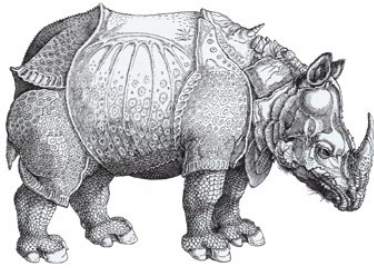


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SECURITY INDEX

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NATO nuclear sharing arrangements: whether they are compliant with the NPT. Assessment of the current situation in the context of the upcoming NPT Review Conference

Nikita Degtyarev, Vladimir Orlov



The article analyzes NATO nuclear sharing arrangements and examines the history of the concept of nuclear sharing, based on archival documents, and its practical implementation at the present stage. The authors pay special attention to the positions of the

countries in whose territory American tactical nuclear weapons are stored, as well as to the speeches of countries against nuclear sharing at the PrepComs of the Review Conference. The authors give a list of reasons why NATO might benefit from changing its inflexible approach to nuclear sharing.

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Key findings:

- **Although the Soviet Union softened its stance on the creation and adoption of the NPT, it did not completely refuse that NATO's joint nuclear missions contradict the idea of the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons.**
- **Russia began to oppose NATO nuclear sharing arrangements only after its nuclear weapons were deployed only on Russian national territory.**
- **There are about 150 US tactical nuclear bombs B61 in Europe. Six US nuclear weapons facilities are deployed in five countries: Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey.**
- **The United States cooperates with NATO members in the development of NATO nuclear policy, holds meetings and joint nuclear military exercises, stores B61 bombs in European countries. However, it depends only on the United States whether these bombs will be used.**
- **The American side states that NATO's nuclear agreements preceded the NPT and were taken into account when concluding the treaty. Western countries do not see the contradictions between nuclear sharing and the NPT.**
- **NATO member states are not always united on the deployment of American nuclear weapons in Europe.**
- **In addition to Russia, NATO nuclear sharing arrangements concern states and groups of states representing different regions of the world: the Non-Aligned Movement, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Cuba, Syria, the Philippines, and South Africa.**
- **There are several reasons why NATO might benefit from changing its inflexible approach to nuclear sharing.**

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NATO nuclear sharing arrangements: whether they are compliant with the NPT. Assessment of the current situation in the context of the upcoming NPT Review Conference

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Throughout the Cold War, there was a race for the development and production of new types of nuclear weapons between the two great powers, the USA and the USSR. Both countries were deploying these weapons in Europe. After the collapse of the USSR, all nuclear weapons from the post-Soviet space were transferred to Russia. After the end of the Cold War, the United States drastically reduced the number of nuclear weapons in Europe but did not completely remove them. One of the main reasons is that the presence of American nuclear weapons in Europe is a confirmation of the US commitment to ensure the security of its NATO allies. In an attempt to build partnerships with the United States and NATO in the early years after the end of the Cold War, Russia did not pay attention to the fact that American nuclear weapons were located on the territory of non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS). Over the past decade, Russia's relations with the West have deteriorated, and Russia has become increasingly clear about its dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and international relations. In particular, the Russian Federation began to draw attention to the incompatibility of NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements and the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime. Russia strongly opposes the maintenance of joint NATO nuclear missions in the post-Cold War period, since the features of military confrontation during the Cold War have disappeared, and the retention of US nuclear weapons in Europe can only arouse unnecessary tension and suspicion. However, Western countries believe that the contradiction between nuclear sharing and the NPT is made up by Russia and does not have the proper argumentation behind it. Moreover, NATO countries are trying to ignore Russian statements on this matter.

There are several months left before the start of the NPT Review Conference. It is important to know by the start of the Conference, whether NATO nuclear sharing arrangements are compatible with the NPT, and if not, what arguments there are to prove it. Moreover, it is needed to accurately assess the relevancy of this topic, as well as to determine whether Russia is the only country that stands against the nuclear sharing concept and sees it as an NPT violation, or if there are other states that share the Russian view.

The history of the nuclear sharing concept

NATO's nuclear sharing is a program among the NATO states regarding the deployment and storage of American nuclear weapons in Europe to ensure security and stability. Under this program, non-nuclear members of the Alliance accept nuclear weapons on their territory, participate in the planning of its use, and their military personnel is involved in nuclear strike training exercises. During the Cold War, nuclear sharing arrangements were primarily aimed at containing the Soviet Union, which had superiority in the field of conventional weapons. It also strengthened cohesion within NATO.

