

Russians Reiterate Warning: NATO Faces Preemptive Strike

by Carl Osgood

May 7—A two-day international conference on ballistic-missile-defense (BMD) systems called by the Russian government, should serve as a wake-up call to those who have been denying the strategic reality of the threat of thermonuclear war. The May 3-4 conference in Moscow was titled “The Factor of Anti-Missile Defense in Forming a New Security Zone.” Before an audience of representatives of 50 nations, including the 28 NATO countries, the top Russian military leadership reiterated the warning issued by Russian President Dmitri Medvedev on Nov. 23, 2011: If NATO goes ahead unilaterally with the deployment of the NATO-U.S. anti-missile systems in Europe, which Russia has repeatedly identified as a threat to its strategic forces, Russia will have no choice but to consider a preemptive strike against the anti-missile installations.

Since NATO intends the first phase of deployment of the European BMD system to be up and running at the time of its May 20 summit in Chicago, a global showdown of decisive importance for the world’s survival looms immediately ahead.

Makarov Is Blunt

Chief of the Russian Armed Forces General Staff, Gen. Nikolai Makarov, laid out the stark situation during the opening session.

“The placement of new strike weapons in the south and northwest of Russia against [NATO] missile de-

fense components, including the deployment of Iskander missile systems in Kaliningrad region, is one possible way of incapacitating the European missile defense infrastructure,” Makarov said. Taking into account the “destabilizing nature of the missile defense system . . . the decision on the preemptive use of available weapons will be made during an aggravation of the situation.”

This is not the first time Makarov has made such a dire warning. Back on Nov. 17, 2011, he told Russian Public Chamber, a Kremlin advisory body which includes numerous policy heavyweights, that “Russia could be involved in a conflict where weapons of mass destruction could be used. . . .” Then, on Feb. 15, in an interview with the radio station Ekho Moskv, Makarov said, “We are certainly not planning to fight against the whole of NATO, but if there is a threat to the integrity of the Russian Federation, we have the right to use nuclear weapons, and we will.”

No Target But Russia

One of the major features of the conference was a presentation by the Russians of a computer simulation showing how the missile defense system represented a threat to no country other than Russia. The presentation depicted the reach of radars and interceptor missiles to be deployed as part of the shield, and demonstrated how the interceptors would, in several years, be capable of hitting Russian missiles.



Presidential Press Service

President Putin greets military veterans in a ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow on May 8. At an international conference on anti-missile defense the previous week, the military brass and civilian defense officials warned that NATO deployment of ballistic missile defense installations on Russia's borders could be a casus belli.

But the Russians are not prepared to wait for later phases of the system. With the intention of NATO clearly visible, they are drawing the line now: “*Nyet.*”

At the conference, the secretary of Russia's Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev, said that, by 2020, the NATO system would have the capability to intercept a portion of Russia's ICBM force. “The geographical regions and technical characteristics of these missile defense systems create the foundations for additional dangers, especially considering the current and future levels of high-precision armament of the United States,” he said. “There are just no targets for the missile defense shield other than Russia.”

Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov told the conference that “so far, we have not found a mutually acceptable solution to the missile defense issue, and the situation is at a dead end.” He noted that NATO intends to declare initial operational capability of the European BMD systems on May 20 at the Chicago summit, indicating its willingness to go ahead without Russian accord.

“There is a dilemma facing our countries now,” Serdyukov said. “Either we pass this test of cooperation and respond together to new missile challenges and threats, or we will be forced to undertake the necessary military measures.” But he also indicated that an agree-

ment on missile defense can, in principle, be reached, as the recent agreement on nuclear arms reductions shows.

Cooperation Is Still Possible

But Russia has also put offers of cooperation on the table, on missile defense and more.

Repeating the proposal Moscow has been making since then-President Vladimir Putin brought it to the Kennebunkport summit with President George W. Bush five years ago, Patrushev said the optimal solution is joint development of a European BMD system which would strengthen security of all countries of the continent without exception, would be adequate to the probable threats, and would not undermine strategic stability.

Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov added that, if there were a genuine agreement to cooperate on missile defense, then not only the Russian Gabala radar in Azerbaijan and other potential facilities in southern Russia, but also the Moscow Don-2N radar, would be available for joint East-West use.

Just last week, Patrushev announced that Strategic Defense of Earth (SDE) issues such as preempting asteroid strikes, would be a major topic at the Russian Security Council-sponsored global security forum in St. Petersburg next month. That proposal for collaboration was first issued by Russia's former Ambassador to NATO Dmitri Rogozin last Fall (see box).

