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Independent Political Party

9 June 2016

## Pay attention to these warnings! Giant NATO exercise under way in Poland; Putin warns “fundamentals of international security” are in danger

8 June 2016—NATO’s war game Anaconda-16 began this week in Poland and the Baltic countries, involving 31,000 troops from 24 countries in a 10-day exercise simulating a supposed Russian invasion of the region. The exercises themselves are a dangerous potential trigger for a nuclear world war. A defence attaché at a European embassy in Warsaw told the *Guardian* that the “nightmare scenario” of the exercise would be “a mishap, a miscalculation which the Russians construe, or choose to construe, as an offensive action.”

“Construe” is the wrong word, American political figure Lyndon LaRouche commented today. NATO is in fact provoking Russia in increasingly dangerous ways, and the Russians will make their own decision in their own way, in response to these probes.

The potential danger was stated by Russian Ambassador to NATO Alexander Grushko in a 6 June TV interview: “What we are seeing today in the Baltic states ... is nothing but attempts towards the development of forces [in line with] the hostile policy pursued by NATO... [I]t obviously creates serious risks, as we see an absolutely new military reality forming along our border.” Calling NATO’s policy “surreal”, Grushko added that “the most dangerous thing is that it now starts taking the form of military planning and military preparations, carried out on territories along our borders.”

At a 27 May press conference in Athens after talks with the Greek government, Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered his own evaluation of the NATO threat and Russia’s response. This important statement underscored the extreme danger of the Obama Administration policy toward Russia and the persistent build-up of NATO forces at Russia’s borders.

Putin underscored that the US-NATO European Ballistic Missile Defence “Aegis Ashore” facility in Romania, which became operational in May as a Phase II element of the Euro BMD program, is viewed as a threat *now*, not only down the road two years when its missiles will be upgraded and a second such facility will be opened, in Poland, in Phase III. In addition, Putin confirmed that Russia’s use, during its military operations against terrorists in Syria since September 2015, of cruise missiles fired from ships in the Caspian Sea, and from strategic bombers that had flown to the Mediterranean via a route around the entire Atlantic perimeter of Europe, was meant as a demonstration of strategic capabilities, in addition to the immediate combat goals.

Since 2007, when Putin visited then-President George W. Bush in Kennebunkport, Maine, a Russian proposal for joint US-Russian development and manning of anti-



As did Russian President Vladimir Putin at an Athens press conference on 27 May, a growing array of security specialists are warning of the extreme danger of pursuing the present US-NATO course towards showdown with Russia. Photo: Kremlin

missile defence stations has been on the table. Russian Deputy Defence Minister Anatoli Antonov, however, stated at the Shangri-La Dialogue Asia Security Summit in Singapore 5 June that at present, the United States refuses “to continue dialogue” on these proposals. Meanwhile, the USA and NATO persist in building their “global missile shield” in both the Transatlantic and Pacific areas. This is the allegedly “defensive” policy, which the CEC’s *New Citizen of June/July 2012* exposed as a component of an offensive, first-strike capability.

A growing array of security specialists from around the world are pointing to the grave danger of continuing on the present US-NATO course towards showdown with Russia and China. We urge paying close attention to Putin’s warning, as well as the assessments of others (links below), who think that the danger of nuclear war is greater now, than at the height of the Cold War.

Here are excerpts of Putin’s 27 May remarks, in the Kremlin official translation:

What is the impact of security-related issues on economic cooperation, in particular, the commissioning of the US anti-missile defence deployment area in Romania? What is the impact? The impact is negative, and it cannot be otherwise. Because some time ago the United States unilaterally withdrew from the Anti-Missile Defence Treaty and started what amounts to undermining the fundamentals of international security.

Yet another step has been made now. Since the early 2000s, we have been persistently repeating the

same thing, like a mantra: we will have to respond to it in some way. Nobody listens to us, nobody is willing to have talks with us, we do not hear anything but platitudes, and those platitudes mainly boil down to the fact that this is not directed against Russia and does not threaten Russia's security.

Let me remind you that initially there was talk about thwarting a threat from Iran, it was all about the Iranian nuclear programme. Where is the Iranian nuclear programme now? It no longer exists. The United States themselves initiated the signing of the treaty with Iran. The Iranian nuclear threat does not exist, while the US anti-missile deployment area is being created and was commissioned in Romania.

What is this? These are launch pads and radar stations. Today, 500-kilometre range land-based missiles are being deployed; in a few years they will be 1000-kilometre range missiles. We even know the approximate date when such missiles will be deployed. How can this not be a threat to us? It is a clear threat to our nuclear forces.

