

Veiled Threats Directed against Russia: U.S. Expands Missile Shield Into Black Sea

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When Romanian President Traian Basescu disclosed on February 4 that his nation's Supreme Defense Council had "approved a U.S. proposal that Romania takes part in the anti-rocket shield system" and that "Terrestrial interceptors will be located inside the national territory," [1] many readers may have been taken by surprise.

They need not have been, though, as the expansion of the U.S. global, layered, integrated interceptor missile system into the Black Sea was as foreseeable as it is inevitable.

Previous articles in this series forecast just such an eventuality. Just that certainty. [2]

Later on the 4th when a better translation of Basescu's comments was available, the New York Times confirmed that the Romanian head of state pledged that his nation "was prepared to negotiate with the United States to accept ground-based interceptors as part of an antiballistic missile defense system. He said it could be working by 2015."

Basescu added that "the proposal accepted by the Supreme Defense Council came from President Obama, whose under secretary of state for arms control and international security, Ellen O. Tauscher, was in Romania." [3]

That he stipulated the year 2015 and mentioned the State Department's Tauscher are both significant facts. Tauscher signed the agreement with Polish Deputy Defense Minister Stanislaw Komorowski last December to deploy American mid-range interceptor missiles and troops to the Eastern European nation. Two weeks ago Komorowski's ministry announced that U.S. Patriot missiles and troops would be stationed at a Baltic Sea site only 35 miles from Russia's Kaliningrad exclave.

Russia was no more pleased with that news than about U.S. ground-based missiles being stationed in Romania, as will be seen later.

Keeping in mind Tauscher's longstanding role in promoting American interceptor missile plans in Europe, which will be examined in detail further on, the State Department nonetheless formally describes her role as Senior Adviser to the President and the Secretary of State for Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament.

Last year, two days after President Barack Obama and Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced on the same day, September 17, that the U.S. was abandoning plans to station ten ground-based interceptor missiles in Poland and transfer a modified X-band missile radar from the Kwajalein Atoll in the Pacific Ocean to the Czech Republic, Gates described in the New York Times the alternative project, what Obama characterized as a "stronger,

swifter, and smarter” missile shield program far broader in scope and intent than his predecessor’s.

Gates wrote of a three-phase plan that would begin with “proven, sea-based SM-3 [Standard Missile-3] interceptor missiles – weapons that are growing in capability,” then be followed by a “second phase, which will become operational around 2015” and “involve putting upgraded SM-3s on the ground in Southern and Central Europe. All told, every phase of this plan will include scores of SM-3 missiles, as opposed to the old plan of just 10 ground-based interceptors....” [4]

While deploying scores – 40, 60, 80, 100? – of SM-3 interceptor missiles adapted for ground deployment in both the south and east of Europe (by Central Europe read Eastern Europe), “our military will continue research and development on a two-stage ground-based interceptor, the kind that was planned to be put in Poland, as a back-up,” Gates added. [5]

The White House and the Pentagon had not retreated an inch on plans to establish an impenetrable missile shield along Russia’s western borders, one that could potentially threaten the nation’s strategic forces and disable its ability to retaliate and so credibly maintain a deterrence capability. In fact, as Gates explicitly stated, plans for ten ground-based midcourse missiles in Poland are to be superseded by several times more SM-3 and Patriot Advanced Capability-3 [PAC-3] anti-ballistic missiles as well as a proposed 50,000-pound mobile missile launcher [6] and ground-based missiles in the final analysis anyway.

Shortly after the official shift in U.S. interceptor plans in Europe – and beyond into the Caucasus, the Middle East and even further – Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs Ellen Tauscher put to rest hopes that even the Polish and Czech locations would be left out of wider-ranging plans. At a symposium hosted by the pro-NATO Atlantic Council, one also addressed by the head of the Pentagon’s Missile Defense Agency Lieutenant General Patrick O’Reilly, Tauscher delivered a speech which the Washington Post commented on as follows:

“The undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, Ellen Tauscher...said discussions are already underway with Poland to base missiles there, and talks have begun with the Czech Republic about making it the headquarters for command and control elements associated with the system.

“Tauscher said European allies, who were initially troubled by the hasty announcement canceling the George W. Bush-era system, have come to support the Obama administration’s plan, which would permit earlier deployment and provide wider coverage than the earlier one.”

