

Social Sciences

© East View Press

<http://www.eastviewpress.com/Journals/SocialSciences.aspx>



It Did Not Work and Will Not Work? Reasons for the Failure of Anti-Missile Cooperation between Russia and the United States

Aleksey ARBATOV

Abstract. Joint ballistic missile defense (BMD) means that one party puts saving the lives of millions of its citizens at the mercy of political commitment and the effectiveness of technical systems of the other. Such interdependence implies nothing less than close allied relations, which should cover not only the sphere of missile defense, but the key areas of military and foreign policy. Russia and the United States do not have such a relationship, and it is unlikely to emerge in the foreseeable future. Perhaps, in the past, there was a widely accepted and quite naive belief that technical solutions for the integration of certain elements of BMD systems would make it possible to circumvent the fundamental military-political realities of the relations between the two powers. After many attempts to establish BMD cooperation in 2002–2011, it became apparent that the whole idea was premature, and from the point of view of today’s realities somewhat utopian. Even a partial integration of some elements of the BMD systems implies common understanding of the origins, characteristics of missile attack risks, and their azimuths. The US is openly designing its anti-missile system against Iran, North Korea, and, unofficially, perhaps also against China. Russia has never officially recognized the threats to its security from these countries. With regard to the BMD systems, Russia’s concerns about the USA/NATO program might be allayed, among other things, by agreeing on confidence-building measures. Such agreements and defense program adjustments would create preconditions for cooperation on some BMD elements, and subsequently for the integration of Russian and US defense systems in general. However, the revival of anti-missile cooperation involves much more. It implies a deep revision of the relations between Russia and the United States and its allies,

A. Arbatov, Full Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), director, Center for International Security, Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences. The article was first published in Russian in the journal *Politicheskiye issledovaniya (POLIS)*, No. 2, 2016.

which requires significant changes in the foreign and security policies of both sides. All of this goes far beyond relations between Moscow and Washington in the sphere of anti-missile defense—as important and complex as it is. And this problem of a higher order, undoubtedly, is much more important for the future of Russia and of the rest of the world.

Keywords: Russia; USA; international security; missile defense; ABM; cooperation.

DOI: 10.17976/jpps/2016.02.05

Today even non-specialists realize that the plan of Russia-USA cooperation in creating a joint Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) has suffered a fiasco. At best, it has been put off for a long time, and at worst, forever.

And yet until fairly recently hopes were pinned on such cooperation at the official level in Washington and Moscow. Perhaps the last comment on the issue was made by Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu in late 2013: “We still come out for mutually beneficial cooperation on BMD... However, before launching common anti-missile projects we need firm and reliable legal guarantees that the American BMD system will not be used against the Russian nuclear deterrent” [3]. It was, however, more a last *pro forma* statement than a practical proposal. At about the same time, according to press reports, President Vladimir Putin dissolved the inter-agency working group led by Vice-Premier Dmitry Rogozin responsible for negotiations on the issue [4].

Today, with continuing tensions around the Ukrainian crisis and contradictions over Syria, the BMD topic is brought up, if at all, only in the context of mutual accusations of being disingenuous, of seeking to upset strategic stability by word and deed in terms of new armaments.

Addressing the Valdai Forum in Sochi in 2015 President Vladimir Putin said: “As we know, under the pretext of a nuclear missile threat from Iran the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, which forms the foundation of modern international security, has been destroyed. The USA withdrew from it unilaterally. Today, incidentally, the Iran nuclear problem has been solved, there is no threat from Iran and, as we have said, never has been. The reason which allegedly prompted our American partners to build a missile defense system seems to have gone. We would be entitled to expect that work on the development of BMD by the United States would stop. What do we see in reality? Nothing of the kind is happening, on the contrary, everything continues... They were simply trying to mislead us and indeed the whole world. Or, to put it still more simply, we were being cheated. This is not about a hypothetical Iranian threat, which has never existed. This is about an attempt to upset the strategic balance, to change the balance of forces in their favor in order not just to dominate, but to be able to dictate their will to everyone: to their geopolitical rivals and I think to their allies... The nuclear deterrent began to be devalued,” Vladimir Putin stressed. “Some may even have an illusion that real victory of one of the sides in the world conflict is

achievable again—without irreversible, unacceptable, as specialists put it, consequences for the winner, if there is a winner” [5].

