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Military conflict between Russia and NATO may start in near future

7/15/2015



The United States has been rearranging its nuclear forces lately. Pravda.Ru discussed the current state of affairs in the US-Russia relations with chairman of the Union of Geopolitics, Konstantin Sivkov.

"Russia and the United States have been exchanging harsh statements lately. Is it nothing but

political rhetoric, or is there anything changing in the nuclear strategies of the two countries?"

"Russia has been replacing outdated nuclear missiles with new ones. the Russian Armed Forces will receive 40 new missiles, and there is nothing surprising about it. Old missiles will be disposed of.

"The START-3 treaty imposes restrictions of not more than 700 sea and ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. The Russian Federation strictly adheres to these rules. The Russian Federation is updating its nuclear potential to ensure strategic nuclear deterrence."

"What missiles are considered outdated and what are the new ones?"

"The Russian Armed Forces will receive "Yars" type missiles. The old ones are MR-UR-100. These are the missiles from the 1970s. R-36M2, "Voevoda" or Satan SS-18, will be removed from services partially as well. They will be replaced with the new Sarmat missile, the performance of which will be equal to that of Satan."

"Why was the West so concerned about it?"

"Military professionals are not worried a bit. This is a part of the media campaign of the West that creates Russia's image of the enemy. Western countries also replace outdated missiles with new ones. They replace Trident missiles after 20-30 years. As for the change of the Western strategy, the ideology of this nuclear strategy comes from the United States of America, because the States owns the largest nuclear arsenal.

"I can see the following in the changing nuclear strategy of the West. They intend to pull out from the treaty on short and medium-range missiles. The United States will thus be able to deploy medium-range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and ground-based missiles in Europe. All this is being done for the so-called decapitating and preemptive nuclear strike on Russia.

"Additionally, the United States will be able to divert a part of Russia's nuclear potential from the United States to Europe, thus turning Europe into a potential theater of a nuclear war.

"The second trend is the change of the nuclear destruction criterion of the enemy - Russia, that is. Today, according open press, the criterion for nuclear destruction stipulates unacceptable economic damage, which implies the destruction of about 200-250 key economic facilities in Russia.

"Another criterion is the "McNamara criterion" - the destruction of the living potential of the

nation. It goes about the destruction of administrative, political and other centers to destroy at least 60-70 percent of the population of the Russian Federation in the first nuclear strike and subsequently up to 80 percent during the second attack."

"So the Americans may withdraw from the treaty on intermediate and short-range missiles, but they accuse Russia of the same claiming that Russian missiles are capable of striking targets at distances larger than 500 kilometers."

"That's right. It goes about tactical missiles, designed to destroy very well protected missile defense system elements. The Americans are concerned about RS-26 "Frontier" missile. The range of the missile is 6,000 km from the minimum firing range of 2,000 km, but no one measures firing range on minimal distances. The minimum firing range of both American and Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles - both sea and ground-based ones - lies in the range of 2,000-3,000 km. That is, an intercontinental ballistic missile can destroy objects on the territory of Europe.

"Yet, an intercontinental ballistic missile is more vulnerable to territorial missile defense systems than ballistic medium-range missiles that fly in a flat trajectory. Intercontinental missiles fall under all treaties on the subject of nuclear weapons. Their quantity is strictly regulated. Russia's RS-26 missile is nothing but a "Yars" missile with a heavier warhead - it is purely an intercontinental missile.

"A medium-range missile is a missile that has a range of from 2,000 to 5,000 km, and the RS-26 has a range of 6,000 km, so it is an intercontinental missile. This missile will replace the Soviet-built Topol complexes. The West uses this as a pretext to justify their right to withdraw from the treaty of medium and short-range missiles. They need to do this to disarm Russia."

"Are nuclear weapons still the only deterrent for Russia? Does Russia develop high-precision weapons?"

"Yes, the Russian nuclear weapons are our only deterrent. According to my own estimates, the Russian Federation has a 800,000-strong army. Today, the Russian armed forces can effectively solve problems of small wars, without the use of weapons of mass destruction. A local war we is something that we can not succeed in, even if we deploy our armed forces fully. NATO is ten times stronger than Russia at this point. But if the United States pulls out from from the treaty on medium and short-range missiles to deploy such missiles in Europe, Russia will take action, of course."

"Many analysts say such rhetoric can lead to a nuclear conflict."

"This is nonsense. Rhetoric does not lead to nuclear conflicts - certain actions and certain events do. I believe that a military conflict between Russia and NATO is possible, and it may start in the near future already. Casus belli, a reason for such a war, is Transnistria. Today, the territory remains in complete isolation from the outside world. It is surrounded by two hostile states.

"In these circumstances, Russia may face a dilemma: either to accept the physical destruction of 200,000 of its citizens living in Transdnistria, or solve the problem by making a corridor through the territory of Ukraine. This reaction may trigger a military conflict between Russia and NATO. The risk for a nuclear conflict is too high. The Americans understand it and deploy nuclear forces in Europe."