tupolev Aerospace Company, Sukhoi Company, RAC MiG, Irkut Corporation, Beriev Aircraft Company, Ilyushin Design Bureau, Moscow Aviation Institute will be participating in the construction of the modernized version of Tu-160 (Tu-160M2 bomber²⁷²). This decision was made by the United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) in order to accelerate the development of the bomber²⁷³. It is, in fact, a 'virtual UAC design bureau' to solve complex problems on a tight schedule.

In addition, the development of new weapons now involves modernization capacity through such characteristics as modularity, maintainability, versatility, and mobility.

Conclusions

Despite the economic problems the implementation of SAP-2020 in the last two years has achieved significant successes. The plans for the first half of the programme have generally been realized.

²⁶⁹ See: *Lenta VPK*, 17 Nov. 2015, <<http://www.oborona.gov.ru/news/view/7377>>.

²⁷⁰ See: *Pravdinform*, 17 Nov. 2015, <<http://www.trueinform.ru/modules.php?name=Laid&file=print&sid=584>>.

²⁷¹ See: *Argumenty i fakty*, 17 Nov. 2015, <http://www.aif.ru/dontknows/actual/chto_predusmatrivaet_novyy_plan_oborony_rossii>.

²⁷² The decision was taken in April 2015. According to the plan, by 2020 10 such aircraft will enter the service in the Aerospace Forces. Tu-160M2 is different from its predecessor: it has new on-board electronics and weapons. In fact, it will be a new aircraft with the old look.

²⁷³ Several design bureaus participate in modernization of Tu-160, *Voyenno-tekhnicheskoye sotrudnichestvo*, No 13, 28 Mar.-3 Apr. 2016, p. 13.

2015 was also successful: the budget was almost 100% implemented²⁷⁴, state defence order – 98% implemented²⁷⁵, increase in procurement of new weapons and military equipment was 7% compared to 2014. The share of modern hardware in the Russian armed forces reached 47%²⁷⁶.

In 2015, the government fully complied with procurement plans for anti-missile systems and complexes, missile systems for ground forces, strategic weapons, fighter jets and attack aircraft, helicopters, attack submarines, armored vehicles, rocket and artillery and other weapons²⁷⁷.

A new branch of the armed forces – the Aerospace Forces was created and 50% equipped with modern weapons. Military aircraft are updated in accordance with the state programme's road map, the air fleet is projected to receive several hundred new machines²⁷⁸.

One of the most important and essential elements of competitive advantage in the development of military hardware today – the electronic warfare forces – develops at a rapid pace²⁷⁹.

In April 2016, Russia successfully tested a prototype hypersonic aircraft designed to be delivered by currently operational and future intercontinental ballistic missiles. According to Academician Andrei Kokoshin, the hypersonic aircraft is intended to securely overcome the missile defence systems which will be developed only in 20-30 years, and at the same time it shows that

²⁷⁴ According to official data, 99.85% of the defence budget was implemented in 2015, and 99.96% in 2014.

²⁷⁵ This was announced by Yu. Borisov, deputy minister of defence. See: *RIA Novosti*, 11 Mar. 2016, <http://ria.ru/defense_safety/20160311/1388341977.html>.

²⁷⁶ See the 2015 Russian Defence Ministry performance report submitted on 1 December 2015 at the extended board meeting of the ministry. Korneev, V., Military equipment entered into service in the Russian Armed Forces in 2015, *News-Front*, 7 Jan. 2016, <<http://news-front.info/2016/01/07/voennaya-texnika-voshedshaya-v-stroj-vs-rf-v-2015-g-valerij-korneev/>>.

²⁷⁷ See: *RIA Novosti*, 11 Mar. 2016, <http://ria.ru/defense_safety/20160311/1388341977.html>.

²⁷⁸ Russian defence budget may lose 5% in 2016...

²⁷⁹ Lastochkin, Yu., Not a day without interference. Electronic warfare is conducted on a strictly scientific basis, *VPK*, 27 Apr. 2016, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/30428>>.

Russia can not only maintain its nuclear deterrence but also use non-nuclear means²⁸⁰.

The successes of the Russian armed forces modernization including those demonstrated during the military operation in Syria are also noted by Western military specialists and experts²⁸¹.

Russia improves its defence industry performance. In 2015, the output of the military industrial complex increased by almost 13%, export of weapons and military equipment amounted to about \$14.5 bln (second place in the world). Introduction of new technical solutions helped to increase defence industry's productivity by 7.2% in 2015. Overall, in the first half period of SAP-2020 (during the implementation of the relevant federal target programme), labour productivity increased by 1.7 times (over the period of 2011 to 2015)²⁸².

Given the main areas of search for optimal solutions to implement the policy of military modernization amidst budget problems specified above, the following should be noted. The transition to the new SAP 2018-2025 with a focus on strengthening scientific and technological foundation and creating innovative technological basis would, in fact, mean supplementing the Russian Armed Forces modernization process with the process of active transformation of the national war economy as a whole.

This will dramatically increase significance of such factors as defence industry economic efficiency, its effective and robust interaction with the civil sector of the national economy to establish and maintain steady pace of innovative development of dual-use technologies.

²⁸⁰ Vlyadkin, O., Russian mastered hypersound, *NVO*, 24 Apr. 2016, <http://nvo.ng.ru/nvoevents/2016-04-29/2_hyper.html>.

²⁸¹ For example, according to members of the US National Commission on the Future of the Army Carter Ham and Kathleen Hicks, the Russian Federation 'demonstrated breakthroughs in the field of short range air defence systems'. See: *Voyenno-tekhnicheskoye sotrudnichestvo*, No 5, 29 Jan. 2016. Commander of NATO forces in Europe, US General F. Breedlove noted that Putin managed to create 'a strong army... He also created powerful long-range missile capabilities'. NATO recognized the power of the Russian army, *Forbes*, 5 Apr. 2016, <<http://www.forbes.ru/news/317179-nato-priznalo-moshch-rossiiskoi-armii>>.

²⁸² Vladimir Putin: starting from 2018 we plan to reduce orders for the defence industry...

Given the goal of transformation of military and economic activity, special attention should be paid to human resources of the national economy. Together with industrial, scientific and technical resources they require the most attention and urgent effective solutions.

9. PROSPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON INFORMATION SECURITY

Natalia ROMASHKINA

By the end of XX century the process of the rapid development of new information technologies known as the 'information revolution' became a natural phase of scientific and technological progress, a prerequisite for further evolution of society. In the XXI century rapid development of computer technology and new information and communication technologies (ICT) increasingly becomes a driver of change in political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.

At the same time new ways of using information resources for destructive purposes – against individuals, social groups and, eventually, state, its economy and armed forces emerge. There are an increasing number of cases when ICT are used to settle international disputes in a manner incompatible with the UN Charter, disseminate ideas of extremism and terrorism, commit cross-border crimes related to violation of human rights and freedoms. The attacks against critical state infrastructure become more complex. Every year Internet resources of the Russian, US, and Chinese government face an average of 70 million cyber attacks. On the one hand, diversionary techniques become more sophisticated, while on the other – more accessible even for non-experts.

Russia has initiated an international discussion on the problems arising in the information field at the end of the XX century. Since then, the issues of information security (IS) have been the center of attention of the United Nations. These problems need to be solved in accordance with the resolutions of the UN

General Assembly and summit documents, primarily through improving the culture of information security at the state level. Unfortunately, this process is complicated and goes much slower than threats grow. New malicious and dangerous information technologies require constant monitoring and analysis in order to ensure national and international security. And sustainable and innovative use of ICT requires new mechanisms developed collectively by the international community.

International information security at the UN level

In 1998, Russia proposed the United States to sign at the presidential level a statement on information security and thus became a sponsor of an international solution to information security issues. The draft document included provisions on joint assessing challenges and threats; putting together a list of terms and definitions; raising the issue of global information security at the UN level including its disarmament aspects; developing an international multilateral treaty to combat information terrorism and crime. The discussion of the draft statement did not draw the parties much closer, but information security in most general terms was mentioned in the 'Joint Statement on Common Security Challenges at the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century', signed by the presidents of Russia and the United States in September 1998²⁸³.

In the same year, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs sent a special note to the UN Secretary General on the issues of international information security (IIS) which stressed the need to prevent the emergence of fundamentally new information sphere of confrontation and fundamentally new conflicts. This initiative was realized in the form of a draft resolution entitled '*Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security*' submitted by Russia to the UN General

²⁸³ Joint Statement on Common Security Challenges at the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century, 2 Sep.1998, The Diplomatic Bulletin of the Russian Foreign Ministry, No 10, Oct. 1998, <http://www.businesspravo.ru/Docum/DocumShow_DocumID_62942.html>.

Assembly First Committee. UNGA Resolution 53/70 was adopted without a vote on 4 December 1998.

The adopted resolution, contrary to the Russian draft, included no direct reference to the use of ICT for military purposes, specific definitions of ‘information weapons’ and ‘information war’, need for a regime prohibiting development and use of information weapons, or comparability of the impact of information weapons and weapons of mass destruction. According to Russian representatives, the greatest opposition to the document came from the US.

However, after the adoption of Resolution 53/70 the topic of problems and results of ensuring IIS has been on the agenda of the United Nations since then. Russia has been submitting the document under the same title to the General Assembly for more than 15 years.

UN General Assembly Resolution 54/49 ‘Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security’ of 1 December 1999 was the first to stress the IIS threats not only in civilian, but also in the military sphere. The UN Secretary General’s report of 10 June 2000 with the same name reflected Russian proposal of ‘Principles relating to the international information security’ which included basic terms and offered five basic principles of government activities in the international information space.

In 2004, in accordance with the UNGA resolutions ‘Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security’, a UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security was created.

In 2010, the Russian chairmanship in the GGE resulted in adoption of a report that allowed to lay the groundwork for substantive discussion on IIS.

During this period, many countries repeatedly confirmed the need for international cooperation in this field. Such cooperation is realized within the framework of the SCO, CSTO, BRICS, CIS, Organization of American States, APEC, ASEAN Regional Forum, Economic Community of West African States, African Union, EU, OSCE and Council of Europe as well as in the form of bilateral collaboration. Among the results of these efforts, in particular, was

the discussion of a UN Convention on ensuring international information security²⁸⁴ proposed by Russia in 2011 and addressing the problem of poorly defined terminology and its insufficiency for dealing with threats to information security. The document sought to consolidate at the international level a number of concepts – ‘information war’, ‘information security’, ‘information weapon’, ‘terrorism in the information space’ and others that were not yet categories of international law. The Russian draft detailed the issue of state’s sovereignty over its information space, as well as protection against ‘actions in information space aimed at undermining political, economic, and social system of another state, or psychological influence on the population in order to destabilize society’²⁸⁵.

