

Hillary Clinton says ABM system hinges on Iran's actions

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, February 12, 2009

[Russia Today](#) 12 February 2009

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said Tuesday the Obama administration might reconsider its plans to deploy an ABM system in Eastern Europe – if Iran agrees to compromise on its nuclear program.

Clinton made her statement in Washington after talks with Karl Swartzenberg, the Foreign Minister of Czech Republic, which is currently presiding over the Council of the European Union until July 1 of this year.

Some analysts are interpreting the statement as a clear signal to Russia to impose tougher sanctions on Iran.

Clinton included another hurdle that the ABM system must clear: it must work. The secretary of state said the radar in the Czech Republic and ABM interceptor missiles in Poland will be deployed only if their effectiveness and technical reliability are proven. This is a qualification that the former Bush administration tried to ignore.

Moscow, perhaps in a goodwill gesture to the new U.S. administration, announced that it would refrain from deploying tactical missiles in the Kaliningrad region – a Russian enclave that is situated between Poland and Lithuania on the Baltic Sea – if the U.S. agrees not to deploy the ABM system, which Moscow views as a clear threat to its security.

But now it appears that progress between Moscow and Washington might have hit a snag: The U.S. is blaming Moscow for Kyrgyzstan's decision to close the Manas Air Base in the capital of Bishkek. The facility serves as a key supply corridor for US and NATO troops in Afghanistan.

Now, there is talk in Moscow that the US might use the controversial ABM system as a bargaining chip with the Kremlin on issues involving Middle Eastern and Central Asian politics. Perhaps those fears are exaggerated.

In a recent informal talk with reporters at the State Department, Clinton mentioned that now, with the new Obama administration, the Iranians have a clear opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to engage with the US. In a nutshell, it's up to the Iranians to use this opportunity for dialogue or not.

This is a new change of tone from the heated U.S. rhetoric of the past. And it was none other than Hillary Clinton who consistently stated over the last several years that Iran represents a danger to the U.S., as well as to Israel.

“U.S. policy must be clear and unequivocal: We cannot, we should not, we must not permit Iran to build or acquire nuclear weapons,” the former Senator from New York told a crowd of Israeli supporters during her failed campaign for the U.S. presidency.

Yet the new administration’s view on the ABM program in Eastern Europe remains clouded in ambiguity, which can be largely explained by US President Barack Obama’s heated objections to the missile system during his presidential campaign on the grounds of its unproven capabilities.

Vice President Joseph Biden added, “We will continue to develop missile defenses to counter a growing Iranian capability, provided the technology is proven to work and cost effective.”

This thorny issue places yet another big challenge on the plate of the American president, who is being critically watched in these early days of his presidency. Without a clear position on this controversial issue there cannot be much progress in U.S. relations with Russia, Iran, and America’s allies in Europe.

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