

“DEFENSE” OR “MISSILE OFFENSE”? U.S.-NATO Global Missile Shield Undermines World Strategic Stability

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Global Research, June 10, 2012

[RT and Stop NATO](#) 10 June 2012

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD, US NATO
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The deployment of a global missile defense system by the United States and NATO undermines strategic stability in the world and prompts Moscow to take appropriate steps in response, says a leading Russian engineer.

Yury Zaitsev, an advisor at the Academy of Engineering Sciences, told reporters on Saturday that as long as the Americans continue to pursue a global missile defense system, the idea of strategic stability does not exist.

“While the US is planning to set up a missile defense system without any limitations, you can forget about strategic stability forever,” Zaitsev said. “Russia is going to find itself surrounded by a belt of NATO interceptor missiles along its western borders.”

In light of these developments, the specialist said that Russia’s plans to deploy tactical missile systems near the NATO borders are “absolutely justified.”

“The same thing concerns the creation of other forces and systems capable of destroying or disabling missile defense systems on the territories of neighboring states,” he added.

NATO announced at its Chicago summit in May that an interim European missile defense system is already on line, and that the alliance is determined to proceed with its expansion until it fully realizes the system’s potential.

Meanwhile, at the same time that US and NATO officials declare that the missile defense system is not targeted against Russia, their actual steps are proving the opposite, Zaitsev said.

“The European missile defense system is certainly designed not to defend from a mythical missile threat on the part of Iran and North Korea, but from what Western politicians believe could be a possible attack by Russian ballistic missiles,” he said. “Any NATO military plans classify the Russian nuclear missile potential as posing a threat to the alliance, which

envisions certain measures to neutralize (Russia's nuclear defense forces)."

The Russian specialist said that it is possible that the missile defense system may give some politicians a false sense of security, possibly resulting in potential adversaries "dictating their terms" to Russia.

"No one can guarantee that there will not be politicians with the illusion of a reliable missile shield over their heads and, being sure of their security, wanting to dictate their terms to Russia," Zaitsev said.

In such a situation, it makes no sense to demand legal guarantees that the system will not be targeted against Russia, he stressed.

"Even if such guarantees are issued, they will only serve to lull Moscow, and then they will retract these guarantees just as easily," Zaitsev said.

"Suffice it to recall how prominent Western politicians swore that, following Germany's reunification, NATO would not move eastward even by an inch."

America's determination to build a missile defense system in former Warsaw Pact territory represents the main stumbling block in relations between Russia and the US, Zaitsev explained.

He insisted that the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which former US President George W. Bush walked away from in late 2001, maintained strategic global stability precisely because it limited the deployment and modernization of missile defense systems. At the same time, the treaty provided opportunities to negotiate the reduction of strategic offensive weapons.

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