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## Major challenges for U.S. nuclear policy – The alliance of the threatening powers

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*Nuclear blackmail is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon for a greater number of aggressive actors in the international geopolitical arena. More states are suffering from economic, political and territorial expansion on the part of geopolitical actors, whose main lever of pressure is nuclear weapons. The author of the article, using such methods of scientific research as content analysis and comparative analysis, reveals the formation of a bloc of countries, who adhere to offensive political realism and are ready to use any means to improve their geopolitical position on the world stage, despite the rights and territorial integrity of other countries. Encroachment on territorial integrity accompanied by nuclear threats according the example of russia, despite the fact that this country was one of the signatories of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.*

*Analyzing the trend of statements by the leaders of states such as russia, Iran, and North Korea, the question arises: "Is participation in a treaty aimed at non-proliferation and deterrence of nuclear weapons a guarantee of security for a country that does not have nuclear weapons?" This article also discusses the effectiveness of the current US nuclear policy aimed at non-proliferation and deterrence of nuclear weapons, on the example of bilateral agreements with countries such as Ukraine, South Korea, and Taiwan. In the case of Ukraine, according to the Budapest Memorandum, the United States acts as a guarantor of the territorial integrity of the state in exchange for the country's renunciation of possession of its nuclear arsenal. Having analyzed all the general trends based on the rapid development of events in the third decade of the 21st century, it can be assumed that today actors of the international geopolitical arena have moved away from the basic theories of political idealism or realism, and instead there is the development of political neorealism or, as it is also called, structural realism.*

**Key words:** US nuclear policy, nuclear blackmail, non-proliferation, NPT, China, Iran, North Korea.

**Statement of the problem.** Development of the trend of nuclear blackmailing, ignoring and violating the rights of other countries and, which is the most dangerous for global nuclear security, consolidation of states that are carriers of the above tendency. At the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, it was a chain of challenges for the US nuclear deterrence policy, however today there is a clear line of gradual military unification and consolidation of countries that previously created these challenges individually. Iran, North Korea and russia are actively exchanging military technologies, the most striking example is Iran's supply of drones, and later the production technology, Shahed-136 and their modifications, which russia vigorously and regularly uses to destroy Ukrainian civilian infrastructure. But the biggest problem for global security is the potential cooperation of these countries' nuclear arsenals, as they are increasingly using nuclear leverage to achieve personal geopolitical goals.

**Analysis of existing research.** Since the topic of U.S. nuclear policy is directly or indirectly related to the foreign policy of almost every country in the world, a large number of both American and foreign scientists in relation to the United States work on this topic. Among them are those whose works were most relevant to this article: Amy Wolf, who is a researcher at the U.S. Congress on the U.S., russia and China Nuclear Arsenal Programs, Strategic Arms Control and U.S.-russian Arms Control Policy; Scott Sagan, whose work focuses on U.S. foreign policy

and nuclear deterrence; Heather Williams researches international security and nuclear nonproliferation issues in Eastern Europe; Jonathan Eyall during recent years, he has been researching the possible consequences of Iran's nuclear program for Europe, as well as russia's nuclear threats in the context of its invasion of Ukraine; Eric Heginbotham examines China's nuclear deterrence, as well as US-China relations in the geopolitical direction; Bruce Bennett is an expert on nuclear non-proliferation and deterrence in the Northeast Asian direction, namely North Korea, China, Japan, and South Korea.

Among the Ukrainian researchers who consider the nuclear policy of the United States, including through the problem of non-proliferation, it is worth mentioning Sergei Galaka[5], Polina Sinovets[12] and Valeria Gergieva, among others. Given the dynamism and relevance of the problem investigated in the framework of this work, attention is mostly paid to the current tasks, problems and achievements of the United States policy on nuclear non-proliferation and deterrence.

**The purpose** of the study is to identify the level of effectiveness of the US nuclear policy at the end of the second decade and the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century in the context of nuclear deterrence and non-proliferation, based on the international treaty framework initiated and guaranteed by the United States. A large number of challenges to their nuclear deterrence policy faced are being transformed into the biggest challenge in the form

of a threatening bloc of nuclear totalitarian countries such as Russia, Iran and North Korea, as well as China's rather volatile position. People's Republic of China provide economic support for Russia in the war against Ukraine take the previous challenges to a whole new level. Effective counteraction to this challenge can only be achieved through optimization and adoption of measures appropriate to the level of danger of this geopolitical subjects consolidation.

