



PLOUGHSHARES FUND

Meeting of the SuPR (Sustainable Partnership with Russia) Group

February 1-3, 2011

Arc-en-Ciel, Gstaad, Switzerland

**CONVENTIONAL PROMPT GLOBAL STRIKE WEAPONS
AND THEIR IMPACT ON STRATEGIC STABILITY**

A Policy Memo

Anatoly Anin

Member of the SuPR Group

One of the thorniest issues at the Russian-U.S. talks on the New START treaty that ended in spring 2010 was that of strategic-range non-nuclear systems (or conventional Prompt Global Strike weapons, CPGS). Similar to the new treaty, we shall take the term to mean conventional intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). Heavy bombers, although technically falling under strategic offensive arms, in the context of the issues under review do not present a serious threat due to some peculiarities of their use that shall be considered below.

One cannot say that the issue of strategic-range non-nuclear systems came as a surprise to the Russian negotiators in the course of working on New START or that it did not exist before. It is worth stressing that, as was the case with START I, the title of the new START treaty is the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation and Strategic Offensive Arms. The omission of the word "nuclear" is not accidental. Neither is it an oversight on the part of the delegations. Rather it is a result of a difficult compromise with the United States that have always sought to make sure that new agreements do not involve "conventional arms" and cover only nuclear weapons, without touching strategic-range non-nuclear systems. Whereas the Russian side, on the contrary, has insisted that the new treaty cover all strategic-range offensive weapons.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has more than once spoken of the dangers that the creation of strategic-range non-nuclear systems poses for strategic stability and international security since it can undermine the prospects of nuclear disarmament. In particular, in a speech at Helsinki University in spring 2009, he stressed that "it is unacceptable to compensate nuclear reductions by developing strategic systems which are equipped with conventional weapons. This would be an unequal exchange"¹. Taking this thought further in the context of nuclear disarmament prospects, in an address to the 64th UN General Assembly in September 2009, Dmitry Medvedev

¹ Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's speech. April 20, 2009.

clearly stated that "unless we address problems such as missile defense and the creation of non-nuclear strategic forces, we cannot make any real progress on disarmament"².

One look at Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's speeches and articles on strategic arms reduction issues over the past year is enough to see that practically all of them voice concern as regards the uncontrolled development of strategic-range non-nuclear systems on the part of the United States. For instance, in an article "New START Treaty in the Global Security Matrix" published in the Russian media and posted on the Russian Foreign Ministry's website, Lavrov describes non-nuclear strategic weapons as a hugely serious problem fraught with destabilizing risks. "Chief among them is the so-called nuclear ambiguity; that is, the impossibility of identifying the type of warheads carried by ballistic missiles (nuclear or non-nuclear) after they have been launched. The risk of a nuclear conflict sharply increases in this case".

The Russian minister went on to cite the problem of a significant decrease in the *threshold* for the use of conventional strategic missiles and the danger of a missile arms race. It is obvious that in this case other countries that have missile capabilities would consider themselves free to build *non-nuclear* ICBMs. Combined with the development of global missile defense systems, in certain circumstances strategic-range non-nuclear systems may turn into a powerful military potential that creates the illusion of the possibility of delivering the first disarming strike, destroys the strategic balance of forces and does irreparable damage to nuclear disarmament. The Russian side has more than once put this across to their U.S. counterparts within the framework of the Russia-NATO Council dialogue.

However, so far this problem has defied resolution. The previous START treaty did not ban conventional ICBMs or SLBMs. Despite all the difficulties of the negotiation process, the New START treaty envisages a temporary compromise, thus making this issue less acute.

On the one hand, there is no direct ban on developing conventional ICBMs and SLBMs, that is to say that the parties, if they deem it necessary, can fit these missiles with conventional warheads. On the other hand, these warheads (if deployed on strategic-range systems) fall under the overall strategic offensive arms limits and, therefore, under all the limitations, control and other procedures under the Treaty. All that makes it possible to ensure reliable controls over these strategic weapons, without giving the United States an opportunity to uncontrollably and without any restrictions under the new Treaty take any action as regards these systems. Yet another important factor is that this provision does not allow the Americans the freedom of choice in ensuring *breakout potential*.

It would appear that the Russian and the Western expert communities are only just beginning to analyze what START-2010 has achieved as regards non-nuclear strategic weapons. A fuller understanding of these issues will take time and, naturally, an assessment of how effective the Treaty itself is. An interesting study of the results of talks with the United States on strategic-range non-nuclear systems was presented by Eugene Miasnikov in his paper "Strategic Conventional Arms: Deadlocks and

² Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's speech. September 24, 2009.