In the first NATO strategic concept (Strategic Concept For The Defence Of The North Atlantic Area 1949) it was stated that to “ensure the ability to carry out strategic bombing promptly by all means possible with all types of weapons without exception” is one of the basic undertakings¹. That is, nuclear weapons were meant as a mutual guarantee of NATO security and collective defense already in 1949.

In July 1953, the United States decided to deploy its nuclear weapons on the European continent as a key defense measure for NATO states in Europe. The first American nuclear weapons arrived in Europe in September 1954. It should be noted that at that time there was no clear concept of joint nuclear missions.

In December 1960, the United States announced to the North Atlantic Council that it intended to create a NATO Multi-Lateral Force (MLF). In May 1961, the MLF concept was announced publicly. It was suggested that the MLF could consist of bombers, submarines, and tactical nuclear weapons², which would be manned by mixed nationality crews, with participation open to all NATO states.

The Soviet Union reacted negatively to this announcement. Before this announcement in December 1960, Gromyko had given a speech at the session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR with the following words:

“Making NATO a "nuclear power" would in practice mean making West Germany a "nuclear power"... Transferring nuclear missile weapons to NATO command and giving West German militarists access to these weapons would be a crime against peace”³.

The note from the Soviet government to the Federal Republic of Germany government of February 5, 1963, also illustrated the criticism well (copies were sent to the governments of more than 40 states):

“The Soviet government considers it necessary to declare that the access of the Bundeswehr to nuclear weapons, regardless of the form of such access (and now the question of the form of admission is being intensively discussed in the West) would mean a very serious aggravation of the situation in Europe. Whichever way nuclear weapons fell into the hands of the Bundeswehr, directly or indirectly, the Soviet Union would see it as an immediate threat to its vital national interests and would be forced to immediately take the necessary measures dictated by such a situation”⁴.

And by the note from the USSR government to the US government dated April 8, 1963:

“Regardless of what final forms the plans to create NATO nuclear forces take - whether the form of "multinational" or "multilateral" forces or both together - from what has already been made public, one thing is clear - this is the intention of the United States and other NATO powers to open access to nuclear missile weapons for the Bundeswehr and the armed forces of other countries, expand the scope of preparations for a thermonuclear war even wider and unleash a nuclear missile arms race that does not know either state or geographic boundaries... If the United States, Britain, and France followed the path of nuclear proliferation, the Soviet government, of course, would be forced to draw appropriate conclusions based on the new situation and take such measures that would ensure the maintenance of the security of the Soviet Union, its friends, and allies”⁵.

The USSR criticized the transformation of NATO into a nuclear bloc, moreover, even directly accused the West of proliferating nuclear weapons. However, it is clear from these notes that West Germany's access to nuclear weapons and, consequently, the subsequent political strengthening of this country, caused more concern than the very fact of NATO's joint nuclear policy. Fears that West Germany would gain access to nuclear weapons are reflected in many letters and statements from the USSR⁶. After December 1964, the United States stopped active diplomacy in promoting the concept of MLF. This was influenced by many factors: the position of the American Senate, active Soviet diplomacy against the MLF, disagreements within NATO, the reaction of the European public, and representatives of the executive branch.

However, the very idea of collective nuclear planning did not cease to exist. In February 1966, a Special Committee created a year earlier at the initiative of US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and within the framework, the Nuclear Planning Working Group began work that focused on the consideration of NATO nuclear planning: discussion of the strategic nuclear threat, the available forces, the potential results of a nuclear war⁷.

The Soviet Union reacted critically to the creation of the group. However, as both William Alberque and Roland Timerbaev note, the Soviet leadership did not view this group as an obstacle to concluding a future NPT. The position was not as categorical as in the case of the MLF due to the NPT negotiation process already being underway at that time.

During bilateral negotiations between the USSR and the United States, the United States made it clear that it was not ready to participate in an agreement that would deprive its NATO allies of participating in strengthening NATO defense, including through nuclear planning. However, the United States made some concessions, making it clear that the United States would not proliferate nuclear weapons or grant national control to any country over American nuclear weapons, including West Germany.