**Statement of the main material.** Most of today's nuclear threats to global stability were laid down by the ineffectiveness of individual treaties and other levers of influence aimed at nuclear deterrence and non-proliferation. The second decade and the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century can be characterized as a period of systematic growth of potential nuclear threats to the United States and its allies from a number of participants on the geopolitical arena, which will be considered in this article within this chronological period. Aftermath of the collapse of USSR and signing of the Budapest Memorandum on December 5, 1994, the following two points regarding the inviolability and sovereignty of the territory of Ukraine were recorded and confirmed [17]:

Noting the changes in the world-wide security situation, including the end of the Cold War, which have brought about conditions for deep reductions in nuclear forces,

Confirm the following:

1. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the CSCE Final Act, to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine.
2. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used

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And paragraph 4 specifically regarding the reaction of the signatories to the aggression against Ukraine:

4. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to seek immediate United Nations Security Council action to provide assistance to Ukraine, as a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, if Ukraine should become a victim of an act of aggression or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used.

When Ukraine set an example of voluntary renunciation of nuclear weapons and thereby demon-

strated to the whole world real possibility of nuclear disarmament, the United States assumed the role of chairmanship in this process. At the same time, terrorist threats since the beginning of the 21st century, continued deployment of North Korea and Iran's nuclear programs, Russia's particularly aggressive foreign policy, including Putin's threats to use its nuclear arsenal, as he stated on September 21, 2022: "This is not a bluff. And those who try to blackmail us with nuclear weapons should know that the weather vane can turn around and point at them"[4], compared to other challenges and potential instability in the context of nuclear deterrence initiated in the 21st century by North Korea, Iran, and to some extent China, it can be assumed that this threat was much more real and potentially generated a powerful impetus for changing and revising US nuclear policy, because since 2014 Russia has been explicitly deploying its national armed forces on the territory of the sovereign state of Ukraine.

In the case of North Korea, this is still a potential threat, since the DPRK, unlike Russia, does not send its troops to a neighboring state, threatening to use nuclear weapons if one of the guarantors of sovereignty intervenes. As mentioned by the BBC on January 1, 2018, quoting the leader of the DPRK, "the button to launch nuclear weapons is always on my desk", Kim Jong-un warned the United States that they could never start a war.

In a televised New Year's speech, he said that the entire U.S. territory was within range of North Korea's nuclear weapons, adding, "This is a reality, not a threat" [1]. These specific quotes may have some correlation with what Putin said, as noted above.

In the context of Russian military aggression against Ukraine, there is a fact of the supply of Shahed-131/136 military drones from Iran to Russia [3]. These drones are vigorously used by the Russian military forces to damage or destroy both vital infrastructure (during the winter 2022) and against civilian objects in large settlements and cities. At this stage, it can be unequivocally stated that Iran is a military ally of Russia. Returning to the topic of nuclear It is worth mentioning another quote from Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, published by The Times of Israel on August 28, 2021: "The Americans are really not ashamed of the nuclear issue, and although they have withdrawn from the JCPOA... they are now talking in a certain way and making demands as if it [Iran] has withdrawn", he added, referring to the agreement officially titled the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Earlier, a senior Iranian official said that Biden's comments pose an "illegal threat to another country" and give Tehran "the right to respond to each other" [15].

Comparing the quotes of the above-mentioned political leaders, it can be assumed that these three countries, Russia, Iran and North Korea, have similar

sentiments regarding the attitude to nuclear weapons as the main lever of pressure on the way to achieving their personal geopolitical interests in a dialogue with other actors on global geopolitical arena. Since the beginning of Russia's armed invasion of the sovereign territory of Ukraine, there have been increasing amount of facts in the context of military cooperation between these countries. Also, it is possible to identify a number of similarities in the structure and formation of the ruling elite of each of these three countries, what is one of the explanations for the reliability of their foreign nuclear policy. As noted in Mark L. Haas's study "IDEOLOGIES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS": "The opposite threat to relations often threatens leaders of states who are committed to similar ideological convictions. Politicians who share basic ideological principles are more likely to interpret each other's international intentions in a predominantly favorable light and view their domestic interests as intertwined. This dynamic has often led to significant collaboration between such ideological groups, including liberals, monarchists, fascists, religious fundamentalists, and even communists [7]. So, the form of government that in fact prevails in the 21st century in these three countries, whose leaders and quotes were mentioned earlier, is totalitarianism. "Totalitarianism is a form of government and a political system which prohibits all opposition parties, outlaws individual and group opposition to the state and its demands, and exercises an extremely high, if not complete, degree of control and regulation of public and private life [2]".