The Russian draft became a counterweight to the Budapest Convention (Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime) which was seen by Western countries as a universal document on the issues of cybersecurity. Russia did not sign the Budapest Convention because it did not agree with some of its provisions, in particular with Article 32 on the ‘trans-border access’ which allowed secret services of one country to access computer networks of another country and act there without the knowledge of the national authorities.

Disagreements between Russia and Western countries led by the United States during the discussion of the document were related to the assessment of information threats and the need to develop binding international instruments to counter them. Russia believed that the parties should consider a complex of measures against possible illegal (hostile) using of ICT. The United States deemed it sufficient to limit the discussion to the issues of cyber threats and cyber security. That approach excluded information and psychological operations from the scope of international legal regulation. US justified its position by stating that including these issues could be seen as ‘a desire to put pressure on civil society, threaten freedom of expression, and strengthen authoritarian trends’. Currently, the international community operates such compromise

²⁸⁴ Convention on international information security (concept note), <<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/6/112.html>>.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

terms as ‘the threat of the use of information and communication technologies’ and ‘security in the use of information and communication technologies’. It takes months and years to agree on the language of international instruments.

On 2 December 2014, during the 69th session of the UN General Assembly the First Committee adopted by consensus another Russian resolution ‘Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security’²⁸⁶ which kept last year’s resolution on the importance of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the field of ICT. Every year more and more countries become co-sponsors of this document (in 2014 their number exceeded 50). Co-sponsorship of the document has become truly global encompassing all regions of the world.

In 2014, GGE convened for the fourth time – first three meetings took place in 2004-2005, 2009-2010, and 2012-2013. Representatives of Belarus, Brazil, Britain, China, Colombia, Egypt, Estonia, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Qatar, South Africa, Spain, US, and others participated in the work of the Group. The 2014-2015 GGE was mandated with further study of existing and potential threats in information sphere and joint approaches to address them, including rules, regulations and principles of responsible conduct of states, confidence-building measures, use of ICT in conflicts, and application of international law to the information space. As a result, the Group managed to reach a consensus on a number of fundamental issues related to the use of ICT.

On the basis of the GGE report one can identify the main threats to IIS at present.

1. Building up ICT capacity for military, intelligence and political purposes by a number of states.

²⁸⁶ The resolution ‘Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security’ was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 2 December 2014 [upon the report of the First Committee (A/69/435)], A/RES/69/28, <[http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/ N14/662/43/PDF/N1466243.pdf?OpenElement](http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/662/43/PDF/N1466243.pdf?OpenElement)>.

2. The difficulty and uncertainty in identifying the source of an ICT incident and lack of common understanding of acceptable state measures creating a risk of instability and misperception, conflict and economic damages.

3. The probability of ICT use in future conflicts.

4. A risk of an ICT attack on national critical infrastructure and related information systems.

5. A risk of ICT use for terrorist purposes – to carry out terrorist attacks against ICT facilities and ICT-related infrastructure.

6. A risk of ICT use for terrorist purposes – to recruit supporters, get financing, provide training and incite that can endanger international peace and security.

7. A variety of malicious non-state actors (including criminal groups and terrorists), their different motives, swiftness of malicious ICT attacks.

8. Malicious instruments and methods of ICT criminals and hackers.

9. The use of ICT for the exchange, collection and transfer of information, organization of subversion and propaganda.

10. Implementation of malicious software that can undermine confidence in the goods and services, as well as to the business as a whole.

11. Different levels of ICT security level among states, which can lead to increased vulnerability in the interconnected world.

The findings of the 2014-2015 GGE provided the basis for a Russian sponsored Resolution ‘Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security’ co-sponsored by 84 states from all regions of the world and adopted at the 70th session of the UN GA First Committee in 2015. Among the co-sponsors were states-members of BRICS, SCO, CIS, as well as Latin American and Asian countries. First time co-sponsors of the document were the United States, Japan and many EU member states, including the UK, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, and France²⁸⁷.

²⁸⁷ On the adoption of the resolution ‘Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security’ by the UN General Assembly First Committee (2173-07-11-2015) see: Ministry of Foreign

In July 2015, summarizing the results of the four work sessions GGE released its third report²⁸⁸ which was presented at the anniversary 70th session of the UN General Assembly and included ‘existing and emerging threats generated by the use of ICT by states; it also reviewed measures to deal with them, including the development of norms, rules, principles, and confidence-building measures. In addition the report considered issue of applicability of international law to the use of ICT by states. Based on the work of the previous groups, the Group made significant progress in those areas’²⁸⁹. The Russian members of the Group considered the report revolutionary, while the American representatives believed it was a victory of US diplomacy²⁹⁰.

The report of the 2014-2015 GGE contained the following agreements in view of the positions of 20 countries (including the US, China and developing countries) on the applicability of international law in the information space:

- not to legalize or regulate conflicts in information space, but to prevent the use of ICT for military and political purposes;
- refrain from mutual accusations in cyber attacks, as it often happens without good evidence;
- use ICT exclusively for peaceful purposes;
- to recognize the implementation of malicious logic in IT-products as illegal and malicious activities (for the first time);

Affairs of the Russian Federation, <http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1922990>.

²⁸⁸ Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, United Nations General Assembly, 70th session, Provisional agenda item 93, Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, A/70/174, <http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/174&referer=/english/&Lang=R>.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ The interview of A. Krutskikh, Special Representative of the Russian President on international cooperation in the field of information security, Ambassador at Large of the Russian Foreign Ministry, to ‘Kommersant’ newspaper published on 17 August 2015, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, <http://www.mid.ru/web/guest/mezdunarodnaa-informacionnaa-bezopasnost/-/asset_publisher/UsCUTiw2pO53/content/id/1655289>.

– not to carry out or knowingly support ICT activities aimed at causing deliberate damage to critical infrastructure or creating other obstacles to its use or function (at the same time states should take appropriate measures to protect their critical infrastructure from ICT threats);

– reaffirm the sovereign right of states to control the information and communication infrastructure in their territory and to determine their policy in the sphere of international information security.

An important result of the work of the 4th GGE was Item 12 on the Group acknowledging the International Code of Conduct for information security, proposed by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan and submitted to the UN General Assembly in January 2015²⁹¹, as well as recommendations to address existing and emerging threats to international peace and security arising from the use of ICT by states and non-state actors, on confidence building, capacity building, and implementation of international law.

In particular, the obligations of states voluntarily subscribing to the Code of Conduct include:

– to comply with the UN Charter and universally recognized principles and norms of international law;

– not to use information and communication technologies and networks to carry out activities which run counter to the goals of maintaining international peace and security, to interfere in the internal affairs of other states or undermine their political, economic and social stability;

– to cooperate in combating criminal and terrorist activities that use information and communication technologies and networks;

– to develop confidence-building measures in order to increase predictability and reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings and conflict;

²⁹¹ Letter from the Permanent Representatives of Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to the United Nations to the UN Secretary-General dated 9 January 2015, United Nations General Assembly, 69th session, Agenda item 91, Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, A/69/723, <http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/723&Lang=R>.

- to strengthen bilateral, regional and international cooperation and promote the role of the UN in the process of developing international legal norms for information security;
- to use peaceful means and refrain from the threat or use of force to settle any dispute that may arise in the course of the activities covered by the Code of Conduct.

The resolution adopted in 2015 was aimed at stirring up the development of such rules of conduct. To this end, in August 2016 a new 5th Group of Governmental Experts will start its work with the mandate to ensure peaceful use of ICT for national development and international stability. It is expected to hold four meetings in the 2016-2017. For the first time the group will be expanded to include 25 countries. The number of states who have confirmed their willingness to participate in the 2016-2017 GGE is unprecedented: more than 60 countries submitted applications, and 45 countries at the level of foreign ministers lobbied their participation before the UN Secretary General. During the preparatory period Russia, as a country initiating the UN GA resolutions on information security, informed the UN Secretary-General that it deemed necessary to be mindful of the principle of equitable geographic representation. Particular emphasis was made on the participation of Germany, Cuba, Israel and Muslim countries²⁹².

The overall aim of the new GGE is to develop a universal international regime governing the activities of states in the global information space. One of the major tasks in this respect is to include the Code of Conduct in the text of the next UN General Assembly Resolution ‘Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security’.

In the meantime, serious disagreements remain, mostly related to the Code of Conduct. Western countries prefer it to focus on confidence-building measures in the least binding form. At the same time they propose to adopt separate rules for peacetime and wartime that would work differently. And the Code itself should mainly be a set of technical parameters. Russia cannot agree with such proposals as they blur the key objective of the Code –

²⁹² According to the materials of the 10th International Scientific Forum ‘The partnership of government, business and civil society on international information security’, 25-28 Apr. 2016.

prevention of conflicts rather than development of rules of engagement. A provision related to the prevention of the use of ICT for interference in the internal affairs of other states also remains a bone of contention between Russia and Western countries.

States are concerned with attempts to establish control over the global information space through the use of ICT. Of special importance is the question of respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms in the information space. However, implementation of these rights should not be set against other important principles of international law – non-interference in the internal affairs of states and respect for national sovereignty.

Russia and IIS

Today Russia has more than 50 laws on information security and a host of presidential and governmental regulatory legal acts.

Russia is one of the host countries of the Modern Trends in Cryptography annual international mini-symposium that supports research on theoretical and practical cryptography.

In 2012, as part of establishing a government system designed to detect and prevent computer attacks (GosSOPKA) aimed at consolidating the efforts of all Russian ministries and agencies to effectively counter cyber attacks and dangerous destructive influences, Moscow created a center to respond to computer incidents in government networks (gov-cert.ru) which was tasked with collecting and analyzing information about computer attacks as well as interacting with similar centers (Computer Emergency Response Team – CERT) of other countries and organizations²⁹³.

In 2013, Russia adopted ‘Basic principles for State Policy of the Russian Federation in the field of International Information Security to 2020’ which defined *international information security* as *such condition for the global information space which prevents any possibility of violation of rights of the individual, society and*

²⁹³ Cyber Security and Incident Response Team for the governmental networks of the Russian Federation. International name – GOV-CERT.RU <<http://gov-cert.ru/index.html>>.

*state in the information sphere, and destructive and unlawful impact on the elements of national critical information infrastructure*²⁹⁴.

International information security system to counter threats to strategic stability and facilitate equitable strategic partnership in the global information space is defined as *a set of national and international institutions which should regulate activities of different actors of the global information space*²⁹⁵.

To the triad of threats associated with the use of information weapon a) for military and political purposes, for hostile actions and acts of aggression, b) for terrorist purposes, including destructive impact on the elements of critical information infrastructure, and c) for committing crime, including those connected with unauthorised access to computer information, creation, use and dissemination of malicious computer software, the 'Basic principles added interference into the internal affairs of sovereign states, the violation of public order, incitement of interethnic, interracial and interconfessional strife. It was in fact Russian reaction to the 'color revolutions' and the events of the 'Arab Spring' when social networks and blogs were actively used to start and coordinate protest movements.

