

State Department: missile defense system proposed for deployment in Czech Republic and Poland is to deter nuclear attack on the United States by Iran and North Korea

By Edward Campbell

Missoula, Feb. 14 (Al-Masakin)—The U.S. State Department's number three and senior career diplomat Under Secretary for Political Affairs, William J. Burns said at an interview with the Russian news agency Interfax on Friday that Washington's new missile defense system proposed for possible deployment in the Czech Republic and in Poland is not intended to pressure the Russian Federation, but to deter a possible nuclear strike on America by Iran or North Korea.



In the interview provided to Al-Masakin by the State Department via e-mail Under Secretary Burns said, "We have certainly heard Russia's concerns about missile defense. We hope also that Russians understand that no U.S. President can afford a situation where the United States is vulnerable to potential nuclear weapons on missiles from North Korea or Iran."

When asked if the plan for deploying the system would be revised if the nuclear problem with Iran and North Korea were resolved, Burns said "that is certainly one of the factors that we will consider."

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The Under Secretary would not confirm that the proposed deployment was connected to the renegotiation of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) which will expire this year. The renegotiation of the START treaty with the Russian Federation is being Fast Tracked by the new administration. Both President Obama and Vice President Biden have said that they seek to "reset" relations with Russia.

"In recent years, often times mutual frustration has tended to obscure our mutual interests. We believe it's time to look ahead. That doesn't mean that we won't have differences and disagreements from time to time; what it means is that we are committed to trying to take advantage of this moment of opportunity and of the common interests between us.

What we need to do now together is to try to translate those good intentions and that positive rhetoric into practical progress that serves the interest not only of the United States and Russia but of the rest of the world.

"One clear, concrete example is nuclear cooperation. That is an area where the United States and Russia have unique capabilities and unique responsibilities. The U.S. and Russia together possess 95 percent of the world's nuclear arsenal. It's important for us to set a good example for the rest of the world in how we manage and reduce our own remaining nuclear arsenals; how we

work together with other partners to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons; and how to ensure that terrorists are not able to get their hands on such weapons. That is one example of our clear common interest,” Under Secretary Burns told Interfax on Friday

Mr. Burns could not confirm that the Obama administration is seeking to reduce the U.S. and Russian nuclear stockpile by up to 80 percent.

Nuclear proliferation is a national security threat to both nations, but the insinuation that Iran or North Korea are the principal sources of that national security threat does not stand-up to the giggle test.

Clearly the threat to the American homeland, a nuclear strike on American soil, comes primarily from the Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda terrorist networks, not from either Iran or North Korea, for it does not appear likely that Iran has a delivery vehicle for an N-weapon to reach the United States nor does it seem likely that a missile defense system deployed in either Poland or the Czech Republic could intercept a first strike initiated from the DPRK. America’s nuclear stockpile, moreover, stands as a deterrent force to both nations. It is al-Qaeda which remains undeterred by America’s nuclear arsenal.

Renegotiating the START treaty is therefore in America’s national interest for radical Islam has access to the Russian Federations FSB through the volatile Northern Caucasus region. It appears that the proposed missile defense deployment is in reality intended to pressure the Russian Federation to reduce its nuclear stockpile in an effort to gain greater control over fissionable material which is earnestly sought, and may fall into the hands of an exceedingly dangerous terrorist

organization which has professed its intention to use such a device should it ever obtain one.

“These are issues – arms control, further reductions, the control of the proliferation of nuclear materials, which President Obama takes very seriously,” the Under Secretary said on Friday.

Mr. Burns also said that the administration had not made a final decision as to whether or not to deploy the missile system and suggested that such a deployment might also be of mutual benefit to the Russian Federation, because Russia is a member of NATO.

“As we pursue the issue of missile defense, we obviously have to take into account a number of factors: whether the system works, and whether it is cost effective; the nature of the threat, and if, through strong diplomacy with Russia and our other partners, we can reduce or eliminate that threat, it obviously shapes the way that we look at missile defense. We are also open to the possibility of cooperation with Russia and with our NATO partners on new missile defense configurations which can take advantage of assets which each of us have. We want to consult with Russia and with our NATO partners to see if we can’t develop cooperative approaches to missile defense which protect all of us,” Mr. Burns said.

The United States and the Russian Federation will discuss economic issues April 2 at the G-20 summit in London. START negotiations are likely to begin at the NATO summit in Strasbourg later that month.

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