The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia's Ambassador to NATO Warns of Response to Buildup in Eastern Europe

By The Moscow Times

November 05, 2014



Russian military planners will adjust their defensive posture in response to NATO's recent decision to deploy units along Russian borders in Eastern Europe, Moscow's ambassador to NATO said in an interview published Wednesday.

"NATO must understand ... Russia will take all necessary measures to ensure reliable protection against any threats," Alexander Grushko told the Kommersant newspaper, pointing specifically to the U.S.-led alliance's moves to refocus on Russia after Moscow's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in March.

Labeling NATO's deployment a reversion to Cold War logic, Grushko said the decision to position itself against a "big enemy" such as Russia "will have long-term political consequences," pushing both sides down a path of escalating tensions that will ultimately undermine the security interests of the entire European community.

Grushko pinned the blame on Brussels, which he said is looking for "any pretext to accuse Russia of harboring aggressive intentions," brushing off reports of increased Russian air and naval activity on NATO territory over the last year.

Russian defense officials have said Moscow's increased military activity is defensive and meant to deter what they see as NATO encroachment on the country's borders and interests.

Some Russian officials close to Putin, such as Security Council chief Nikolai Patrushev, have taken this line of thinking a step further and accused NATO of outright aggression against Russia.

In an interview with official state newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta last month, Patrushev said the U.S. and NATO had unseated former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych in favor of an anti-Russian government in Kiev as part of a policy of containing Moscow that stretches back to the Cold War.

While Grushko's comments are significantly tamer than Patrushev's, they echo remarks made by Putin himself at a special ceremony for military officers at the Kremlin on Friday. Putin said Russia's military buildup, which is costing the government 20 trillion rubles ($500 billion) through 2020, is motivated by purely defensive concerns in the face of what Moscow perceives to be renewed NATO aggression.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/11/05/russias-ambassador-to-nato-warns-of-response-to-buildup-in-eastern-europe-a41058