The American Non-Response

The American response to the Russian assertions about the NATO system was to say that it's not aimed at Russia and to argue, in effect, that it doesn't work anyway. Most importantly, NATO and the United States insist that they will go ahead with the deployment; that they will not provide written guarantees that the system is not aimed at Russia; and that Russia should give President Obama leeway until after his (presumed) reelection to negotiate an agreement with Russia.

Having already received numerous assurances from the Obama Administration on the system that were not

honored—and clear indications of the Obama-British encirclement policy against Russia and China—the Russians have no reason to believe them, and no intention to go along with the NATO game.

“In fact, we have no desire at all to disturb global strategic stability,” Alexander Vershbow, the Deputy Secretary General of NATO, told the conference. “Quite the contrary: NATO missile defense will be capable of intercepting only a small number of relatively unsophisticated ballistic missiles. It does not have the capability to neutralize Russian deterrence.”

Madelyn Creedon, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs, claimed that Russian virtual modeling that shows Russia as the only

possible target of the NATO system is wrong, because it is based on the assumption that the system is activated immediately on launch, when in fact there’s a delay before it is activated. A Russian missile could hit Seattle or Washington, but the delay would not prevent intercept of more primitive missiles. These comments inspired the headline in one Russian newspaper, “NATO says Euro ABM can only intercept substandard rockets.”

The notion that Iran is even the threat to Europe that NATO claims it is, was itself challenged at the conference. According to *Russia Today*, political analyst Vladimir Orlov told the conference that the threats that NATO claims to be worried about are greatly exagger-

Rogozin’s Proposal for the Strategic Defense of Earth

Dmitri Rogozin, then Moscow’s envoy to NATO, and now deputy prime minister, proposed in October 2011, that the deadlock over the stationing of a U.S. missile defense system in Eastern Europe could be broken with an alternative plan, providing for a joint system capable of protecting the planet both from missile threats and from threats coming from outer space, such as asteroids. His views were reported in the daily *Kommersant* on Oct. 18, and the story was widely covered in other Russian media.

The proposal, dubbed the Strategic Defense of Earth (SDE), would tend in the direction envisioned by Lyndon LaRouche in 1982 and earlier, in his plan for U.S.-Soviet cooperation in bringing an end to the era of Mutually Assured Destruction. The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) adopted by Ronald Reagan in March 1983 embodied LaRouche’s proposal, but was rejected by the Soviet Union and sabotaged from within the United States.

According to coverage in the Oct. 18, 2011 *Russia Today*, the point of the current Russian initiative “is to focus on fighting threats coming from space rather than just missiles. . . . It would be an integration of anti-aircraft, missile, and space defenses.

“The system would be targeted against possible threats to Earth coming from space, including aster-

oids, comet fragments, and other alien bodies. . . . The system should be capable of both monitoring space and destroying any dangerous objects as they approach our planet.”

According to *Kommersant*’s sources, “one of the key elements of the Russian proposal is that the new Strategic Defense of Earth concept would have to be under UN control. The reason for this is obvious. Russia, as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, has veto power, and would therefore be able to fully monitor the project’s development and prevent its transformation in an undesirable direction.”

Russian President Dmitri Medvedev expressed interest in the proposal, and instructed one of his aides, Sergei Prikhodko, to work with Rogozin on it.

The English-language cable TV program “Russia Today” commented on Oct. 18: “The package of proposals has yet to be formalized. The idea has been nicknamed Strategic Defense of Earth, as an allusion to the Strategic Defense Initiative. . . .

“The concept gives an opportunity to propose [to the U.S.] an even more global task to save the world. And also do it together with us rather than on their own, *Kommersant*’s informant noted.”

On March 5, 2012, Rogozin, who was by then deputy prime minister, said at a meeting with space experts in Korolyov that whereas presently there is no immediate danger posed by asteroids, “We have to imagine that our planet could collide with other celestial bodies, such as meteorites, sometime in the future.”

ated. “Missile threats by those countries which Americans and Europeans claim develop long-range missiles—it is just not credible. Europe should not feel vulnerable, and the issue is that Russia instead of Europe now feels vulnerable,” he asserted.

Orlov was backed up by France’s Director for Strategy Affairs and Defense Policy Michel Miraillet: “Firstly, Iran’s ballistic missile program threatens neither Europe or the United States. Secondly, the Iranian nuclear program is developed for civil applications only. Therefore Russia considers Iran is a risk, not a threat to Europe.” He also said, however, that it would be a risk to ignore Iran’s missile program, which is quite capable at shorter ranges.

Over 200 experts from 50 countries, including all 28 NATO members, as well as China, South Korea, Japan, and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) member states, participated in the conference. They are now all on notice, to act to prevent World War III.