This can be seen in a letter from President Johnson to Kosygin (the letter is believed to be dated January 1966):

“Our willingness is based on the strong conviction that it would be contrary to the interests of the United States if any presently non-nuclear nation were to acquire such a right or ability to fire nuclear weapons. In this respect, I believe that your interests and ours coincide. Since you have concentrated your comment on the Federal Republic of Germany, let me make it clear that this position applies to the Federal Republic of Germany as to all non-nuclear powers, and is so understood by the Federal Republic of Germany.

At the same time, I must also make clear that we are not prepared to enter into any agreement that would deny our allies the possibility of participating in their own defense through arrangements that would not constitute proliferation”⁸.

The US consent not to give NATO countries control over American nuclear weapons is more clearly reflected in a Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson dated September 2, 1966:

“... Bob McNamara's and my judgment is that the probe should take place on this question: Would the Russians sign a treaty if we were to guarantee that we would not

surrender under any future circumstances, and whatever the form of nuclear organization in the West, our veto over the firing of nuclear weapons?”⁹

An important issue was resolved. Further, a joint working group of the USSR and the United States began to form a draft of the future treaty. According to William Alberque, in the process of negotiations on Articles 1 and 2 of the NPT, the Soviet Union abandoned its wording prohibiting NNWS from participating in nuclear activities, exercises, and also prohibiting the deployment of nuclear weapons on the territory of allies. The USSR did not object to NATO nuclear planning and consultations.

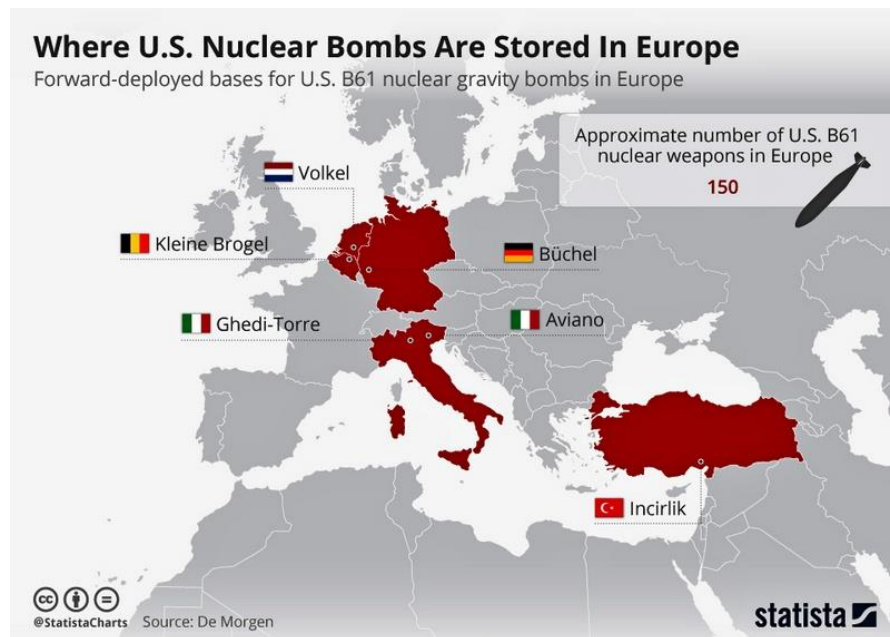
However, the Alberque’s work mentions Gromyko's statement that the Soviet Union reserves the right to return to discussing this issue on a bilateral basis¹⁰. This proves that, when approving the text of the future treaty, the country did not fully agree with the idea of NATO nuclear planning.

By December 1966, the USSR and the United States had approved the draft NPT (except for the provisions relating to safeguards), and in mid-December, NATO approved the creation of the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), which exists to this day.

Both superpowers were interested in creating a treaty that would prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the emergence of new states possessing them, so the countries made some concessions. The United States moved away from the idea of creating “NATO nuclear weapons”, and the Soviet Union softened its position on the existence of an explicit ban on joint nuclear planning in the NPT. During the signing of the NPT, the parties had the same understanding of Articles 1 and 2 of the NPT, since the USSR would not have signed the Treaty in the event of different approaches of the USSR and the United States to the issue of nuclear nonproliferation. As Gromyko said about the future Treaty: “... the wording should not give rise to different interpretations of the obligations of states fixed in the treaty. You cannot sign a treaty knowing that it gives rise to opposite interpretations. It is necessary to accurately formulate the respective obligations of the parties to the agreement.”¹¹

How does nuclear sharing work nowadays?

