

The US Must Remove Nuclear Arms from Europe

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The U.S. must remove its tactical nuclear arms from Europe, former chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Hans Blix, said in an interview with the Global Security Newswire.

Mr. Blix touched upon a pressing international issue which has a direct relation to the European security, as well as relations between Russia and the U.S., Russia and NATO. Moscow, Washington and Brussels have long been involved in talks on this matter but nowadays it appears to be the most favorable time to make a real breakthrough in these negotiations. Certainly, progress can be achieved only in case a new strategic arms reduction treaty between signed by the Russian and the American leaders in Prague in early April is ratified by both parliaments.

If the treaty is ratified, status of the U.S. nuclear arsenal in Europe, their plans to deploy anti-missile elements in Eastern Europe, as well as agreements on middle- and small-range missiles will be brought to foreground. Still, it is important to keep in mind that the U.S. tactical arms could be transported to the Russian borders within a few minutes.

Russia has repeatedly urged the U.S. to pull its tactical arms from Europe for America remains the only country having a stockpile of bombs outside its own territory. The weapons are thought to be located at bases in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey. It is remarkable that the position of Moscow is shared by many prominent U.S. citizens, including former high-ranking army officers, diplomats and scholars. They wrote letters to George W. Bush and the current U.S. President, Barack Obama, asking to accept Russia's proposal.

MPs in Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Norway would also urge the U.S. administration to withdraw nuclear arms from Europe but all those efforts were in vain. Washington insists that its tactical arms remain within NATO. But does not it look strange that the U.S. and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen justify their position by saying there is a need for keeping the nukes in Europe as means of deterrence. The question is whom they are going to deter. Their intention reminds of the Cold War era policies, which is absolutely out of tune with the reset of Russia-U.S. relations.

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