The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian General Says Nuclear Arsenal Guarantees Superiority Over NATO

By The Moscow Times

January 30, 2015



Russia promises to push through by 2020 a more than 20-trillion-ruble ($286.62 billion) military modernization plan conceived by Putin, and military expenditures will remain unchanged even in the face of a growing economic crisis that has cut the budgets of other ministries.

Russia's top general said Friday that a strong nuclear arsenal will ensure military superiority over the West as Moscow forges ahead with a multi-billion dollar plan to modernize its forces by 2020.

Russia, facing a likely recession because of a fall in oil prices and sanctions over Ukraine, must deal with new forms of Western aggression, including economic confrontation, said General Valery Gerasimov.

But despite the deep economic woes, he said the Russian military would receive more than 50 new intercontinental nuclear missiles this year.

"Support for our strategic nuclear forces to ensure their high military capability combined with ... growth of the military potential of the general forces will assure that [the U.S. and NATO] do not gain military superiority over our country," said Gerasimov.

Tensions between Russia and the West have risen over the conflict in eastern Ukraine, where the U.S. and Europe say Moscow is fueling an insurgency by sending in troops and weapons. Moscow denies this.

Russia has criticized NATO expansion in eastern Europe and President Vladimir Putin has accused the Ukrainian army, which is fighting pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine, of being puppets of NATO with a policy of "containing" Russia.

Russian war planes have increasingly been spotted over Europe in recent months. Britain summoned the Russian ambassador on Thursday to complain about two Russian long-range bombers that flew over the English Channel, forcing British authorities to reroute civil aircraft.

Russia promises to push through by 2020 a more than 20-trillion-ruble ($286.62 billion) military modernization plan conceived by Putin, and military expenditures will remain unchanged even in the face of a growing economic crisis that has cut the budgets of other ministries.

The modernization project aims to revamp Russia's weapons systems to assure that 70-100 percent of the armed forces weapons and equipment has been modernized by the end of the decade — a plan confirmed by Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

"We plan to fulfill the government armament program and reach by 2020 the intended quantities of modern weapons systems," he said at the meeting.

Russia keeps its state nuclear capabilities shrouded in secrecy, but its military has approximately 8,500 warheads in total, including those non-deployed — some 1,000 more than the U.S. possesses — according to a study last year by the Center for Arms-Control and Non-Proliferation.

Speaking against a backdrop of rising prices brought on in part by a weaker ruble, Gerasimov said that Russia had to deal with new kinds of Western aggression.

"Western countries are actively using new forms of aggression, combining military as well as non-military means. Political, economic and information methods are also being used," the Interfax news agency cited him as saying.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/01/30/russian-general-says-nuclear-arsenal-guarantees-superiority-over-nato-a43404