For their part, the US and NATO leaders accuse Russia of an “irresponsible” course of building up nuclear arms and making threatening nuclear declarations. Much was made of President Putin’s announcement that in 2015 Russia would put on duty 40 new strategic missiles which could penetrate any BMD systems [6]. The US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter declared: “Nuclear weapons are not something that should be the subject of loose rhetoric... it is not appropriate judgment, in my opinion, for leaders to be speaking that way about something as grave as nuclear weapons” [7]. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg stressed that “It’s a rhetoric on nuclear activities which are completely unjustified... And they are destabilizing” [8].

Since the late 1990s many studies in the professional circles in the USA and Russia sought to justify the advantages of cooperation between the two powers in developing and using BMD systems. In hindsight it is clear that assessing such advantages as something abstract, as something “hanging in the air” was a critical mistake of the policy-makers and specialists of the time. And yet such benefits can only be assessed in the context of the tasks both sides put before defense systems. These tasks provide the political and strategic ground on which are based the technical characteristics of BMD systems and elements of possible interaction between them. In other words, the theoretical advantages of BMD cooperation can only be put into practice in a corresponding political and strategic environment.

Unfortunately, such an environment does not exist today. The current conditions for interaction are unfavorable compared with the late 1990s and 2001-2011 when the idea of anti-missile cooperation was elevated to the level of inter-state relations and negotiations between the two powers. A return to the concept of cooperation on BMD is only possible if there is a positive change in these circumstances, which would require great political, diplomatic and military-technical efforts on both sides.

Domestic Policies

In Russia after the unrest of 2011-2012 and Vladimir Putin’s return to the Kremlin the political course veered from “Russia’s European choice” which was the name of the game for many years, to “the Eurasian path,” self-reliance and economic, political and military interaction with the Asia-Pacific countries. Their economies are booming and there is no pressure on the partners over the issues of democracy and human rights which the Russian elite perceives as the intention to bring about a change of political regime through ideological sabotage and “color revolutions.”

The course for distancing itself from the West, followed by confrontation, reached its peak during the Ukrainian crisis of 2013-2015. The USA and its allies were accused of trying to put Russia back “on its knees,” to dismember it and grab its natural resources and territory. Against the background of massive

propaganda of a Western military threat Russia launched a 23-trillion-ruble program of modernizing its army and navy, unprecedented since the late 1980s, under the State Armament Program to 2020.

Clearly, under such conditions the project of a joint BMD with the USA/NATO, which were perceived as the main military threat to Russia, would look totally absurd inside the country.

In the United States the election of the first Afro-American president with socially-oriented internal reform and emphasis on pursuing foreign policy under the UN aegis and restraint in the use of force and nuclear disarmament created a groundswell of right-wing conservative opposition. After the clash over Ukraine it acquired a distinct anti-Russian thrust and tied the president's hands in foreign and military policy, including any compromises on the BMD program and cooperation with Russia in this field.

Foreign Policy

Joint ballistic missile defense (BMD) means that one party puts saving the lives of millions of its citizens at the mercy of political commitment and the effectiveness of technical systems of the other. Such interdependence implies nothing less than close allied relations, which should cover not only the sphere of missile defense, but the key areas of military and foreign policy. Even the current US program of BMD in Europe and the Asia-Pacific Region is not a joint allied project, but a US system partially deployed on the territories of its allies who are using some of its elements.

Russia and the USA do not have such relations and are unlikely to have them in the foreseeable future. Perhaps formerly many believed, naively, that some technical solutions to combine certain BMD elements would make it possible to circumvent these fundamental military-political realities in the relations between the two powers. After unsuccessful attempts to establish anti-missile cooperation in 2002-2011 it became obvious that the idea itself was premature and somewhat utopian from the point of view of today's realities.

Thus even a partial integration of some elements of the BMD systems (not to speak of the entire system) implies common understanding of the origins, characteristics of missile attack risks, and their azimuths. The US is openly designing its anti-missile system against Iran, North Korea, and, unofficially, perhaps also against China. Russia has never officially recognized the threats to its security from these countries. However, Moscow repeatedly expressed official concern about the nuclear missile potentials of Great Britain and France against which the US BMD could not be targeted for understandable reasons. Exceptions are Israel, India and Pakistan. Neither Russia nor the USA are afraid of the first two states while Russia speaks about the potential threat from the third state openly and America privately for reasons of political expediency.

