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**DETERRENCE AND THE NUCLEAR
SUPERPOWERS AFTER THE COLD
WAR**

**NUCLEAR DETERRENCE IN THE POLICIES OF
THE UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA IN THE
POST-BIPOLAR PERIOD**

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To my parents

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War didn't satisfy global pacifist expectations - the abolition of nuclear weapons. On the opposite, after a short period of disarmament activities many states started to reevaluate the role of nuclear weapons in their foreign and defense policies as well as some of non-nuclear states decided to change their status. This very situation promises lots of conceptual and practical difficulties to the researches and also politicians, as the existing nuclear deterrence theory was created during the Cold War on the model of dual Soviet-American interaction. Today even the situation within this dyad changed drastically, considering the new challenges, connected first of all with the transformation of the security architecture and consequent changes, taken place within the deterrence rules.

The central point of research is one of the key deterrence elements - its credibility. It is traditionally considered that the success of the deterrence function depends on the believability of the deterrent threat – which presupposes some combination of technical capability and political will of the state to use this capability. The second one is especially important in relation to nuclear weapons, as there are significant political, psychological and other barriers for using this “last argument”.

The actual character of the research topic is motivated by the significant transformation of the nuclear strategies of the world's nuclear superpowers, whereas their relations in strategic sphere is used to be a cradle of the deterrence rules. Thus any transformation within the strategic dialogue of the United States and Russia bears the potential of having an impact on the global security issues. It concerns, for example, the transformation of the strategic stability character by the idea of the defense domination in the US policy, involving the spread of the BMD systems built up not only on US territory, but in Europe as well. Or lowering of the nuclear threshold, revealed during the last decade in Russia's strategy, which increases the risk of the nuclear weapons regional application. Or the global “nuclear zero” initiative, expressed by the Barak Obama administration, which supposes the marginalization of the nuclear weapons as a tool of national security provision. To understand the dynamics of the events development, especially the risks, connected with the

emerging of the new character of the bipolar nuclear deterrence system it is necessary to reevaluate some of deterrence rules and foundations due to the new security conditions.

The key position is the idea, that multipolar system of international relations possesses basic features, different from the one during the Cold War. Some of them can be very important for the nuclear deterrence formation. Among them are:

-nuclear deterrence doesn't have only bipolar implication today, but can be presented in triangular and more actors framework;

- The balance of power which is peculiar to the Cold War period gradually gives the place to the deterrence asymmetry demonstrated even in the US-Russia relations;

- the new character of the potential nuclear adversaries, who are gradually emerging on international arena (such as Iran or DPRK);

These conditions not only significantly complicate the mission to provide credible threat of response to an aggression, but increase the risk of an armed conflict, the consequences of which might be catastrophic for the eternal system of international relations.

Therefore the main tasks of the research are:

1. comparative analysis of the US and Russia's nuclear strategies evolution since the end of the Cold War up to the present moment;
2. the identification of the main challenges for the deterrence strategies in each country, following the process of their resolution;
3. exploration of the main basic nuclear deterrence elements, being transformed along with the international system configuration and also with multiplication of the new security challenges;