The nuclear planning process in NATO member states takes place at the NPG. The NPG, the highest governing body for nuclear policy in the Alliance, reviews and discusses nuclear policy and military exercises on the use of nuclear forces¹². Military exercises on the use of these forces are also agreed upon.



According to the Nuclear Threat Initiative, there are about 150 American B61 tactical bombs in Europe. Six facilities with US nuclear weapons are located in five countries: Belgium (10-20) (Kleine Brogel Air Base), Germany (10-20) (Büchel Air Base), Italy (60-70) (Aviano Air Base and Ghedi Torre Air Base), The Netherlands (10-20) (Volkel Air Base) and Turkey (60-70) (Incirlik Air Base)¹³.



Unlike the Cold War period, when US ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads were installed in Europe, the B61 bombs are designed to be delivered only by combat aircraft. The list of combat aircraft that can carry B61 on board includes the American F-15 E, F-16 C / D, Belgian, Dutch and Turkish F-16s, as well as the German and Italian PA-200 Tornado¹⁴. It is important to understand that although US nuclear weapons are located in the national territories of five NATO states, the responsibility for maintaining and protecting US nuclear bombs stored in Europe lies with the US Air Force. Moreover, although in the event of a war, this arsenal can be installed on the aircraft of the country in which it is stored, these nuclear weapons remain under the command and control of the United States. Only the United States decides whether to use it or not. The B61 bomb includes several security mechanisms designed to prevent unauthorized use:

- 1) an aircraft needs to have Aircraft Monitoring and Control (AMAC) computers that provide safing, arming, and fuzing functions of the bomb;
- 2) a pilot can input the Permissive Action Links code arming the bomb only through AMAC system;
- 3) activation code consists of a 6-12-digit number with a limited number of attempts to enter¹⁵.

Activation codes come directly from Washington DC.

Although the United States cooperates with NATO members in developing NATO nuclear policy, holds meetings and joint nuclear military exercises, and stores B61 bombs in European countries, in the end, it depends only on the United States whether this nuclear weapon will be used.

In 2017, it was announced that the United States was planning to upgrade its existing B61 bombs to modification 12 as part of the Life extension program. The program will allow keeping these bombs in the arsenal for the next 20-30 years¹⁶. The first production unit of the weapon will be completed in the fiscal year 2022¹⁷.



The modernization will be fully completed in 2025¹⁸. B61-12 will have new combat characteristics, updated security and radar components, modified power supplies, etc¹⁹. One of the key points is the modernization of the tail section of the aerial bomb (removal of the parachute, installation of an improved GPS and inertial guidance system), which actually makes it a high-precision weapon, and also allows the bomb to be equipped with a nuclear warhead of lower yield. The accuracy can reach 30 meters. Also, due to the new modification, carrier aircraft do not need to fly in close proximity to the target, thereby increasing the chance of avoiding falling into the enemy's air defense range.

The concept of nuclear sharing arrangements is not a rudiment of NATO during the Cold War but practice that is still in force today. NATO countries conduct relevant exercises, keep American nuclear weapons on their territory, and have military bombers to deliver them. The planned modernization of the American nuclear weapons located in Europe only confirms that the United States and NATO countries are seriously considering these tactical weapons.

Positions of NATO countries and Russia on nuclear sharing issue

The first thing the American side draws attention to is that the concept of NATO nuclear sharing arrangements was developed even before the creation of the NPT. At the same time, the NPT was adopted without prohibiting this concept. Moreover, historical records indicate that the text of the NPT was drafted by the USSR and the United States in such a way that NATO's nuclear policy was consistent with this text. Thus, NATO's nuclear agreements preceded the NPT, and they were fully taken into account when concluding the treaty. After the treaty entered into force, the Soviet Union also did not indicate that there was a violation of the treaty. That is, NATO nuclear policy complies with the NPT and does not contradict it, and Russia began to oppose nuclear sharing after its nuclear weapons began to be deployed only on Russian national territory. Here it is worth mentioning the position of Roland Timerbaev, one of the authors of the NPT, who confirmed that nuclear sharing contradicts the NPT (in an interview with Anton Khlopkov):



