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Washington Military Planners Have Gone Mad

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To read the Western mainstream media, we would be led to believe that the big, bad Russian Bear, with Vladimir Putin atop, shaking a fistful of nuclear warheads, is confronting the West in the most threatening manner imaginable.

We should believe Russia is provoking at every turn, frothing at the mouth and threatening to invade the Baltic countries and perhaps all Western Europe. We would feel quite justified, as the propaganda spin of Washington claims, to protect America's European allies from surprise Russian nuclear attack by surrounding Russia with anti-Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) systems.

So we as citizens in the Western NATO countries have little reaction at all when we read some days ago that the Obama White House announced it had activated the first phase of its anti-ballistic missile defense system (BMD), known as AEGIS, in an air base in Deveselu, Romania. Poland will be next to become activated with Washington's Aegis.

The Aegis Ashore system has been officially put into operation and can already launch SM-3 interceptor missiles. The system includes 24 anti-aircraft SM-3 missiles. At the same time the Pentagon is placing its BMD installations in Japan and South Korea and possibly, Australia, aimed at China. Our perception of world reality is primarily shaped for us by what we read in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal or hear on CNN or BBC. We sigh a small sigh of relief that our world is now more secure. Nothing is farther from reality. That's a grave error.

On May 13, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, alongside officials representing the United States and European NATO members, announced the activation of a new missile system, based in Romania. Stoltenberg announced,

"The United States' Aegis ashore system is declared certified for operations."

The new missile network is based at Romania's Deveselu military air base. The US is also building another new US missile base in Poland. On the same day Deveselu missile base was opened for "business," construction began on the US missile base near Redzikowo, Poland. Both will operate under the direct command of the US Department of Defense. The Pentagon insists both are intended to protect Europe from Iran (sic!). Shall we call that a pretty pathetic propaganda deception of Washington? I would say so. Both and other systems are directly intended for Russia and those "unarmed" Aegis missiles are potentially nuclear-capable and carry Tomahawk Land Attack Cruise Missiles.

The Romanian missile base is positioned less than 400 miles from Russia's main Black Sea naval base at Sevastopol, Crimea. AEGIS is able to fire short and long-range

missiles.i Neither Romania nor Poland will have any say over its use, even though their territory will be the target of any pre-emptive Russian reaction.

Commenting on the event, the *New York Times* openly acknowledged, "The launch-pad violates a 1987 treaty intended to take the superpowers off their hair-trigger nuclear alter, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, by banning land-based cruise and medium-range missiles with a range from 300 to 3,400 miles."

US and NATO officials insist that AEGIS is directed against Iran and other small states viewed by Washington as "rogue states," and poses no threat to Russia or China, something absurd on the surface.

The reality, that Russia is the target of the Romanian Aegis system was made plain by the remarks at the opening ceremony by Romanian President Klaus Ioannis. Ioannis made clear that the new installation is part of broader plans to use his country as a staging area for NATO activities throughout Eastern Europe and the Black Sea.

Of course the Black Sea is home to Russia's naval Black Sea Fleet in Russian Crimea. Admitting that the real target of the missiles is the Russian Federation, Ioannis called on NATO leaders to maintain a "permanent naval presence" in the Black Sea, as part of a military buildup aimed at making a "credible and predictable presence of Allied forces on the eastern flank." A glance at the map shos that the only nation bordering the Black Sea not either in NATO or controlled by pro-NATO regimes is the Russian Federation.

During his swearing in some days before the Aegis opening US Army General and Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, Curtis Scaparrotti, warned that Russia "is striving to project itself as a world power." He declared that US forces in Europe must "enhance our levels of readiness and our agility in the spirit of being able to fight tonight if deterrence fails." That sounds pretty "hair-trigger" to me.

Russia made clear it does not greet the news of Aegis deployment with grace or joy. Russia's President Putin told news agencies, "This is not a defense system. This is part of a US nuclear strategic potential brought on to a periphery. In this case, Eastern Europe is such a periphery…Those people taking such decisions must know that until now they have lived calm, fairly well-off and in safety. Now, as these elements of ballistic missile defense are deployed, we are forced to think how to neutralize the emerging threats to the Russian Federation."