Solutions"³. It would therefore be sufficient to offer just general observations on how the issue of strategic non-nuclear weapons is addressed in that treaty.

New START classifies issues related to strategic-range non-nuclear systems into two groups. The first covers issues related to strategic systems already equipped for conventional armaments. These include heavy bombers equipped for conventional arms and *Ohio*-class strategic nuclear-powered submarines equipped to carry long-range sea-launched cruise missiles. The Treaty envisages the necessary procedures for Russian inspectors to verify that cruise missile launchers have not been restored to the capacity to launch ballistic missiles.

The second group covers issues related to the possible further re-equipment of strategic offensive weapons for conventional armaments. All these systems will fall under the Treaty's *legal remit*, with the relevant control mechanisms in place. Furthermore, if conventional ICBMs and SLBMs are deployed, they will fall under the relevant limitations envisaged in the Treaty, i.e. 700 units for deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and deployed heavy bombers. Non-deployed launchers for conventional ICBMs and SLBMs are included in the aggregate limit of 800 units for deployed and non-deployed launchers for ICBMs, deployed and non-deployed launchers for SLBMs, and heavy bombers. However, the Treaty's *limit* of 1,550 warheads implies both nuclear and non-nuclear warheads.

Finally, the Treaty envisages that if the United States or Russia develop a new type of strategic offensive arms, the issue of extending the limitations set in the Treaty to cover it too will be considered within the Bilateral Consultative Commission (BCC) that has been set up to implement this agreement.

An analysis of U.S. officials' statements and publications, including those that accompanied the ratification of New START in Congress, shows that U.S. approaches to strategic-range non-nuclear systems are fundamentally different from Russian assessments. In particular, the article-by-article analysis of the new Treaty⁴, which has largely been drawn up by U.S. negotiators, says that New START does not set any restrictions on testing, developing or deploying non-nuclear strategic weapons. Moreover, the Americans note that not all new kinds of arms that have a strategic range will be considered to be "new kinds of strategic offensive arms" subject to the limitations set in the new Treaty.

The Russian side is closely monitoring U.S. plans for future strategic-range conventional missile systems. Reports that are coming in clearly indicate that the United States are developing a new significant segment of the strategic arsenal capable of resolving a wide range of tasks, some of which previously belonged exclusively to strategic nuclear weapons. This work is being carried out within the framework of the so-called Prompt Global Strike (PGS) concept.

³ In: *Security Index* N1, Spring 2010. Pp. 123-130.

⁴ Message from the President of the United States transmitting Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, signed in Prague on April 8, 2010, with Protocol, US Government Printing Office, Washington, 2010.

This concept was first launched in the United States in the late 1980s – early 1990s. Its aim is to provide the United States of America with full spectrum dominance, including through developing effective strategic **non-nuclear arms** and at the same time preserving an arsenal of means of nuclear deterrence. If the PGS concept is successfully implemented, the United States will be capable of delivering conventional weapon strikes against targets in any part of the world within an hour of taking the decision to strike. In effect, this may mean a transformation of the U.S. military potential with future conflicts in view.

This thinking also takes into account the changed nature of possible threats to the United States, with the list of perceived sources of these threats expanded to include not just Russia and China but also so-called *rogue states*, terrorist and extremist groups, the use of nuclear weapons against whom is considered counterproductive.

In 1999-2000 U.S. Defense Department documents began to use the term "conventional prompt global strike", noting the need to develop technologies for delivering these strikes with the use of precision-guided and deep-penetration conventional warheads.

Work on PGS was given a powerful new boost after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. U.S. experts believe that new threats to the United States and their allies cannot be ignored. Equally, they cannot be countered just with the use of the existing high-precision conventional weapons. It is impossible to predict the time and place from which a serious threat to U.S. national security may come. It is equally impossible to hope to have conventional forces in place in all parts of the world where they may be needed to prevent an attack.

According to American experts, it cannot be ruled out that future conflicts may start far away from the existing U.S. military bases and locations where the main sea-based forces are deployed. Furthermore, future conflicts may develop very fast, not allowing U.S. armed forces the time to arrive at the required positions. Everybody remembers how following 9/11, it took the Americans several weeks to obtain permissions to base their forces in countries neighboring on Afghanistan and to deploy their naval forces to the region.

In addition, new tasks may emerge in theaters of operations which cannot be resolved by the existing means, for instance the task of destroying command and control systems that are hardened and deeply buried, warehouses storing weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles, air and missile defense systems being deployed by the enemy, etc.