Another country that can be considered an ideological ally of Russia is China. However, their military cooperation cannot be clearly stated at the same level as in the case of Iran or North Korea. First of all, it is necessary to objectively assess China's current nuclear military capabilities. U.S. Senator Roger Wicker, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, took part in the committee's full hearings on March 9, 2023, which discussed the position of the United States Space Command (SPACECOM) and the United States Strategic Command (STRATCOM). "The story of China is also very disturbing. Beijing is modernizing and expanding its nuclear forces at breakneck speed. It is likely to overtake the United States in the early 2030s. The past 18-month period has given us a promising idea of China's impressive growth. During this time, China's nuclear arsenal has doubled. The Chinese have launched a missile that can drop nuclear warheads from orbit anywhere on Earth, with little to no warning. And China became the third country to develop a strategic triad of nuclear missiles, bombers and submarines. General Cotton recently informed Congress that China now has more ICBM launchers than the United States. Just last week, news reports exposed Beijing's purchase of 28 tons of Russian uranium that could be used for further weapons production [11]" – this is his brief

assessment of the current state of China's nuclear arsenal. Despite the absence of harsh provocative statements or acts of direct military aggression, there is an active build-up and development of combat nuclear power by the PRC.

In the context of cooperation with Russia, it is necessary to note the joint statement of cooperation between the two leaders signed and announced at the beginning of the 2022 Winter Olympics in the capital of the People's Republic of China. The presidents said the ties between the two countries "have no limits". "There are no 'forbidden' areas of cooperation", they said.

In a joint statement issued by the Kremlin, Putin and Xi Jinping called on NATO to halt expansion in Eastern Europe, condemned the formation of security blocs in the Asia-Pacific region, and criticized the AUKUS trilateral security pact between the United States, Britain and Australia. Further statements about cooperation between the two countries in the economic and strategic spheres were made during Xi Jinping's last visit to Moscow on March 21, 2023: "China has become a leader in importing Russian oil and Russia is ready to increase uninterrupted oil supplies for the needs of the Chinese economy", Putin said. Putin added that further growth of Russian gas exports to China was discussed, including "the implementation of the initiative to build the Power of Siberia-2 gas pipeline through the territory of Mongolia" [10].

In the context of Putin's threats to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine, Chinese President Xi Jinping said that the international community should "advocate that nuclear weapons cannot be used, nuclear war cannot be waged to prevent a nuclear crisis", he also mentioned the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, calling on the world to "jointly oppose the use or threat of use, of nuclear weapons". These statements were made by Xi Jinping during a meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who tried to pave a diplomatic path out of the crisis. Since Germany played a rather important role in the gas issue, which directly affected Ukrainian-Russian relations, since it had a joint energy project with Russia, Nord Stream 2, it makes sense to pay attention to statements and trends in Germany's attitude to the war in Ukraine.

The day before his arrival in Moscow, on February 14, 2022, Olaf Scholz said during a joint press conference in Kyiv after meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy: "The President has once again assured me that he will submit bills on special status, electoral legislation and amendments to the Constitution for discussion in the Minsk Contact Group" [14]. He insisted that both Russia and Ukraine should abide by the so-called Minsk agreements, which were brokered by Germany and France after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and 2015. The thirteen clauses of Minsk II are particularly controversial

because they require the transfer of power (and separate elections in) the disputed areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. In addition, the agreements provide for amnesty for all those involved in the bloody conflict, including russian-backed rebels and mercenaries. The German Chancellor also told the German media in Moscow on February 15, 2022, after meeting with Putin in the context of Ukraine's accession to NATO: "The fact is that everyone involved knows that Ukraine's membership in NATO is not on the agenda. Everybody should step back a little bit here and make it clear that we simply cannot have a military conflict on an issue that is not on the agenda" [8].

