

Lavrov: No Progress On U.S. BMD Systems

March 1—Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, after meeting with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on Feb. 26, denied widespread media reports that he and Kerry were expected to find common ground on a planned U.S. ballistic missile defense (BMD) system in Europe. The reports were based on a *Kommersant* article that cited unidentified “diplomatic sources on both sides.” “There are no grounds for such reports whatsoever,” Lavrov said, according to Interfax on Feb. 27.

He alluded to President Obama’s failure to further U.S.-Russia cooperation, as discussed six years ago at Kennebunkport, Maine: “If we cannot agree on a joint system, as Russia has proposed more than once starting 2007, when President Putin visited the U.S.,” Lavrov said, “we surely should talk not about new declarations, but about guarantees that this system will not be directed against the Russian nuclear potential, which can be verified based on impartial military-technical criteria.”

‘Out To Destroy Russian ICBMs’

Along the same lines, Vladimir Kozin, a member of an interagency working group attached to the Russian presidential administration and a researcher at the Russian Institute of Strategic Studies, wrote a hard-hitting article in the *Moscow Times* Feb. 28, warning that the U.S. BMD systems are out to “destroy Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles,” and advising that instead of trying to surround Russia, the United States should be working *with* Russia to defend the Earth from meteorites and similar dangers.

Kozin’s piece is an unusually detailed analysis that rips into President Obama’s phony offers of reducing offensive systems, and shows that Obama is covering up the buildup of tactical nuclear weapons at the same time as the BMD systems are being put in place.

“U.S. operational missile defense systems to be deployed in Romania and Poland in 2015 and 2018, respectively, are not designed to intercept potential ballistic missiles launched by Iran—the reason that

the U.S. gave for introducing the missile shield,” Kozin writes. “This is the task of the missile defense systems of the United States and its allies deployed in the Gulf region. *The only purpose of the U.S. missile defense equipment deployed in Europe is to destroy Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles* [emphasis added].

“The fact that our country is never mentioned in the missile shield program as a potential participant, proves that it is aimed at Russia. Russia is missing from both the NATO Missile Defense Action Plan and the U.S. and alliance’s ‘rules of engagement’ concerning the use of anti-ballistic missiles, endorsed shortly after the NATO Chicago summit last year.”

Kozin also throws in some very pointed questions, such as: “Why has the U.S. Air Force completed building new underground warehouses at 13 air bases in six NATO member countries to store precision nuclear air bombs designed to destroy hard targets?”

Moscow and Washington should agree once and for all, Kozin writes, “not to use nuclear weapons first against each other and not to deploy their missile defense systems near the borders of the other country. Russia has repeatedly declared its willingness to show restraint in the area of missile defense. A refusal by both sides to use nuclear weapons in a first strike would make the deployment of American missile defense systems at the ‘forward lines’ illogical and set an example of real cooperation for other nuclear states.

“Obviously, Russia and the U.S. would maintain their right to deploy and upgrade their infrastructure for the interception of ballistic missiles on their territories.

“But Washington should renounce its plans to implement not only the fourth but all the other phases of its current missile defense program. This means calling off the second phase, which has already started, and canceling the third as well. If Washington stops implementation of the fourth phase only, it will not meet the national security interests of Russia. In this case, the U.S. and NATO missile defense system will be deployed anyway.”

In conclusion, Kozin puts the Strategic Defense of Earth question onto the table. “Quite frankly, instead of thinking how to encircle Russia with nuclear and missile defense weapons,” he writes, “the American side should think about how it can work together with us and other interested parties to prevent meteorites from raining down on our planet.”