

Amid Finger Pointing at Russia, US Brings Tanks Back to Cold War Depot

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As President Barack Obama vows that the United States will take “action” in response to the allegations that Russia interfered with the November election, the U.S. army has started to bring tanks back to a Cold War site in the Netherlands as a show of its “commitment to deterrence in Europe.”

The U.S. and Dutch military reopened the Eyselshoven site on Thursday. It [will contain](#) “strategically prepositioned critical war stock” [including](#) M1 Abrams Tanks and M109 Paladin Self-Propelled Howitzers.

“Three years ago, the last American tank left Europe; we all wanted Russia to be our partner,” [said](#) Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, head of U.S. Army Europe. “My country is bringing tanks back,” and “[w]e are signaling our commitment and demonstrating the ability to prepare,” he said.

“That is what Eyselshoven represents. This is the manifestation of 28 nations committed to the security of each other,” he said.

Added Dutch Gen. Tom Middendorp, chief defense staff of the Royal Netherlands Army: “We want to make sure we are sending a clear signal to Russia that we will not accept any violation of NATO’s territorial integrity.”

U.S. Congress earlier this month [passed](#) the National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, which, as the *Wall Street Journal* noted, “approved a \$3.4 billion spending plan to boost European defenses including reopening or creating five equipment-storage sites in the Netherlands, Poland, Belgium, and two locations in Germany.”

NBC News adds:

In September, the U.S. Army began to assemble additional so called Army Prepositioned Stocks (APS) for permanent storage in Europe. The latest shipment includes ammunition.

The additional combat equipment will give the Army the option for another heavy armored brigade. Presently, it has only two light brigades in Europe: 173rd Airborne Brigade and the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.

Earlier in the year the U.S. had already begun [taking steps](#) to confront what the Pentagon described as “an aggressive Russia,” and *Reuters* [wrote](#) in October that NATO was prepping for its “biggest military build-up on Russia’s borders since the Cold War.”

But the restocking of tanks and other equipment at the Dutch site comes as U.S. intelligence officials and politicians have [accused](#) Russia of hacking the Democratic National Committee (DNC) computer network and interfering with the 2016 U.S. elections—an accusation [repeated](#) by corporate media.

Obama [said](#) in an interview with *NPR* that aired Friday, “I think there is no doubt that when any foreign government tries to impact the integrity of our elections ... we need to take action. And we will—at a time and place of our own choosing. Some of it may be explicit and publicized; some of it may not be.”

Agencies were still conducting “a whole range of assessments,” and so he couldn’t speak to motivations for the alleged hacks. However, Obama said, they “create[d] more problems for the Clinton campaign than it had for the Trump campaign.”

As *The Intercept*’s Sam Biddle [wrote](#) this week:

the refrain of Russian attribution has been repeated so regularly and so emphatically that it’s become easy to forget that no one has ever truly proven the claim. There is strong evidence indicating that Democratic email accounts were breached via phishing messages, and that specific malware was spread across DNC computers. There’s even evidence that the attackers are the same group that’s been spotted attacking other targets in the past. But again: No one has actually proven that group is the Russian government (or works for it).

President-elect Donald Trump, for his part, has [dismissed](#) the accusations and called them “ridiculous,” and the Kremlin has [denounced](#) them as “ludicrous nonsense.”

[According to](#) Stephen Cohen, professor emeritus of Russian studies, history, and politics at New York University and Princeton University, “We’re in the most dangerous confrontation with Russia since the Cuban missile crisis. It needs to be discussed.”

Speaking to *Democracy Now!* on Thursday, Cohen said that “at the moment, it can’t be discussed because of these charges that everybody is a client of [Russian President Vladimir] Putin who disagrees with the mainstream opinion. And it’s coming from the Senate. It’s coming from *The New York Times*.”

“[O]ne motive is to keep Trump from going to the White House. Another is to delegitimize him before he gets there. But the main motive—and you can hear it clearly—is Trump has said he wants cooperation with Russia, and the war party here that’s against that is determined to stop it,” he said.

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