“Incidentally, the body responsible for making NATO nuclear policy decisions, which is now called the Nuclear Planning Group, de facto continues to exist. This gives a pretext to some politicians and officials to interpret the NPT in a way that allows bloc participation in nuclear issues. That is a mistaken interpretation. Joint nuclear missions by NATO members, or “nuclear sharing,” are prohibited by the treaty.”²⁰

The modernization of the B61 bombs proves that the United States is not going to give up them on their deployment in Europe. Also, according to the 2018 US Nuclear Posture Review, these bombs will remain in service, as they “can hold at risk a variety of protected targets”. Moreover, F-15E fighter-bombers and NATO allied dual capable aircraft will be replaced with forward-deployable, nuclear capable F-35. This is “a key contributor to continued regional deterrence stability and the assurance of allies”²¹.

At the 2018 NATO summit in Brussels, the participating States reaffirmed that the primary purpose of NATO nuclear forces is deterrence and that “as long as nuclear weapons exist, it [NATO] will remain a nuclear alliance”²². This was also reaffirmed in the London Declaration in December 2019. At the same time, at each NATO meeting, the participating countries reaffirmed their commitment to the NPT obligations. It can be concluded that the Western countries do not see contradictions between nuclear sharing and the NPT.

However, the participating countries are not always as united on this issue as they seem. In early 2010, several NATO countries - Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Norway - called on the United States to remove nuclear weapons from Europe. They argued that these weapons no longer serve military purposes in Europe and that withdrawing them would demonstrate NATO's commitment to the idea of a world free of nuclear weapons. The countries argued that NATO can achieve the political goals of the concept of nuclear sharing arrangements in other ways. For instance, the United States can expand deterrence and ensure the security of its allies in Europe through conventional weapons, missile defense, and strategic intercontinental missiles. Moreover, since nuclear weapons do not play a military or political role in Europe, they are no longer a symbol of the alliance's solidarity and cooperation²³. This initiative appeared after the promise of the German government in 2009 to speak within the framework of the Alliance for the removal of nuclear weapons from Germany. For the first time, the government of one of the countries storing American nuclear weapons on its territory has so clearly expressed itself in favor of the withdrawal of these weapons.

At the same time other NATO member states, including some new members, argued that US tactical nuclear weapons in Europe not only remain militarily relevant but are also an important indicator of US commitment to NATO security and solidarity. Withdrawing nuclear weapons from Europe would mean that the United States has changed its commitment to NATO security. This point of view was especially supported by countries such as Poland and the Baltic states, which felt threatened by Russia and its arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons²⁴.

Foreign ministers of NATO states addressed the issue of US non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe during a meeting in Tallinn in April 2010. At the meeting, Allied members sought to balance the views of those countries that sought to withdraw nuclear weapons and those that argued that these weapons were still providing security and solidarity within the block. After the meeting, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the United



States was not opposed to reducing the number of US nuclear weapons in Europe, but this process should be associated with a reduction in the number of Russian tactical nuclear weapons. Moreover, everyone agreed that nuclear weapons would not be removed from Europe if there was no consensus of all NATO member states on this issue²⁵. The adoption in November 2010 of the new Strategic Concept and the subsequent Deterrence and Defense Posture Review in May 2012 managed to consolidate the allies, however, according to some experts, they did not completely eliminate the differences that appeared within the alliance²⁶.

What is the attitude to the nuclear sharing arrangements of the countries on the territory of which the American nuclear weapons are now?

Belgium

On the territory of Belgium there are about 20 B61 bombs, and Belgium also has an F-16 A / B combat aircraft designed to use B61 nuclear bombs. In 2016, Belgium began replacing these aircraft. In 2018, it was decided to replace them with American F-35s²⁷. The Belgian government does not confirm or deny information about the presence of American nuclear weapons in Belgium. It is worth noting that in 2010 a group of anti-nuclear activists managed to infiltrate the Kleine Brogel Air Base and even get into the place of the alleged storage of nuclear bombs. After this incident, the fact of poor-quality protection of the Belgian military facility was revealed²⁸.