Strategic Relations: Offensive Systems

The military-strategic relations of Russia with the USA and NATO are based on mutual nuclear deterrence. In the two decades since the end of the Cold War the two sides made substantial cuts to their nuclear forces and until 2011-2012 the topic of nuclear deterrence was overshadowed by current political relations. But it never went away and was implicitly present in the military-political relations between the powers.

After 2012, Russia's policy emphasis on nuclear deterrence increased dramatically both in the rhetoric and in military-technical terms. In his programmatic article on the eve of 2012 elections Vladimir Putin stressed: "As long as the 'powder' of strategic nuclear forces created by the valiant efforts of our fathers and grandfathers remains 'dry' nobody would dare unleash a full-scale aggression against us." Elsewhere in his article he wrote: "The role and significance of nuclear deterrence will be preserved in the structure of the Armed Forces at least until we get other types of weapons, new-generation strike complexes" [9].

In 2012 Putin published a program of modernizing the Strategic Nuclear Forces (SNF) whereby 400 modern land-based and sea-launched strategic ballistic missiles and eight new strategic missile-carrying submarines would be handed over to the armed forces until 2020. (Incidentally, the very fact that the head of state is displaying such great public attention to nuclear weapons is perceived in the West as a political threat. In the West these issues, as a rule, never rise above the level of defense secretaries and the army top brass). Today seven types of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) are at various stages of development, testing, building and deployment. They are Yars, Rubezh, a new liquid-fueled heavy silo-based Sarmat missile (to replace Voyevoda ICBM), the Barguzin railway mobile missile system as well as sea-launched Sineva, Liner and Bulava missiles. All these nuclear assets are aimed primarily against the USA and its allies and have been improved to increase their survivability and the ability to penetrate any real or future BMD system.

Nuclear deterrence does not loom so large in official US rhetoric, but it is not going to be discarded. According to the American doctrine, "the fundamental role of US nuclear weapons, which will continue as long as nuclear weapons exist, is to deter nuclear attack on the United States, our allies, and partners" [2, p. VIII]. After 2020 the US, after Russia, will start a cycle of renewing its strategic triad. A new bomber will be deployed since the beginning of the next decade, and a new generation of land-based ICBMs after 2030 followed by the sea-launched missile to replace submarines and Trident missiles. The whole cycle will cost an estimated \$900 billion.

Given the sharp controversy over the INF Treaty Washington apparently lost interest in further strategic weapons cuts [10]. Most probably the USA is committed to update its strategic nuclear triad once it gets a free hand after the expiry of the Prague Treaty on measures for the further reduction and limitation of

strategic offensive arms in 2020. The main aim of the new systems will be to deter Russia and China considering the current programs of strategic nuclear forces modernization.

Obviously, in such strategic conditions creating even elements of a joint BMD is unrealistic: for example, integration of space (satellites) and land (radars) missile attack warning systems. These systems in the USA and Russia are highly centralized, fully automated and for the most part are intended to detect each other's missile launches. Thus mutual disclosure of their technical potential is unacceptable and information exchange should at the very least be "filtered." Furthermore, it is inconceivable that two powers would automatically exchange signals of combat launches of their missiles (or those of their allies and partners, for example, Great Britain, France, Israel and China). Hence the integrated elements of the missile attack warning systems would have to be separated from the warning system in general and the areas of joint observation would have to be agreed, which would create political problems (noted above) and technical difficulties. True, nothing could in principle prevent the revival of the joint missile launch data exchange center, a kind of common data bank agreed in 2000 but never implemented. However, even this "innocuous" project is likely to be stillborn given the tough confrontation between the two powers.

It has to be recalled that in the previous decade there was a program of cooperation on tactical BMD (theater BMD) which saw joint computer exercises of Russia and the USA/NATO. But those were different political times and, most importantly, things were aided indirectly by the 1987 Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). It eliminated all the land-based Russian and US missiles which could be intercepted by tactical BMD systems. Therefore there was no contradiction between offensive missiles of the parties and a common anti-missile defense. Hypothetically, if Russia and the USA had eliminated their strategic ballistic missiles it would have been much easier to develop a joint BMD. But that is unlikely in the foreseeable future.

