

Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces

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On December 17, General of the Army Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff - First Deputy Defence Minister of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, met with representatives of the military diplomatic corps accredited in Russia. Arriving at the invitation of the Russian military department to the National Centre for State Defence Control of the Russian Federation by a foreign military attaché, the Chief of the General Staff spoke about the results of the activities of the Russian Armed Forces in the outgoing year and plans for next year. The event was attended by about 150 representatives of the military diplomatic corps from more than 70 countries.

This year, the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation solved many problems, the systematic development of the Armed Forces continue, said Army General Valery Gerasimov. Three missile regiments of Strategic Missile Forces have been re-equipped with modern Yars missile systems. The creation of the Avangard missile system with an intercontinental ballistic missile equipped with a hypersonic glider winged warhead has been completed. 1st missile regiment, armed with this complex, will take combat duty in the near future.

Since the beginning of December, the Peresvet laser systems have been on alert in the positional areas of mobile ground missile systems with the task of covering up their maneuvering operations.

Strategic Naval Nuclear Forces provide continuous military alert by strategic missile submarines with patrols at sea, including under the ice of the Arctic.

At the final stage are the state trials of the major submarine Knyaz Vladimir of project 955A. By the end of this year, it will enter the Russian Navy. The creation of four more nuclear submarines of this project is ongoing.

The potential of the aviation strategic nuclear forces is supported by the modernization of the Tu-160 and Tu-95MS missile carriers. Serial production of strategic missile carriers Tu-160M, which in the coming years will begin to enter service with long-range aviation, has been launched.

In general, the state of strategic nuclear forces provides deterrence. At the same time, the development of strategic weapons is conducted in strict compliance with international obligations, as defined by the treaties on strategic offensive arms.

At the same time, the situation with the future of this agreement remains uncertain. Its validity expires in 2021. On December 5, the President of the Russian Federation confirmed Russia's readiness to extend the SNV-3 Treaty by the end of this year. However, a clear position on the part of the United States regarding its extension has not been announced. All this creates additional uncertainty in the field of nuclear arms control.

This year, the Aerospace Defence complexly developed, the basis of which is the Aerospace Forces. Another spacecraft of the Unified Space System has been launched, which significantly increased our capabilities for guaranteed detection of ballistic missile launches. Rearmed two anti-aircraft missile regiments on the

S-400 complex.

Since December 1, a radar station for the horizontal detection of air targets in Kovyilkino (Mordovia), which provides airspace control in the Western and Southern strategic aerospace directions at a distance of up to 2,000 km from our border, has taken combat duty.

The tasks of the pilot combat duty by the Kinzhal aviation missile system with a hypersonic missile are being worked out. These missiles were launched at training grounds located in various climatic conditions, including in the Arctic.

For the year, aviation units and military units received 139 modern aircraft. Testing of fifth-generation Su-57 aircraft continues. They were re-tested in Syria, during which all the planned tasks were successfully completed.

All missile development in the Russian Federation was carried out in strict accordance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty).

However, these initiatives were ignored by the American side. On August 2, 2019, under a far-fetched pretext, Washington unilaterally withdrew from the Treaty.

This says that the true goal of the United States was to eliminate the prohibitions and restrictions on building up their missile capabilities. Then two weeks after the termination of the INF Treaty Pentagon conducted the test launch of a cruise missile from a land mobile launcher to a range of more than 500 km.

But even in these conditions, Russia opposes the deployment of a new arms race. Confirmation of this is the proposal of the President of the Russian Federation on the non-deployment in Europe and other regions of intermediate-range missiles.

The Chief of the General Staff also told representatives of the military diplomatic corps that in 2019 the re-equipment of the Land Forces and the Airborne Forces continued. This year, land forces and airborne troops have received over 3,300 pieces of new and modernised armaments.

At the end of the year, the Navy will receive 25 ships, combat boats and support vessels, including 5 carriers equipped with the Caliber missile system. Bal and Bastion missile systems were delivered to the Coastal Forces.

In general, implementation of the State Defence Order 2019 has fully armed over 30 various formations and military units with a share of modern weapons amounting to 68%.

Combat training continues to be a priority for the Armed Forces, the Chief of the General Staff noted. The main preparation event this year was Tsentr 2019 strategic command post exercise. It was attended by military contingents of seven foreign countries from the CSTO and SCO. The troops operated on the territory of four states (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). During the Ocean Shield exercise, the Navy practiced actions of inter-naval groups in the ocean zone.

The final event of the annual training cycle of the Armed Forces was Grom 2019 strategic command post exercise for managing strategic offensive forces with the implementation of practical launches of cruise and ballistic missiles of various bases. Next year, the main event in the training of the Armed Forces will be the Caucasus 2020 strategic command post exercise. It is planned to invite military contingents of foreign states to this exercise.

One of the most important tasks of the Armed Forces remains to assist the Syrian

government in the fight against international terrorist organizations. As you know, the active phase of the operation to eliminate terrorist groups in Syria was completed in December 2017. With the support of the Russian Aerospace Forces, a large part of the country was liberated and returned to the control of the Syrian government.

The implementation of the agreements reached between the presidents of Russia and Turkey on October 22 this year in Sochi helped stabilize the situation in northeast Syria. Kurdish self-defence units have been withdrawn 30 km from the Syrian-Turkish border, and Syrian border troops and Russian military police have been brought to Kobani and al-Jazeera settlements. A joint Russian-Turkish patrol was organized. Since November 3, a joint Russian-Turkish coordination centre has been successfully operating.