According to the 'Basic principles for State Policy of the Russian Federation in the field of International Information Security to 2020' Russia aims to establish an international legal regime for an effective information security system. Among other things, such a regime needs a legal framework to facilitate the reducing of the risk of the use of ICT for hostile actions and acts of aggression aimed at discrediting the sovereignty and violating the territorial integrity of states and threatening international peace, security and strategic stability. At the same time the Russian Foreign Policy Concept states that Moscow will insist on the rules of conduct in providing IIS to be developed under the auspices of the UN.

On 10 January 2014, the Russian Federation Council began to discuss a draft Concept of Cyber Security Strategy of the Russian

²⁹⁴ Basic principles for State Policy of the Russian Federation in the field of International Information Security to 2020, <<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/6/114.html>>.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

Federation²⁹⁶. The document structures the initial effort but it has not been adopted yet due to the accelerated pace of emergence and transformation of threats in cyberspace.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs constantly emphasizes the growing threat of the use of ICT for illegal purposes, as well as in violation of the principles of international law. In May 2015, the Foreign Ministry's collegial board meeting on the topic of 'Global challenges in the field of information technology. Foreign Ministry's objectives on ensuring international information security' discussed the need to adopt broad measures to deal with today's global military-political, terrorist and criminal threats in the information sphere. It highlighted the importance of cooperation between Russia and the members of CIS, SCO, CSTO, and BRICS. The board found it useful to strengthen partnerships with countries that share Russian approaches and positions in matters of ensuring IIS. The meeting resulted in adopting specific measures aimed, in particular, at facilitating Russia's participation in the SCO and BRICS summits in July 2015 and a number of other important forums dedicated to IIS issues.

Over the past few years, Russian experts participated in inter-agency consultations with Belarus, Brazil, Cuba, France, Germany, India, Israel, South Korea, and the United States. IIS issues have been discussed within the UN, OSCE, CSTO, SCO, ASEAN Regional Forum, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). While chairing the BRICS in 2015, Russia was the first to put Internet governance issue on the agenda. Since 2007, at the instruction of the Russian President the Institute for Information Security Issues of the Moscow State University together with the Russian Security Council has hold an annual international scientific forum 'Partnership of State Authorities, Civil Society and the Business Community in Ensuring International Information Security' which brings together experts from different countries and regions of the world with different political views. The forum has become a unique international platform which allows for coordination of views of experts from

²⁹⁶ Concept of Cyber Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, <<http://www.council.gov.ru/media/files/41d4b3dfbdb25cea8a73.pdf>>.

different countries on topical issues of establishing the IIS system and lays groundwork for negotiations at the UN level.

The result of this collaboration was a number of international legal instruments and documents that created a basis for the Russian system to contribute to IIS. The most significant among those instruments are:

- Reports of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on ‘Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security’ (act as UN guidelines);

- Agreement among the governments of the SCO member states on cooperation in the field of ensuring international information security (signed in 2009, entered into force in 2011);

- Joint Action Plan on the formation of information-security systems of the member states of the CSTO (2008), Provision on the cooperation of CSTO member states in the field of information security (2010), and Plan of priority measures to develop coordinated information policy in the interests of the CSTO member states (2011);

- Agreement between CIS member states on cooperation in the field of information security (signed in 2013, entered into force for Russia in 2015);

- agreements between the government of the Russian Federation and the governments of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Cuba, and People’s Republic of China on cooperation in the field of international information security (2010, 2013, 2014, and 2015, respectively).

The analysis of documents, official statements and expert opinions leads to the conclusion that Russia is in favor of the demilitarization of the international information space, need for revision and adaptation of international legal instruments to ICT, and development of new standards. It repeatedly stresses that the arms race in the information space is able to destabilize existing agreements on disarmament and international security and other issues.

Issues of international cooperation on information security

An encouraging step in international cooperation on information security was a joint decision of the Russian and US

presidents to establish a bilateral working group on threats to and in the use of ICTs in the context of international security, which was adopted at the G8 summit in June 2013. The group was meant to meet on a regular basis to ‘assess emerging threats, elaborate, propose and coordinate joint measures to address such threats as well as strengthen confidence’²⁹⁷. The first meeting was held in November 2013 and was very productive.

However since the relations between Russia and the United States got complicated, this process slowed down and during the 2014-2015 the group did not hold any meetings. However, the US-Russian talks on cyber security in Geneva on 21-22 April 2016 was the evidence that the countries with different political views realized their cyber vulnerability and the need to intensify the negotiating process on IIS. The Russian delegation was headed by Sergei Buravlev, Deputy Secretary of the Security Council, while the US delegation – by Michael Daniel, Special Assistant to the US President and White House Coordinator on cybersecurity. From the Russian side the event was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defence Ministry, Interior Ministry, Federal Security Service, and Federal Guards Service, from the US side – the State Department, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Intelligence Council. They discussed all aspects of information security, interaction at international forums, joint fight against terrorism, and most importantly – mutual intention to prevent conflicts. They also discussed the Russian idea to develop an agreement on preventing incidents in the information sphere. This can be viewed as a remarkable new step forward.

However, due to the special aspects of ICT sector, there are significant difficulties in exercising control over the implementation of any agreement. If to verify compliance with other types of arms control regimes one can conduct inspections and track missile launches, changes in radioactivity, consequences of development and use of toxicological and chemical compounds, deployment of infrastructural elements, etc., in the information space verification methods are limited. Another problem stems from the fact that

²⁹⁷ The first day of G8: meeting between Putin and Obama, *Interfax*, 18 June 2013, <<http://www.interfax.ru/world/txt.asp?id=313009>>.

nowadays it is practically impossible to prove a violation of an arms control regime. This again supports the argument for moving forward the negotiation process on developing and adopting international instruments on the code of conduct and self-restraint in the use of ICT including in the military sphere, as well as on responsibility for non-compliance.

10. RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND CIS/CSTO COUNTRIES: KEY ASPECTS IN 2015

Vadim VLADIMIROV

Events of 2015 became the next, after the Ukrainian crisis, serious challenge to the unity of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). 2014-2015 witnessed the increased role of negative factors associated with the threats to the national security of Russia and the Commonwealth countries – particularly with the activization of international terrorism and radical Islamic groups in the Middle East and some other regions. While two years ago the CIS countries in their cooperation focused on the so-called 2014 factor, i.e. the situation that may arise in the Central Asian region after the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from Afghanistan, now the Afghan factor needs to be considered within a broader context of threats and challenges that Russia and the CIS countries have to respond to.

The Islamic State's expansion in the Middle East, seizure of large areas in Syria and Iraq in 2014, introduction of sharia law on the controlled territories, intensified recruitment of new followers and establishment of new bases and groups, including in a number of Transcaucasian and Central Asian countries – it all led to the CIS countries revising their goals and interests within the Commonwealth, as well as prompted a search for new solutions to counter the threats of terrorism and extremism.

For the CIS countries the consequences of the Ukrainian crisis²⁹⁸ coincided with the new situation associated with the growth of terrorist threat and the military operation of the Russian Aerospace Forces in Syria. Undoubtedly, the impact of negative trends caused by Russian involvement in the conflict in Ukraine – primarily the significant deterioration of Russia's relations with Western countries and mutual sanctions – remained significant.

Terrorist threats and countermeasures

Such factors as increasing tension and conflict in the Middle East and Afghanistan, along with the strengthening of the Islamic State (IS) – the terrorist group banned in Russia and several CIS countries²⁹⁹ – are of particular danger for the Central Asian and Caucasian countries – Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. In 2014-2015 IS recruiters actively infiltrated border areas of the Central Asian republics against the background of worsening situation in Afghanistan including the rise of extremism and drug trafficking. The prospects of broad and fruitful international cooperation in the region aimed at countering the above challenges is becoming less and less realistic. Increasingly, experts offer scenarios that predict long-term destabilization of military-political and economic situation in Central Asia, including collapse of certain countries in the region as a result of IS expansion and terrorist and drug threat from Afghanistan³⁰⁰.

²⁹⁸ The CIS member countries reacted differently to the Ukrainian crisis and Crimea's accession to Russia partially due to the concerns about a possible repetition of the 'Kiev scenario'. In the wake of the Ukrainian crisis many Russian CIS partners began adjusting their strategies on strengthen security with a number of them trying to benefit from the crisis by gaining some economic and military-political preferences. See: Vladimirov, V., Russia's military-political cooperation with the CIS: the role of the Ukraine crisis. In *Russia: Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security. IMEMO Supplement to the Russian Edition of the SIPRI Yearbook 2014* (Moscow: IMEMO RAN, 2015), pp. 157-177.

²⁹⁹ It is also known as ISIS, ISIL or Daesh.

³⁰⁰ Torin, A., Afghanistan and Central Asia in the context of the CSTO activity: scenarios and perspectives after 2015, *International Affairs*, 11 June 2015, <<https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/13297>>.

Not only Central Asia but also South Caucasus region face direct terrorist threat. The IS' claims to establish a caliphate on the entire territory of the Caucasus aggravate conflicts between states in the region and threaten their territorial integrity.

According to the London-based Institute for Economics and Peace which publishes Global Terrorism Index, in 2015 the threat of terrorism increased dramatically in Azerbaijan especially with regard to the return of some Azerbaijanis fighting in Syria³⁰¹. The most vulnerable to terrorism among the Transcaucasian republics of the former USSR is Georgia. Experts talk about the presence in the country of 'wilayah' – an Islamic caliphate with a center in Tbilisi. Georgia is especially important for terrorists because it is a transit corridor between Syria, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan³⁰². Also, a number of experts believe that some of the terrorists, driven out of Syria (those fighting for IS, Jabhat al-Nusra, and Al-Qaeda), could flee to Georgia. In particular, there is information regarding the militants based in the Pankisi Gorge which planned armed provocations in South Ossetian³⁰³.

Armenia is also concerned with the threat of terrorism given the short distance (400-500 km) from the Turkish-Syrian border to the Armenian-Turkish border protected by Russian border guards³⁰⁴. In addition, Armenia already hosts more than

³⁰¹ Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Terrorism Index 2015, <<http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015-Global-Terrorism-Index-Report.pdf>>.

³⁰² The so called 'Georgian corridor' contributes to the emergence of a terrorist threat aimed at Russia as well as to its penetration into Europe.

³⁰³ Their main targets are Russian and South Ossetian border guards, civilians, observers from the European Union and the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs. See: South Ossetia, *Nykhil News*, 15 Jan. 2016.