NATO

Russian Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Nikolai Makarov heads a delegation to NATO, January 2010. Makarov warned at the recent conference that in view of deployment of the NATO BMD system, “a decision on the preemptive use of available offensive weapons will be taken during the period of an escalating situation.”

Documentation

Russian Leaders Warn of Preemptive Strike on BMDS

The following are excerpts from comments made by Russian officials at the May 3-4, 2012 conference in Moscow on anti-ballistic missiles (ABM) and the NATO ballistic missile defense system (BMDS). The quotes are from Interfax news agency and Vzglyad newspaper (translated by EIR).

Minister of Defense Anatoli Serdyukov:

“The defense capability of our country depends on solving this problem. . . . We want to show the potential and the prospects for mutually beneficial cooperation on ABM defense. We intend to set the conditions for developing such cooperation.”

At the present time, however, regarding the ABM negotiations:

“The situation is practically at a dead end.” When NATO on May 20 announces that the first phase of the Euro BMDS is operational, “that will mean that the USA and NATO intend to continue developing the BMDS without consideration of Russia’s concerns.”

“Recently it has been stated more and more frequently that it is fundamentally impossible to reach agreement on ABM issues. We do not agree with that. Despite all the difficulties, Russia and the USA were able to conclude the Strategic Offensive Arms Reduction and Limitation Treaty. That document clearly reflects the inseparability of strategic offensive weapons and anti-missile defense.”

Secretary of the Russian Security Council Nikolai Patrushev:

“Russia shares the concerns of the world community about new upward spirals of missile proliferation. We do not think, however, that the current degree of these matches what the NATO countries prescribe for eliminating them.”

Patrushev went on to say that not a single one of the countries presenting possible problems from the stand-

point of missile proliferation has ICBMs, and that there is no evidence that ICBMs will appear in the near future.

He emphasized the refusal of the United States to provide legally binding guarantees that its BMDS would not be directed against Russia, saying that this casts doubt on what the real purpose of the system is:

“Legally binding guarantees are needed that the BMDS in Europe is not directed against Russia’s strategic nuclear forces. These should be backed up by objective criteria with respect to, in particular, the quantity and geography of interceptor missiles deployed, their velocities and ranges, and the capabilities of radar installations and other information systems for detecting ballistic missiles and aiming anti-missile missiles at them.”

According to Interfax, the Security Council secretary stated his certainty that the BMDS in Europe will lower the effectiveness of Russia’s deterrent: “The geographical regions and technical characteristics of these missile defense systems create the foundations for additional dangers, especially considering the current and future levels of U.S. high-precision armaments. There are simply no targets for the missile defense shield other than Russia.”

Patrushev also said:

“The optimal solution would be joint development of a concept for European ABM architecture that would strengthen the security of all countries of the continent without exception, would be adequate to the probable threats, and would not undermine strategic stability.”

Chief of the General Staff Gen. Nikolai Makarov:

“Considering the destabilizing nature of the BMDS, specifically the creation of the illusion of being able to inflict a disarming first strike without retaliation, *a decision on the preemptive use of available offensive weapons will be taken during the period of an escalating situation...* Deployment of new offensive weapons in southern and northwestern Russia, capable of firing on the anti-missile installations, and including the emplacement of Iskander missile units in the Kaliningrad Region, is one possible option for destroying the ABM infrastructure in Europe” (emphasis added).

Makarov stated that the current U.S. deployment plan for the BMDS in Europe is unacceptable, insofar



Press Service of the Russian Eastern Military District
Russian anti-aircraft defenses in the Republic of Buryatia.

as it “covers the flight trajectories of Russian ICBMs.”

Makarov commented that the U.S. refusal to offer legally binding guarantees that the BMDS is not directed against Russia, may indicate that plans exist to use the system against Russian forces.

Deputy Minister of Defense Anatoli Antonov:

“Our task today is for this conference to enable us to narrow the abyss of mistrust or misunderstanding in this area. It is not likely that we shall reach agreement about anything. But I would greatly wish that when our colleagues gather [at the NATO summit later this month] in Chicago and make decisions on their next steps, they remember this conference and think seriously about where implementation of these ill-advised ABM plans could lead. . . . My hope is that the results of this conference will enable our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense negotiators to get a feel for those elements on which agreement might be reached.”

Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Alexander Lukashevich:

“I think that the signals sent not only by General Makarov, but also by other senior military officers, were intended to make the participants of the upcoming Chicago NATO summit understand the how serious the situation is and to reconfigure their thinking to take the Russian arguments into account in the further development of their BMDS.”