On January 16, 2020, the Belgian parliament voted on a resolution on the withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from Belgium and accession to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). 66 MPs voted for - 74 against, and the resolution was rejected. Also, according to a survey by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), conducted in April 2019, 64% of Belgians are in favor of signing the TPNW (17% are against)²⁹. The difference of 8 votes in parliament and the mood of the civilian population is an indicator of an ambiguous position on the issue of the location of American nuclear weapons in Belgium.

Germany

Germany stores about 20 B61 bombs at the Büchel Air Base and has means of delivery - PA-200 Tornados combat aircraft³⁰, which Germany is going to replace with American F-18s³¹. Germany is trying to remain silent regarding the presence of nuclear weapons on its territory.

However, in early May, representatives of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) began a discussion about the need to withdraw US nuclear weapons from German territory³², since US nuclear weapons on German soil do not strengthen the country's security, but rather vice versa. Besides, the policies of the Trump administration have left the risk of nuclear escalation unmanageable. It was also noted that other countries had already rejected US nuclear weapons without asking NATO questions. The fraction of the Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria strongly opposed the idea of withdrawing American nuclear weapons. Neither the Free Democratic Party of Germany supported the statements of the SPD. External players (USA) also spoke negatively about this. On May 15, the American ambassador to Warsaw Georgette Mosbacher said that if Germany wanted to reduce NATO's nuclear potential and weaken the alliance, then perhaps Poland could deploy American nuclear weapons and their means of delivery on its territory. The Russian side noted that the plan to move the nuclear weapons from Germany to Poland would be "a direct violation of the fundamental Russia-NATO act, in which NATO pledged not to deploy nuclear weapons either at that moment or in the future on the territory of the new members of the North Atlantic Alliance"³³. Russia is closely following the development of this plot.

Italy

There are 45-55 B61 bombs in Italy. There are also combat aircraft designed to deliver these bombs - F-16 C / D and PA-200 Tornados. Italy plans to purchase F-35 from the United States and begin replacing existing aircraft in 2024. Italy is the only NATO country to have adopted a resolution that allows the Italian government to consider ratifying the TPNW. This may indicate that the state believes that joining the TPNW and NATO membership can be compatible³⁴.

Netherlands

Volkel Air Base has about 20 B61 bombs, and the country has F-16 A/B combat aircraft to deliver them. The Netherlands plans to purchase F-35 combat aircraft from the United States and replace existing bombers in 2024³⁵. However, in 2013 it was unclear whether the country would acquire new bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons. In the fall of 2013, the Dutch parliament adopted a resolution to replace nuclear bombers with new American combat aircraft that cannot be equipped with nuclear weapons. Although this resolution was not binding, nevertheless, it once again shows the fragility of political support by some NATO member states for the concept of joint nuclear missions³⁶.

Turkey

At the Turkish Incirlik Air Base in southeastern Turkey, there is NATO largest nuclear weapons storage facility, which contains 50 American B61 bombs³⁷. In 2016, during an attempted military coup in Turkey, Washington was thinking about withdrawing nuclear weapons from the Incirlik base. Then, during the failed coup, the Turkish authorities closed the airspace in the area of the base, and the base itself was disconnected from the electricity supply for some time. The Turkish base was discussed again in 2019. All autumn 2019, the media and the expert community were discussing the Turkish airbase and the American nuclear weapons stored at this base. Of all the NATO countries on which territory there are American nuclear weapons, Turkey is the only one that does not play an active direct role in the delivery of nuclear weapons using its bombers. On October 14, 2019, The New York Times, citing its unnamed sources, reported that officials from the US Department of State and Department of Energy were discussing the possibility of withdrawing nuclear weapons from the Incirlik base in Turkey. However, at the moment, nothing indicates that the role of the Incirlik base may radically change in the near future and nuclear weapons will be transported somewhere³⁸.

Russia's position

2015-16 Russia began to openly declare that American nuclear weapons in Europe and NATO nuclear sharing arrangements are in direct violation of the spirit and letter of the NPT. Especially considering that the military of non-nuclear NATO countries (for example, pilots) are participating in exercises on the use of American TNW deployed in Europe. This was stated by the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Sergei Shoigu at the IV Moscow Conference on International Security 2015 (MCIS)³⁹ and Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Valery Gerasimov at the MCIS-2016 conference⁴⁰. In addition, Mikhail Ulyanov at the 2015 NPT Review Conference stated that NATO joint nuclear missions violate Articles 1 and 2 of the NPT⁴¹. For the first time, Ulyanov voiced Russia's discontent at the Prepcom in 2014. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation continues to criticize this NATO concept.

