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Russia

Russia flexes muscles with "father of all bombs" - Guardian

20:08 | 12/09/2007



MOSCOW, September 12 (RIA Novosti) - An article published in a British newspaper Wednesday has called Russia's testing of a new thermobaric bomb, Moscow's response to U.S. plans to deploy a missile defense system in Central Europe.

The Guardian said Russian statements concerning the development of the world's most powerful non-nuclear weapon, dubbed the "father of all bombs," were made "at a time of growing tension between Russia and the West."

Russia announced the testing of the new bomb on its state-run Channel One television station Tuesday night, stating that the device was four times more powerful than the U.S. "mother of all bombs" thanks to a new, highly efficient type of explosives.

The Guardian also said the "series of war games with China and four other central Asian states," along with Russia's resumed strategic nuclear bombers patrols were "designed to show the country's resurgent military power and the emergence of new regional alliances outside NATO."

The Guardian quoted Sergei Rogov, director of the Russian Academy of Science's U.S. and Canada Institute, as saying that, "Relations could sink into a serious crisis in a few years," and "domestic and political factors will aggravate the situation rather than help overcome the differences."

The air-delivered thermobaric bomb uses a fuel-air explosive and can create overpressures equal to an atomic bomb, said Alexander Rukshin, deputy chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces.

"It is environmentally friendly, compared to a nuclear bomb, and it will enable us to ensure national security, and at the same time stand up to international terrorism in any part of the globe and in any situation," he said.

He stressed that the bomb does not violate any of the international agreements that Russia has signed.

While the U.S. bomb is equivalent to 11 tons of TNT, the Russian one is equivalent to 44 tons of regular explosives. The Russian weapon's blast radius is 990 feet, twice as big as that of the U.S. design, the report said.

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Russian strategic bombers

More than 50 strategic and long-range bombers are involved in a major exercise that began Tuesday. Tu-160 Blackjacks, Tu-95MS Bears and Tu-22M3 Backfires would fly above the Arctic and Pacific oceans and the Black and Caspian seas.

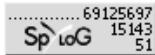
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