

Rampant Militarization of the World: West Risks New Arms Race In Europe

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Does the West want to start arms race in Europe?

John Robles

Interview with Rick Rozoff, the manager of the Stop [NATO website](#) and [mailing list](#) and a contributing writer to [GlobalResearch.ca](#)



Collage: Voice of Russia

About a month ago, NATO tested first-strike capabilities by using a mobile radar in Turkey. Why would a defensive system need to test offensive capabilities? We have the cyber warfare center. You said it also can be used as an offensive tool by the U.S. We have hypersonic missile tests and the Prompt Global Strike system. I think these are pretty good reasons for the Russian Federation to be worried, to put it mildly, as to the intentions of the West. Why would the West want to start an arms race in Europe? Why would this be profitable? Why not include Russia as part of the sectoral approach system? It's probably a rhetorical question but can you touch upon it?

There is no rational answer to it, certainly not a persuasive one from the West. For example, as you mentioned, Russia is far from simply arbitrarily and firmly opposing the creation of a unilateral U.S. interceptor missile system in Europe. The entire western flank of Russia is affected by this, of course: From the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea.

Russia went out of its way, Russian political leadership went out of its way to be accommodating; to offer, for example, the use of the Gabala radar site it maintains in Azerbaijan to be employed in conjunction with NATO. It offered a sectoral approach in which

Russia would cover part of the affected area and NATO the other and so forth, for purposes of integration and communication. But we know that several things have occurred this week, and so far this month – the advanced hypersonic weapon test earlier this month, the statement by Anatoly Serdyukov, the defense minister of Russia, the day before Medvedev’s statement stating that Russian Air Defenses will be equipped to protect Russian nuclear strategic capabilities in the European part of the Russian Federation, and also that the U.S. announced – and was soon followed by 14 NATO allies in doing so – that it is effectively pulling out of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, blaming Russia for it because Russia suspended its activities within the CFE, as it’s known, in 2007 – but did so because the U.S. and its NATO allies refused to ratify amendments to the treaty. The U.S. has used the presence of a comparatively small contingent of Russian peacekeepers in Transdniester and, before Mikhail Saakashvili launched an assault against South Ossetia and began the 5-day war with Russia in August of 2008, the existence at that time of, again, small contingents of Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, using that as an excuse for basically suspending, for not ratifying amendments to, the CFE Treaty.

And we have, as you know, President Medvedev’s statement on Wednesday, the fact that Russia may be compelled to suspend its activities in or withdraw from the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). This is a very momentous week in terms of security in Russia with the fear of not only a new arms race, a new missile race, but something perhaps even more ominous than that.

What we are looking at is brinkmanship, lawlessness – I don’t know what other words to use to describe it – very bold and threatening actions by the U.S. and its NATO partners to move missiles up to Russia’s borders, in the case of Poland, which adjoins Kaliningrad, and perhaps Aegis-class warships equipped with Standard Missile-3 interceptors in the Baltic Sea off the coast of Russia and, of course, the 24 Standard Missile-3 land-based interceptors that are going to be placed in Romania, directly across the Black Sea from Russia.

I believe that President Medvedev mentioned precisely that – “on our borders and in waters bordering Russia” and so forth. What we are seeing is an almost calculated provocation, as I would characterize it. That’s the best interpretation.

The worst is that the U.S. and NATO are building up the military capability for neutralizing Russia’s strategic deterrent capability in the west and the south of the country. And I suspect that, having this year a military budget of some \$730 billion, which in constant dollars is at a World War II level, the highest since 1945, I’m reminded of the old expression that the abuse of power inevitably results from the power to abuse. As long as the U.S. has built itself into, in Obama’s terms, “the world’s sole military superpower,” it feels it can operate with impunity.

Would you say it’s time for the world to be very concerned here?

It’s way past time to be very concerned. I don’t know if it occurred at this year’s General Assembly session at the UN but I know that in preceding years Russia and China jointly went to the General Assembly and introduced resolutions addressing yet another threat, which is the militarization of space by the U.S. This is the ultimate facet of the so-called global missile shield. So there will be a space component to this in addition to land-, air- and sea-based interceptor missiles and radar. The world has sounded the alarm, at least major nations have. But I would like to see both the Security Council and the General Assembly

convene on an emergency basis, to be honest about it, to demand that this rampant militarization of the world stop. Two years ago, the Financial Times talked about a \$123 billion arms package for Saudi Arabia and three of its Persian Gulf allies with the U.S. The Saudi portion of that is estimated at \$60-67 billion, which is the single largest bilateral military deal in human history.

We've seen comparable buildups with countries like Canada, Australia and Japan. You don't build up this kind of military capability unless, at the very least, you are going to use it to blackmail somebody.

We should recall that on Wednesday President Medvedev's statements were very tempered. He was mentioning certain contingency plans that would only be put into operation if the U.S. didn't eventually heed the plea by Russia to notify it of its missile deployment plans and not pose a threat, or a potential threat, to Russian strategic interests and so forth. This wasn't a threat. This was rather stating that Russia would be compelled to introduce certain defensive measures if the U.S. and NATO continued to turn a deaf ear to Russia's offers of cooperation but was also an expression of its concern. One major Russian official - it may have been Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, I'm not sure - says the U.S. claims to be defending its own territory by building up a missile defense system, but that missile defense system is encroaching on Russian borders.

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