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Religion, ethics and arms control

To understand the current situation in the field of security and ethics, the role of religion in the field of arms control, including nuclear deterrence, and the problem of disarmament in general, it is necessary to understand the ideological and political context of what is happening. First of all, the contours of European security have changed dramatically following the destruction of the strategic partnership that has been developing for decades in relations between two leading world powers – Russia and the United States. In recent years, even before the start of the Ukrainian crisis in 2022, the United States has chosen a policy of double containment of Russia and China. Moreover, this kind of policy of containment of Russia and China has also been imposed on the countries of the European Union. This was done despite the fact that such a policy contradicts the economic interests of European countries. After 2022, it is obvious that the policy of NATO expansion and the construction of a unipolar world opposing Russia has only weakened security in Europe.

Another important point is the change in the rhetoric of European leaders under the influence of this policy of double containment. The leaders of the European Union have moved from a policy of soft power to the need to use hard power. At the same time, the Europeans found themselves largely at an impasse, since this kind of rigidity is possible only with the support of the United States. The ideas of strategic autonomy of the European Union and the idea of French President Macron to return to the concept of creating a European army have become unworkable. Political leaders are trapped.

On the other hand, the topic of the possibility of using nuclear weapons came to the fore during the discussion of various aspects of the Ukrainian crisis. As experts from different countries have repeatedly stressed, over the past two decades, the fear of the possible use of nuclear weapons and its consequences, both regionally and globally, has disappeared in the world community, primarily among ordinary citizens. That is why the gradual abandonment of obligations in the field of nuclear deterrence in relations between the United States and Russia was perceived relatively calmly in society. Mutual distrust and the impossibility of further cooperation led to the fact that in 2023 Russia suspended its participation in the NEW START agreement. The expansion of NATO and the inclusion of Sweden and Finland in the North Atlantic Alliance was done in opposition to Russia's interests. The possibility of the location or transit of nuclear weapons through the territory of Finland was also stated by the current President of Finland, Alexander Stubb. The rhetoric related to the possible use of nuclear weapons is also heard in Russia. This is one of the reactions to the participation of Western countries in the proxy war with Russia.

An important fact for understanding the political situation is that Russia began negotiations on strategic stability with an appeal to the Gorbachev-Reagan formula in 1985. In 2021, Russia announced that it hoped for confirmation by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (Great Britain, China, Russia, USA, France) of the Gorbachev-Reagan formula There can be no winners in a nuclear war, and therefore it should never be unleashed. Further developments have shown that many are not ready to repeat this formula.

The world's leading Christian churches, such as the Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church, have warned many times that much depends on the cooperation of nuclear powers, on their ability to establish dialogue and overcome potential conflicts. The growing crisis phenomena in the world were also discussed in the Havana Declaration of Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis in 2016. For the Vatican, the

topic of the complete abandonment of nuclear weapons in the world and the rejection of conventional wars, getting rid of the "culture of war" in the world acquired special importance during the pontificate of Pope Francis. Back in 1971. The Vatican joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (negotiations on this with Pope Paul VI were conducted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Andrei Andreevich Gromyko).

For the Russian Orthodox Church, the issue of overcoming conflicts and how to avoid wars in order to make the use of nuclear weapons impossible in principle is in the foreground. The Moscow Patriarchate, although it has parishes and dioceses on different continents, is closely linked to the national interests of the Russian Federation. In this regard, peacemaking in the public worldview of the Russian Church is always associated with certain conditions, including it may be conditioned by the policy of nuclear deterrence, arms control and their non-proliferation. This was the position of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet period, and it remains so now.

A striking example is the words of Patriarch Kirill, spoken by him in a traditional Christmas interview in January 2022 about what peace is in the church's understanding, what is the ethics of this world: "We are all interested in maintaining peace. So that the formidable, destructive weapons that are available both there and there will never be put into action, because today war can mean almost the end of human history. When you watch television programs, listen to the radio, sometimes you are surprised at the short-sighted position of some politicians in the West, who, unfortunately, believe that today Russia can be defeated by force, forced, forced, and so on. By the grace of God, all these statements are not being implemented in practice, and God forbid that they lead to concrete political steps, because the presence of nuclear weapons can lead to a global tragedy today. Therefore, the Church constantly stands for peace, but not just for peace, they say, "let's live together, guys," but for peace and justice. Because there can be no true peace without justice, and this is a great challenge for all of us and especially for modern Western civilization." Since February 2022, the tragedy of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples, the heirs of the united Holy Russia, who were involved in a military conflict, has been of key importance to Patriarch Kirill and the entire Church.

Thus, a new "ethics of peace" should appear and, in fact, a new language of peacemaking should be developed. Only then is it possible to switch to programs such as Megatonns to Megawatts. The conditions for building new bridges, developing a new language, and overcoming stereotypes are as follows:

Firstly, a scientific academic and religious discussion between representatives of different countries, which will help not only to find new approaches and definitions, but also to feel in time with the help of research intuition where the situation in the world and in certain regions is developing.

Secondly, the discussion at different levels should have a practical basis, representatives of different scientific, social and religious forces should see in site (the mutual commission have to be established) those who suffer in the modern Ukrainian conflict in order to understand people's motivation and dispel existing stereotypes. It is precisely the misunderstanding and disregard for the interests of citizens that prolongs the conflict, and is an excuse for politicians to pursue a sanctions policy and irresponsible security policy.

Thirdly, the most obvious step to begin the path to turning megatons into megawatts in the framework of the modern arms race could be joint humanitarian activities and visits to conflict zones jointly by representatives of academic circles, the Russian Orthodox Church (which is already present in these zones on both sides of the conflict), the Vatican. This kind of complex diplomatic and humanitarian

work, including assistance to displaced persons, especially children, has already been started by Cardinal Zuppi in 2023. Talking about the future of disarmament and arms control and common security is indeed possible when children are safe, and preferably at home with their parents.