In the areas of over Euphrates river, a peaceful life is being established. The population of the northeastern provinces is provided with humanitarian and medical assistance, and social infrastructure facilities are being restored.

In the Idlib de-escalation zone, radicals continue shelling the positions of the Syrian army and settlements, as a result of which both military personnel and civilians die.

As part of the political settlement process in the Syrian Arab Republic, the efforts of the countries of the Astana format, with the support of the UN, created and launched the Syrian Constitutional Committee.

In the interests of establishing a peaceful life, the Russian Ministry of Defence continues to actively assist the Syrian government in the return of refugees. To resolve these issues, the Joint Coordination Headquarters for the Return of Refugees and the Centre for the Reception, Distribution and Accommodation of Refugees in Damascus are effectively working in Moscow. Over a year and a half, over 495,000 refugees returned to Syria through their efforts. A total of 1,300,000 internally displaced persons returned to their pre-war places.

The situation in Rukban refugee camp located in the United States-controlled area of al-Tanf continues to be of serious concern. Theft, violence, slavery and human trafficking are widespread in the camp. The Syrian government declared complete readiness to receive people from the camp, confirmed security guarantees at all stages of their withdrawal. At the same time, the armed groups that control Rukban prevent the return of refugees.

The critical situation remains in al Khol largest refugee camp, which is located in al-Hasakah province in the territory controlled by the United States. According to available information, about 70,000 people live in al Hol, of which more than half are children.

A factor negatively affecting the resolution of the Syrian crisis is the illegitimate presence of foreign military contingents on the territory of the republic. US Army units continue to control oil fields in the north-east of the country, thereby encouraging the illegal extraction and sale of petroleum products.

The intervention of Washington and its allies in the internal affairs of the countries of the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia led to the formation of hotbeds of conflict and increased tension in these regions. According to a similar scenario, events develop in individual states of Latin America.

NATO continues to have a major impact on the security situation. In the documents of Brussels, Russia has been assigned the status of an adversary.

Work continues on deploying US ABM systems in Europe. In the Baltic countries and Poland, in the waters of the Black and Baltic Seas, military activity is intensifying, and the intensity of NATO military exercises is increasing. Their scripts point to NATO's targeted preparation for the deployment of its forces in a large-scale military conflict.

At the same time, the Western allies are advancing the thesis of the so-called Russian military threat. Any step of Russia in the field of ensuring its military security, any planned and ongoing event to build an army and navy is presented as a threat to peace.

The actions of the alliance increase tension and reduce the level of security on the Russia-NATO contact line.

Reducing the risks of dangerous incidents in the military sphere should remain the most important area of dialogue between Russia on the one hand, the United States and NATO on the other.

In order to strengthen confidence-building measures, the Russian Defence Ministry continues to build up interaction with foreign partners. At the end of 2019, the total number of countries with which international military cooperation is carried out reached one hundred. Expanding cooperation within the CIS, CSTO and SCO remains a priority.

International meetings were held with European partners on security issues both in a bilateral format and at the OSCE site. The Russian Ministry of Defence also took part in international events held in the Asia-Pacific region: in the Beijing Xiangshan Forum, the regional forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for Security, and in the working bodies of the mechanism of the Conference of Defence Ministers of ASEAN Member Countries and Dialogue Partners (ADMM-Plus).

In April, the VIII Moscow Conference on International Security was held. Over 1000 delegates from 111 countries and 7 international organizations participated in its work. The next conference will be held in April next year.

Particular importance was paid to joint training activities with other partner countries. At the Union Shield exercise, the issues of ensuring the security of the Union State were worked out, during Unbreakable Brotherhood exercise joint actions of military contingents to destroy terrorist groups and launch peacekeeping operations.

Joint Sea exercise of the Russian Navy and the Chinese Navy jointly worked out issues of combating piracy in the East China Sea.

Combat Commonwealth exercise solved tasks of collective air defence of the CIS countries.

At present, the Indra-2019 exercise is being held, at which the combat units of the Russian Navy and Indian Navy jointly practice issues of combating piracy in the Arabian Sea.

Next year, more than 50 joint training events are planned according to plans for international military cooperation. Priority events will be within the framework of the CSTO, CIS and SCO. Joint exercises were also planned with China, India, Serbia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Algeria, Egypt and other countries.

The International Army Games remain one of the effective means of strengthening

military cooperation, to improve individual skills of the military personnel and coherence of units. On the territory of 10 states, more than 5,000 troops took part. A total of 223 teams from 39 countries participated. Every year there is an increase in the skill of military personnel.

The key and most ambitious congress and exhibition event of this year was the ARMY 2019 International Military and Technical Forum. The Forum was attended by more than 1,300 enterprises and organizations that presented over 27,000 samples of military and dual-use products. 101 defence enterprises from 14 foreign countries, 120 official military delegations of foreign states also participated in it.

It is planned to invite the heads of defence departments from 133 states to the next Forum. In August next year, the Army Games will be held simultaneously with the ARMY 2020 International Military and Technical Forum.

Concluding his speech. General of the Army Valery Gerasimov emphasized that next year, work will continue to create conditions for stabilizing the situation at the global and regional levels, as well as the progressive and balanced development of the Army and Navy to ensure the peaceful social and economic development of our country. To achieve these goals, we are open for an equal dialogue on military security.

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