American designers believe that problems like these cannot be resolved by the existing conventional weapons systems. For instance, air- (ALCM) and sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCM) have a limited range and a relatively low speed. Hypersonic cruise missiles being developed have a range of under 1,100km. Heavy bombers' limitations when it comes to operational tasks like these are also well-known: they take several hours to prepare for take-off, are vulnerable to air defense systems, and require the additional deployment of tanker aircraft in forward-deployment areas.

At the moment PGS projects are focused on developing and demonstrating technologies that could *support* weapons systems deployed on U.S. territory. The ongoing efforts in this area are concentrated on studying three concepts: hypersonic technology vehicle-2 (HTV-2), conventional strike missile (CSM), and advanced hypersonic weapon (AHW)⁵.

That is why the Americans believe that their armed forces should be capable of defending against attacks that may come from deep within inaccessible territories or against attacks to prevent which there may be just a very narrow window of opportunity. The U.S. military believe that non-nuclear ICBMs, deployed in relatively small numbers, are a potential means of preventing most serious threats posed by an enemy state or a nonstate actor that operates from a great distance, with high precision and allowing little warning time and no prospects for hiding. During the U.S. Senate hearings on ratifying the New START treaty, other purposes of using PGS were named too, including the elimination of fleeting mobile targets: terrorist leaders and WMD transfers⁶.

The proponents of these plans believe that having such a powerful weapon at one's disposal will become the best way of deterring aggressive opponents at the regional level since its use is more practical. It is the *proportionality* of high-precision strikes with the use of long-range conventional systems that makes their potential use against a possible aggressor more acceptable and thus strengthens the deterrence effect that these weapons have for state and nonstate actors. If deterrence fails to work, high-precision strikes with the use of long-range non-nuclear systems may become the only way of preventing an attack with the use of weapons of mass destruction or further attacks following the said act of aggression. In effect, their strong characteristics in terms of the range, speed, destructive potential, precision and effectiveness, as well as promptness of response and freedom of maneuver enable the United States to resolve practically the same tasks with the use of conventional strategic arms as with the use of nuclear weapons.

The U.S. military believe that strategic-range non-nuclear systems will make it possible to very quickly move to planning and delivering a strike against targets that are located thousands of kilometers away, once the U.S. president has taken the relevant decision on the strength of the available intelligence information. They insist that in order to deliver a prompt strike, data gathering, decision-making and execution should happen in a matter of minutes. It is obvious that with the existing operations and decision-making technologies, such promptness cannot be achieved.

As a further argument in favor of non-nuclear strategic arms, U.S. experts often cite its relatively low cost compared to the *incalculable losses* from the use of WMD.

In January 2003 the concept of the Prompt Global Strike was approved by the President of the United States. In 2002-2006 the Pentagon was busy developing systems as part of this concept (setting its operational, technical, financial, and production parameters, conducting target exercises). In 2007, after experts had

⁵ Bureau of Verification, Compliance and Implementation. Fact Sheet. April 8, 2010.

⁶ Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. June 24, 2010. Witness Amb. Eric Edelman, distinguished fellow, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, Morton Halperin, Senior advisor to the Open Society Institute.

concluded that the PGS project was technically feasible, the PGS concept was approved by the U.S. Congress, too. The U.S. Defense Department's budget envisages the development of a program to provide the U.S. armed forces with a high-speed, powerful and high-precision conventional weapon system. Thus between 2003 and 2011, the Pentagon has allocated 308 million dollars for developing HTV-2; between 2008 and 2013, 477 million for CSM; and between 2006 and 2011, 180 million for AHW⁷.

The PGS concept envisages the development of intelligence and control systems, communications and computer networks that would make it possible to command the strike and maintain operational communications from the top to the tactical levels.

Weapons like these, not being subject to any limitations envisaged in international agreements, could be used to perform strategic offensive tasks.

The trend towards an increase in the budget funding for the program gives one reason to believe that by 2014-2015 the U.S. military may receive new types of weapons capable of performing PGS tasks.

Now it would seem appropriate to take a critical look at the PGS concept and to voice a number of arguments questioning its expediency and safety for strategic stability. As a justification for deploying "an insignificant amount" of these weapons (speaking in the Senate on June 24, 2010, Erik Edelman cited some *recent research*, according to which there is currently a need for at least 50 such systems), the United States continues to speak of the need to resolve a number of tasks in *the war against terrorism*. At the same time, in terms of the possible individual cases for the potential use of these missiles, the United States primarily talks of possible strikes against terrorist strongholds and gatherings and locations where their leaders meet.

However, it would appear that the use of these weapons in this context would be highly ineffective. First, gatherings and meetings like these hardly ever take place in deserted areas, so the use of these weapons, given their high destructive potential, would lead to a considerable number of casualties among innocent civilians.

