Russian government warns of new arms race

By Andrea Peters

On Tuesday, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev delivered his annual address before the country’s Federal Assembly. While his speech largely echoed a discussion of the pressing economic and political issues facing Russia, he used the occasion to issue a sharp warning to the United States on the question of missile defense.

"[W]e will only be able to state that in the coming 10 years we face the following alternative: either we reach an agreement on anti-missile defense and we create the full-fledged joint mechanism of cooperation, or (if we cannot reach a constructive agreement) a new arms race begins," stated Medvedev.

The Russian president underscored his government’s intention to create a “high-tech mobile shield,” to prevent an active attack on Russia. In his annual address, Medvedev also revealed that Russia’s political positions are more important in the eyes of international relations than its military capacities.

In particular, Medvedev made the following points: a) As a result of the distraction caused by the Iraq war, there is no longer any possibility that the United States will attempt an active attack on Russia; b) Russia is becoming a political power, and its position that develops inside the system is capable of doing something; c) Russia is running a deficit of 4.6 percent of GDP, and if this situation continues for much longer, it will lead to a collapse of the country.

In his remarks, Medvedev stated that the Russian government is prepared to make a major effort to increase the country’s economic growth. The president also stated that he expects a decline in global trade and a decrease in the growth of developed countries, which will contribute to the stability of Russia’s economy.

Medvedev also announced that he is planning to establish a joint mechanism with the United States to protect the country from an active attack. He called on the United States to consider this proposal, adding that he will be in touch with President Obama to discuss the issue.

In conclusion, Medvedev called on the United States to consider Russia’s proposal and to take steps to prevent the arms race from escalating. He also stated that he is ready to work with President Obama to create a joint mechanism to combat the arms race.

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