³⁰⁴ Both the Armenian border guard forces and Russian troops secure the Armenian state border. The border with Turkey and Iran is guarded by Russian border guards in cooperation with the Armenian armed forces. The border with Georgia and Azerbaijan is protected by the Armenian border guards. Protection of the Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Iranian borders is carried out by the Russian forces under the 1992 'Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia on the status of the Border Troops of the Russian Federation on the territory of the Republic of Armenia, and the conditions of their functioning'. See: Gorupay, O., Two countries – one border, *Krasnaya zvezda*, 4 Mar. 2005.

15 thousand Armenian refugees from Syria which get no support from the relevant international organizations³⁰⁵.

By the early 2015, the CIS countries had to boost their political and military cooperation in order to take concrete decisions at the level of heads of state to counter the threats of terrorism and extremism. In this regard, the CIS summit held in Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan) on 16 October 2015³⁰⁶ played an important role. In addition to the traditional agenda of issues of trade and economic cooperation, for the first time in a long time participants raised the necessity to develop a common approach by the CIS member states to combating the threat of international terrorism. The importance of the goal and the level of disagreements among the participating countries on the issues were revealed by the fact that the whole summit was held behind the closed doors. Usually only meetings of presidents of the CIS states are closed to the press during the summits³⁰⁷.

There are only scanty media reports on how the summit was held and what its full agenda was. In this respect, the remark of Belarus president Alexander Lukashenko about the discussions in the narrow circle of presidents being ‘heated’ is rather illustrative. It suggests that the positions of the CIS countries and their approaches to solving various problems of multilateral cooperation are still quite divergent. On the one hand, the divergence can be attributed to ‘the Syrian question’, i.e. to the nuances of CIA leaders’ assessments of the Russian operation in Syria, and on the other – to their positions on the ‘export of extremism’ from Afghanistan and on border issues.

Russian President Vladimir Putin devoted a significant part of his speech at the summit to fighting terrorism, Russian operation in Syria conducted by the Aerospace Forces, and strengthening the ‘the coordination of joint efforts of CIS member countries in the

³⁰⁵ Islamic State and ‘the Armenian question’, Center for support of the Russian-Armenian strategic and public initiatives, 23 Oct. 2015, <<http://russia-armenia.info/node/21750>>.

³⁰⁶ The CIS summit in Kazakhstan: what did presidents talk about?, *Mir 24*, 16 Oct. 2015, <<http://mir24.tv/news/politics/13391572>>.

³⁰⁷ The text of Putin’s speech became available to journalists it was published on the Kremlin website. See: Council of CIS Heads of State meeting, 16 Oct. 2015, <<http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50515>>.

sphere of foreign policy'. Putin stressed that the Russian operation involving ships from the Caspian Flotilla was carried out in accordance with international law and was absolutely legitimate, as it was launched upon an official request of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Judging by the press reports, the CIS countries supported Russia's military action in Syria after the summit were Kyrgyzstan and Belarus³⁰⁸. Belarus declared its position (on the compliance of the Russian operation with international norms) not through the president but through its Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei³⁰⁹. Other CIS member countries, in fact, preferred to remain silent or took an evasive position. The leaders of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Armenia abstained from public endorsement of Russia's actions in Syria. The position of Kazakhstan, an important strategic partner of Russia, also remained uncertain.

The positions of these countries can be explained by their interest in maintaining as neutral line as possible for the fear of spoiling relations with Western countries critical of the Russian campaign in Syria³¹⁰. Some countries are also affected by security related concerns. For example, experts point out, that Ashgabat can be cautious on the Syrian issue due to potential aggravation of the situation on the Afghan-Turkmen border. Similarly, Armenia may have decided not to go public in its assessments because of concerns about possible provocations on the part of Turkey.

³⁰⁸ In his interview to RTR TV channel, Kyrgyz President Atambayev commenting on the words of the interviewer that the Russian Aerospace Forces fighting in Syria were also protecting Kyrgyzstan, said that 'at that moment it was correct'. He further stated that 'those guys who were fighting for IS were tested in Syria, and later they would be sent to built Khorasan caliphate in Central Asia, including in Kyrgyzstan'. See: Dubnov, A., Why CIS countries are in no hurry to approve the actions of Russia in Syria?, 24 Oct. 2015, <<http://www.szona.org/pochemu-strany-sng-ne-toropyatsya-odobrit-dejstviya-rf-v-sirii->>.

³⁰⁹ Vladimir Makei said that during a joint interview with the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, *Federal'noye agentstvo novostey*, 27 Oct. 2015, <<http://riafan.ru/455618-belorussiya-podderzhivaet-deystviya-rossii-v-sirii->>.

³¹⁰ It may be noted in this regard that many CIS countries (Kazakhstan being a good example) in their foreign policy follow the multi-vector principle, i.e. they maintain friendly relations both with the countries-members of the CIS and SCO and with the Western states.

Despite the lack of consensus estimates of the operations in Syria, most of the CIS member countries, including Russia, expressed concern with increasing threats of terrorism and extremism and called for tougher measures to combat these negative phenomena.

In general, on the counter terrorism agenda the 2015 CIS summit adopted three key agreements and several other documents, including the Statement on the joint fight against international terrorism, a new Concept of military cooperation of the CIS member states for the period of 2015-2020, a border control programme³¹¹, as well as a number of documents on cooperation of law enforcement and investigative agencies on the counter-terrorism efforts³¹².

CSTO activities

As the threat of terrorism is growing, it is increasingly obvious that the CSTO should become the primary mechanism for support and cooperation of the CIS countries in border protection, fight against drug trafficking and religious extremism.

In 2015, the CSTO continued actively working on strengthening its military capabilities. The main efforts were focused on establishing CSTO collective forces, carrying out the traditional Interaction-2015 military exercises and Indestructible Brotherhood-2015 peacekeeping forces training in Armenia. A completely new feature was a sudden combat readiness check of the CSTO Collective Rapid Response Force (CSTO CRRF) in May 2015 when units from all member states were redeployed to the Republic of Tajikistan to perform combat training missions near the Tajik-Afghan border. In addition, the organization strengthened military-economic and military-technical cooperation among its members including adopting the Programme of military and

³¹¹ The expansion of cooperation on strengthening border security will be further discussed in more details.

³¹² See: *Newstube*, 16 Oct. 2016, <<http://www.newstube.ru/media/v-kazahstane-prohodit-sammit-stran-sng>>.

economic cooperation up to 2017 and beyond³¹³. At a meeting of the CSTO Security Council in Moscow on 21 December 2015 the presidents adopted a joint declaration on combating international terrorism which called for the creation of a broad international coalition against IS and other terrorist groups³¹⁴.

Substantive efforts on preventing the threat of terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking, and illegal migration were undertaken through the Committee of Secretaries of the Security Councils. In particular, the Committee considered measures to combat the recruitment of citizens of the CSTO member states for participation in the armed conflict on the side of international terrorist organizations, as well as their eventual return in order to prevent terrorist activities³¹⁵. To improve the coordination of the Russian ministries and departments the Russian President signed a decree in August 2015 that established an interdepartmental working group to support Russia's participation in the CSTO.

Overall, however, the CSTO still cannot be considered a full-fledged military-political alliance where member states have and advance common political (and military-political) interests. According to experts, the CSTO is to a large extent is 'a club' of countries who have bilateral military-political relations with Russia rather than with each other. For instance, there are several independent 'axes' within the CSTO: Moscow–Minsk, Moscow–Yerevan, and Moscow–Central Asia. And each of these 'axes' operates rather independently from the others and focuses on its own problems³¹⁶. It is no coincidence that the CSTO throughout its

³¹³ On CSTO activities in 2015. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29 Dec. 2015, <http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2003708>.

³¹⁴ Statement by the heads of states-members of the Organization of the Collective Security Treaty on combating international terrorism, 21 Dec. 2015, <http://www.odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=5857>.

³¹⁵ On CSTO activities in 2015.

³¹⁶ For example, what common security interests do Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan share with Armenia? Interests of the Turkic-speaking countries likely coincide with the interests of Turkey and Azerbaijan which they consider the fraternal countries, while Armenia has no intention to interfere in the affairs of Central Asia. Similarly, Belarus has virtually no desire to 'go deep' into into security issues in Central Asia or the Caucasus.

existence has not intervened in any conflict within the CIS or beyond.

There are several examples of how differences of opinion on a number of key military and political issues in the post-Soviet space manifest themselves among the CSTO countries. One such example was the 2015 developments in Nagorny Karabakh. Due to the change in political situation, Azerbaijan intensified its activity on the Karabakh issue and began regular shelling of the adjacent territories, including from the weapons of Turkish origin. At the meeting of the OSCE Council on 21 December 2015, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan accused the CSTO member states of ‘un-ally policy’ and passive response to the actions of Azerbaijan stressing that the CSTO countries ignored them. According to the Sargsyan, Armenia’s CSTO allies violate the charter of the Organization which requires them to provide military assistance to an ally country, and thus effectively support Baku³¹⁷.

However, the loyalty of the CSTO allies towards Russia were also weakening. A clear indication of this was the fact that none of the CSTO member states supported the Russian statement on Turkey downing the Su-24 bomber or gave a straightforward assessment of the incident. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan who have close trade and economic ties with Turkey preferred to remain silent as long as possible not to upset relations with Ankara. Azerbaijan also formed a special position in this regard clearly not in support of Russia³¹⁸. Tajikistan and Belarus reacted with vague formal statements at the level of foreign ministries that stated that more

³¹⁷ From the speech delivered by S. Sargsyan at the CSTO Collective Security Council session. See: The reasons of Armenia’s disagreements with its CSTO partners, 22 Dec. 2015, <<https://www.foreignpolicy.ru/analyses/prichiny-raznoglasiy-armenii-s-partnerami-po-odkb/>>.

³¹⁸ An expert opinion on the matter: ‘Now Baku favorably receives the Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, listens to his arguments in support of Nagorno-Karabakh returning to Azerbaijan. Moreover, the Azerbaijani leadership have offered to mediate the conflict [between Russia and Turkey]. It is not ready to take a pro-Russian stance, although this does not mean that Ilham Aliyev’s regime is ready to side with Erdogan’. See: Preobrazhenskiy, I., Comment: the conflict between Turkey and Russia threatens to split the Eurasian world, *Deutsche Welle*, 30 Nov. 2015.

work was needed to find out all the details of the incident and to de-escalate the aggravated Russian-Turkish relations³¹⁹.

Moscow failed to achieve a consensus in the condemnation of shooting down the Russian aircraft at an emergency meeting of the CSTO Permanent Council on 25 November 2015³²⁰. Only on 21 December the CSTO summit finally adopted a formal statement that the allied countries stood in solidarity and support for Moscow on the incident with the Russian aircraft. While the document avoided strong condemnation of Turkey's actions, it stressed that 'the move was not conducive to the consolidation of international efforts aimed at combating international terrorism'.