Based on the above-mentioned facts, it can be concluded that both similarities at ideological foundations in the apparatus of public administration and direct economic interdependencies can lead to the military consolidation of states on the international geopolitical arena in one powerful strategical-military alliance. According to the classical geopolitical theories of Mackinder and Speakman, a superpower in the center of Eurasia will seek to expand its geographical bases by expanding towards its closest neighbors. This decision may be relevant for both Russia and China. In the case of Russia, the expansion takes place at the expense of the sovereign territory of Ukraine (practically, after the annexation of Crimea in 2014), and in the case of China, it is possible to focus on the threats of annexation of Taiwan. However, in the case of China, one can note an active policy of economic, rather than military expansion in relation to the countries of the African and Asian continents. Chinese companies are actively buying, leasing and developing, both economically and militarily, a number of African ports that have voluntarily entered into mutually binding economic relations with China. A striking example of such economic expansion is the naval base in Guinea, which belongs to China. This trend was described by Professor Michael Tanchum: "The permanent Chinese military facility in Equatorial Guinea is the culmination of almost a decade of investment in Africa and will not be the last such base on the Atlantic coast of the continent". One of the latest statements made on March 13, 2023 by Chinese leader Xi Jinping in the context of the Taiwan issue: "We must actively oppose external forces and separatist activities of Taiwan's independence. We must steadily advance the cause of national rejuvenation and reunification". This statement should be considered in the context of the above-mentioned speech by US Senator Roger Wicker.

Returning to the issue of nuclear stability guarantees, it should be noted a number of basic treaties, the effectiveness of which the author of the article analyzes in this research. "In this regard, I am forced to announce today that Russia is suspending its participation in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty", Putin said on February 21, 2023, making the status

of the NEW START treaty de facto illegitimate. It has been in force since February 5, 2011. The Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, also known as the New START Treaty, strengthens U.S. national security by imposing verifiable limits on all intercontinental-range nuclear weapons deployed by Russia. Putin justified this decision with some potential threats and violations from the "Western world" to Russian national security, but almost a month later there was a statement about the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus in the immediate vicinity of NATO countries. "There is nothing unusual here either: first, the United States has been doing this for decades. They have long since deployed their tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of allied countries", Putin told state television on March 26, 2023 [9]. And 2 months later, Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko's statements about receiving nuclear weapons from Russia follow, and one of them, which was made on June 14, 2023 during a press conference with the media, has a clear provocative connotation: "The bombs are three times more powerful than those dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki".

Another extremely influential international treaty aimed at nuclear arms control, preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their technologies. Russia is an active participant in this agreement, but the fact that Russia occupied Ukrainian Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant by force of arms calls into question the legitimacy of this membership in the future. On August 26, 2022 Russia blocked the consensus of the NPT conference. Official comment on August 28, 2022 in the context of this situation made First Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel: "After weeks of intensive but productive negotiations, the Russian Federation has independently decided to block the consensus on the outcome document of the Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Russia did this in order to block language that simply acknowledges the serious radiological risk at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine, exactly the challenge that the conference aims to address. The fact that Russian Federation does not accept such language in the face of overwhelming international consensus underscores need for the United States and other countries to continue to call on Russia to cease its military activities near the ZNPP and return control of the plant to Ukraine".

A few weeks after Belarus received nuclear weapons from the Russian Federation, many reputable media outlets report that Russia has mined the same Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant that the Russians have seized and controlled since February 2022. On June 20, 2023, Kyrylo Budanov, Chief of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense

of Ukraine, announced this fact: "... The worst thing is that the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant was additionally mined during this time... namely, a cooling pond was extracted".