Russian commentator Konstantin Bogdanov told the *New York Times*, "The antimissile sites in Eastern Europe might even accelerate the slippery slope to nuclear war in a crisis. They would inevitably become priority targets in the event of nuclear war, possibly even targets for preventive strikes… Countries like Romania that host American antimissile systems might be the only casualties, whereas the United States would then reconcile with Russia 'over the smoking ruins of the East European elements of the missile defense system."

Possible Russian response

Many Washington "think-tank generals," neo-conservative academic hawks and even senior Pentagon professional military generals, more concerned with lobbying for a bigger defense budget than for reality, seem to believe the United States is invulnerable and that their drip-drip escalation against Russia and also China in recent years will restore their vanishing sole

superpower global hegemony. It won't, and in fact may end up obliterating the United States mainland as well as Europe, even if it costs Russians dearly.

A well-respected Cold War military veteran originally from the Soviet Union, later in French intelligence, writing under the nom de plume, The Saker, recently outlined in detail what the United States and NATO can expect from Russia if Washington foolishly continues to escalate US troop deployments on Russia's doorstep in the Baltics, activates more of its BMD missile defenses–which, by the way, as Vladimir Putin pointed out, are also capable of being easily converted to carry nuclear warheads.

Saker correctly points out that Washington's AEGIS kinetic BMD system at present is no real military threat to Russia's military defense capabilities. It is the escalation that they see that alarms Moscow. That, especially since Washington's February, 2014 coup d'etat in Ukraine, and the lock-step obedience as literal vassals, of every EU head of government to Washington orders since, even at their own economic expense.

As a consequence, Russia has begun to prepare for the "unthinkable." Keep in mind Russians abhor war, having lost perhaps up to 30 million souls in the 1940's only to see the latecomer, USA, who jumped in in 1944, after the Russians has been taking the vast bulk of the fighting against Nazi Germany, claim themselves as "victor." Yet, through history going back to the Great Schism of 1054, Russians, when forced in existential crises, are capable of defending against all odds.

Saker describes the Russian current response strategy which has been quietly in preparation since the Cheney-Bush Administration announced plans in 2007 for a US BMD in Poland and the Czech Republic:

> "The Russian effort is a vast and a complex one, and it covers almost every aspect of Russian force planning, but there are four examples which, I think, best illustrate the Russian determination not to allow a 22 June 1941 to happen again:
>
> • The re-creation of the First Guards Tank Army (in progress)
>
> • The deployment of the Iskander-M operational-tactical missile system (done)
>
> • The deployment of the Sarmat ICBM (in progress)
>
> • The deployment of the Status-6 strategic torpedo (in progress)"

Three of the four points are especially worth describing in detail. Saker describes the Iskander-M: "The new Iskander-M operational tactical missile system is…extremely accurate, it has advanced anti-ABM capabilities, it flies at hypersonic speeds and is practically undetectable on the ground…This will be the missile tasked with destroying all the units and equipment the US and NATO have forward-deployed in Eastern Europe…"

Then he details Sarmat ICBM, in progress. After noting that during the Cold War, the SS-18, the most powerful ICBM ever developed, was scary enough. " "The RS-28 'Sarmat' brings the terror to a totally new level. The Sarmat is…capable of carrying 10-15 MIRVed warheads which will be delivered in a so-called "depressed" (suborbital) trajectory and which will remain maneuverable at hypersonic speeds. The missile will not have to use the typical trajectory over the North Pole but will be capable of reaching any target anywhere on the

planet from any trajectory. All these elements combined will make the Sarmat itself and its warheads completely impossible to intercept."