Second, targets like these are quite mobile and ICBMs' long flying times as well as the time required to prepare and sanction launches like these are unlikely to ensure the guaranteed elimination of individual mobile targets in surgical strikes.

Looking at the experience of using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan, one can conclude that even despite their incomparably smaller size, ease of operation and limited fire power, the so-called *collateral damage* from the use of UAVs, including civilian deaths, is rather considerable. Imagine what the *consequences* of the use of strategic missile systems to deliver *deadly surgical strikes* might be! What would be the price of a possible intelligence error? It appears that so far these issues have either not been considered in the United States or have not made it to the list of the military planners' top priorities. Indeed, the main thinking there is about increasing the United States' strategic might, with any humanitarian aspects of a possible prompt global strike retreating into the background.

⁷ Bureau of Arms Control. Verification and Compliance Fact Sheet. December 13, 2010.

Third, the United States already have their armed forces (aviation and fleet) close to or directly in parts of the globe that are *of vital interest*, which enables them, in the event of a crisis, to deliver a powerful strike against the enemy with the use of a high-precision weapon system. Therefore, one can maintain with a high degree of certainty that the probability of a situation whereby the United States would have to use non-nuclear strategic arms is very low, especially when measured against the possible cost to strategic stability.

Besides, the economic efficiency of developing and creating such an expensive weapon system just for the sake of *eliminating terrorist leaders* appears highly doubtful.

Thus, the grounds Washington cites to justify the production and deployment of these weapons systems appear unconvincing. Hence the legitimate question: **what are the real reasons behind the U.S. plans for the creation of strategic-range non-nuclear systems?** Could it, by any chance, be a desire to consolidate one's leading military positions in the world, having strengthened one's armed forces with modern high-precision weapons systems, which are not even under development elsewhere in the world?

It is obvious that if the PGS concept, with the decisive role belonging to conventional strategic weapons, is successfully implemented, the U.S. armed forces will be strengthened by a powerful monolith of modern offensive arms enabling them to resolve global tasks in the sea, on the ground, and in space. Thanks to their strong characteristics, these missile systems will be able to perform functions which currently fall under the remit of strategic nuclear arms. At the same time the decision to use non-nuclear strategic arms may be taken at a considerably lower threshold than that applied to means of nuclear deterrence.

It is particularly worth noting that if conventional strategic arms are accepted, the key factor of the so-called nuclear uncertainty and unpredictability will still remain. Any launch of a conventional ICBM or SLBM in the direction of Russia or China (all the PGS targets listed by the United States are located in the immediate proximity to the borders of these two countries) may be interpreted as a missile attack, thus dramatically increasing the risk of a retaliatory strike. It would appear that U.S. military experts understand full well that once an ICBM or a SLBM has been launched it is impossible to establish whether it carries a nuclear or conventional payload.

The U.S. military are working on some options aimed at *alleviating* Russia's concerns regarding these issues. Washington is considering the possibility of improving the existing and devising additional transparency and confidence-building procedures. In other words, options are being considered whereby the PGS concept would not be perceived by Russia as directed against it. In addition, such potentially useful mechanisms as advance notifications and transparency applied within the framework of the relevant Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers (NRRC) and the joint Data Exchange Center (DEC), if and when it is set up, would allegedly allow our country to unequivocally identify the nature of a ballistic missile strike being launched. As a result, U.S. experts believe, Russia will be able to make prompt decisions on how to react to a U.S. long-range conventional strike against a third country.

When analyzing this option, it is necessary to note that the United States intends to use strategic-range non-nuclear systems exclusively for the interests of its national security, bypassing international law and without a UN Security Council sanction. All this may indicate Washington's attempts to move still further away from the supremacy of law, the leading role of the legitimate international institutions, primarily the United Nations and its Security Council, the primacy of diplomacy in resolving international conflicts, the legality of the use of force for the purposes of self-defense or for the purposes of ensuring peace and security (under Articles 51 and 42 of the UN Charter). At the same time Washington uses an increasingly broad interpretation of the notion of a *direct threat* by including in it the actions of *hostile* states and terrorists.

One can confidently assume that Russia will not put up with this thinking and will not be satisfied with *some information* that the United States will consider necessary to impart to it in connection with a proposed strike with the use of conventional strategic arms. The Russian side has never supported actions like these and is unlikely to support them in future.

