

Special Offer: Subscribe to the Monitor and get 32 issues RISK-FREE!

- World
- USA
- Commentary
- Work & Money
- Learning
- Living
- Sci/Tech
- A & E
- Travel
- Books
- The Home Forum

[Home](#) | [About Us/Help](#) | [Archive](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Text Edition](#)

Search:

- E-mail this story
- Print this story
- Write a letter to the Editor
- del.icio.us
- digg

[\(About these ads\)](#)

Daily Update > **Terrorism & Security**
posted February 21, 2007 at 1:10 p.m. EST

US-Russia tensions rise over antimissile bases

Russia has threatened to withdraw from INF missile treaty, and target proposed US bases in Poland, Czech Republic.

By [Arthur Bright](#) | csmonitor.com

A top advisor to President Bush left for Moscow Tuesday to deal with rising tensions between the US and Russia over American plans to build missile defense bases in Poland and the Czech Republic.

The **International Herald Tribune** reports that national security advisor Stephen Hadley [set out for talks in Moscow](#) just a day after a Russian general warned that Poland and the Czech Republic could become targets if they played host to US antimissile bases, meant to defend against Iranian ballistic missiles.

The trip by the adviser, Stephen Hadley, was planned weeks ago. But it now comes in

Paying Too Much For Auto Insurance?

Zip code where you park at night:

Do you currently have auto insurance? **Yes** **No**

Have you had a U.S. driver's license for more than 3 years? **Yes** **No**

Has any driver in your household had 2 or more accidents or moving violations in the last 3 years? **Yes** **No**

the context of the harsh Russian words about the antimissile plan, the earlier stinging denunciation of U.S. policy by [Russian] President Vladimir Putin, and the underlying Russian suggestion that a hidden American agenda is designed to expand its influence in Eastern Europe.

Comments earlier this month by Mr. Putin were hostile to the US missile defense plan, saying that American plans to build such a shield had "overstepped its national boundaries in every way."

RIA Novosti reports that those American antimissile bases could [prompt Russia to withdraw](#) from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) that the US and USSR signed in 1987. Nikolai Solovtsov, commander of Russia's Strategic Missile Forces, said Tuesday that "If a political decision is taken to quit the treaty, the Strategic Missile Forces are ready to carry out this task." RIA Novosti adds that Mr. Solovtsov's comments were not the first time that Russia has publicly mentioned leaving the treaty.

Army General Yury Baluyevsky, the chief of the Russian General Staff, said last February 15 that Moscow might unilaterally abandon the treaty.

"It is possible for a party to abandon the treaty [unilaterally] if it provides convincing evidence that it is necessary to do so," said Baluyevsky. "We currently have such evidence."

The INF treaty eliminated nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 kilometers (300 to 3,400 miles). By the treaty's deadline of June 1, 1991, a total of 2,692 such weapons had been destroyed, 846 by the U.S. and 1,846 by the Soviet Union.

The Associated Press reports that Polish Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski dismissed the Russian threat as "an attempt to frighten" Poland, saying Russia's stance is not about security, but rather [about influence](#).

"To make it clear - this is not about Russian security; these installations do not in any way threaten Russia," Jaroslaw Kaczynski said on state Radio 1. "It's about the status of Poland and Russian hopes that the zone, in other words Poland, will once again find itself ... in the Russian sphere of influence."

"From the moment the missile bases are installed here, the chances of that happening, for at least decades to come, very much declines," he said.

Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg similarly dismissed Russian comments, calling them "[blackmail](#)," reports **Reuters**.

"The Czechs will now think the shield is even more necessary," Schwarzenberg told Reuters on the sidelines of a business conference in Warsaw.

[Monitor Services](#)

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Treeless Edition](#)
- [Give a gift subscription](#)
- [Free sample issue](#)
- [Search the Archives](#)
- [Monitor Mall](#)
- [Receive our free e-mail newsletters:](#)
[Enter e-mail address](#)

Today's print issue



[Enlarge page one](#)

Donate to the Monitor

[\(About these ads\)](#)

Sponsored Links

Apparel

[T-Shirts - Design Online](#)
[Womens Shoes](#)

Promotional Items

[Business Card](#)
[Promotional Products](#)
[Rubber Stamp](#)

Automotive

[New Car Price Quotes](#)

Real Estate

[Home Loans](#)
[Mortgage Calculator](#)
[Moving](#)
[Moving Companies](#)
[Real Estate](#)
[Toronto Condos](#)

Business Resources

[Business Cards](#)

Travel

Education

[MA in Diplomacy - Online](#)

[Hawaii Vacations](#)
[Hotels](#)

Financial

Web Services

"We have quite an experience with Russians. You have to make clear to them you won't succumb to blackmail. Once you give in to blackmail, there's no going back. We have to be strong."

However, the **Guardian** reports that while the center-right, pro-American governments of Poland and the Czech Republic support the missile defense plan, "some opposition parties are against the plan and polls in recent weeks suggest that [up to two-thirds of Poles and Czechs oppose their country taking part.](#)"

There is concern among some that greater ties with the US will increase the threat of domestic terrorism. A recent poll showed that 53% of Poles opposed hosting a base, while 34% were in favour.

The Guardian also writes that although Mr. Kaczynski and his Czech counterpart, Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, both oppose referendums on the defense plan, they still have concerns about the presence of sovereign US bases on their soil and the efficacy of the Bush administration, given its troubles in Iraq.

Despite Polish and Czech claims that Russia's response is about influence, Russia says that it is [a matter of national security](#), reports **The Washington Post**, as Iran, the shield's purported focus, is decades away from being a missile threat.