Then Russia's Status-6 strategic torpedo: "The Status-6 torpedo would be delivered from an 'autonomous underwater vehicle' with advanced navigational capabilities but which can also be remote controlled and steered from a specialized command module. The vehicle can dive as deep as 1 kilometer at a speed up to 185km/h with a range of up to 10,000km (over 6,200 miles). The Status-6 system can target aircraft carrier battle groups, US navy bases (especially SSBN bases) and, in its most frightening configuration, it can be used to deliver high-radioactivity cobalt bombs capable of laying waste to huge expanses of land. The Status-6 delivery system would be...capable of delivering a 100 megaton warhead which would make it twice as powerful as the most powerful nuclear device ever detonated, the Soviet Czar-bomb (57 megatons). Hiroshima was only 15 kilotons." Saker adds, "Keep in mind that most of the USA's cities and industrial centers are all along the coastline which makes them extremely vulnerable to torpedo based attacks...the depth and speed of the Status-6 torpedo would make it basically invulnerable to interception."

The Saker notes there are other equally serious possible Russian responses to any potential existential danger for the motherland, rodina, as Russians call their homeland.

Nuclear Primacy

The active USA BMD project began during Ronald Reagan's Presidency. In 1972 the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) between Moscow and Washington placed severe limits on development or deployment of Ballistic Missile Defense, but didn't prevent intense research on such systems. That was what President Ronald Reagan announced to the world in March 1983, when he launched the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which the press quickly dubbed, 'Star Wars.' When the Cold War ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, Washington temporarily shelved full-scale work on deploying their BMD systems. But only temporarily, until the Cheney-Bush Administration in 2001.

Ballistic Missile Defense systems are the final element that could make a US nuclear first strike a possible live option. It would be aimed to take out any Soviet missiles that had somehow survived a US First Strike.

According to the late Lt. Col. Robert Bowman, former head of President Carter's then-top secret SDI research, anti-missile defense remained in 2009, "the missing link to a First Strike" capability.

Already in 2003 at the onset of the illegal US invasion of Iraq, the Pentagon's 2003 Nuclear Posture Review made clear that nuclear weapons were here to stay. The declared purpose of US nuclear weapons under the hawkish Cheney-Bush era was changing from nuclear deterrence (MAD) and weapon of last resort to a central, usable component of the US military arsenal. The unthinkable was being thought in Washington.

In September 2015 the Pentagon announced Washington's decision to station 20 next-generation advanced nuclear bombs of Type B61-12 in Germany, above the protests of leading but impotent German politicians. The B61-12 is in fact a brand new nuclear weapon with vastly improved military capabilities, and the most expensive nuclear bomb project ever. I noted in an article then, that Washington's deployment of new nuclear weapons in Germany, "is no minor affair as it brings the likelihood of nuclear war by miscalculation

between the United States and Russia one giant step closer and it makes the German Republic a direct high-priority target in any such escalation."

If I am walking down the street minding my own business and I see a psychopath leap at me with a drawn knife clearly aiming to kill, I have a moral responsibility to defend my life with all my means. Likewise, as Kremlin planners carefully monitor the actions of the US military and State Department since declaration of plans to install its Ballistic Missile Defense in NATO Western European lands back in 2007, after the Cheney-Bush Administration unilaterally tore up the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty of 1987 to free itself to deploy its BMD systems, and now with deployments of NATO and US troops and tanks at the periphery of Russia as well as around China, both countries are taking deadly seriously the growing danger to their very existence through an "unthinkable" US nuclear first strike.

As a nice cheery footnote, the state-owned China paper, *Global Times,* in its May 29, 2016 edition reported that China will send a submarine armed with nuclear missiles into the Pacific for the first time. The paper, making an official Beijing Government response to Washington's military Asia Pivot, added that China has been adopting an "effective nuclear deterrence" strategy, with much fewer nuclear warheads than the West powers. Also, China is the only one among the nuclear powers to announce a no-first-use policy. It means that China's nuclear deterrence lies in its capability to strike back… As Sino-US tensions build, it is necessary for China to strengthen its capability for nuclear retaliation. It will help with balance in the Asia-Pacific region and enhance the US willingness to seek peace with China.

It is vital that the still sane among us clearly understand how utterly mad, as in insane, not in Mutual Assured Destruction, the Washington missile defense and Russia provoking strategy of the past two decades, especially the past two years, is. Unlike US Defense Secretary Ash Carter, I for one am not willing to end up in a thermonuclear ash heap.

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