She was quoted saying “Remember, this is a NATO-wide European missile defense system as opposed to a bilateral missile defense system” and paraphrased vowing “there would be additional opportunities for allied countries to participate in missile defense.

“Another land-based radar system, which was also part of the Bush plan, for example, will need to be located in southeastern Europe.” [7]

Not only missile radar but missiles themselves will be based in Southeastern Europe, substantially south of Poland and east of the Czech Republic.

As the last head of the Missile Defense Agency, Lieutenant General Henry Obering, told a Pentagon gathering two years ago, “A powerful, ‘forward based’ X-band radar station could go in southeastern Europe, possibly in Turkey, the Caucasus or the Caspian Sea region.” [8]

There is nothing new and nothing unsurprising about the announcement that American interceptor missiles are headed to Romania.

As for Tauscher, there is no discontinuity with her work, either.

She came to her current position in the State Department from that of chairperson of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee in the U.S. Congress.

During that tenure she was a consistently determined promoter of interceptor missile development and deployment.

A brief chronology from the waning days of the George W. Bush presidency will document the unimpeded continuation of her efforts from the Bush to the Obama administrations.

On missiles in Poland:

“I would feel better if this were a NATO framework we were operating in.” [9]

On global missile shield plans and space war:

“Rejecting the recommendations of a sub-committee, Representatives Ellen Tauscher (D-CA) and John Larson (D-CT) restored \$150 million to Pentagon ‘boost phase’ missile defense programs, \$48 million for future missile defense systems, including space sensors, \$12 million more for sea-based sensors and language to allow \$160 million for a highly controversial European missile defense site.” [10]

On expanding Bush’s missile plans to encompass all of Europe:

“This is a crucial element for the US Congress. US missile defense must protect all NATO territories and be fully interoperable with the NATO system. We want more clarity about how these two systems can work together”. [11]

While in the Czech Republic:

“The missile defence system must be fully incorporated in NATO and it must protect Europe and the United States, U.S. Democrat Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher told a press conference today....Tauscher also said that the radar base could not operate without the missile base in Poland.

“She added that the anti-missile system to be stationed in the Czech Republic and Poland is to be connected with another system defending against other type of missiles. ‘We are looking for a system of systems,’ she said.” [12]

Back in Washington:

“House Armed Services strategic forces chair Ellen Tauscher (D-Calif.) told reporters Nov. 8 that final congressional defense authorization language for fiscal 2008 should hew to her subcommittee’s drive to ‘NATO-ize’ U.S. ballistic missile defense (BMDS) system efforts based in Europe.

“Speaking to defense writers in Washington, Tauscher said she would like to see U.S. ground-based midcourse defense (GBMD) elements there [Europe] - like a proposed radar in the Czech Republic and 10 interceptors for facilities in Poland - become the ‘long-range’ aspect of a NATO system complimented by European short- and medium-range systems.

“Tauscher specifically named NATO’s Active Layered Theater Ballistic Missile Defense (ALT-BMD) program - which could include the PAC-3, THAAD [Terminal High Altitude Area Defense], and Aegis BMD [Ballistic Missile Defense] systems....” [13]

In March of 2009, shortly before assuming her State Department post - for promoting arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament, recall - she remained an avid proponent of missile deployments in Europe and stated “We need to move in a NATOized way. Eventually we will develop a short- and medium-range system....We can certainly bolt on a long-range system once it has been tested.” [14]

She was back in Prague last November and beforehand said “the command for the managing and control of elements of the new version of anti-missile defence could be stationed in the Czech Republic.” [15]

Tauscher’s project for a more sophisticated, diversified, mobile interceptor system in Europe and its expansion into the Middle East, integrated with all 28 NATO member states and doubtlessly with several key partners, is well on the way to realization. Neither Poland nor the Czech Republic are excluded from the designs; rather the number of nations pulled into Washington’s missile shield network will be increased in number and in geographical range.

The first steps have been taken in the Baltic Sea with U.S. PAC-3 missiles and troops to arrive as early as next month and Aegis class warships with Standard Missile-3 interceptors not far behind. The USS Cole, upgraded to an Aegis-equipped guided missile destroyer, made port calls to the capitals of Estonia and Finland in the Baltic Sea region last November.

