

Nuclear Confrontation with Russia: Has Washington Gone Looney Tunes?

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Global Research, July 02, 2015

[New Eastern Outlook](#) 22 June 2015

Region: [Russia and FSU, USA](#)

Theme: [Military and WMD, US NATO](#)

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Given a series of recent speeches by leading US officials and actions, the question must be frankly posed: Has Washington gone collectively looney tunes? Even as the governments of the EU are moving to buck US pressures and ease the sanctions, the Obama Administration seems intent on marching in the direction of a nuclear confrontation with Russia. As the ancient Greek expression puts it, "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad..." The following recent developments fit that pattern quite nicely, thank you.

On June 5, Ashton Carter, the neo-conservative Obama Defense Secretary gave clear indications he is prepared to be far more provocative against Russia than his fired predecessor, Chuck Hagel. Carter convened a special meeting in Stuttgart, Germany of two dozen US military leaders and US Ambassadors in Europe at the headquarters of US European Command. He told them, "We have something that has taken a sad turn recently, which is Russia."

That in itself was not so notable as were the reports that the neo-con US Defense Secretary, "Ash"—that is his nickname, appropriately enough—Carter discussed at the Stuttgart meeting returning US short-range nuclear missiles to European NATO countries to target Russia.

On June 7, just two days after Carter's Stuttgart remarks, UK Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond, told the press that the UK might again place American nuclear missiles on British soil because of what he termed "heightened tensions" with Russia. The Foreign Secretary said there were "worrying signs" about the increased activity of Russian forces and that the UK would "consider the pros and cons of taking US intermediate-range [weapons](#)."

The UK Telegraph reported that Ash Carter was considering unilaterally abrogating a Cold War-era treaty with Russia's predecessor, the Soviet Union, and re-deploying nuclear-capable missiles in Europe.

Britain's Foreign Secretary Hammond went on to reveal what a psychologist might clinically call paranoid schizophrenia. First he sounded the war drums, declaring boldly, "We have got to send a clear signal to Russia that we will not allow them to transgress our red lines." The last NATO politician to foolishly talk about red lines was US President Barack Obama in Syria in 2013 and that nearly landed the US in a Middle East conflagration so dangerous that his own generals reportedly threatened to resign. Then, in the next breath, Hammond the tough guy talking about re-stationing US intermediate-range nuclear missiles on UK soil, blurts out, "At the same time, we have to recognize that the Russians do have a sense of being

surrounded and under attack and we don't want to make unnecessary [provocations](#)."

Does that mean the UK will only make "necessary" provocations? Indeed, the intellectual and moral quality of western politicians in the last decades has become laughable.

Neither Britain nor France, both NATO countries with nuclear arsenals, signed the 1987 INF Treaty, something Moscow at the time vehemently protested.

Germans agree US Pershing II missiles

In 1983 the German Bundestag agreed to allow the deployment of American Pershing II middle-range nuclear missiles on German territory, at the same time the Reagan Administration announced it was initiating an anti-ballistic missile defense system, later dubbed Star Wars. Both decisions led to a state of extreme military tensions between the Warsaw Pact and NATO until the USA and Soviet Union agreed to sign the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in December 1987 which provided for destruction of all middle range weapons on both sides.

Significantly, that was one year after Washington and Saudi Arabia had deliberately collapsed the price of crude oil to well below \$10 a barrel, devastating the Soviet hard currency dollar budget that was essential to obtain technologies to counter the US Star Wars and other NATO military threats.

Now Washington seems to be saying, to quote the words of the great New York Yankees baseball catcher, Yogi Berra, "It's déjà vu all over again." But 2015 is not at all the same world as 1983, and the Russian Federation, especially in de facto alliance with China and others, is not the bankrupt Soviet Union of 1983.

NATO to take Kaliningrad?

It seems that the Pentagon is considering far more mad moves than merely returning mid-range nuclear missiles to Europe. According to hackers who managed to enter the system of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, that tiny Baltic country is getting ready to militarily annex Russia's Kaliningrad [region](#). It reads like a fantastic rewrite of the 1950's Peter Sellers satire film, *The Mouse that Roared*, with Lithuania cast in the role of the Duchy of Grand Fenwick, declaring war this time, not on the United States, but on the Russian Federation.

