

The Militarization of Europe. US-NATO Missiles Threat to Russia's Security

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Russia has warned that the US missile defense system in Europe could spark another arms race.

NATO's missile defense system presents a threat to Russia's national security and may trigger the militarization of Europe, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin told a NATO Parliamentary Assembly delegation on Thursday.

"This missile defense concept is global and mobile, and it creates unpredictability," Rogozin said at a meeting with NATO officials at the Federation Council. "That is the real Figaro; Figaro here and Figaro there."

Rogozin said Moscow is "awaiting explanations from NATO and Washington concerning the real purpose [of the system]," he stressed.

The Deputy Prime Minister remarked on the military defense components "that are being deployed around Norway, the bases in Romania," which are aimed at intercepting "strategic rockets according to speed, range and altitude characteristics."

Rogozin then mentioned the US naval group - the core of European missile defense - which "may be deployed in European ports rather far from the Russian territory (such as a base in Spain)."

However, "the same fleet will invariably appear in our northern seas under particular circumstances."

"The radius of use of these weapons makes them a real threat to us," Rogozin noted. "The strategic potential of Russia is a guarantee of its sovereignty and independence."

The US missile defense system, first shelved then repackaged under the Obama administration, has been a thorn in the side of the Russia-US reset. Indeed, Russia has warned that the issue has all the potential to escalate into another arms race.

If new threats to Russia's strategic potential appear, Russia will simply have to consider the threatening prospect of a militarized Europe.

Rogozin implored the NATO delegation not to push Russia into a position where it will be forced to respond.

"We request you don't do that," he stressed. "The Russian response has a...political and

diplomatic nature at the moment, but you will not like the technical response we may have to pursue under certain circumstances.”

Although the Vice Premier said Russia has no reason to fear for the security of its western borders, he acknowledged there are threats that both Russia and the European Union share alike.

“We see new threats arising in Russia and European countries and...these threats are practically identical to both you and us,” Rogozin told the NATO delegation. “Russia is no an exporter of such threats to NATO states, and we can hardly reproach NATO for the presence of such threats.”

Russia regards the European Union as its unconditional strategic partner and Moscow is not interested in any conflicts or controversies disrupting the bilateral partnership, he stressed.

“The 21st century should...represent the revival of Russia’s full-scale presence in Europe’s common political affairs, which would be of much benefit both for Russia and Europe,” he declared.

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