Thus, the events of 2015 showed that Russia, as during the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, again failed to convince the CSTO member countries to support its actions on the international arena, and most importantly – to participate in its military operation in Syria. At the same time, increasing threat of terrorism and extremism showed that while Russia due to its military and economic power could protect itself, for other CSTO member countries providing their national security without Russia was extremely difficult. This understanding could become a new foundation for further measures to strengthen collective security in the CSTO zone of responsibility.

Bilateral Russia–CIS relations

Given the difficulties with developing joint policy approaches in the fight against international terrorism, Moscow once again tried to strengthen its influence within the CIS by

³¹⁹ Tajik Foreign Ministry made a statement on the downing of the Russian aircraft, 26 Nov. 2015, <<http://catoday.org/centrasia/23297-mid-tadzhikistana-sdelal-zayavlenie-o-sbitom-rossiyskom-samolete.html>>; Belarusian Foreign Ministry expressed concern over the incident with the Su-24, 25 Nov. 2015, <<http://www.belvpo.com/ru/61161.html>>.

³²⁰ In response to the statement by General Yuri Khachaturov, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Armenia and acting chairman of the CSTO Military Committee condemning Turkey's actions, representatives from Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan said that they knew nothing about such a statement and had already expressed their opinion on the incident.

stepping up bilateral political-military relations. This approach was generally welcomed by the majority of the CIS countries. For example, in a recent interview the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov stressed that ‘the joint struggle against terrorism within the framework of the CIS and CSTO would not be very effective, and it was better to act on the basis of bilateral negotiations’³²¹.

In 2015, Russia ratified agreements on the extension of lease on military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan until 2042 and 2032 respectively. Moscow also declared an intention to increase its military presence in Tajikistan from 5,900 to 9,000 personnel by 2020. The command of the Central Military District which is in charge of Russian military bases, said that it would send a helicopter group to the Avni air base to enhance the 201st Russian military base in Tajikistan³²².

Russia announced that it would modernize the aircraft fleet at a military air base in Kyrgyzstan by 2016. 10 new modernized Su-25 fighter jets have already been deployed there to replace the old aircraft. Moscow also plan to update other military equipment: trucks, armored vehicles, drones. In addition, Russia promised to provide Kyrgyzstan with aid worth of \$1 billion³²³.

One of the key issues of Russia’s relations with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in 2015 was also the question of protection of borders from the threat of international terrorism which were widely discussed both at the CIS summit in Kazakhstan, as well as at meetings of various levels within the CSTO. The key issue was strengthening the Tajik-Afghan border of more than 1,300 km long. At the request of the official Dushanbe the CSTO began developing a set of concrete measures to strengthen the Tajik-Afghan border³²⁴. These measures were considered at the meeting of the CSTO

³²¹ Ivanov, A., Special operation of independent states, *Svobodnaya pressa*, 28 Oct. 2015, <<http://svpressa.ru/war21/article/134857/>>.

³²² Moscow has tried to gain access to the airport since 2004. Tajikistan has been promised another round of financial assistance which size is not known yet. See: Abdurasulov, A., Russia strengthens its military presence in Central Asia, *BBC Russian Service*, 16 Oct. 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2015/10/151016_cis_summit_kazakhstan>.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ From 2005 and up to that moment Tajikistan maintained its border security entirely on its own.

Collective Security Council on 21 December 2015 in Moscow. Russia admitted the possibility of using its armed forces in coalition with Tajik forces if the situation demanded it. This purpose was among the reasons Russia optimized structure and deployment pattern of the 201st Russian military base in Tajikistan and increased its combat readiness³²⁵.

In the meantime Tajikistan is trying to reconcile its ambition to preserve an independent role in protecting its borders with requests for more military-technical and financial assistance from Russia. Kyrgyzstan occupies a similar position. Turkmenistan, on the contrary, refuses such assistance stating that the situation at its border with Afghanistan is under full control³²⁶.

It should be noted that Russia does not hide its disappointment by the fact that Uzbekistan, for instance, keeps its distance when it comes to military cooperation with Moscow. Moreover, for military aid Uzbekistan prefers to approach the United States rather than Russia. Recently, as part of a special programme, the Pentagon has handed over 300 armored vehicles worth \$180 million to Uzbekistan³²⁷. Turkmenistan, and to a certain extent Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, are also actively pursuing military and military-technical cooperation with Western countries. Kazakhstan which is a key Russian partner in the CIS and the CSTO continues its military and political cooperation with NATO (specifically, Kazakhstan is a member of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and Partnership for Peace program).

In 2015, Kazakhstan held two military exercises together with the US. Such moves are a part of Astana's course on multi-

³²⁵ Interview of the director of the CIS third department of the Russian Foreign Ministry A. Sternik to the Interfax agency, 4 Jan. 2016, <http://www.mid.ru/nota-bene/-/asset_publisher/dx7DsH1WAM6w/content/id/2009630>.

³²⁶ A mere fact of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, concerned with the actions of extremists in Afghanistan, mentioning incidents on the border between Turkmenistan and Afghanistan caused a diplomatic scandal. Ashgabat expressed a 'strong protest' to Astana in this regard and called the sister republic 'to use more objective information'. It is likely that under the present circumstances in the matters of border control Ashgabat counts more on the US than its CSTO allies, but at the same time it tries not to complicate relations with neighboring countries.

³²⁷ US completed delivery of more than 300 armored vehicles to Uzbekistan, *RIA Novosti*, 27 Aug. 2015, <<http://ria.ru/world/20150827/1211242951.html>>.

vector foreign and military policy in order to secure the country against external influences that can undermine internal stability. Astana, apparently, is of the opinion that despite all the benefits of participation in the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the latter 'is not primarily designed to protect Kazakhstan from external invasion'³²⁸. Therefore, for Kazakhstan to have alternatives (including improving military cooperation with the United States) makes real sense.

Other CIS countries, especially at Russia's western border, are also quite careful in matters of military alignment with Russia. Due to separation of Crimea and the ongoing conflict in the south-east of the country Ukraine has assumed the role of Russia's geopolitical rival. For example, Kiev officially declared Russia an accomplice of terrorism in the Donbass. The leaders of both Ukraine and Moldova did not attend the October summit of the CIS countries. Experts believe that the low level of representation at the summit shows the countries' attitude towards cooperation within the CIS, especially on military issues. Even such a country as Belarus after its presidential elections began to carry out a policy of certain distancing from Russia. On the eve of the December CSTO summit Alexander Lukashenko announced that he refused to host a Russian airbase in Belarus³²⁹.

In Central Asian countries, the concept of security is primarily concerned with ensuring internal stability and strengthening of the existing regimes. They are aware of the growing threat from Afghanistan and neighboring countries, but still do not consider the situation critical³³⁰. In the event of a slight increase in tensions and small conflicts, the Russian troops stationed in the region have the capacity to deal with existing threats.

³²⁸ Pamfilova, B., Kazakhstan cooperates with the US and NATO, *Vestnik Kavkaza*, 2 Feb. 2016, <<http://www.vestikavkaza.ru/analytics/Kazakhstan-rasshryaet-sotrudnichestvo-s-SSHA-i-NATO.html>>.

³²⁹ Lukashenko refused to host a military base in Belarus, *RBC*, 6 Oct. 2015, <<http://www.rbc.ru/politics/06/10/2015/5613ebe59a794769839c9e3f>>.

³³⁰ So far, a number of Central Asian politicians and media have stated that the threat is exaggerated. Back in the day the Taliban did not show intention to attack its northern neighbors either, although in the 1990s it controlled most of the borders with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Some in these countries still believe that they can negotiate with the movement.

Russia's allies believe that the major threat is terrorists originated from Russia and the CIS countries and fighting for the Islamic State. According to President Putin, the number of such fighters amounts to 5,000 to 7,000 people³³¹. Returning home these militants can pose a serious risk in terms of undermining stability of the existing regimes in the Central Asian countries. To prevent such a risk countries of the region – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – have declared IS illegal on their territories.

* * *

Summing up 2015, it should be noted that despite Russian efforts to ensure the unity of the Commonwealth, a number of CIS states were reluctant to adopt Moscow's view on political and military security. The CIS countries were largely preoccupied with their internal problems and at the same time tried to stay away from serious international conflicts. Although Russia provided them with military, technical, and economic assistance, they were not ready to completely rely on Moscow in a number of military, political, and foreign policy issues. Moreover, the CIS and CSTO countries continued to perceive some Russian actions, especially on Ukraine, as posing a potential threat to their own territorial integrity and an obstacle to developing mutually beneficial political and economic cooperation with NATO countries, including the US.

Nevertheless, 2015 witnessed some positive effects of Russian initiatives in the sphere of strengthening military and border cooperation and counter-terrorism measures within the CIS and CSTO. If these initiatives successful transition from the formal decisions to real actions, they can become a basis for strengthening political and military cooperation between the CIS/CSTO countries, as well as bringing together their foreign policy and military-political interests.

³³¹ See: *Kremlin.ru*, 16 Oct. 2015, <<http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50515>>. According to the Russian Defence Ministry, in December 2015 the Islamic State had 25,000-30,000 foreign fighters. The CIA also estimated the number of IS militants at about 30,000, while the Iraqi government reported about 200,000 fighters.

11. THE ISLAMIC STATE AND OTHER RADICAL ISLAMIST ORGANIZATIONS: MAIN TRENDS

Stanislav IVANOV

In 2015-2016, efforts of the Russian Aerospace Defence Force and air component of the international coalition headed by the United States have considerably weakened the military and economic potential of the leading radical Islamist group – the Islamic State (IS) and contributed to the liberation of a number of settlements in Syria and Iraq. However it is premature to talk about turning of the tide in the fight against the Islamists. Founded in 2014 by IS militants a pseudo-state of Islamic caliphate continues to control large areas of Syria and Iraq and the major cities of Mosul and Raqqa. Dozens of other radical Islamic groups in Middle East, Africa, and Asia pledge allegiance to the Islamic State. IS leaders took responsibility for large-scale terrorist attacks in 2015 and early 2016 in France, Turkey, and Belgium and threaten global jihad (a war against infidels) worldwide.

Many politicians and experts come to the conclusion that air bomb and missile strikes alone cannot inflict a decisive defeat on the Islamic caliphate. It is believed that only a ground operation or a series of such operations can defeat the IS military forces and liberate the occupied territories. Unfortunately, the military potential of the Iraqi and Syrian armies as a result of the years of civil wars has weakened significantly and so far they are not able to carry out large-scale military operations. Moreover, in addition to IS and Jabhat al-Nusra there are dozens of other radical Islamist groups operated on the territories of these countries, while a large part of Syria is controlled by armed opposition groups and Kurdish militias. It seems that only close coordination among all national

patriotic forces of Iraq and Syria could bring a decisive advantage in the fight against militants of the Islamic caliphate.