Perhaps, given the political will of the governments, if Russia really and consistently followed the "European path" of internal development and defining its place in the world, experts could develop a road map of phased integration of BMD and parallel departure from relations of mutual nuclear deterrence. It could be replaced by a different model of strategic relations (like between Britain and France, for example). However, such a model failed to be developed in the last quarter century although there was no shortage of fine rhetoric. The continuing state of mutual nuclear deterrence was simply not mentioned on the grounds that a military conflict was unthinkable after the end of the Cold War. And today and likely in the future the two powers are moving not closer but further away from each other in military-political terms.

Strategic Relations: Defense Systems

In this strategic sphere, today the situation has changed radically compared with the first decade of our century. First, unlike in the past, the world has not only one main anti-missile program (that of the USA), but two, the American and the Russian ones, with the latter developing as part of the air-space defense program (VKO). VKO forces were created in May 2011 on the basis of Space Forces. The development and deployment of air-space defense systems was the key section of the State Armament Program (GPV-2020) which will account for about 20% of allocations, i.e., about 3.4 trillion rubles.

Naturally, there is no question of Russia taking part in the USA/NATO system—we can only speak about elements of compatibility of the two systems. But that is impeded not only by the offensive, but also by the defense programs and strategies of the parties. Unlike political relations, which can change quickly, strategic relations have immense inertia. The programs that are being planned today will determine strategic relations well beyond 2020 unless the strategic and technical parameters of BMD are substantially changed on a mutual basis.

The US BMD is officially being created for protection from third countries (“rogue states”) and not from Russia. Moscow does not believe it. True, most authoritative independent specialists in and outside Russia believe that the projected system does not pose problems for the Russian nuclear deterrence potential (i.e., missiles can penetrate any BMD system likely to appear in the next 15-20 years). However, Russia’s suspicions are fueled by the refusal of the US to discuss any limitations on future quantitative and technical characteristics (for example, the speed of interceptor missiles) and the geography of the system’s deployment if only over an agreed period of time and depending on the predicted threats, with the standard right of withdrawing from an agreement in the event of “a threat to the highest national interests.” Washington’s refusal is dictated by technical uncertainty and even more so by internal political considerations, but the Kremlin rejects these justifications. Indeed, the projected missile programs of “rogue states” with nuclear weapons allow of coordination of such limitations (with the exception of China which is not officially a target of the BMD of the USA and its allies in the Pacific). The US missile defense program is open-ended, which is the first obstacle in the way of combining the US and Russian defense systems.

The second obstacle is the Russian Air-Space Defense (VKO) which is expressly directed against the USA. Combining it with the American system would be strategically bizarre. In June 2013, visiting a plant that produces air defense missiles, President Putin said: “An effective air space defense is a guarantee of the stability of our strategic deterrent, of protecting the territory of the country against air and space offensive weapons” [11]. No country other than the USA is capable of threatening the stability of the Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces and not a single country has air-space attack capability although there is an inherent contradiction in the very term. In the above-mentioned article Putin notes: “A guarantee against the violation of the global balance of forces should be either

the creation of our own very costly and still ineffective BMD system, or, far more effectively, a capability to penetrate any system of missile defense and to protect the Russian retaliatory potential. This will be the aim of the Strategic Nuclear Forces and the air space defense structures” [9].

Following this logic, if a BMD system is thought to be “costly and ineffective” then the program of air and space defense does not envisage the building of a system to protect Russian cities or strategic nuclear forces assets against US land-based and sea-launched ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads. At present the VKO air and space defense program includes only modernization of A-135 BMD system for non-nuclear interception to cover the Moscow area, i.e., state government and military control points. Formerly US nuclear ballistic missiles were considered to be the main threat to the “retaliation potential” of the USSR/Russia.

Consequently, according to Putin’s formula, now the main task is defending strategic forces not from nuclear ICBMs or SLBMs but from other American high-precision long-range systems. Such systems fall roughly into two categories. First, submarine-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) and air-launched cruise missiles (it is ALCMs) currently deployed on submarines, cruisers, destroyers and bombers.