I would like to make a few remarks on the substance of the transparency measures as such in this context. Back during the early stages of the talks on the New START Treaty, the American side proposed establishing a formula under which future missile systems tested for the purpose of delivering a non-nuclear payload would not have been covered by the new agreement. For quite obvious reasons, however, this proposal was not accepted. It must be noted that a multitude of questions would have arisen during the stage of potential testing – in particular, how would test launches of *nuclear* and *non-nuclear* ICBMs be distinguished from one another? After all, even during preparations for flight tests of space launch vehicles (SLVs) that included ICBM or SLBM stages, the Russian and American sides, under the provisions of START-1, informed each other in good time and in detail of the technical specifications of these missile systems and their purpose. With new missile systems intended for PGS, the problem is far more complex and multidimensional.

At the present time, all test launches of ICBMs and SLBMs carried out by both Russia and the U.S. are not armed with nuclear warheads. A real warhead is replaced with a dummy, which has the same weight and dimensions, and imitates the delivery of a nuclear warhead to its target. If successful, the tests confirm that any BMs are capable of delivering both nuclear and non-nuclear warheads, provided that their mass, dimensions and aerodynamic properties are similar or identical.

Of course, when carrying out tests of BMs fitted with multiple warheads, there are certain differences related to their dispensing and the construction of the necessary combat configuration, but none of this alters the substance of the test, which is to check whether the BMs can deliver warheads. So the U.S. assertion that there may allegedly be some kind of special BMs created and tested exclusively for the delivery of non-nuclear warheads gives rise to justified doubts.

One could, of course, try to debate the possibility of removing part of the problem of *nuclear uncertainty and unpredictability* by calculating the missile's aiming point along its flight trajectory once it has been launched, as well as the possibility of

changing the trajectories of ballistic missiles equipped with conventional warheads, so that they differ from the flight trajectories of nuclear ICBMs if they were to be directed at targets situated on Russian territory. It would seem, however, that this method is not viable. So the possible argument that American global strikes using non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons could be launched in such a way as to avoid flying over Russian territory simply does not work.

How will the Russian side react if it discovers that this type of ballistic missile launch has taken place? The answer is clear – in deciding how to react, the Russian military will proceed from the assumption that the missile is carrying a nuclear warhead.

Moreover, when there is clearly insufficient time for a multilateral assessment of the operational environment, the main response measures will be implemented automatically. A legitimate question arises – does the U.S. fully understand the disastrous nature of the risks involved in these types of unidentifiable launches? It is no coincidence that even in the U.S. Congress, where many agree on the need for the president to have at his disposal the means to launch a powerful strike using non-nuclear missile systems against remote targets around the planet, there are concerns that the aims and objectives of non-nuclear ICBM and SBLM launches might be misunderstood. This is why congressmen are currently choosing to focus on financing continued research and development work in the area of PGS.

In the context of this problem, serious questions remain regarding the consequences of equipping only some of the launch facilities on American SSBNs with non-nuclear SLBMs (and these specific arrangements are being considered in the US). In such a scenario, there remains the problem of preventing accidental and unauthorized launches of SLBMs equipped with nuclear warheads, during combat patrols by SSBNs carrying missiles with various payloads. Launch authorization procedures that have already been repeated on numerous occasions are necessary. Is this possible in technical terms? The question remains open.

Another problem that has not been fully addressed is the issue of notifying other states of launches of ballistic missiles across their territory and of the areas in which missile stages will fall, something that in itself brings an unnecessary potential for conflict and tension in international relations.

It would seem that, in future, the U.S. will seek to bring about a strategic dialogue on non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons, and not only with Russia, but, at the very least, with China as well. One can imagine that, as with other pressing problems, such as the problem of global missile defense, Washington will stress transparency, including briefings, familiarization of Russian and Chinese military specialists with American plans, visits to relevant facilities, participation in exercises involving anti-missile system launches etc. It cannot be ruled out that the Americans may even opt to familiarize our military specialists with their plans regarding the application and combat capabilities of non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons. One would like to hope that in our *collaboration* on missile defense, the Americans will proceed on the basis that such contacts will make it possible to strengthen trust between the U.S. and Russia and will at least partially allay Russian concerns, something that will in turn influence the dialogue between the administration in the White House and Congress in respect of the financing of PGS programs.

As one of the potential steps that could be taken to allay Russian concerns over non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons, the Americans may consider the possibility of basing their non-nuclear ICBMs in areas far away from the nuclear bases used for those missiles, such as at Vandenberg Air Force Base, or at the base at Cape Canaveral, or possibly in other places. Naturally, non-nuclear ICBMs must carry markings that distinguish them from their nuclear *brethren* and must be subject to inspections or demonstrations. However, such verification procedures do not provide a complete guarantee that in certain circumstances non-nuclear ICBMs will not be converted back for use with nuclear warheads. Moreover, it would seem that no transparency measures will be sufficient in conditions where time is extremely short and complete information is unavailable, should a conflict break out where the U.S. takes a political decision to launch a non-nuclear strike using non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons.