In the context of the nuclear deterrence of Iran's nuclear program, which contains a set of violations under the JCPOA Treaty, after a thorough analysis of trends, it can be assumed that Iran is purposefully and systematically developing its potentially offensive nuclear technologies. One of the most severe violations was caused by the ignition of advanced uranium enrichment centrifuges installed at an underground plant in Natanz in 2020, after which US President Donald Trump considered but rejected a military strike on Natanz, south of Tehran and the country's main uranium enrichment facility. And also taking into account the fact that against the backdrop of Russia's military aggression in Ukraine – Iran is one of the most active suppliers of offensive weapons, namely Shahed kamikaze drones, with which Russia attacks civilian infrastructure of Ukraine every day, killing hundreds of civilians. Even if the Iranian leadership tells the Democrats in the team of the current US President Joe Biden, that they want to restore the JCPOA – they will never follow this agreement, as they have openly shown that they belong to an alliance of totalitarian countries that, in order to achieve their personal geopolitical interests, will not take into account the rights of other countries or signed agreements on deterrence and non-proliferation.

By returning to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), China is violating Article VI of the NPT, which requires NPT members to "negotiate in good faith on effective measures related to cessation of the nuclear arms race". Dr. Thomas Grant mentioned in his study "China's Nuclear Buildup and Article VI of the NPT: Legal Text and Strategic Challenge" that China's nuclear arsenal is increasing against the NPT: "At an international security conference in Singapore on June 12, 2022 Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida revealed China's secret on nuclear weapons build-up. His comments came just weeks after Secretary of State Antony Blinken publicly called on Beijing to work with Washington to promote nuclear non-proliferation [6]. At the 10th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it was planned that States Parties should hold China and all other nuclear states promoting their nuclear arsenals accountable for violating their obligations under the Disarmament Treaty. However, this the goal was not achieved due to the fact that the 10th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ended without reaching agreement on substantive conclusions and recommendations, which is due to the opposition of the Russian Federation to the final document presented by the Chairmanship. The NPT is the largest international treaty on the deterrence

and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, however until 2026 (the next review conference will be held in 2026), as we can see from the above facts, it is unlikely that it will effectively "deter": China from actively building up their nuclear arsenal and Russia from transferring tactical nuclear warheads to its allies, as in the case of Belarus, as well as the military seizure of a nuclear power plant in a third country and the creation of a zone of high probability of a nuclear disaster there due to mining and bombing on the territory of this nuclear power plant, which was originally the territory and property of the sovereign state of Ukraine.

Based on the above material, it can be concluded that Russia, North Korea and Iran are potential association of states that are closely cooperating on technologies for building up and developing a nuclear arms as opposed to the NATO bloc, blackmailing the world community with this lever of influence. The subjects of this blackmail are political, economic and most importantly territorial claims of these countries. When asked whether we can include China on this list – based on leader Xi Jinping's recent statements regarding their territorial claims to Taiwan – yes, we can include China to the list of states that threaten global nuclear stability in order to achieve their own geopolitical goals, which is not legitimate under international law. Taking into account the fact that the main blackmailing countries have suspended, left or have never been members of international or bilateral treaties on nuclear deterrence and non-proliferation, it is possible to conclude that today there is no effective instrument of control that would guarantee nuclear stability on the international geopolitical arena.

However, going back to the basics, nuclear weapons, which are in the possession of another antagonistic alliance of states where United States has the most powerful arsenal, are the only deterrent and the main pillar that prevents explicit expansion of these entities, although in the case of Ukraine, it is obvious that Russia has crossed this line without any consequences in terms of a retaliatory strike on its territory. This could set a bad example for North Korea vis-à-vis South Korea, as well as for China against Taiwan. If the only lever of pressure on the Euro-Atlantic alliance of collective security is the imposition of economic sanctions, then the alliance of antagonistic countries can create the most autonomous closed economic cycle and act in the international arena without any responsibility, pursuing only its own geopolitical interests. This trend could lead to the world's complete immersion in political neorealism, also known as structural realism. This geopolitical theory has ideological roots in the works of Hans Morgenthau on classical realism, first reflected in the work "Theory of International Politics" by Kenneth Waltz in 1979, and after the promulgation of this geopolitical theory gaining more supporters in the scientific community. Extrapolating the theory

of constructive realism to the geopolitical situation in the world at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century, it can be stated that we are not talking about anarchy in the context of chaos, but about countries that invest most of their resources in obtaining military power to promote and achieve their own individual geopolitical interests at the expense of other countries that do not have nuclear weapons or they are objectively incapable of competing with such military superpowers. "It simply means that there is no centralized authority, night watchman, or ultimate arbiter who stands over states and protects them", is how John Mearsheimer explained the term "anarchy". And based on the facts that reflect the real situation in the geopolitical arena, where nuclear weapons are the main source of influence, this quote is relevant in relation to countries that possess nuclear weapons. The challenge to global nuclear stability is growing due to this type of geopolitical actors, who continue aggressive economic, political and geopolitical expansion against sovereign states that are unable to defend their sovereignty and geopolitical space, due to the lack of arguments such as nuclear weapons and the ineffectiveness of the collective security treaties of which they are members.