However, there is something else that is even worse: these compact launch pads can accommodate assault missiles with a 2,400-kilometre range, and replacing the missiles is no problem; one only has to change the software, and nobody is going to notice anything, even the Romanians. Isn't it a threat to us? It certainly is. That is the reason we have to respond now, and if yesterday some areas in Romania did not know what it is like to be a target, today we will have to take action to ensure our security.

Let me repeat, these are response measures, a response only. We were not the first to take such steps. The same will be done with regard to Poland. We will wait for certain actions to be taken in Poland. We are not going to do anything until we see missiles on the neighbouring territory. And we have the necessary resources. You saw, the whole world saw our capabilities in terms of medium-range sea and air based missiles. We are not violating anything, but the Iskander land-based missile systems have a brilliant record. Incidentally, the fact that launch pads are deployed that may be charged with medium-range missiles is nothing short of erosion of the medium and short range missile treaty by our American partners. I think it is an obvious matter that requires the most careful consideration, and undoubtedly, the involvement of the parties concerned in detailed and substantial talks on these issues.

**John Helmer**, the Australia-born analyst who is the longest-serving foreign journalist in Moscow, posted "[The Red Line crossed, in the Cross-Hairs, at Trigger Point—waiting for an October Surprise](#)" in his Dances with Bears blog on 30 May. He analysed Putin's warning in Athens that "the installation of an Aegis anti-missile base in Romania ... and the rush to do the same in Poland, are hostile acts, just short of *casus belli*—cause of war." Helmer provided citations and links to analysis by Massachusetts Institute for Technology (MIT) physicist and missile defence expert Theodore Postol, demonstrating precisely how the US-NATO facilities threaten Russia.

**Prof. Stephen F. Cohen**, professor emeritus at New

York University and Princeton, devoted his weekly radio interviews on the John Batchelor Show throughout the month of May to "the new Cold War". On 10 May, he warned, "To the extent we demonise Putin, we systematically undermine our national security, concerning terrorism, nuclear proliferation, the environment, the economy. It is systematic disregard for US national security". He summarised his 24 May Batchelor show appearance in an article in *The Nation*, titled "[Beyond Cold War to Mobilisation for War Against Russia?](#)", with the summary statement: "The large-scale US-NATO amassing of military force on Russia's Western borders, NATO's 'Eastern Front', is unprecedented and creates the impression of preparation for actual war." Cohen wrote that the NATO build-up "on land, sea, and in the air—on and very near Russia's borders ... had no precedent during the preceding 40-year Cold War, leading Cohen to ask [in the radio interview] if this is already something more than 'Cold War', a mobilisation for real war."

**Prof. Richard Sakwa**, University of Kent, an Associate Fellow of the Russia and Eurasia Programme of Chatham House (UK), wrote on 26 May at [Theconversation.com](#) under the headline "[West could sleepwalk into a Doomsday war with Russia—it's time to wake up](#)". He, too, emphasised that "the US-led NATO build-up on land, sea and air around Russia's borders, accompanied by the activation in May 2016 of missile defence installations in the region, is perceived as a threat to the very existence of Russia as a sovereign state. Moscow views the US Aegis Ashore system installed in Romania as having the potential to negate its nuclear deterrence capability." Sakwa also drew attention to the proliferation of war-scenario books by NATO officials and military analysts, who are far from doing anything serious to stop them from becoming reality: cited were the scenario book *2017: War with Russia*, by former Deputy Commander of NATO and British General Sir Alexander Richard Shirreff, and the Feb. 2016 BBC2 program that acted out the scenario of a Russian attack on Latvia escalating into a nuclear exchange.

**Philip Giraldi**, former military intelligence specialist at the US Central Intelligence Agency, wrote under the headline "[How the World Ends: Baiting Russia is not good policy](#)", in *The Unz Review* on 24 May. He wrote, "Many Russian military leaders have quite plausibly come to believe that the continuous NATO expansion and the stationing of more army units right along the border means that the United States wants war." Giraldi cited Prof. John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago, who argued at a recent conference in the US capital, that "Washington's misguided policy towards Russia under both Republican and Democratic presidents indeed has the potential to become the greatest international catastrophe of all time".

**Three US-based analysts of Russian extraction writing in The Vineyard of the Saker blog—A. Raevsky ("The Saker"), Dmitri Orlov, and Dr. Eugenia V. Gurevich—**issued "[A Russian Warning](#)" on 1 June. "We have been watching with increasing anxiety as the current US and NATO policies have set us on an extremely dangerous collision course with the Russian Federation, as well as with China", they begin, mustering military and political evidence to conclude, "If there is going to be a war with Russia, then the United States will most certainly be destroyed, and most of us will end up dead." Their analysis and warning is well-documented and compelling, and should be read in full.