

Rossiyskaya Gazeta Interview with Special Envoy Tauscher

Question 1: In 2011 you said that the U.S. was ready to confirm in writing that European MD elements are not directed against Russia. Then why does your country oppose that these agreements acquire legal force? About what mutual trust in arms control between our countries could we talk then? Is the U.S. ready to influence NATO leadership so that the Alliance takes a written commitment that its MD is not directed against Russia?

President Obama has said we cannot agree to limits on U.S. and NATO missile defenses. But as he has stressed publicly and privately, U.S. and NATO missile defense efforts are not intended nor will they be capable of threatening Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent. The United States is prepared to put this assurance in writing as part of a political framework that would open the way for practical missile defense cooperation with Russia. The United States also would encourage NATO to provide a similar assurance as part of a political framework for NATO-Russia missile defense cooperation.

The United States thinks close cooperation with the United States and NATO by Russia is the best and most enduring way for it to gain the assurance that European missile defenses do not undermine Russia's strategic deterrent. Through this cooperation, Russia would see firsthand that this system is designed for and capable of defending against missiles originating from the Middle East and not for undermining Russia's strategic deterrent.

Question 2: Does the U.S. realize its responsibility that should a missile defense system be deployed in Europe, Europeans may find themselves in the center of a nuclear standoff? After all, intercepted missiles will be falling on their heads, and their cities will become the targets for the missiles of America's potential enemies.

Europe, including Russia, already faces ballistic missile threats from the Middle East, and those threats are growing. For example, Iran has the largest missile inventory and most active missile program in the Middle East and is fielding more ballistic missiles with increasingly longer ranges. Because of those growing threats, at the November 2010 NATO Lisbon Summit, NATO Allies agreed to develop a missile defense capability to provide protection for NATO European populations, territories, and deployed military forces against the increasing threats posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles. We want Russia to cooperate with us on finding common solutions to the common threats that we face.

Question 3: The U.S. and its NATO partners rejected two variants of cooperation on European MD. Could you please explain what it is that you do not agree with the sector approach?

Because of our Article 5 commitments in the North Atlantic Treaty, it is important that NATO defend NATO members without relying on Russian capabilities, as suggested in the Russian proposal for sectoral missile defense cooperation. The U.S. vision for NATO-Russia missile defense cooperation is two independent, but coordinated, missile defense systems that would augment and enhance each other's performance. Under this approach, NATO would be responsible for defending NATO territory, and Russia would be responsible for defending Russian territory. Russia would not cede the defense of its territory to NATO so why would NATO members cede their defense to any other country? Instead, our approach calls for NATO and Russia to take responsibility for their self-defense and enhance that defense through cooperation.

Question 4: The U.S. and its NATO allies' reluctance to review the conditions of the CFE treaty have forced Russia to suspend its participation in this treaty. In your opinion, does Europe need a new CFE treaty? What can the U.S. propose in order to make a new treaty equal and taking into consideration Russia's interests?

The CFE regime remains important to the United States, NATO Allies, and European security as a whole. Since Russia ceased implementation of its CFE obligations in December 2007, the United States and NATO Allies have made two major efforts to overcome the CFE impasse, but without success. The United States remains firmly committed to revitalizing conventional arms control in Europe. In order to continue that process, Acting Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller is leading a U.S. effort encouraging all parties to think about the current security architecture, our future needs, and the types of measures that will help achieve our security goals. The way forward should be consistent with core European security principles, including the right of states to choose whether and under what conditions to allow foreign forces to be stationed on their territories. In addition, transparency among all parties is essential for preserving confidence during any negotiations.

Question 5: Why is the U.S. cautious about the proposals banning the deployment of offensive arms in space? Russia sees it as evidence that the U.S. still lives by the stereotypes of the Strategic Offensive Initiative and the so-called Star Wars, long since forgotten by the world community.

President Obama's National Space Policy states that "[t]he United States will consider proposals and concepts for arms control measures if they are equitable, effectively verifiable, and enhance the national security of the United States and its allies." We have carefully studied the Russian- and Chinese-proposed "Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects," or "PPWT" for shorthand, and it has been determined by the Obama Administration, as well as the prior Bush Administration, to be fundamentally flawed. Specifically, the PPWT is not verifiable and would not enhance international security. We believe, as stated in our 2010 National Space Policy, "it is the shared interest of all nations to act responsibly in space to help prevent mishaps, misperceptions, and mistrust."

To ensure future sustainability, safety, stability, and security in space, the United States and Russia must work together and with other space-faring nations to adopt approaches for responsible space activities. The best way to move forward is to pursue near-term, voluntary, and pragmatic steps through transparency and confidence-building measures, which would allow governments to respond to challenges and share information with the aim of creating mutual understanding and reducing tensions. For example, we conduct regular Space Security Dialogues with Russia as well as with other space-faring nations. We also provide notifications of potential orbital collision hazards to all government and private sector satellite operators, including more than 450 notifications to Russia in the past year. We look forward to working together with Russia and the European Union and other space-faring nations to develop an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities.

Question 6: In 2002 you said that Russia may become a possible source of nuclear materials falling into terrorists' hands. Have you changed your point of view on this issue since then?