From the strictly military point of view a disarming strike by such missiles on Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces is a highly dubious proposition. Its preparation would take too much time and would be detectable for the other side giving it a chance to upgrade the combat readiness of its troops and assets. The attack itself would extend in time over many hours or even days (in contrast to 20-30 minutes when nuclear ballistic missiles are used) which would enable the other side to deliver a retaliatory nuclear strike during the course of the attack.

However, if Moscow has doubts that nuclear weapons would be used in retaliation of conventional attack air and space defense may come in very useful. Given proper information and control support, systems like Pantsyr-S1 and S-400 could probably protect from cruise missiles mobile and stationary nuclear deterrence assets (command points, silo-based and mobile ICBMs, and submarine and bomber bases). In any case, air and space defense systems would provide more time for decision-making and bring a significant element of uncertainty to the proposed plans of disarming strikes, which would already strengthen deterrence.

Secondly, the USA is conducting, at various experimental stages, the development of new systems under the Conventional Prompt Global Strike (CPGS) program. They may be deployed after 2020 [12], although the current military budget cuts would put off that moment. Such assets include missile gliding (or aeroballistic) systems with hypersonic devices such as *AHW (Advanced Hypersonic Weapon)* [1, pp. 33-63] which may be based on the islands of Guam and Diego Garcia, on surface ships and submarines. It uses ballistic booster stages and guided hypersonic maneuverable and gliding vehicles. There are plans to build submarine-launched intermediate-range ballistic missiles (*SLIRBM*) with gliding warheads that can be deployed on ships and submarines. In parallel and outside the framework of the CPGS program the hypersonic X-51A Waverider aviation cruise missile is being tested.

Like in the case of BMD, Washington justifies these weapon systems by the need to counter problem regimes (Iran, DPRK) and terrorists. Independent Western experts do not rule out their use in the event of a military conflict with China. However, like in the case missile defense systems, Russia does not believe this and sees future American long-range non-nuclear assets primarily as a threat to its nuclear deterrence potential. In response Russia and China are deploying long-range cruise missiles with conventional warheads (such as the Kalibr system used in October 2015 against targets in Syria) and are developing their own hypersonic gliding missile and ballistic strategic and intermediate-range assets. Apparently, these were the systems with regard to the USA that President Putin had in mind when he wrote in the above-mentioned article: "All this will make it possible, along with nuclear weapons, to obtain qualitatively new instruments for achieving political and strategic goals. Such weapons systems would be comparable in effectiveness to nuclear weapons, but would be more 'acceptable' in political and military terms. Thus, the role of the strategic balance of nuclear forces in deterring aggression and chaos would gradually diminish" [9].

However, it has to be stressed that in terms of destructive capacity conventional assets will never even remotely approach nuclear weapons in delivering a disarming strike on protected targets (launch silos, command bunkers) and on industrial and population centers. However, the concerns of the Russian leadership over such projects can be understood in the context of its perceptions of nuclear deterrence and the tasks of Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces.

Modern strategic ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads have greater speed and shorter flight time than the CPGS being developed in the USA. There is practically no protection against modern missiles. However, their trajectories are predictable, launches are detected by satellites during the first minutes of the flight and confirmed by land-based missile attack warning radars 10-15 minutes before the warheads fall. Thus, the other side has a chance to launch a counter strike (i.e., launching based on MAWS signals before enemy warheads go off) on which the main stake is put.

The start of gliding missile systems, and of ballistic missiles, can be detected by satellite, but thereafter they enter the stratosphere and fly at hypersonic speed by unpredictable routes. Because of the lower trajectory than that of ICBMs and SLBMs MAWS radars would detect them only 3-4 minutes before they reach target and air defense radars, because of the high speed, within three minutes or less [1, pp. 70, 76, 87]. US gliding missile systems are for the greater part of the trajectory in the "blind zone" between the missile defense and air defense warning systems. To detect and follow CPGS assets in a timely manner Russia will have to modify at great cost the information and control systems and intercept missiles. It is still debatable whether these assets will be accurate enough to hit protected objects (ICBM silos, command points) and whether they would be able to destroy land-based mobile systems. It is also unclear whether enough of these assets will be deployed (hundreds of units) to pose a threat to Russian strategic deterrence assets.