It has to be noted that many of the means by which the Russian side's concerns in respect of non-nuclear ICBMs can be allayed do not apply to SLBMs. For example, the plan is for non-nuclear SLBMs to be deployed on SSBNs carrying nuclear missiles, and so the opportunity will be lost to base them separately, an opportunity that exists with ICBMs.

All the circumstances listed above make using such missile systems much more dangerous. At the same time, the development of the non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons concept is giving rise to ever more concerns, since this amounts to the creation of a qualitatively new and powerful military potential, capable of addressing strategic objectives. That is especially true because all the elements of the American nuclear triad are being assigned *dual purpose* status and capability (as we know, it has long been possible to use strategic aviation to carry both nuclear and conventional weapons).

What is really behind these plans, which seem to be an integral part of the concept of deploying a global missile defense system? Such a system could clearly compromise the capability of Russia's strategic nuclear forces to launch a retaliatory strike. And what is really behind the attractive ideas of a mutual reduction in the operational combat readiness of the strategic nuclear arsenals, which are being promoted against the backdrop of their future reduction?

It is clear that the tangible progress made in the development of *conventional* weapons systems is being accompanied by the emergence in the U.S. of doctrinal precepts designed to effect a gradual transfer of the deterrent function from nuclear weapons to high-precision conventional weapons. If one takes an even broader look at the strategic stability situation, then the picture that emerges is one that does not bode well for Russia's security.

The implementation of plans for global missile defense, the unresolved problems surrounding the CFE Treaty, the manifest imbalance between NATO and Russia in terms of conventional weapons, the lack of clarity surrounding U.S. intentions in respect of the deployment of weapons in space, the clear U.S. superiority in the development of military information technology and the prospects for the implementation of PGS using non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons in parallel with

future reductions in Russian and U.S. stocks of nuclear weapons – all these developments may lead to a strengthening of America's dominant position in the military-technical field and send out the wrong signal about the use of this supremacy for the purpose of achieving unilateral political aims. This scenario does not, of course, meet Russia's national interests.

Taking all these factors into account, Russian experts, from the strictly military point of view, are obliged to view the possible arrival of non-nuclear missile systems in the U.S. strategic arsenal not only as a qualitative improvement in American deterrent forces, but also, first and foremost, as a bid to possess a *battlefield weapon* at a high level of combat readiness, a counterforce potential for launching a disarming non-nuclear strike against Russia's strategic nuclear forces. It is clear that this type of scenario is fraught with far-reaching destabilizing consequences for international security. Naturally, the Russian military will not be able to ignore these aspects in the course of their military-strategic planning. What gives particular cause for concern are the attempts by the U.S. to place future delivery systems for this class of new strategic weapons outside any restrictions or controls.

This trend was particularly clear when the New START Treaty was being drawn up and ratified in the Senate. In particular, the U.S. said on more than one occasion that it does not view future conventionally-armed systems (and at the same time they studiously avoided referring to the nature of such systems) that to a certain extent lie outside the definitions of the new agreement as a new type of strategic offensive weapons. At Senate hearings on June 16, 2010, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense James Miller revealed this thinking. In particular, he acknowledged that the Pentagon is studying the potential of long-range non-nuclear systems that do not fly along a ballistic trajectory. By way of example he cited the *planned flight system including accelerator* (boost glide system), which does not fit in with the definitions set out in the START Treaty and cannot be included in its scope.

During the negotiations, the Russian delegation always proceeded from the notion that any strategic offensive weapons, including new types of those weapons (for example, strategic range systems equipped with both nuclear and non-nuclear warheads), will fall within the scope of the new treaty. Moreover, the procedure for extending the provisions of the agreement to cover new types of these weapons is clearly formulated in the text.

So under Paragraph 2 of Article V of the Treaty, "when a Party believes that a new kind of strategic offensive arm is emerging, that Party shall have the right to raise the question of such a strategic offensive arms for consideration in the Bilateral Consultative Commission"; in accordance with Section I of Part Six of the Protocol to the Treaty, "to promote the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty, the Parties within the framework of the BCC shall: ... (d) resolve questions related to the applicability of provisions of the Treaty to a new kind of strategic offensive arm".