Russian officials have said that Iran has no missiles capable of reaching the United States or even Western Europe and that Iran is incapable of developing them any time soon. Sergei Ivanov, then defense minister, told the German newspaper Die Welt this month that it would take "at least 20 years" for Iran to develop missiles that could reach Central Europe.

"I think you can draw your own conclusions about which missiles this system actually targets," Solovtsov said. "This is why we are watching the situation with anxiety and concern."

But the Post adds that US officials admit that if they wanted, Russia could easily overwhelm the missile shield - which only includes 10 interceptors. Air Force Lt. Gen. Henry Obering, head of the Missile Defense Agency, said in January that the interceptors "are directed toward rogue nations' capabilities, not an obviously sophisticated ballistic missile fleet such as the Russians have."

Still, some experts understand Russia's concern. Otfried Nassauer, director of the Berlin Information Center for Transatlantic Security, tells German news broadcaster **Deutsche Welle** that the presence of US bases in Poland and the Czech Republic would represent [a renege of NATO promises](#) to refrain from military expansion into new NATO member states near Russia.

As NATO planned its expansion to the East, the alliance had guaranteed Russia it would not station any important military capacities on the new members' territory for the

[Car Insurance](#)

Gifts

[Engagement Rings](#)
[Gemstone Jewelry](#)

Graphic Design

[Logo Design](#) -
LogoBee

**Home
Remodeling**

[Home Renovation
Guide](#)






Investing

[Perpetual Money
Machine](#)

Legal Services

[Find Lawyers](#)

Subscribe to our RSS Feeds
Stay up to date with the latest news

 Top Stories	 newsgator	 MY YAHOO!	
	 SUB BLOGLINES		
	 Add to Google		

long-term, Nassauer said.

"Now Moscow feels betrayed because the biggest NATO state doesn't feel bound (to that guarantee) and wants to station national rather than NATO capacities," he said.

Global intelligence provider **Stratfor** writes that while abandoning the INF treaty would not make Russia a direct threat to the US, it would effectively neutralize the threat to Russia of American missile interceptors, while also [dramatically shifting Russian military influence in Europe](#).

Though a direct arms race with the United States remains out of the question, a lopsided race in which the Russians focus on IRBMs [intermediate-range ballistic missiles] could change the game entirely. A barrage of several dozen IRBMs easily could overwhelm a small squadron of BMD [ballistic missile defense] interceptors based in Europe -- as well as any system that the United States conceivably might field in the next 20 years.

To be clear, this is not an option that would buy Russia parity with the United States. But it would be a stout reminder to Europe -- and to the United States by extension -- that even a weakened Moscow is not to be trifled with. Unable to reclaim the global power it wielded during the Soviet era, Russia nevertheless could use a new IRBM force to threaten Europe and, in so doing, resurrect a host of diplomatic options that served Kremlin interests very well in the past.

Such a step might not mark Russia as a resurgent world power, but it certainly would reforge perceptions of Russia as a power that is impossible to ignore.

Nonetheless, Russia says that the tensions over the US missile defense system [will not lead to a new arms race](#), reports **RIA Novosti**. "The current developments in the world do not point at a new variant of the Cold War," Mr. Lavrov said.

Also...

- [PM Blair announces Iraq troops withdrawal](#) (**Press Association**)
- [Out of step: now Australian PM Howard backs Britain's pullout from Iraq](#) (**The Sydney Morning Herald**)
- [Iran vows to pursue atomic program on UN deadline day](#) (**Bloomberg**)
- [India, Pakistan sign pact on nuclear weapons security](#) (**Voice of America**)
- [Israeli undercover troops kill Jenin-area Islamic Jihad chief](#) (**Haaretz**)

Feedback appreciated. E-mail [Arthur Bright](#).

Terrorism and Security: A Daily Update

02/21/07

[US-Russia tensions rise over antimissile bases](#)

02/20/07

[Global poll: There is no 'clash of civilizations'](#)

02/16/07

[US doubts reports Al Qaeda in Iraq chief injured in clash](#)

Subscribe via RSS

 [What is RSS?](#)

 [MY YAHOO!](#)

 [Add to Google](#)

 [SUB BLOGLINES](#)

 [MY AOL](#)

Get daily e-mail alerts

[Find out more](#)

Sign up here to be notified each weekday of the new Terrorism & Security / A Daily Update:

[Find out more.](#)

(Your e-mail address will be protected by csmonitor.com's tough [privacy policy](#).)

World Stories: for 02/23/2007

[Europeans' chill deepens on US policy](#)

[Market approach recasts often-hungry Ethiopia as potential bread basket](#)

[Political killings traced to Philippine military](#)

[A Serb raid, but pressure eases on war suspects](#)

[Symbolic step of peace at Irish stadium](#)

[Reporters on the Job](#)

 [What is this?](#)

Links of interest

[Symbolic step of peace at Irish stadium](#)

[Scaling down, newspapers look to Web](#)

[Verbal energy: The buzz about worker bees](#)

[What most concerns you about movies, TV, and other media?](#)

Poll | [Your views: Share your thoughts](#)

[Looking for well-paid work? Check salaries for hundreds of job titles in dozens of cities](#)

Most-viewed stories (for 02/21/07)

[US deficit is shrinking, for now](#) (02/21/07)

[US-Russia tensions rise over antimissile bases](#)
(02/21/07)

[The axis of evil, five years later](#) (02/21/07)

[Mexicans cross 'the border' - at a theme park](#)
(02/21/07)

[New fight, old foe: Slavery](#) (02/21/07)

[Home](#) | [About Us/Help](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Archive](#) | [Print Edition](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Special Projects](#) | [Corrections](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Rights & Permissions](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Today's Article on Christian Science](#)

www.csmonitor.com | Copyright © 2007 The Christian Science Monitor. All rights reserved.