Russia urges the United States and its allies to end violations of the NPT, “to ensure the return of American nuclear weapons to the national territory of the United States and to eliminate

all infrastructure that would allow the rapid deployment of these weapons in the territory of other NATO members. It is necessary to completely abandon the conduct of any exercises related to the development of skills in the use of nuclear weapons with the participation of NNWS.”⁴²

In addition, Russia notes the fact that the United States remains the only NWS with forward-based non-strategic nuclear weapons outside its territory.

Article 1 of the NPT states: “Each nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly...”⁴³. Article 2 of the NPT: “Each non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly...”⁴⁴. And in this regard, at least three controversial points arise:

1. In the case of the nuclear sharing concept, it can be argued that the United States transferred its nuclear weapons to five recipient states.
2. During hostilities, it is assumed that aircraft from the US NATO allies can participate in the delivery and use of nuclear weapons. And this can already be called the transfer of indirect control over nuclear weapons. This is especially dangerous when there is an opinion among some NATO states that the NPT does not operate in wartime⁴⁵, therefore, the participation of non-nuclear NATO countries in a real military mission with the use of nuclear weapons will not contradict the NPT if military conflict is already underway.
3. The provision by a European country of a base for the deployment of American nuclear weapons on its territory can be perceived as an acceptance of indirect control over these weapons. The same applies to the provision of pilots from a European state for NATO joint nuclear exercises.

The Russian side also notes that the deployment of new B61-12 nuclear bombs in Europe objectively lowers the nuclear threshold, that is, the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. This is due to the peculiarity of the new modification B61-12, which “will be... “more ethical” and “more usable”, since it is more accurate and supposedly has less disastrous consequences for the civilian population in the case of the application over large areas”⁴⁶. It is important to note that the United States adheres to the same position concerning Russia and its TNW. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review notes that Russian low-yield nuclear weapons lower the nuclear threshold, so the United States is increasing the flexibility and combat capability of its nuclear forces, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of deterrence policies and raising the nuclear threshold⁴⁷.

An analysis of the countries' positions shows that NATO nuclear sharing arrangements are indeed in some respects inconsistent with the NPT. Moreover, historically, there has been a periodic lack of consensus within the NATO on this issue, and the countries on which American nuclear weapons are located try not to discuss this topic. It is also important to note that NATO nuclear policy can be changed, and nuclear weapons removed from Europe, only if there is a consensus of all NATO member states on this issue.

Nuclear sharing in the context of the upcoming NPT Review Conference

For a better understanding of what attention will be paid to the concept of NATO nuclear sharing at the upcoming NPT Review Conference, the speeches of all countries at the three the Preparatory Committee of the Review Conference were analyzed. The position of Russia will not be shown in this part of the work, as it has already been displayed earlier. The analysis showed that not only Russia opposes NATO nuclear sharing.

At the first session of the PrepCom, Cuba criticized American nuclear weapons (including its proliferation in Europe)⁴⁸. Syria criticized US nuclear development in the military sphere⁴⁹, and Iran in its speech called the concept of NATO nuclear sharing, in any of its manifestations, an obvious violation of Articles 1 and 2 of the NPT⁵⁰. Kazakhstan in its speech expressed concern about the modernization of nuclear weapons in general⁵¹.

At the second PrepCom session, China criticized the presence of US nuclear weapons in Europe and declared the need to return it to its national territory⁵². Iran opposed the modernization of nuclear weapons, in particular the creation of low-yield nuclear weapons⁵³. South Africa (like the Philippines⁵⁴) also opposed the ongoing modernization of nuclear weapons⁵⁵.

At the third session of the PrepCom, China called on countries to stop thinking in terms of the Cold War, and also reiterated its call on certain nuclear countries to end the practice of nuclear sharing⁵⁶. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) (Indonesia spoke on behalf of the organization) also stated that any horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and the principles of nuclear sharing is a clear violation of Articles 1 and 2 of the NPT, and called for an end to such practices, including within the framework of military alliances⁵⁷. Iran reiterated that NATO nuclear sharing arrangements and the United States' modernization of nuclear weapons constituted a serious violation of the spirit and letter of the NPT⁵⁸.

