

Latest U.S. Move May Piss Off Russia

Does the U.S. really want to be pissing off Vladimir Putin? At this point, is the risk necessary?

Last Tuesday, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter [named](#) Russia—not ISIS—as [the primary threat to U.S. national security](#). To “deter Russian aggression,” he is proposing to quadruple military spending in Europe to \$3.4 billion, which will allow the U.S. to add more weaponry and military equipment, and maintain a 4,000-troop brigade (on rotational deployments), close to Russia’s borders. It’s called the “European Reassurance Initiative.”

According to Carter, “I’ve talked with President Obama about this a great deal over the last year and as a result, we have five, in our minds, evolving challenges that have driven the focus of the Defense Department’s planning and budgeting this year.” Here they are, in order:

1) Russia

2) China

3) North Korea

4) Iran

5) ISIL

On the February 2nd episode of *The John Batchelor Show*, Stephen F. Cohen, professor emeritus of Russian studies and

politics at New York University and Princeton, offered a sobering analysis of the U.S.' increased commitment to countering Russia. Below is a link to the program, along with the summary of it offered by *The Nation*:

“This installment focuses on the Pentagon’s announcement that it will quickly quadruple the positioning of US-NATO heavy military weapons and troops near Russia’s eastern borders. The result, Cohen argues, will further militarize the new Cold War, making it more confrontational and likely to lead to actual war with Russia. The move is unprecedented in modern times. Except during Nazi Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union, Western military power has never been positioned so close to Russia, making the new Cold War even more dangerous than was the preceding one. Russia will certainly react, probably by moving more of its own heavy weapons, including new missiles, to its Western borders, possibly along with a large number of its tactical nuclear weapons. The latter reminds us, Cohen points out, that a new and more dangerous US-Russian nuclear arms race has been under way for several years, which the Obama Administration’s

decision can only intensify. The decision will also have other woeful consequences, undermining ongoing negotiations by Secretary of State Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov for cooperation on the Ukrainian and Syrian crises and further dividing Europe itself, which is far from united on Washington's increasingly hawkish approach to Moscow.

Cohen ends by expressing despair that these ongoing developments have been barely reported in the US media and publicly debated not at all, not even by current presidential candidates and the moderators of their 'debates.' Never before has such a dire international situation been so ignored in an American presidential campaign. The reason may be, Cohen adds, that everything that has happened since the Ukrainian crisis erupted in November 2013 has been blamed solely on the 'aggression' of Russian President Putin—a highly questionable assertion and media-policy narrative."

Do you think we're on the verge of a new Cold War, or simply a new war?