However, the specific nature of the trajectory of gliding missile assets may impede an ICBM counter strike or else they will have to be launched after receiving a signal from satellites without confirmation of the attack by land radars. In general the concept of a retaliatory counter-strike is very dubious because of the high danger of an exchange due to a false alarm or a mistake of the leadership which has several minutes to make the fateful decision to use nuclear weapons. But that is a separate topic of discussion. Clearly, in combination with gliding missile systems this concept would make the start of a nuclear war by inadvertence more probable. The signs are that under the VKO program the Moscow BMD A-135 is being modernized for non-nuclear intercept to protect the military-political leadership of Russia against conventional ballistic missiles and gliding missile systems. To defend strategic nuclear forces from hypersonic vehicles there are S-500 air defense missiles which should be integrated in the single information and control system with space and land-based missile attack warning systems.

Thus, at present cooperation on BMD systems, in addition to deep political differences between the parties, is absolutely ruled out because of the huge strategic asymmetry of their defense programs oriented toward totally different missile threats (on the Russian side, to repel American strike assets).

As a result, Russia and the USA (together with its allies) are on the threshold of a new major cycle of the arms race no matter how strenuously Moscow denies its intention to be drawn into it. Unlike in the past, this race will include not only offensive nuclear weapons, but a rivalry in the field of high-precision conventional long-range systems and competition of new generation non-nuclear BMD systems on one side with advanced high-precision long-range offensive weapons on the other. To cap it all, unlike in the times of bilateral rivalry during the Cold War, the new multi-channel arms race has already been joined by China, India and some other states, which increases the danger of horizontal escalation of military conflicts and impedes arms control agreements.

Such an arms race, first, will destroy the system of arms control treaties. Secondly, it would make a strategic clash in the event of crisis far more likely due to a false alarm or political miscalculation because the distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons, strategic and intermediate and shorter-range missiles will be blurred. Third, it would involve huge economic costs which would be hard for all countries, but most of all for Russia considering its economic and political situation and its military-coalition isolation (in these matters it cannot count on its CSTO, CIS, SCO, let alone BRICS partners).

Prospects for Cooperation

Such a course of events can still be avoided. In addition to creating favorable political conditions if Russia and the USA are to interact in the BMD sphere they both have to cardinaly change their defense programs. The American side needs to move towards great final certainty of all the characteristics and the Russian side in terms of orientation toward other threats than the defense against US

cruise missiles and present and future CPGS systems. There needs to be a dramatic reduction of the level of confrontation of offensive strategic nuclear weapons through the next START treaty, confidence-building measures and verified mutual scaling down of readiness for launch, which today stands at several minutes thus creating the danger of an unintended exchange of strikes.

As regards the latest offensive conventional long-range systems against which the Russian air and space defense is targeted, this problem may be solved by diplomatic means. To pose a threat of a disarming strike, the new US non-nuclear hypersonic assets must be deployed in large numbers (at least several hundred). Agreeing on the definitions of such systems and including them in the ceilings under the next START Treaty would significantly lessen the scale of their deployment because the USA would be loath to “infringe” upon its future nuclear triad after 2020. The precedent was set by the new (Prague) START Treaty of 2010 which limits strategic ballistic missiles regardless of whether they have nuclear or conventional warheads.

It would be far more difficult, but not impossible, to agree measures to limit existing and future cruise missiles (because of their large number and local use, such as the Russian Kalibr cruise missile). For example, because multi-purpose submarines with cruise missiles, unlike strategic missile-carriers, are not on constant combat duty at sea, it would be possible to agree on notification of massive (unscripted) putting to sea of this class of submarines (and missile carrying surface ships) with explanation of the reasons and aims of such actions. Similar measures should be taken with regard to mass take-off and movement to forward bases of heavy bombers with non-nuclear air-launched cruise missiles. These confidence measures would remove fears of secret preparation and sudden disarming strike with the use of thousands of non-nuclear cruise missiles.

As for BMD systems, Russia’s concern about the program of the US and its allies could be addressed by agreed confidence measures. For example, the possibility to monitor tests would provide reassurance that Standard-3 interceptors are not being tested to intercept ICBMs and SLBMs at the booster stage, which is the main fear concerning their deployment in Europe and the seas washing it. Agreeing quantitative, technical and geographical criteria of distinguishing a stabilizing system against third countries from destabilizing BMD against each other (similar to the 1997 agreement on delimitation of strategic and tactical BMD systems) would also help.

