

NATO'S GAMBLE WITH WORLD WAR III

Peace Is Possible Only with Russia and China!

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

June 11—“Nomen est omen”—the name is an omen—can be said of the NATO *Anakonda 16* maneuvers currently taking place in Poland with 31,000 soldiers involved. For while the exercise is supposed to defend against the supposed invasion of Poland and the Baltic States by an “adversary” (Russia, naturally), the name of the exercise—a snake that strangles its meals—betrays the actual intention of NATO, which has now advanced along the entire Eastern European border of Russia. Three other simultaneous maneuvers are being held in the Baltic states and Poland, so that 50-60,000 soldiers in all, are operating right on the border of Russia.

The last time this happened, it was the invasion of Hitler’s Reichswehr in 1941—and that is exactly how the Russian population experiences it. The difference is that what is at stake this time is World War III and the use of thermonuclear weapons, and thus the end of mankind.

In parallel with *Anakonda 16*, three other maneuvers are underway—*Baltops 16* in and around the Baltic Sea, *Saber Strike 16* in the three Baltic republics, and *Swift Response 16* in Poland and Germany. There are no published figures on the exact size of these forces, but it can be estimated that between

50,000 and 60,000 soldiers are taking part in the four maneuvers combined. At the same time, the *USS Porter*—one of the four Aegis Class destroyers stationed in Rota, Spain, and a part of the U.S. ballistic missile defense (BMD) system—arrived in the Black Sea en route to the Bulgarian port of Varna. Simultaneously, the aircraft carrier *USS Dwight Eisenhower* entered the Mediterranean from the Atlantic, and the *USS Harry Truman* moved from the Persian Gulf through the Suez Canal to the U.S. European Command in the Mediterranean, in a “clear demonstration of capacities,” as Rear Admiral Bret Batchelder put it.

Russia is reacting to these demonstrations by adding personnel to the military bases in its northern military district, holding exercises in Crimea and in the Rostov region and, according to *Izvestia*, conducting exercises in which Russian pilots practice neutralizing the American BMD installations along the Russian border.

What is the real purpose of this BMD system?

As Russian Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov recently emphasized at the Shangri-La Dialogue security conference in Singapore, Russia fears that the purpose of the U.S. BMD system being in-



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Rear Admiral Bret Batchelder provocatively characterized the arrival of four U.S. Aegis Class destroyers and two U.S. aircraft carriers in the Black Sea—at the same time as four NATO maneuvers totaling 50-60,000 troops were being conducted along Russia’s western borders—as a “clear demonstration of capacities.”

stalled along the Russian border is to conduct a surprise strike on the Russian nuclear arsenal and incapacitate the defensive second strike. The pretext, transparent from the beginning, that this system is necessary to protect Europe from missile strikes from Iran, was vitiated no later than the P5+1 Agreement with Iran; and military experts agree that this system can be converted in an extremely short time from a defensive to an offensive missile system, simply by changing the software, without the host countries like Romania or Poland even noticing.

It has now dawned on some observers that this combination—the encirclement of Russia, maneuvers expressing an aggressive intention even in their name, and the expected countermeasures by Russia—has created a situation in which the critical moment of decision could be only minutes away. *Der Spiegel* worries that these maneuvers, based on a scenario of an actual war, are going too far. *Die Zeit* calls the installation of the BMD systems in Romania and Poland probably the greatest error NATO has ever committed, possibly leading to Russia canceling the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

One high-ranking military figure commented that these provocations against Putin are extremely foolish, because they can only lead to escalation. This situation very much recalls that prior to World War I, he said. If one side is confronted with the threat of losing face, that marks the start of war.

Of even greater concern is President Obama's refusal to even acknowledge, let alone discuss, Russia's security concerns over the U.S. BMD system, although President Putin has repeatedly requested such opportunities—most recently on May 27 of this year. Moscow has of course not failed to notice that NATO doctrine has long



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Russian Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov said that Russia knows that the U.S. missile system being installed along its border can rapidly be changed to an offensive system.

since departed from the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and has abandoned its premise, that using nuclear weapons is out of the question because it would lead to mutual and complete destruction. It has been replaced with the utopian doctrine that a limited nuclear attack is “winnable” because, thanks to modern technologies, the second-strike capacity of any adversary can be knocked out by means of a surprise attack. This idea was put forward¹ in 2006 in *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations. Today it is the basis for various U.S. and NATO doctrines—that of Prompt Global Strike, of the U.S. BMD system, and of the Air-Sea Battle doctrine

for Asia. That Obama refuses even to discuss the Russian issues and arguments, raised again by Anatoly Antonov, can only be interpreted in one way, in the eyes of many observers.

¹ See <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2006-03-01/rise-us-nuclear-primacy>



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Here President Putin (left) meets President Obama in New York, Sept. 29, 2015. Russian Deputy Defense Minister Antonov noted that Obama refuses to discuss Russia's concerns about the provocative actions being taken against it.



Schiller Institute

Russian Consul General Sergey Petrov stated at a June 8 Schiller Institute conference in San Francisco that “we are very close to a major conflict,” and added that if a “limited nuclear war” is started, “it will be the end of the world.”

That conclusion is supported by the bellicose tone adopted by the “new guard” of American military commanders. Thus Lt. General Ben Hodges, Commander of U.S. Forces Europe, stressed that NATO’s position in the Baltic states has shifted from assurance to “deterrence.” “Deterrence” requires the actual presence of military capacities that render the adversary incapable of attaining his objectives; it does not involve a tripwire, which only triggers the intervention of the full strategic arsenal. “We need Russia in the international community,” said Hodges, “but it only respects strength.”

Russia has repeatedly stressed that it does not have the slightest intention of invading the Baltic states or Poland—yet this scenario is the basis for the entire hysteria. Early this year the RAND Corporation published a study purporting to show that the Baltic states, due to a lack of strategic depth, could not be defended against

a Russian intervention, and could be overrun by Russian troops within 60 hours. The study thereby implicitly acknowledged that all the battalions and heavy equipment being transferred there will still perform only the function of a tripwire. Precisely this—according to Michael Carpenter, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—makes it necessary to quadruple the Pentagon’s spending for Europe in 2017.

Europe as Cannon Fodder?

It is literally one minute to midnight. Survival demands that we wake up, before we in Europe are sacrificed as cannon fodder in a supposedly limited nuclear war to the geopolitical interests of the Anglo-American empire, an empire whose claim to rule over a unipolar world can no longer be sustained. If, at the NATO summit in Warsaw in early July, there is a further buildup of the U.S. BMD system—planned, among other things, is the linking of the system in Romania with the missile-capable Aegis destroyers—then the point of no return could be reached very soon.

At the most recent conference of the Schiller Institute, the Russian Consul-General in San Francisco answered a question on this subject from former U.S. Senator Mike Gravel, and made the point. “I share the understanding that we are very close to a major conflict. And I add that there is no possibility of a ‘limited nuclear war.’ If that starts, it will be end of the world.”

It is high time to leave NATO and replace it with an inclusive security architecture that allows all of us to survive. Federal Chancellor Merkel’s walking on eggs—striving for an EU-Russia common economic space “in the long run,” but approving the extension of the EU sanctions against Russia for another six months—is immensely dangerous. The “Christian” Democratic Union politician should know what the Bible had to say, in *Revelation 3:15*, about being lukewarm.