The Iraqi authorities began the process of rebuilding its regular army defeated in the summer of 2014 on the basis Arab Shia militia forces. However, without interaction with Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and the Arab Sunni tribes the offenses in the northern and western parts of the country are likely to be difficult and ineffective. The areas of Syria and Iraq controlled by the caliphate are home to several million Sunni Arabs some of which are active supporters of IS. Experts also agree that without the direct participation of US, NATO, Russian, and Iranian troops in ground operations the war on radical Islamist groups in Syria and Iraq may continue for a few more years.

Experts also note a number of issues, characteristic and specific features of combating jihadi groups.

There is no frontline as such or a line of contact in its classic sense between the opposing forces. Islamists are spread out over a large territory in populated areas, constantly on the move, hide behind the civilian population used as a 'human shield', control strategic highways and oil infrastructure. Their headquarters, command posts, communication centers, weapons and ammunition depots are located in underground shelters, hospitals, schools, and other civilian facilities, as well as in mosques; black flags of the Islamists are put up on all buildings, hundreds of false targets are created. The personnel and military equipment are well hidden and disguised, radio silence is observed during air raids. As a rule, IS performs attacks against Syrian and Iraqi troops and other competing military groups after a thorough investigation and preparation, using small mobile units, often at night, the militants widely use the element of surprise and psychological pressure on the enemy and locals.

IS manages to quite quickly replenish losses in manpower, military equipment, ammunition, logistical support and maintain the combat capability of its forces. IS draws reinforcements from a permanent influx of recruits worldwide – new jihadi volunteers, mercenaries, deserters from the armed Syrian opposition and smaller Islamist groups, as well as local Arab-Sunni population. IS' material and financial support comes from external sources (intelligence services and non-governmental Islamic organization, various Islamic funds in the Persian Gulf, Turkey and other

countries), as well as through its own military and economic activities (war trophies, taxes, customs, transport, border charges, robbery, extortion, human trafficking, selling of museum artifacts, oil and oil products, smuggling of drugs, weapons, ammunition, etc.). The annual budget of this pseudo state is estimated to amount up to several billion dollars.

IS skillfully uses the negative attitude towards the national governments on the part of a large part of the Arab-Sunni population of Syria and Iraq. To some extent the Islamists managed to convince Sunni Arabs that the Islamic caliphate could protect them from the ruling Arab-Shiite elite in Baghdad mired in corruption and sectarianism and from anti-people Arab-Alawite (Baathist) regime of Bashar al-Assad in Damascus. Part of the civilian population on the occupied Syrian and Iraqi territories is intimidated and forced to submit to the Islamists, while another part consciously support IS and is actively involved in the operations of the Islamic caliphate. More than ten Iraqi Sunni military political groups of former military, police, security services and functionaries of the Baas party joined the IS militants and thus greatly increased the combat capability of the jihadi troops.

IS leaders using dogmas of Salafi-Wahhabi Islam and advanced information technologies (Internet, video and audio records, special effects, psychological tricks, and so on) were able to make the ideology of radical Islam attractive to many locals and foreigners. Propaganda and spread of radical Islamist views and dogmas are facilitated by the vacuum of ideas and moral values in the West and elsewhere, as well as by dissatisfaction of significant segments of the population with their social conditions and policies of the authorities. IS' most favorable recruiting base is former immigrants from the East who are unable to adapt to life in a country with European values, have difficulties with finding a job or getting education, and so on. It should be noted that it is not only Muslims who take the bait of IS recruiters but also nationals of European and other countries professing Christianity and other religions as well as atheists.

Lingering controversies among leading global and regional powers in the Middle East significantly hinder the fight against IS. For instance, Western countries consider the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad anti-popular and illegitimate and accuse it of human rights violations. During a bitter five-year civil war in this

country, the United States and its Western and regional allies (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan) made significant efforts to strengthen the armed opposition of the Arab-Sunni majority. Radical movement 'Muslim Brotherhood' became one of the main forces opposing the regime of Bashar al-Assad. For a long time countering IS and other extremist groups was not a priority for Washington and its allies. Furthermore, they counted on the jihadi forces to be instrumental to the forces of moderate Syrian opposition in overthrowing al-Assad and withdraw into the shadows afterwards. Russia and Iran continued to work closely with the legitimate government of Syria led by Bashar al-Assad. Russian Aerospace Defence Force, Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah groups, Iranian Revolutionary Guard troops and Kurdish militias – all lent effective help to the national government. However, foreign countries failed to create joint coalition against IS and the latter, as well as Jabhat al-Nusra, did not fail to take advantage of that fact. They skillfully maneuver their forces in Syria and Iraq and retain combat capability and readiness to defend the areas under their control.

While the international community fights against Islamist armed groups of individual countries and coalitions, jihadi forces also make progress. They actively recruit new supporters all over the world and seek to get new modern weapons including the samples of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). IS fighters adapt to the ongoing war waged against them by international coalitions and Syrian and Iraqi troops by moving from one country to another³³², actively using women and children as suicide bombers. There is evidence of attempts of IS agents penetrating high risk facilities in the EU, such as a nuclear power plant in Belgium.

IS militants captured man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) in Syria, Libya and Iraq and may use them to shoot down passenger aircraft during takeoff and landing. This fact was stated by representatives of the German Federal Intelligence Service during the hearings at the federal parliament. These MANPADS

³³² In particular, there were reports on the movement of IS militants from Syria to Yemen via Turkey.

include both outdated (from the 1970s) and advanced models³³³. IS may have also acquired some MANPADS from its Libyan, Qatari, and Saudi supporters, as well as from the so-called moderate Syrian opposition which expected supplies of such weapons from the United States across the Turkish border³³⁴. Kuwaiti Interior Ministry reported on having suppressed the activities of an extremist group suspected of aiding the Islamic State. The group was headed by a Lebanese citizen Osama Hayat who confessed to recruiting fighters for the Islamic State and collecting money that he would then wire to accounts in Turkish banks. In addition, he admitted that he purchased weapons in Ukraine which he then shipped via Turkey to Syria (FN6 MANPADS of Chinese origin designed to destroy aircraft and helicopters at low altitudes)³³⁵.

Arab TV networks reported that the Islamic State conducted a research for new biological weapons. A computer seized from terrorists contained a 19-page report on the transformation of the bubonic plague in WMD. The group also studied a variety of methods and techniques for proliferation of chemical and biological weapons over large areas. Experts believe that the chances of IS militants acquiring biological weapons are quite high³³⁶.

The Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop believes that IS strives to create chemical weapons. 'The use of chlorine by Da'esh, and its recruitment of highly technically trained professionals, including from the West, have revealed far more serious efforts in chemical weapons development', she said speaking in Perth (Australia). According to Ms Bishop, IS has already recruited enough experts to develop chemical weapons³³⁷.

³³³ See: *TASS*, 26 Oct. 2014, <<http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1532996>>.

³³⁴ See: *Svobodnaya pressa*, 28 Oct. 2015, <<http://svpressa.ru/war21/article/134843/>>.

³³⁵ Jihadists from Kuwait purchased MANPADS in Ukraine, *Deutsche Welle*, 20 Nov. 2015, <<http://www.dw.com/ru/a-18863409>>.

³³⁶ Islamic State seeks to use bubonic plague as a weapon of war, *The Telegraph*, 29 Aug. 2014, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/11064133/Islamic-State-seeks-to-use-bubonic-plague-as-a-weapon-of-war.html>>.

³³⁷ See: *Interfax*, 6 June 2015, <<http://www.interfax.ru/world/446085>>.

The CIA Director John Brennan said that IS militants had used chemical weapons (mustard gas and chlorine) in Iraq and Syria. At the same time, he stressed that it was the first extremist group to start the production and use of chemical agents since the 1995 terrorist attack in the Tokyo subway by members of Japanese Aum Shinrikyo cult³³⁸.

Experts of British organizations Conflict Armament Research and Sahan Research detected the presence of chlorine and chemical phosphine on the sites of shells explosions in Syria and Iraq. Earlier, the Russian Foreign Ministry repeatedly warned on serious possibility of IS using chemical weapons. In particular, such cases were reported on 15 February 2015 in the town of Darayya (Damascus province) and on 21 August 2015 in the town of Marea (Aleppo province)³³⁹.

Iraqi authorities officially notified the United Nations about IS militants having seized a military depot in Muthanna province which contained about 2.5 thousand missiles and missile engines intended for destruction, as well as some outdated components for manufacturing chemical warfare agents. A number of containers at the site stored sodium cyanide that could be used to produce tabun nerve agent. This facility was extensively used during the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988. In the 1980s (during the Iran-Iraq war) and later it produced chemical warfare agents such as tabun, sarin, mustard gas, nerve gas (VX) and others.

IS fighters were also able to seize 40 kg of radioactive materials that had been stored at the University of Mosul as laboratory reagents. According to media reports, IS displayed an interest in the process of manufacturing a so-called 'dirty' bomb from the above materials³⁴⁰. Moreover, there was evidence that IS leadership tried to gain access to nuclear weapons. The exposure in the early 2000s of the Pakistani nuclear scientist A.Q. Khan and his international network of smugglers in nuclear technology, materials and equipment in Germany, Malaysia, South Africa, Switzerland,

³³⁸ See: TASS, 12 Feb. 2016, <<http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/2660913>>.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ivanov, S., Radical Islam threatens international security, *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, 14 Nov. 2014, <http://nvo.ng.ru/wars/2014-11-14/1_islam.html>.

Turkey, UK, UAE and other countries shows that the likelihood of Islamists obtaining a nuclear device or its components also exists. Delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction (such as R-17 ballistic missiles, captured MiG-19, MiG-21, and unmanned aerial vehicles) are already available for IS. Using captured civilian aircraft, net of agents, suicide bombers in attacks on nuclear power plants and other high risk and infrastructure facilities remains one of the key areas of IS activities.

Islamic State leadership continues to pay considerable attention to recruiting new members and supporters. The UN estimates that the number of fighters in IS and other terrorist groups in the Middle East is already exceeding 35 thousand volunteers and mercenaries from 100 countries. Of these, about 5 thousands came from the Western countries, primarily from France, Belgium, Germany, Austria and the UK, and around 3 thousands – from Russia.

According to the US National Counterterrorism Center, IS recruited hundreds of young people from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan and over 1,000 from Kazakhstan³⁴¹. While some jihadists from Central Asia pledged allegiance to Jabhat al-Nusra, others entered the ranks of its rival – the Islamic State. Syrian authorities estimate the number of CIS fighters in the IS forces alone at 10 thousand people³⁴². At that volunteers from the Central Asian countries join IS and related groups in units. Thus, the largest Uzbek group in Syria is Imam Bukhari Jamaat with forces concentrated in Aleppo. Another group which also consists mostly of ethnic Uzbeks is called al-Tawhid wal Jihad and acts in Idlib province. Jamaat Saifullah ash-Shishani group includes mainly Dagestani and Chechens and is headed by an ethnic Uzbek, Abu Ubaida al Madani. Abdurashid Magomedov, Minister of Internal Affairs of Dagestan, said that there were 800 Dagestani fighting in Syria; according to the Chechen leadership, up to 500 Chechens also joined IS. Some militants from the North Caucasus took their families and young children to the caliphate. IS fighters also include

³⁴¹ UN: 25,000 people from 100 countries serve in IS ranks, *Golos Ameriki*, 15 June 2016, <<http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/content/isis-foreign-fighters/2822447.html>>.