The threat that terrorists or other malicious actors could gain access to nuclear materials in any country – including the United States – is a real concern. This is why President Obama called for global action to lock down nuclear materials and travelled to Seoul recently to participate in the second Nuclear Security Summit. Since 2002, the United States and Russia have worked intensively with

international partners on several efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism and strengthen facility security. Two examples include Russia's sponsorship of the Nuclear Terrorism Convention and our work together to co-chair the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Our partnership with Russia has laid the groundwork for important international collaboration in preventing nuclear terrorism and securing or reducing stocks of nuclear and radioactive material. Continued U.S. and Russian leadership is critical to stopping the illicit smuggling of nuclear materials worldwide. The upcoming Nuclear Security Summit is an important mechanism for strengthening government efforts against this lingering transnational criminal phenomenon.

Question 7: Do you agree that the time has come to officially expand the international nuclear club? What do you think about the proposal to recognize the nuclear powers status for North Korea and Israel?

No. President Obama has been clear that the goal is to move in the opposite direction toward a world without nuclear weapons. The United States has long supported universal adherence to the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We have urged all states that have not joined that Treaty to do so and to accept the requisite full-scope IAEA safeguards on all of their nuclear activities. We have consistently stated that we will never accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state.

Question 8: Does the mechanism of nuclear deterrence developed during the Cold War work today? Can it be implemented toward the countries almost ready to become nuclear powers, like Iran?

The nature of the U.S.-Russia relationship has changed fundamentally since the days of the Cold War. Russia and the United States are no longer adversaries, and prospects for military confrontation have declined dramatically. While the United States and Russia have reduced their operationally deployed nuclear weapons since the Cold War by approximately 75 percent, both countries retain more nuclear weapons than are needed for deterrence. The United States is committed to working with Russia to preserve stability at reduced force levels. On a broader level, the United States is committed to preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and we do not believe that deterrence or containment is an appropriate policy posture to consider as we confront the challenge posed by potential proliferant states like Iran. The objective is to prevent additional countries from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Question 9: Do you agree with the notion that the non-proliferation mechanism is a permanently unfinished project?

We are always working to ensure that our nonproliferation mechanisms are constantly being updated and improved to keep pace with rapidly changing technologies and ways of conducting business. These mechanisms include the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which serves as the cornerstone of the nonproliferation regime, as well as the multilateral export control regimes, such as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). Additional mechanisms include our cooperative threat reduction programs and counter-proliferation initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Together with the international community as a whole, progress is being made. But until nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are consigned to the history books, our nonproliferation work will remain unfinished.

Question 10: The U.S. has been allocating billions of dollars to solve non-proliferation problems for decades. How would you assess the effectiveness of these investments?

There is an expression that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The funds spent over the years to counter nuclear proliferation and prevent nuclear terrorism exemplify this philosophy because the costs of our successful nonproliferation work would be dwarfed by the costs of an act of nuclear terrorism. This is one reason President Obama called for global action to lock down nuclear materials and convened the first Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in April 2010. World leaders have responded by taking significant action over the last two years to secure nuclear materials. Through those efforts we have permanently eliminated enough weapon-usable material for thousands of nuclear weapons and have plans for doing even more. For example, the 68 tonnes of weapon-grade plutonium that the United States and Russia have agreed to dispose of represents enough material for approximately 17,000 weapons. With the help of Russia, the United States, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and other partners, 20 nations have eliminated all their stocks of highly enriched uranium (HEU). The United States and Russia together will continue the dual track of securing weapon-usable nuclear materials and permanently reducing the threat by eliminating such material where possible.

Question 11: Today Russian experts speak about the risks of further disarmament in a turbulent world. Do you agree that nuclear disarmament should be suspended till better times?

This is a time when we should advance rather than suspend nuclear arms control. The Soviet Union and the United States negotiated a series of arms control and arms reduction treaties in the midst of the Cold War, a period we all can agree was hardly the best of times. The United States is fully dedicated to fulfilling its commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, including the pursuit of good-faith negotiations on nuclear disarmament. When President Obama spoke in Prague in April 2009 about his vision of a world without nuclear weapons, he recognized the need to create the conditions to bring about such a world. We are working diligently on creating those conditions, including by pursuing concrete steps to reduce nuclear arsenals, stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and secure all fissile materials. We need to plan for the next phase of nuclear arms reductions. The working group of the Bilateral Presidential Commission that I co-chair with Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov has launched a dialogue on issues of stability, security, and confidence-building, to lay the groundwork for continued progress toward nuclear disarmament.

Question 12: At the age of 25 you have become one of the first women to hold a permanent seat at the NY stock exchange. Do you find that experience useful in your current job? What are the differences and similarities between working at stock exchange and being an undersecretary of state in charge of arms control and security issues?

My experience in business and finance has been useful to my work in Congress and at the State Department. The private sector rewards innovation and problem solving skills and I have drawn on those skills when faced with the difficult and complex issues in arms control and nonproliferation. Things tend to move faster in the business world and on Capitol Hill, but it is a privilege to have the opportunity to contribute to the effort to reduce the threat of weapons of mass destruction. I also welcome the opportunity to help Russia and the United States move beyond decades of competition to a new era of cooperation.