

Nuclear War Is Not on the Table - Because It Makes No Sense

Important personalities in alternative news, or the counter-narrative, have spilled a lot of ink recently on the imminent possibility of nuclear war between the US and Russia.

By Federico Pieraccini *

Before considering the issue more closely, it is essential to clarify certain basic principles on which we should all agree as a premise for this analysis.

(a) Russia will never allow any country to make it a victim of such a situation as a world war, condemning its citizens to suffer tens of millions of deaths.

(b) The United States does not have the slightest idea of what it means to lose millions of fellow citizens in an armed conflict. Except for Pearl Harbour, Americans have never fought or seen the devastation of a domestic war against a peer competitor.

(c) Since the collapse of the USSR, NATO has lost its reason for existence. If it has continued to fuel the spending spree of the American military-industrial complex, it is because it has managed to artfully conjure various bogeymen (intercontinental missiles, imaginary enemies, "rogue states") over the past 25 years, thanks to the connivance of the corrupt mainstream media lies and deception.

(d) There is no missile shield that is capable of neutralizing with 100% accuracy a nuclear attack (of any kind, that is first strike, second strike, pre-emptive or response/retaliation). The S-400, Aegis, S-500, THAAD, and Patriot air-defense systems can all be saturated with a torrent of decoys to safeguard the nuclear-armed missiles.

Having agreed on the above, then what is the most likely scenario?

It is important not to underestimate the obvious and fundamental importance that humanity places on the strategic balance arising from so-called "MAD" (Mutually Assured Destruction). According to our trusted analysts, it is precisely the disturbance of this delicate balance that could lead to the real threat of war between NATO and Russia.

The question to ask is the following. Is it really possible to decisively alter MAD? The short answer is, no. As already explained in point (d), there is no chance now, and probably will not be in the future, where a state can hope to carry out a nuclear attack without receiving a retaliatory response from a nuclear-armed opponent.

Logic then leads us to ask a simple question: What purpose does this chatter over the supposed nullification of MAD, thanks to the missile shield in Europe that gives

an alleged advantage to Washington, serve? The Kremlin has vehemently denounced this NATO effort, well aware of the psychological pressure that this move is meant to place on them. And this is the only tangible benefit NATO could derive from this, this psychological pressure of an existential threat hanging over the Russians. It is yet another infamous attempt by Washington to play with fire without getting burned.

Observing Moscow's response to this continued aggression is a key issue in understanding the balance of power between superpowers. Although seeking to upset the strategic balance of MAD is misguided, NATO's intention nevertheless remains to invalidate MAD, casting aside humanity's most important safety guarantee.

A strong response from Moscow has been forthcoming, and this is what has developed over the last few months in particular: Iskander missiles in Europe; Russian ships in the Baltic, Mediterranean and Black Seas, all armed with Kalibr missiles that can carry nuclear warheads; radars able to identify and track objects from a distance of thousands of miles; and the S-300/400/500 missile defense systems. It seems clear that Moscow has manifold possibilities before it as well as the actual ability to actively disabuse any misguided attempt to alter the balance enshrined in MAD.

Having established the principle that those launching a nuclear attack should expect a symmetrical response, one wonders for what reason NATO & Co would want to trigger such a cataclysm. Maybe to save the dollar from the true economic crisis that threatens to annihilate American hegemony? What wealth prospects could the oligarchs of Wall Street and the City of London ever have once their main partners (Europeans, Americans, Russians, Chinese) are reduced to ashes? Who would obtain an advantage from a lethal exchange of nuclear weapons between NATO and Russia? Let's be honest: nobody. All those who claim to the contrary have not examined the issue seriously enough.

I would like to bring to the attention of the kind reader some issues that we often take for granted. The real industrial profit for the military industrial complex, working hand in glove with Wall Street and London, stems from the preparation for war: spending on research, development, manufacture, stretching costs, inflating them and extorting as much money as possible from the government and the American taxpayers. This is the basic guideline for American military spending doctrine. Do you think that Raytheon and Boeing would derive higher profits from a nuclear exchange with tens of millions of deaths? Unlikely, least of all because those who finance them (common citizens paying taxes) would themselves be reduced to ashes.

If a nuclear exchange is not convenient for anyone, and if MAD cannot be altered willy-nilly, then why does NATO continue to fan the flames, raising the scenario of thermonuclear conflict?

Three main reasons:

1. To intimidate Russia with the ridiculous hope that Moscow will step back from the global arena in which it has been playing the leading role in the last months and years.