³⁴² See: *Interfax*, 20 Nov. 2015, <<http://www.interfax.ru/world/480565>>.

natives of the South Caucasus, mainly Kist Chechens from Pankisi region of Georgia.

Involvement of women, adolescents and children has become a common feature of the IS activities in recent years. According to the Syrian Supervisory Board for human rights, in 2015 only IS recruited about 1.8 thousand Syrian children. 350 of them have already been killed, at least 48 'recruits' have become suicide bombers and lost their lives. The extremist group engages children through special outreach offices in the territories under its control in the central provinces of Homs, Hasakah, Raqqa and Aleppo. On the territory controlled by IS in Syria there are special stations to recruit underage volunteers and send them to training camps after which they are used to carry out terrorist attacks and participate in fighting³⁴³. Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic interviewed 300 people who fled from IS or stayed on the territories occupied by terrorists. The Commission concluded that IS 'prioritises children as a vehicle for ensuring long-term loyalty, adherence to their ideology and a cadre of devoted fighters that will see violence as a way of life'.

Modern information technologies became one of the most effective and common instruments of IS activities. BBC News reported existence of about 50 thousand Twitter accounts belonged to the Islamic State which terrorists used to spread their appeals, propaganda materials, videos, photos and calls for people around the world to join them³⁴⁴. Much effort is focused on cyber attacks. In January 2015, IS hacked profiles of US Central Command in social networks Twitter and YouTube with the information about air strikes against Islamic State targets. The main methods used by IS hackers are massive DDoS attacks or targeted attacks on sites with high traffic, which they then put their slogans and agitation. At the same time there is a risk that IS hackers may move from rather simple to more complex attacks including those against life support systems or control systems in energy and manufacture industries. The most recent trend in financing IS terrorist and extremist

³⁴³ See: *Interfax*, 15 Jan. 2016, <<http://www.interfax.ru/world/489875>>.

³⁴⁴ See: *BBC News*, 6 Mar. 2015, <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-31760126>>.

activities is the use of so-called crowdfunding, i.e. mass collecting donations through the Internet.

According to the Federal Drug Control Service of Russia, the Islamic State receives enormous revenues from transiting heroin from Afghanistan to Europe through Turkey. The former head of the Service, Viktor Ivanov, said: 'Afghan drugs bring about 150 billion dollars which come in a criminal traffic and lead to destabilization of the situation in the transit countries', and estimated IS annual income from the transit of Afghan heroin to Europe at over 1 billion dollars³⁴⁵.

The British Guardian published a 24-page IS training manual which indicates that the caliphate were transforming from an amorphous structure into a pseudo-state with an administrative apparatus, set of laws, government, army, police, and economic programme³⁴⁶. IS plans to create 'isolated security zones' in Iraq and Syria and build a caliphate with representation in Libya, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia, Egypt, the Philippines and other countries. On the occupied territories IS creates districts and 'departments', for instance, of health or natural resources: the task of the latter is to manage oil and water resources and architectural monuments. In addition to the revenues from exports of oil and oil products, IS plans to increase foreign trade in cotton, corn, and other traditional items.

On 20 November 2015, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2249 on the fight against terrorism. The resolution calls on UN member states 'to redouble and coordinate their efforts to prevent and suppress terrorist acts' committed by IS, groups and entities associated with Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups recognized as such by the UN Security Council, and 'to eradicate the safe haven they have established over significant parts of Iraq and Syria'³⁴⁷. This document which also expresses the intention to update the 1267 committee sanctions list in order to better reflect

³⁴⁵ See.: *Lenta.ru*, 16 Dec. 2015, <<http://lenta.ru/news/2015/12/16/isis/>>.

³⁴⁶ The ISIS papers: behind 'death cult' image lies a methodical bureaucracy, *The Guardian*, 7 Dec. 2015, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/07/isis-papers-guardian-syria-iraq-bureaucracy>>.

³⁴⁷ See: The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2249, S/RES/2249 (2015), 20 Nov. 2015, <<http://www.un.org/ru/documents/ods.asp?m=S/RES/2249%282015%29>>.

the threat posed by the IS³⁴⁸ is an important step in enhancing efforts of the global community to combat radical Islamists.

Large-scale terrorist attacks in France, Turkey and Belgium demonstrated that no country in the world can feel safe as long as there are radical Islamist groups such as IS. According to some media, IS have trained at least 400 volunteers in their camps in Iraq and Syria to carry out terrorist acts in Europe. And if previously the group focused on organizing isolated large-scale terrorist attacks, now it tends to rely on a series of such attacks³⁴⁹.

Today the fight against the Islamic State and other radical Islamist groups has become one of the priorities for various countries in order to maintain national and international security. They are coming to an understanding that only joint efforts of the entire global community can defeat terrorism and the expansion of terror carried out by radical Islamist groups. The effectiveness of combating terrorism to a great extent depends on the willingness of the US and its Western and regional allies to work closely with Russia, China, Iran and other countries that conduct different foreign policy in the Middle East but are ready to collectively fight against international terrorism and radical Islamists. Also, this goal can be facilitated by the UN Security Council imposing strict sanctions on the identified sponsors of terrorism including companies and individuals from Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

³⁴⁸ The United Nations Security Council consolidated list of sanctions, <<https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/ru/sanctions/un-sc-consolidated-list>>.

³⁴⁹ See: *USA Today*, 23 Mar. 2016, <<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/03/23/islamic-state-trains-400-fighters-attack-europe-wave-bloodshed/82175884/>>.

PART III. DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

12. Key documents of the Russian Federation on national security, defence and arms control (January–December 2015)

12. KEY DOCUMENTS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON NATIONAL SECURITY, DEFENCE AND ARMS CONTROL (JANUARY–DECEMBER 2015)

Sergei TSELITSKI

Legislative acts

Federal Law no. 3-FZ of 3 February 2015 ‘On ratification of the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on alliance and strategic partnership’

Passed by the State Duma (SD) on 23 January 2015, approved by the Federation Council (FC) on 28 January 2015, signed by the President of the Russian Federation (President) on 3 February 2015.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on alliance and strategic partnership signed in Sochi on 24 November 2014.

Federal Law no. 93-FZ of 20 April 2015 ‘On amendments to the Federal Law on the federal budget for 2015 and the budget plan for 2016-2017’

Passed by the SD on 10 April 2015, approved by the FC on 15 April 2015, signed by the President on 20 April 2015.

Federal Law hereby amends the federal budget for 2015 and the budget plan for 2016-2017.

Federal Law no. 92-FZ of 20 April 2015 ‘On the ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia’

Passed by the SD on 10 April 2015, approved by the FC on 15 April 2015, signed by the President on 20 April 2015.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia signed by the Russian Federation on 6 May 2014 with the next reservations:

1) Russian Federation will not consider itself bound by the obligations stipulated in Article 1 of the Protocol in the event of an attack against the Russian Federation, Armed Forces of the Russian Federation or its other troops, against its allies or against a state it has security obligations to, carried out or supported by a state which does not possess nuclear weapons jointly with a nuclear weapon state or upon the existence of allied obligations to this state.

2) Russian Federation reserves the right not to consider itself bound by the Protocol if any party to the Treaty pursuant to Article 4 of the Treaty allows foreign military vessels and aircraft with nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices aboard to call at its ports or land at its aerodromes, or any other form of transit of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices through its territory, and also with the next statement:

Russian Federation proceeds on the basis that commitments of the parties to the Treaty set forth in Article 1 of the Protocol are limited in application exclusively to the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone as it is specified in paragraph ‘a’ of Article 2 of the Treaty.

Federal Law no. 164-FZ of 29 June 2015 ‘On ratifying the Treaty on alliance and integration between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia’

Passed by the SD on 19 June 2015, approved by the FC on 24 June 2015, signed by the President on 29 June 2015.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Treaty on alliance and integration between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia signed in Moscow on 18 March 2015.

Federal Law no. 211-FZ of 13 July 2015 ‘On amendments to the Federal Law on the federal budget for 2015 and the budget plan for 2016-2017’

Passed by the SD on 3 July 2015, approved by the FC on 8 July 2015, signed by the President on 13 July 2015.

Federal Law hereby amends the federal budget for 2015 and the budget plan for 2016-2017.

Federal Law no. 159-FZ of 29 July 2015 ‘On amending the Federal Law ‘On the state defence order’ and certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation’

Passed by the SD on 10 June 2015, approved by the FC on 24 June 2015, signed by the President on 29 June 2015.

The Federal Law hereby amends the Federal Law ‘On the state defence order’ and certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation.

Ordinance of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of 30 September 2015 no. 355-FC ‘On using the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation outside the territory of the Russian Federation’

By this Ordinance the Federation Council gives its consent to the President to using the national armed forces outside the territory of the Russian Federation on the basis of the generally recognised principles and norms of international law.

Federal Law no. 329-FZ of 28 November 2015 ‘On amendments to the Federal Law on the federal budget for 2015 and the budget plan for 2016-2017’

Passed by the SD on 20 November 2015, approved by the FC on 25 November 2015, signed by the President on 28 November 2015.

Federal Law hereby amends the federal budget for 2015 and the budget plan for 2016-2017.

Federal Law no. 335-FZ of 28 November 2015 ‘On ratification of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on terms and conditions of transfer and further use of Kazakhstani Balkhash Node in the Russian early warning system’

Passed by the SD on 20 November 2015, approved by the FC on 25 November 2015, signed by the President on 28 November 2015.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the above treaty signed in Moscow on 2 December 2014.

Federal Law no. 359-FZ of 14 December 2015 ‘On the federal budget for 2016’

Passed by the SD on 4 December 2015, approved by the FC on 9 December 2015, signed by the President on 15 December 2015.

Federal Law hereby establishes key figures of the federal budget for 2016 based on the projected gross domestic product and inflation rate. It also sets the projected total revenue and spending as well as deficit of the federal budget.

Normative acts

Decree no. 49-2 of the Government of the Russian Federation of 26 January 2015 ‘On amending the federal target programme ‘Destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles in the Russian Federation’

Decree hereby approves amendments to the federal target programme ‘Destruction of Chemical Weapons Stockpiles in the Russian Federation’.