An analysis of documents from the Preparatory Committees showed that, in addition to Russia, NATO nuclear sharing arrangements are concerned about countries from different regions of the world: NAM, Iran, Kazakhstan (indirectly), China, Cuba, Syria (indirectly), the Philippines (indirectly) and South Africa (indirectly).

Particular attention should be paid to the fact that NAM opposes nuclear sharing, and this organization represents the opinion of 120 countries, where decisions are made based on consensus.

Could it be beneficial for the United States and NATO countries to change NATO nuclear policy and abandon the storage of American nuclear weapons in Europe?

Based on the analysis of expert opinions, as well as the conclusions made in the previous parts of this work, the following list of reasons for refusing to deploy American nuclear weapons in Europe was formed:

- 1. There are no sufficiently convincing excuses for storing nuclear weapons in Europe from a military point of view and its role in deterrence.*

Deterrence can be provided by modern conventional weapons and US troops stationed in Europe. This is an even more explicit form of ensuring the security of the European territory itself. Besides, the strategic nuclear weapons available to the United States in combination with the nuclear weapons of Great Britain and France can continue to fulfill NATO nuclear deterrent role after the removal of TNW from Europe. A good argument was made by a former US State Department employee Wayne Merry, recalling that Japan and South Korea are under the protection of the US nuclear umbrella, and this did not require placing nuclear weapons directly on the territory of these countries⁵⁹. American nuclear weapons were located in South Korea from 1958 to 1991. Then the United States decided to withdraw nuclear weapons from South Korea, partly to persuade North Korea to allow international inspections of its nuclear facilities, and partly because the American military no longer believed that the deployment of nuclear weapons on the territory of South Korea is necessary for its protection. Since then, the protection of South Korea and Japan has been provided by American dual-use fighter-bombers and strategic nuclear forces in the form of bombers and submarines⁶⁰.

2. Serious security risks.

It is likely that terrorists will be able to infiltrate a base in Europe with stored nuclear weapons. The successful infiltration of activists into a base in Belgium in 2010 is an excellent confirmation that something like this can happen.

The B61 bomb has a destabilizing effect since these bombs can be delivered by dual-use fighters capable of carrying both nuclear and conventional warheads. The enemy under attack is always inclined to imagine the worst and can respond with nuclear weapons to an attack carried out using a traditional arsenal.

3. Large financial costs that do not bring real benefits.

4. Violation of Articles 1 and 2 of the NPT.

Many countries will lift their accusations against the US and NATO for non-compliance with the NPT provisions.

5. The concept of nuclear sharing demonstrates to NNWS that the possession of nuclear weapons is still an important guarantee of security, which may lead to the desire to possess them.

6. NATO nuclear sharing arrangements can serve as an example for Russia, China, India, or Pakistan, who may also consider deploying part of their nuclear arsenal in partner countries.

7. The withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from Europe may become the necessary condition that will help convince Russia to take action against its large number of TNW.

Back in 2008, Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak, in an interview with Arms Control Today, admitted that the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from European territory would be a serious factor in changing Russia's position on reducing or eliminating its TNW⁶¹.

Conclusion

In the 1960s, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and realizing that this would be impossible without the conclusion of the NPT, the USSR softened its position in relation to

NATO nuclear sharing arrangements, reserving the right to return to discussing this issue on a bilateral basis with the United States. This was not done. Only a couple of decades after the end of the Cold War did Russia come out with a strong reasoned position against NATO nuclear sharing arrangements, which are still actively pursued by the Alliance. However, the country failed to enter into dialogue with the United States and NATO countries on this issue. At the same time, the Russian Federation is far from the only country that is concerned about this topic. NAM, Iran, China, Cuba, etc. are also concerned. This indicates that this topic may be touched upon in the upcoming NPT Review Conference. Also, there are several reasons why NATO might benefit from changing its inflexible approach to nuclear sharing.

NATO nuclear sharing arrangements are one of the many challenges in the area of nuclear non-proliferation and arms control. On August 2, 2019, the United States withdrew from the INF Treaty, abandoned the JCPOA, and withdrew from the Open Skies Treaty. The response to the Russian proposal to extend New START is also being delayed. Therefore, it is difficult to talk about any possibilities in the coming years to convince the United States and NATO to abandon or change the concept of nuclear sharing.

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