Obviously, all these limitations and confidence measures have to be reciprocal, i.e., should apply to both American and Russian offensive nuclear and conventional systems as well as BMD/VKO assets. In the event of a substantial reduction of the latest American offensive non-nuclear weapons and agreed BMD parameters, the Russian VKO could to a large extent be reoriented toward other important and more realistic tasks: protecting the population and industries against single or group, missile or air, nuclear or non-nuclear strikes by third countries, radical regimes or terrorists. These goals could be far more effectively served by the technology, for example, of VKO, but with different deployment

geography (around big cities and critical facilities such as nuclear power plants, dams, oil-processing and chemical enterprises and storage facilities, etc.).

The above-mentioned measures could prevent or at least limit a new dangerous and multi-channel round of the arms race. They do not require a radical change of the internal situation and the nature of the relations between Russia and the USA and its allies. Of course, it is necessary to settle the Ukrainian crisis and establish non-conflict interaction in combating Islamic military extremism, lift economic sanctions and resume arms control talks, something like a new “détente” which would dampen the current propaganda campaigns against each other in Russia and the West. Such agreements and adjustments of military programs would create strategic prerequisites for combining some elements of missile attack warning systems and subsequently entire BMD systems of Russia and the USA to make the struggle against common missile threats more effective.

However, we should not turn a blind eye to the fact that revival of the anti-missile cooperation project calls for something more, as the unsuccessful experience of the past decades has clearly shown. We are talking about Russia’s return to the “European path” of internal development, its economic recovery aided by investments and high technologies from the West (something neither China nor the Russian defense complex can provide). What is needed is a profound reappraisal of the relations between Russia and the USA and its allies, which calls for an unbiased analysis of past mistakes and a substantial change of the foreign policies of both sides. All this goes far beyond the framework of relations between Moscow and Washington over BMD, for all their significance and complexity. But at the end of the day it is more important for the destinies of Russia and the rest of the world.

References

1. Acton J. M. *Silver Bullet? Asking the Right Questions About Conventional Prompt Nuclear Strike*. Moscow: Carnegie Endowment, 2013.
2. *Nuclear Posture Review Report*. April 2010. Washington, DC, 2010.

Media sources

3. Litovkin V. The Helmet of the Secretary General: Russia and NATO Agree Projects and Differences. *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*. 01.11.2013. Available at: http://nvo.ng.ru/nvo/2013-11-01/1_nato.html.
4. *NTI (The Nuclear Threat Initiative)*. Available at: www.nti.org/gsn/article/russia. 31.10.2013.
5. Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club. 22.10.2015. *President of Russia. Official site*. Available at: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50548>.
6. Vladimir Putin. Speech at the opening ceremony of the International Military-Technical Forum Army-2015. 16.06.2015. Available at: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49712>. (In Russian).

7. Carter Laments Putin's "Loose Rhetoric" on nukes. *CBS News*. 22.06.2015. Available at: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/ash-carter-russia-vladimir-putin-loose-rhetoric-nuclear-missiles-nato/>.
8. Lerman D., Atlas T. *Russia's 'Saber-Rattling' Threatens Stability, U.S. Says*. 25.06.2015 - 11:50 PM MSK (updated on 26.06.2015 - 1:57 AM MSK).
9. Putin V. V. To Be Strong: Guarantee of National Security for Russia. *Rossiiskaya gazeta*. 20.02.2012. Available at: <http://www.rg.ru/2012/02/20/putin-armiya.html>.
10. *Global Security Newswire*. *NTI*. Available at: <http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/us-pessimistic-about-progress-missile-defense-arms-control-russia/?mgs1=1ddbdJhNb4>.
11. Vladimir Putin: Russia will Build Up the Potential of Military Space Defense. *Natsionalnaya oborona*. 2013, July. No. 7, p. 22. Available at: <http://www.oborona.ru/pages/mainpage/archive/2013/07/index.shtml>.
12. Grossman E. M. Pentagon Readies Competition for "Global-Strike" Weapon. *Global Security Newswire*. 24.06.2011.

Translated by Yevgeny Filippov