Order no. 291-r of the Government of the Russian Federation of 24 February 2015 ‘On signing an agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus on military cooperation’

Order hereby approves a draft agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus on military cooperation prepared by the Ministry of Defence in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other concerned federal executive bodies.

The Russian Ministry of Defence with participation of the concerned federal executive bodies is mandated to hold talks with Cyprian officials and sign the agreement on behalf of the Russian

Federation; it is also authorized to introduce nonessential changes in the draft.

Decree no. 181 of the Government of the Russian Federation of 28 February 2015 ‘On amending the federal target programme ‘National Chemical and Biological Security System of the Russian Federation (2009-2014)’”

Decree hereby supports the 2014 decision on reallocation of resources for financing the federal target programme ‘National Chemical and Biological Security System of the Russian Federation (2009-2014)’ and approves the proposed changes.

Decree no. 190 of the President of the Russian Federation of 13 April 2015 ‘On amending Presidential Executive Order no. 1154 of 22 September 2010 ‘On measures for implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1929 of 9 June 2010’”

Decree hereby amends Presidential Executive Order no. 1154 of 22 September 2010 ‘On measures for implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1929 of 9 June 2010’.

Decree no. 407 of the Government of the Russian Federation of 28 April 2015 ‘On methods for determining an initial (maximum) price of a state contract as well as a price of a state contract signed with a single supplier (contractor, provider) for purchasing of goods, works, and services for a state defence order’

Decree hereby approves the guidelines determining an initial (maximum) price of a state contract as well as a price of a state contract signed with a single supplier (contractor, provider) for purchasing of goods, works, and services for a state defence order’

Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation is mandated to develop within six months methodological guidelines for determining profitability (revenues) when estimating prices of goods, works, and services for a state defence order and clear them with the Ministry of Defence, Federal Tariff Service, Federal Space Agency and Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation.

Order no. 788-r of the Government of the Russian Federation of 30 April 2015 ‘On signing an agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government

of the People's Republic of China on cooperation on international information security'

Order hereby approves a draft agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the People's Republic of China on cooperation in the field of international information security prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in consultation with other concerned federal executive bodies and preliminary approved by China. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to hold talks with Chinese officials and sign the agreement on behalf of the Government of the Russian Federation; it is also authorized to introduce nonessential changes in the draft.

Decree no. 260 of the President of the Russian Federation of 22 May 2015 'On some issues of information security of the Russian Federation'

Decree hereby decrees to transform a segment of the Internet, the global computer network, used by the federal and regional state bodies of the Russian Federation and falling under the authority of Federal Protective Service, into a segment of the Russian state information and telecommunication network 'Internet' which is a part of the Russian language Internet.

Decree no. 370 of the President of the Russian Federation of 17 July 2015 'On creation of mobilization manpower reserve of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation'

Decree hereby creates mobilization manpower reserve of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation for the duration of testing a new system of training and accumulation of mobilization human resources.

Decree no. 391 of the President of the Russian Federation of 29 July 2015 'On special economic measures to provide security of the Russian Federation'

Decree hereby states that agricultural produce and raw materials produced in the countries that have imposed economic sanctions on Russian legal entities and individuals or have supported these sanctions, and which are banned from being imported to Russia will be destroyed at the border starting from 6 August 2015.

Decree no. 934 of the Government of the Russian Federation of 4 September 2015 ‘On some issues of providing state guarantees of the Russian Federation on the loans obtained by military industrial complex organizations for the purposes of processing (filling) a state defence order’

Decree hereby approves proposed changes to Decree no. 1215 of the Government of the Russian Federation of 31 December 2010 ‘On providing state guarantees of the Russian Federation in 2011-2014 on the loans obtained by the military industry complex organizations for the purposes of processing (filling) a state defence order’.

In 2015 the state guarantees provided by the Russian Federation on the loans obtained by organizations of military industrial complex for the purposes of processing (filling) a state defence order reached 8 332 316 ths roubles.

Executive Order no. 281-rp of the President of the Russian Federation of 18 September 2015 ‘On signing an agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on establishing a Russian air base in the territory of the Republic of Belarus’

Executive Order hereby accepts the proposal of the Government of the Russian Federation on signing an agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on establishing a Russian air base in the territory of the Republic of Belarus.

The Russian Defence Ministry is mandated to hold talks with the Belarusian counterpart and upon reaching mutual understanding to sign the above agreement on behalf of the Russian Federation; it is also authorized to introduce nonessential changes in the draft approved by the Russian Government.

Decree no. 1065-59 of the Government of the Russian Federation of 3 October 2015 ‘On amending the federal target programme ‘Destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile in the Russian Federation’

Decree hereby approves amendments to the federal target programme ‘Destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile in the Russian Federation’.

Order no. 2118-r of the Government of the Russian Federation of 21 October 2015 ‘On signing an agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on military cooperation’

Order hereby accepts the proposal of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation agreed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other concerned federal executive bodies on negotiating an agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on military cooperation.

Decree no. 1164 of the Government of the Russian Federation of 29 October 2015 ‘On the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation providing education and training for military and military-technical personnel of foreign countries’

Decree hereby approves a guidance on the procedures for Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation of providing education and training for military and military-technical personnel of foreign countries.

Decree no. 553 of the President of the Russian Federation of 8 November 2015 ‘On measures to ensure the Russian Federation’s national security and protection of Russian citizens against criminal and other unlawful acts’

Decree hereby bans passenger flights (including commercial ones) from Russia to the Arab Republic of Egypt by Russian airlines, with the exception of flights (including commercial ones) to Egypt carrying Russian citizens officially representing the state authorities or federal government agencies.

Travel agencies and agents are recommended to refrain from selling tour packages to the citizens that involve flights (including commercial ones) from Russia to Egypt while the ban is in place.

Executive Order no. 355-rp of the President of the Russian Federation of 10 November 2015 ‘On signing an agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia on establishing a united regional air defence system in the Caucasian region of the Collective Security Treaty Organization’

Executive Order hereby adopts the proposal of the Government of the Russian Federation to sign an agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia on establishing a united regional air defence system in the Caucasian region of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

The Russian Ministry of Defence in cooperation with Ministry of Foreign Affairs is mandated to hold talks with the Armenian counterpart and sign the agreement on behalf of the Russian Federation; it is also authorized to introduce nonessential changes in the draft approved by the Russian Government.

Decree no. 560 of the President of the Russian Federation of 16 November 2015 ‘On putting into effect the Defence Plan of the Russian Federation for 2016-2020’

Signed by the President on 16 November 2015.

Decree puts into effect the Defence Plan of the Russian Federation for 2016-2020 with the purpose of implementing defence measures in accordance with the Federal Law on Defence.

Order no. 2375-r of the Government of the Russian Federation of 21 November 2015 ‘On signing a protocol between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on a simplified procedure for warships to enter the ports of the Russian Federation and the Arab Republic of Egypt’

Order hereby approves a draft protocol, prepared by the Russian Ministry of Defence in consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other concerned federal executive bodies and preliminary approved by Egypt, between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on a simplified procedure for warships to enter the ports of the Russian Federation and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The Russian Ministry of Defence with the participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is mandated to hold talks with the Egyptian counterparts and upon reaching an agreement to sign the above protocol on behalf of the Government of the Russian Federation; it is also authorized to introduce nonessential changes in the draft.

Decree no. 567 of the President of the Russian Federation of 23 November 2015 ‘On measures for implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 of 20 July 2010’

Following the adoption of the above resolution and in accordance with the Federal Law no. 281-FZ of 30 December 2006 ‘On special economical measures’ Decree establishes the following.

Starting from 20 July 2015 and until further notice, all government agencies, industrial, trade, financial, logistical and other organizations, credit and non-credit financial institutions, other legal entities and individuals under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation must be guided in their activities by:

Prohibitions, restrictions, and other measures established by Presidential Executive Orders no. 1593 of 28 November 2007 ‘On measures for implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1737 of 23 December 2006 and 1747 of 24 March 2007’, no. 682 of 5 May 2008 ‘On measures for implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1803 of 3 March 2008’, and no. 1154 of 22 September 2010 ‘On measures for implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1929 of 9 June 2010’ shall not apply to:

a) the supply, sale, or transfer of items (materials, equipment, goods, and technology), provision of any related technical assistance, training, financial assistance, investment, brokering or other services directly related to the modification of two cascades at the Fordow facility for production of stable isotope through centrifuge enrichment, export of Iran’s enriched uranium in excess of 300 kilograms in return for natural uranium, as well as to the modernization of the Arak reactor based on the agreed conceptual design and, subsequently, on the agreed final design of such reactor;

the supply and activities directly related to implementation of the nuclear-related measures specified in paragraphs 15.1-15.11 of Annex V to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action approved by the UN Security Council (the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 of 20 July 2015), and/or required for preparation for the implementation of the Plan;

b) the activities covered by the second passage of paragraph ‘a’ above must strictly comply with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, while Iran should provide assurance that the Russian will be able to verify that any supplied item (material, equipment, good, and technology) is used according to the stated purposes;

c) the activities covered by the third passage of paragraph 'a' above must be preliminary approved by the UN Security Council Committee established in accordance to paragraph 18 of the UN Security Council Resolution 1737 of 23 December 2006.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

ARBATOV, Alexei – Academician, the Russian Academy of Sciences, Dr. Sc. (History), Director of the IMEMO Centre for International Security

BUBNOVA, Natalia – Cand. Sc. (History), Leading Researcher at the IMEMO Centre for International Security

IVANOV, Stanislav – Cand. Sc. (History), Senior Researcher at the IMEMO Centre for International Security

NIKITIN, Alexander – Dr. Sc. (Political Science), Senior Researcher at the IMEMO Centre for International Security

OZNOBISHCHEV, Sergei – Cand. Sc. (History), Head of Sector of Military-Political Analysis and Research Projects at the IMEMO Centre for International Security

PANKOVA, Lyudmila – Dr. Sc. (Economics), Head of the Department of Military and Economic Security Research at the IMEMO Centre for International Security

ROMASHKINA, Natalia – Cand. Sc. (Political Science), Head of Group of Information Security Problems at the IMEMO Centre for International Security

TRENIN, Dmitri – Dr. Sc. (History), Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center

TSELITSKI, Sergei – Researcher at the IMEMO Centre for International Security

VLADIMIROV, Vadim – Senior Researcher at the IMEMO Centre for International Security

YESIN, Victor – Cand. Sc. (Military Science), Leading Researcher at the Institute for the US and Canadian Studies RAS, Colonel General (ret.)

ZAGORSKI, Andrei – Cand. Sc. (History), Head of the Department of Conflict Resolution and Disarmament at the IMEMO Centre for International Security

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Ответственные редакторы:
Арбатов Алексей Георгиевич
Ознобищев Сергей Константинович

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