Also last year the guided-missile destroyer USS Stout visited the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea “in support of Navy Ballistic Missile Defense,” [16] visiting Israel, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, and Turkey (the last four Black Sea littoral nations) and engaging in maneuvers with the Georgian navy “seen as a show of American support for the former Soviet nation crushed in last year’s war with Russia.” [17]

In the latter half of 2009 the Pentagon’s Joint Task Force-East conducted almost three months of military exercises in Romania and neighboring Bulgaria which included training for U.S. Stryker and airborne units. In October it was reported that the Pentagon will spend \$110 million to upgrade two of the seven bases it has acquired in Romania and Bulgaria since 2005; the revamped bases will house over 4,000 U.S. troops.

In October Vice President Joseph Biden was in the Romanian capital on a tour that also took him to Poland and the Czech Republic and met with President Basescu, telling him, “I really appreciate your government’s embrace of the new missile defence architecture we are bringing to Europe. It is a better architecture and has the benefit of protecting you as well as

the United States.” [18]

He also reiterated that “Under [NATO’s] Article 5, an attack on one is an attack against all,” [19] according to the Pentagon’s website.

At the time of Biden’s Romanian visit a U.S. army official in Romania stated that “an American military base near the Black Sea port of Constanta will become a permanent facility in the spring....” [20]

A Romanian publication ran a column in November of last year that foreshadowed this week’s news concerning U.S. missile shield deployments in the nation. It included a quote that “A strong and modern surveillance system located in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey could monitor three hot areas at once: the Black Sea, the Caucasus and the Caspian and relevant zones in the Middle East.”

By process of elimination it continued, “Turkey is very unlikely to host a land-based SM-3 system, because it would not dare position itself so aggressively against its Iranian neighbour.

“This would make Greece, Bulgaria or Romania contenders – and with Biden making the recent visit to Bucharest as opposed to Sofia or Athens in the context of discussions on security architecture, Romania appears to be a more likely location.”

It continued: “By 2011 the Pentagon will roll out its naval anti-ballistic missile system on cruisers and destroyers in the eastern Mediterranean. These ships will be equipped with Lockheed Martin’s Aegis system, containing anti-aircraft and anti-missile radar and weaponry. The ships contain mid to long range SM-3 missiles.”

An extension of the ship-based interceptor missiles into the Black Sea may follow because “The [Romanian] Constanta port and naval facilities, plus Bulgaria with its Burgas port, could be good platforms for a military naval base....” [21]

As an indication of how the bases can be used, on the eve of the invasion of Iraq in March of 2003 Agence France-Presse reported that “An air of secrecy surrounds the arrival of thousands of US military personnel at the Romanian Black Sea port of Constanta in preparation for a war on Iraq.

“Ten giant Hercules C-130 transport aircraft and four H-53 helicopters can be seen parked at a military airbase adjacent to the local civilian airport.”

A Romanian source was quoted at the time as saying, “We are NATO’s advance post in the east.” [22]

The base in question is the Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base north of Constanta, the main headquarters of the Pentagon’s Joint Task Force-East.

Russian Response

When it first became evident that the U.S. was moving into and taking over four military

bases in Romania (and three in Bulgaria) for training and deployment for wars in the east, in 2007 then Russian President Vladimir Putin said, “[A] new base in Bulgaria, another in Romania....What are we supposed to do? We cannot just observe all this.” [23]

Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov echoed the concern, stating “Russia finds it hard to understand some decisions of NATO like, for example, the deployment of US military facilities in Bulgaria and Romania.” [24]

When Romania’s President Basescu revealed U.S. missile shield plans for his nation on February 4, Lavrov again spoke out and said “We expect the United States to provide an exhaustive explanation, taking into account the fact that the Black Sea regime is regulated by the Montreux Convention,” [25] which prohibits warships of non-Black Sea nations from staying in the Black Sea longer than 21 days and bans the deployment of outside nations’ aircraft carriers.

Dmitry Rogozin, Russian envoy to NATO, was more detailed and more direct in his assessment. “Maybe it’s against Iran, but that same system can be targeted against any other country, including Russia’s strategic nuclear potential. The U.S. is using Iran’s actions to globalize its system of missile defense....Our military shouldn’t believe some promises or intentions. We need to go on the assumption that a foreign military potential is approaching our borders.” [26]

On February 5 the Russian Information Agency Novosti website quoted the editor-in-chief of the National Defense magazine, Retired Colonel Igor Korotchenko, who said “Russia must warn Romania that if the elements of the U.S. missile shield are placed in the country they will become a target of Russia’s preventive missile strikes.”

