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Russia takes complete advantage of castrated armed forces of the West

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How can Russia - the country that lost the Cold War - be ahead of NATO in terms of military power? One should look into the history of the problem to try to understand.

It is believed that by the beginning of 1991, the USSR had about 20-22,000 units of tactical nuclear weapons. They are nuclear warheads of air bombs, warheads for tactical missiles "Luna", "Tochka", "Oka", nuclear warheads of antisubmarine weapons of the fleet, special warheads of air defense system missiles, nuclear mines and nuclear artillery shells of the Ground Forces.

This impressive arsenal was the result of forty years of an intensive arms race. Noteworthy, it was not the "totalitarian" USSR that started the arms race, but the liberal and democratic USA, which began developing and testing various types of tactical nuclear weapons in the early 1950s. The first example of a warhead of this class was the warhead for a 280-mm gun with the capacity of 15 kilotons. The warhead was tested in May 1953. Afterwards, nuclear warheads would be produced smaller in size, thus leading to the creation of warheads for self-propelled howitzers of 203-mm and 155-mm caliber that had a capacity from one to ten kilotons. Until recently, they were remaining in the arsenal of US troops in Europe.

Afterwards, the US Armed Forces received the following tactical missiles outfitted with nuclear warheads: Redstone (range 370 km), Corporal (125 kilometers), Sergeant (140 kilometers), Lance (130 kilometers) and several others. In the middle of the 1960s, the USA finalized the development of tactical missiles Pershing-1 (740 kilometers).

In turn, the Soviet military and political leadership decided that the equipment of American forces in Europe with TNW was creating a fundamentally new balance of forces. The USSR took decisive steps to create and deploy multiple types of Soviet tactical nuclear weapons. Already in the early 1960s, tactical missiles T-5, T-7, "Luna" were passed into service. Later, the non-strategic nuclear arsenal was expanded with medium-range missiles RSD-10, P-12, P-14 medium-range bombers Tu-22 and Tu-16, as well as tactical missiles OTR-22, OTR-23 and tactical ones - P-17, "Tochka", nuclear artillery of 152 mm, 203 mm and 240 mm caliber, tactical aviation aircraft Su-17, Su-24, MiG-21, MiG-23.

Noteworthy, the Soviet leadership had repeatedly offered Western leaders to start negotiations on the reduction of tactical nuclear weapons. Yet, NATO would persistently reject all Soviet proposals on this subject. The situation changed considerably only when the Union started shattering as a result of Gorbachev's "perestroika". It was the time, when Washington decided to take advantage of the moment to weaken and disarm its main geopolitical rival.

In September 1991, US President George H. Bush launched an initiative on the reduction and even elimination of certain types of tactical nuclear weapons. Gorbachev, in turn, also announced plans to radically reduce similar weapons in the USSR. Subsequently, the plans received development in the statement from Russian President Boris Yeltsin "On Russia's policy in the field of arms limitation and reduction" from January 29, 1992. The statement pointed out that Russia stopped producing nuclear artillery shells and warheads for land-based missiles and undertook to destroy a stockpile of such weapons. Russia promised to remove tactical nuclear weapons from surface ships, attack submarines and eliminate one-third of those weapons. A half of warheads for anti-aircraft missiles and aircraft munitions was to be destroyed too.

After such reductions, the arsenals of tactical nuclear weapons of Russia and the United States were to keep 2,500-3,000 tactical nuclear warheads. However, it turned out otherwise. The illusion of world supremacy played a cruel joke on Washington.

American strategists wrote off the "democratic" Russia after the collapse of the USSR. At the same time, during the Gulf War, US high-precision weapons successfully completed several large-scale combat tasks that had been previously planned for TNW. This prompted Washington

to putting all stakes on a technological breakthrough. This led to the creation of "smart" weapons that were becoming more and more expensive. The USA was gradually cutting the production of such weapons, and NATO's high-tech arms proved to be completely inadequate for conducting large-scale combat actions with an enemy that would be at least approximately equal to the West from the point of view of its technological level.

Meanwhile in Russia, experts were quick to agree that against the backdrop of the post-Soviet geostrategic situation, reducing and eliminating tactical nuclear weapons was unacceptable. After all, it is tactical nuclear weapons that serve as a universal equalizer of forces, depriving NATO of its military advantage. In these circumstances, Russia simply borrowed NATO's thesis of the need to compensate enemy superiority in conventional weapons by deploying tactical nuclear arsenal on the European Theater of Operations.

The situation had been developing according to the above-mentioned scenario for over two decades. The West, having discarded Russia, had been cutting its tanks and destroying tactical nuclear weapons. Russia, feeling its own weakness, kept all tanks and tactical nuclear weapons.

As a result, Russia overcome the inertia of collapse and started reviving its power, while the West, being lulled by sweet day-dreams of the liberal "end of history," castrated its armed forces to the point, when they could be good for leading colonial wars with weak and technically backward enemies. The balance of forces in Europe has thus changed in Russia's favor.

When the Americans realized that, it was too late. In December 2010, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, Rose Gottemoeller, sounded the alarm. The Russians had more tactical nuclear systems than the USA, she said. According to her, the reduction of tactical nuclear weapons was to be the next step.

In 2010, the Europeans, in the face of foreign ministers of Poland and Sweden, insolently demanded Russia should single-handedly establish two nuclear-free zones - the Kaliningrad region (enclave) and the Kola Peninsula - the territories of priority deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons. The regions serve as the main bases for the Baltic and Northern Fleets. In case of the Northern Fleet, the region is a base for most of Russian SNF.

Since then, the Americans have repeatedly offered Russia to follow the flawed way of solving the "problem of tactical nuclear weapons." They stubbornly insist on reaching an agreement to eliminate disparities on stocks of tactical nuclear weapons. They even tried to stipulate a condition for the effect of the START-3 Treaty. Thus, in accordance with Senator Lemieux's amendment (Amendment 4/S.AMDN.4908), the START-3 was to come into force after the Russian side agreed to start negotiations on the so-called liquidation of imbalance of tactical nuclear weapons in Russia and the US.

On February 3, 2011, Barack Obama wrote in a letter to several key senators saying that the United States was going to start negotiations with Russia to address disparity between tactical nuclear weapons of the Russian Federation and the United States to reduce the number of tactical nuclear warheads in a verifiable way. Alas, in 2012, Putin returned to the Kremlin, and the hopes of the West to deceive Russia though unilateral disarmament failed.