It must be noted that the Treaty does not lay down a definition of a new kind of strategic offensive weapon and it does not address the issue of whether or not a new type of strategic offensive weapon meets the definitions set out in the Treaty (Part One of the Protocol). And that is understandable. At this stage it does not seem possible to draw up a definition of "a new kind of strategic offensive weapon", since this type of

weapons does not exist. It is, however, absolutely clear that any strategic weapon has a whole range of criteria which allocate it to the category of strategic offensive weapons. The Russian side therefore believes that the issue of applying the provisions of the Treaty to a new type of strategic offensive weapon may only be resolved within the framework of the BCC and only before such a type of weapon is deployed. Otherwise a *loophole* will appear to allow the Treaty to be bypassed, a loophole that the sides would be able to use for the uncontrolled expansion of their strategic potential. It is unlikely that this sort of logic fits within the concept of the New START Treaty, which is based on strict parity.

It must be stressed that the references the U.S. makes to a new quality of bilateral relations which Washington says rules out the possibility of a military conflict between our countries cannot allay our concerns either. The Russian leadership has noted on more than one occasion that in military matters it is actual potentials that are taken into account, first and foremost, rather than the intentions of the sides, which may change over time, including in connection with existing military capability. It is well known that as the effectiveness of weapons increases and the extent of undesirable side effects is reduced, the *threshold* for any decision to use those weapons also diminishes.

Moreover, U.S. plans to remove new non-nuclear strategic systems from the scope of the new Treaty ought to be viewed as one of the means of providing *breakout potential*. It is worth noting that without expending significant amounts of time or money, any *conventional* delivery system may be reequipped to carry out nuclear tasks.

In this way, by extending *dual purpose* status and capability to all its strategic delivery systems (it has long been known that *reverse conversion* can be applied to TB), the U.S. is providing itself with a guarantee, should the need arise, of additional opportunities for *breakout* expansion, within a short timeframe, of its quantity of nuclear warheads for its strategic offensive weapons systems, both for the systems that have nuclear warheads and for those that have been developed for non-nuclear purposes.

U.S. plans to create non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons could become a major impetus for missile proliferation. Will other countries with missile potential not be tempted to make significant advances in the development and improvement of strategic range missile systems?

Ultimately this means a possible start of a new and dangerous stage in the arms race, based on the latest technologies. And there are no internationally recognized restrictions on such weapons. It is not difficult to imagine how these plans drawn up by the U.S. may affect the missile programs of countries with the capability to use space for military purposes, including those states which Washington considers to be *problematic*.

Considering all that has been said above, it seems that the fears of many authoritative experts, that the development and expansion of high-precision conventional missile systems (particularly in tandem with improvements in missile defense systems) are capable of not only *freezing* the process of reducing stocks of nuclear weapons, but

also reversing it, are justified. It is unlikely that this scenario meets the interests of the international community.

It can be stated that the unilateral actions of the U.S., which violate the fundamental principal of equal and indivisible security, may set off a strategic arms race along parallel tracks – nuclear and non-nuclear, particularly given that research and development work in these two areas could mutually complement and sustain each other. It is worth noting that the scientific-technical backup currently forming in the U.S. for the creation of high-precision *conventional* intercontinental missile delivery systems may also be used for the development of high-precision nuclear combat warheads for ICBMs and SLBMs.

In summing up, it can be said that non-nuclear strategic missile systems are capable of having a highly negative impact on international security and of genuinely undermining strategic stability. Not only may their application not help to bring about a rapid end to conflict, something that American developers have spoken so much about, but quite the reverse, it may aggravate the international situation and increase the likelihood of WMD being used as a result of Russia and China taking the wrong view of the aims behind the introduction of non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons.

Without doubt, the creation and entry into service of such systems could put a major brake on the process of genuine missile disarmament and have a negative impact on the viability of the whole non-proliferation regime.

One would like to hope that the use by the U.S. in connection with these systems of terms such as “non-nuclear long-range systems”, for that is what American officials are seeking to call non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons, should not divert the discussion away from their role in the strategic balance.

The problem of non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons not only has a conceptual dimension, but also has a direct influence on the practical effectiveness and viability of both the New START Treaty and the whole of the existing and future basis of international law in the area of disarmament and nonproliferation.

One can assert with a certain degree of care that the START Treaty 2010 represents the first step in resolving the problem of non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons. It is clear that further work lies ahead in this area.

In this paper I would like to touch upon another problem and attempt to respond to the criticism that has been leveled at the new Treaty, to the effect that the unresolved issue of non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons, in other words the lack of a ban on their creation, allows American high-precision weapons to pose a threat to Russia’s strategic forces. This thesis is based on the supremacy of the U.S. and the countries of NATO in terms of conventional weapons, particularly strategic long-range systems. First of all, neutralizing our nuclear potential with the help of non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons is impossible, because this could only happen if serial production of such weapons were to begin. This is not being witnessed at present, and at this point there is only research and development work in this area.