He also warned “that with ship-based SM-3s in the North, Black and Mediterranean seas, and mobile land-based SM-3s in Central Europe the western borders of Russia would be surrounded by U.S. missile interceptors by 2015.” [27]

At the same time Pentagon chief Robert Gates arrived in Turkey for two days of meetings with fellow NATO defense chiefs and it was reported that he would “urge European allies...to inject more funding into NATO with a focus on Afghanistan and priorities such as missile defense....” [28]

On February 5 Russian President Dmitry Medvedev approved his nation’s new military doctrine, which according to Reuters identifies “NATO expansion as a national threat....”

“The doctrine identifies the expansion of NATO to Eastern Europe and U.S. plans to create an anti-missile shield in Europe as concerns for national security....” [29]

The two are inextricably connected and unless both are halted U.S. military provocations in the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea and the South Caucasus may lead to a new European conflagration.

1) Reuters, February 4, 2010

2) U.S. Expands Global Missile Shield Into Middle East, Balkans

Stop NATO, September 11, 2009

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/09/11/u-s-expands-global-missile-shield-into-middle-ea>

[st-balkans](#)

[Balkans Revisited: U.S., NATO Expand Military Role In Southeastern Europe](#)
[Stop NATO, September 14, 2009](#)

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/09/14/266>

[U.S. Missile Shield Plans: Retreat Or Advance?](#)

[Stop NATO, September 17, 2009](#)

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/09/18/u-s-missile-shield-plans-retreat-or-advance>

[Black Sea, Caucasus: U.S. Moves Missile Shield South And East](#)

[Stop NATO, September 19, 2009](#)

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/09/19/283>

[U.S. Missile Shield System Deployments: Larger, Sooner, Broader](#)

[Stop NATO, September 27, 2009](#)

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/09/27/u-s-missile-shield-system-deployments-larger-sooner-broader>

[Dangerous Missile Battle In Space Over Europe: Fifth Act In U.S. Missile Shield Drama](#)

[Stop NATO, September 29, 2009](#)

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/09/29/dangerous-missile-battle-in-space-over-europe-fifth-act-in-u-s-missile-shield-drama>

[Bulgaria, Romania: U.S., NATO Bases For War In The East](#)

[Stop NATO, October 24, 2009](#)

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/10/25/bulgaria-romania-u-s-nato-bases-for-war-in-the-east>

3) [New York Times, February 4, 2010](#)

4) [New York Times, September 19, 2009](#)

5) [Ibid](#)

6) [Pentagon Intensifies Plans For Global Military Supremacy: U.S., NATO Could Deploy Mobile Missiles Launchers To Europe](#)

[Stop NATO, August 22, 2009](#)

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/09/02/pentagon-intensifies-plans-for-global-military-supremacy-u-s-nato-could-deploy-mobile-missiles-launchers-to-europe/>

7) [Washington Post, October 8, 2009](#)

8) [Turkish Daily News, March 12, 2008](#)

9) [Defense News, March 28, 2007](#)

10) [Bruce Gagnon, U.S. Space First-Strike Program Is Well Underway](#)
[Baltimore Chronicle, May 13, 2007](#)

11) [PanArmenian.net, May 28, 2007](#)

12) [Czech News Agency, September 14, 2007](#)

13) [Aerospace Daily & Defense Report, November 9, 2007](#)

14) [Agence France-Presse, March 22, 2009](#)

15) [Czech News Agency, November 4, 2009](#)

16) [United States Navy, September 25, 2009](#)

17) [Associated Press, July 14, 2009](#)

18) [Romanian Times, October 22, 2009](#)

19) [U.S. Department of Defense, October 22, 2009](#)

20) [Associated Press, October 23, 2009](#)

21) [The Diplomat, November, 2009](#)

22) [Agence France-Presse, March 9, 2003](#)

23) [New Europe, Week of June 2, 2007](#)

24) [Standart News, December 7, 2007](#)

- [25\) Russian Information Agency Novosti, February 5, 2010](#)
- [26\) Bloomberg News, February 5, 2010](#)
- [27\) Russian Information Agency Novosti, February 5, 2010](#)
- [28\) Bloomberg News, February 4, 2010](#)
- [29\) Reuters, February 5, 2010](#)

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