Kaliningrad is a Russian Oblast today of some 960,000 ethnic Russian inhabitants. It became part of the Soviet Union in 1945, at the Potsdam Conference, when the US and British Governments agreed to the transfer to the Soviet Union of the city of Koenigsberg, renamed Kaliningrad, and the area adjacent to it.

Because of Washington's eastward expansion of NATO after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, Kaliningrad is situated now between NATO members Poland and Lithuania on the Baltic Sea. Because it is the only Russian Baltic Sea port "ice-free" all year round, it plays a vital strategic role in harboring the Russian Baltic Naval Fleet and three Russian air force bases.

When the Bush Administration announced it was stationing US missiles in Poland in 2007 as part of its upgraded Ballistic Missile Defense deployment, tensions between Moscow and Washington reached a break point, as Russia threatened to station nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad, a threat dropped in 2009 as a response to Obama's feint, called "reset." For

NATO, using tiny Lithuania today as her proxy, to seize Kaliningrad, would amount to a declaration of nuclear war against Russia.

According to Lithuanian news portal Delfi, the hacked documents of the Lithuanian Defense Ministry reveal that ongoing NATO maneuvers in the region would provide the cover for the surprise attack. Right now some 2,100 soldiers from nine NATO member states part of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) are taking part in [military exercises](#) in northwestern Poland. Later this summer, NATO's "Allied Shield" will be also held in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, involving 15,000 troops from 19 NATO member states and three partner nations, including Sweden, later this [month](#).

Who violates INF?

Moscow accuses Washington of violating the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty by placing missile defense launchers in Poland and Romania, capable of firing Tomahawk thermonuclear cruise missiles at Russian and Belarus targets.

To cover over the brazen US INF violations, Ash Carter claims the Obama Administration "suspects" Russia has tested ground-launched cruise missiles with a range that is not allowed by the INF treaty. Testing missiles, even if true, and Washington has produced no proof, is a far cry from deploying nuclear-capable missiles in Poland and Romania and to planning the invasion by NATO of one of Russia's prime military enclaves, [Kaliningrad](#).

The so-called Russian INF Treaty violations that are being used as a pretext for Washington to again place intermediate-range missiles in Europe, aimed at Russian targets, were supposedly committed by Moscow in 2008, according to New York Times reports. But it was only in 2013, just prior to their launching Maidan Square protests that led to the Washington coup d'etat in Ukraine, did the US State Department even raise the possibility of violation. Then it was only in July, 2014 when, according to the New York Times, that US President Obama had written a letter to President Putin accusing Russia of those 2008 testing [violations](#).viii

The leak of the letter at the time, July, 2014, fit conveniently with the Obama Administration demonization of Putin's Russia. The NATO Supreme Commander, US General Philip M. Breedlove stated in April 2014 that the alleged 2008 Russian "violation" required a response. "A weapon capability that violates the INF, that is introduced into the greater European land mass, is absolutely a tool that will have to be dealt with. It can't go [unanswered](#)."

Little wonder Russian analysts accuse Washington of setting loose a propaganda barrage, blaming Russia for violations, so that they could justify returning their nuclear missiles to European NATO and Asia where they would target both Russia and China.

Mad, heated-up people in Washington, London and elsewhere in NATO are literally playing nuclear "chicken." Are the Poles, Lithuanians, Germans and British that stupid that they cannot see the larger consequences of the Washington NATO game? Or are they that suicidal? After all, it is they who would become a thermonuclear ash-heap, not the United States. Just as it has been the German and other EU economies which have suffered massively under US-imposed Russia sanctions.

How ridiculous this all is. Roaring mad mice streaming out of the cracks in the august

edifices of Washington and London and Vilnius, squeaking and running about in a mad frenzy. It's Looney Tunes rebaked in Washington these days. But Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, Elmer Fudd, Tweety Bird and Sylvester the Cat did a better job than these guys.

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