We should stress that the American side is so far only studying the issue of new

systems to combat what the U.S. believes to be the *most important* threats, including the possible deployment of ballistic missiles equipped with non-nuclear warheads. If and when a positive decision is taken, then time will be required for the serial production of such systems, which will lead to a major modernization of the American military-industrial complex, but the main point is that huge funds will be needed, and it will be Congress which will have to assign these.

Second, it is fairly difficult to create a grouping of non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons on a scale that would threaten Russia's national interests but could not be uncovered by our national technical monitoring systems.

Third, Russian military doctrine clearly states that nuclear weapons may be used if our country is attacked with conventional weapons.

Finally, given the current level of Russian-American relations, which the presidents of the two countries are trying to develop and improve as much as possible, there are no political reasons for such deadly scenarios.

It is important to stress, however, that all these factors do not lessen the urgency of the problem of non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons as such. The danger remains of strategic stability being breached if PGS is implemented using non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons. That is why, having said that in the current stage the New START Treaty strengthens our security and temporarily allays our concerns over non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons, the search must go on for negotiated solutions to this problem, without providing the arms race with a new basis.

There is additional cause for concern arising out of the U.S. Senate's ratification resolution, which was approved by a majority (71 for and 26 against) on 22 December 2010. This document touches upon many problems, but what interests U.S. is purely the issue of non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons. In particular, the resolution stipulates that the Senate will on a regular basis receive complete information on systems being developed in the U.S., as well as the plans for the production and deployment of such forms of weapons. It also stresses that, in respect of test launches of non-nuclear ICBMs and SLBMs created as part of PGS, the transfer of telemetric information is only possible in exchange for the same information on launches of new types of missiles. At the same time, the exchange of information is restricted only to the supply of information that would confirm that the missile being tested does not fall under the restrictions set out in the Treaty.

The most sensitive aspect of the document is the fact that the U.S. does not intend to view non-nuclear strategic-range weapons systems as new types of strategic offensive weapons which would fall within the scope of the Treaty. In the opinion of the senators, the New START Treaty does not impose restrictions on the U.S. in terms of conducting research, development work, testing and deployment in respect of such weapons.

This does not correspond to the understandings achieved in the course of the negotiations. The Russian side has always proceeded from the notion that any strategic offensive weapons the sides may possess, including their new types of strategic-range offensive weapons, equipped with both nuclear and conventional weapons, will fall

within the scope of the Treaty. Moreover, the New START Treaty stipulates that if new types of strategic non-nuclear weapons are created, it is the BCC (and not the U.S. Senate) that shall decide whether or not the Treaty should be applied to the new type of strategic offensive weapon.

In respect of conventional strategic offensive weapons, the thesis continues to be put forward that such types of weapons do not have any effects on strategic stability between Russia and the U.S. This interpretation contradicts the formulation of the preamble to the Treaty, in accordance with which the parties recognize the existence of such effects and support the need for them to be taken into account as stocks of strategic offensive weapons are reduced. All these aspects of the Senate resolution illustrate the desire of a number of U.S. politicians to correct some of the fundamental provisions of the New START Treaty in their favor. The Russian side will never accept such an interpretation. It is no coincidence that, in its statement "On the position of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on issues relating to the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive weapons" (adopted as part of the "package" of documents accompanying the ratification of the START Treaty 2010), the State Duma notes that "any strategic offensive weapons the parties may have and any new types of these weapons, including those that are based on new physical principles, as well as any strategic-range systems, will fall within the scope of the New START Treaty in accordance with its terms, enshrined, in particular, in Paragraph 2 Article V of the New START Treaty, as well as in Section I Part Six of the Protocol to the New START Treaty".

Whatever the circumstances, Russia shall undertake all necessary efforts in as cost-effective a way as possible to maintain parity with the U.S. in respect of strategic offensive weapons, in the context of the U.S.' deployment of a global missile defense system and their implementation of the PGS concept. This thinking was clearly reflected in the National Security Strategy until 2020, approved on May 13, 2009 by the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

Obviously, this does not mean symmetrical action, if only because our country adheres to a strictly defensive military doctrine and does not plan to conduct global offensive operations. The Russian leadership has said on more than one occasion that Russia does not intend to initiate or involve itself in a new arms race. On the contrary, Russia intends to continue strengthening the regime of nonproliferation, disarmament and arms control and building pragmatic relationships with all of the states in the world, and is focused on dialogue and on reducing the scope for conflict.

As President Medvedev stressed in his speech at a July 2010 meeting with Russian ambassadors and permanent representatives at international organizations, "there is no point in expecting everyone to agree with U.S., and we will not agree with everyone, but an understanding of the world in which we live and of the direction in which this world is developing is a condition for future development in both practical policy and in approaches to international affairs".