**Conclusions.** Thus, nuclear weapons have long been a key solution to maintaining global stability and preventing World War III. However, it is obvious in the second and early third decades of the 21st century, increasing quantity of states with an undemocratic direction of the internal policy continue to secretly develop nuclear weapons technologies, teaming up with nuclear superpowers such as Russia. Other countries, who possess nuclear weapons can act without showing open aggression, but periodically reminding that they are ready to defend their interests in the geopolitical arena "by all means available to them", this is what happens in the case of China and its claims to the sovereign state of Taiwan. Marginal countries with nuclear weapons, such as North Korea, continue open nuclear blackmail to the world community in order to preserve and strengthen their totalitarian regime both within the country and gradually enlist the support of ideologically related countries with totalitarian elements of domestic politics, such as Russia and Iran. Actual situation on the international arena can be a vivid example of the dominance of the world order in accordance with the theory of structural realism as the basis of the geopolitical structure in the 21st century. The world is divided into two main associations of nuclear states to determine the means to achieve geopolitical goals, as well as the system of internal control. Totalitarian countries that are not really ready to reckon with the rights and interests of third countries that may be on their way to achieving individual geopolitical interests, as well as, on the other side, states of the Euro-Atlantic alliance, led under the auspices of the guardians of the world nuclear

order represented by the United States. Also, it is worth noting that a common feature of the domestic policy of the second association of countries is democracy, where human rights still remain the highest value, both at the legislative level and in practice. All these geopolitical processes make it much more difficult for the United States to maintain nuclear stability in the world and may require a number of innovative decisions in the USA's foreign nuclear policy in accordance with new challenges.

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## Головні виклики ядерній політиці США – Альянс загрожуючих держав

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*Ядерний шантаж стає все більш повсякчасним явищем для все більшої кількості агресивних акторів на міжнародній геополітичній арені. Дедалі більше держав потерпає від економічної, політичної та територіальної експансії з боку акторів геополітичної арени, основним важелем тиску яких є ядерна зброя. Автор статті, використовуючи такі методи наукового дослідження, як контент аналіз та порівняльний аналіз, виявляє формування блоку країн, які дотримуються наступального політичного реалізму і готові використовувати будь-які засоби для покращення свого геополітичного становища на світовій арені, незважаючи на права та територіальну цілісність інших країн. Зазіхання на територіальну цілісність у супроводі з ядерними погрозами на прикладі росії, при тому що ця країна була одним із підписантів Договору про нерозповсюдження ядерної зброї.*

*Аналізуючи тенденцію заяв лідерів таких країн як росія, Іран, Північна Корея, постає питання: «Чи є участь у договорі, спрямованому на нерозповсюдження та стримування ядерної зброї, гарантією безпеки для країни, яка не має ядерної зброї?». А також у цій статті розглядається питання ефективності сучасної ядерної політики США, спрямованої на нерозповсюдження та стримування ядерної зброї, на прикладі двосторонніх домовленостей з такими країнами, як Україна, Південна Корея, Тайвань. У випадку з Україною згідно Будапештського меморандуму Сполучені Штати, виступають гарантом територіальної цілісності держави в обмін на відмову цієї країни від володіння ядерним арсеналом. Проаналізувавши всі загальні тенденції, що базуються на стрімкому розвитку подій третього десятиліття XXI століття, можна припустити, що сьогодні актори міжнародної геополітичної арени відійшли від базових теорій політичного ідеалізму чи реалізму, а замість цього спостерігається розвиток політичного неореалізму або, як його також називають структурного реалізму.*

**Ключові слова:** ядерна політика США, ядерний шантаж, нерозповсюдження, ДНЯЗ, Китай, Іран, КНДР.