2. The constant state of pre-alert as a harbinger of war for billion-dollar contracts for the US arms industry.

3. Placing troops and weapons in distant countries is a way to project power and at the same time make those nations feel important within the Atlantic alliance (with the added benefit that these governments will provide lucrative contracts for the US defense industry)

The second point is the essence of this analysis and continues in the wake of the previous questions. How does Moscow perceive NATO's attitude, and what is a possible answer to this continuous aggression?

The answer for Russia is simple: tilt the table and take advantage from the deterioration of international relations. Sanctions are imposed? Implement countermeasures that, while painful, are necessary and in the long term will be positive and decisive. Import and export products looking towards the east. Encourage local production with reduced imports. And, especially, decrease the importing and exporting of goods using the US dollar.

A military doctrine does not differ much from the following basic principle: develop weapons and tactics to counter the existential dangers effectively. It is obvious that when Putin recently pointed out the danger that Romania will face, having decided to accept elements of the missile shield in their country, he was addressing the issue pointed out above in (a), which carries a lot of historical weight and significance.

There are of course two other issues to be addressed:

Many analysts note how the West has a really hard time understanding the Russian mindset in a scenario of existential crisis. They are not wrong to say so, but the conclusion they reach is excessive in my view, especially when they claim that a Russian preemptive strike on the European missile shield is possible in order to prevent (what seems to them) an inevitable US nuclear first strike.

The problem with this thesis is that according to the information at our disposal, there simply are not enough elements to this scenario to make it probable or even possible, especially in relation to a Russian preemptive strike. We observe Russia's behavior in Libya, Ukraine and now Syria and are left in little doubt that Moscow's involvement in international affairs has increased exponentially in recent years. But it is always carried out in a proportionate way, accompanied by unceasing diplomatic overtures to Europe and the United States. The carrot and stick always feature prominently in Putin's global vision of the foreign affairs for the Russian Federation.

Realistically, Moscow is well aware that the military build-up on its borders is not a significant threat and nor is the missile shield. Does this mean that Moscow, or even Beijing, are happy to be surrounded by the Atlantic Alliance's bases? Of course not. But this does not automatically mean that the time has come for a final showdown of nuclear Armageddon.

Major analysts of Russians think-tanks have reached the same conclusions as set out above, namely, nuclear war is not convenient for anybody, especially NATO. The

negative effects of such a conflict would not be limited to Russia. We must remember that the best deterrent, along with MAD, is a nuclear arsenal that is intact, functional, and is ready and deadly. This is exactly the thinking that the Russians have employed over the last 10 years concerning their nuclear stockpile, thanks in large part to NATO's aggressiveness.

In short, the beating of the war drums by the neo conservative and neoliberals in relation to Russia is only another way to increase military spending and fatten their own pockets (the same scam is being used when addressing IS, Al Nusra Front/Al-Qaeda as a national threat). Moscow, however, has an excellent opportunity to pursue a military doctrine based on modernization, preparation for conventional and non confrontation with NATO, increasing its zones of influence in Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, the Caucasus, the Baltic and Black Seas the, Pacific Ocean, the North Pole and elsewhere.

Of course the danger of an accidental confrontation leading to nuclear escalation is a possibility that hangs over humanity, but even in this case, it seems difficult if not impossible to imagine that there would not be a phone call between Moscow and Washington to clarify an accidental situation and thereby prevent tens of millions of deaths.

The engine of the conflicts are money and power. A nuclear war would lead to the exact opposite: poverty, famine and a general absence (for the remnant of the world's population) of any form of power. A nuclear war would mean the end of civilization as we know it, would mark the end of the financial profits, war, industry, energy, banking and other sectors of the global economy. It would mean the end of all hegemonies, regional or global.

The next time you read alarming news that speaks of an imminent Armageddon, take a deep breath and ask yourself who would benefit from such an eventuality? Now you know the answer.

* Expert in: Military analysis, International relations -- Bio: Federico is a military analyst who writes the WAR UPDATE for RI. He has covered conflicts in Ukraine, Libya, Egypt, Syria, and Iraq.

Native of Florence, Italy, he frequently writes for L'Antidiplomatico and L'Opinione Pubblica and maintains a popular blog (in Italian), called Fractions of Reality, which seeks to present interesting information about Russia and Ukraine not widely available in the mainstream Italian media. He lives in Milan.

Contact Federico at: Federico (dot) Pieraccini (at) gmail (dot) com