

neighborly Austrian or German earns, although upward pressure on wages here continues to drive these numbers ever higher. Still, middle management can command only around 50,000 Kč (\$2,370) per month on average, while upper management might see six figures if they get with

the government, which is quite a lot; but if our upper manager were to get 200,000 Kč — which is still below the Northern Alpine average — then the employer contribution becomes even more overwhelming. The idea is to keep payroll taxes as low as possible while attracting good human

with other countries.

Are you doing the math? So far, our company has gotten out of paying a higher wage, while augmenting its inventory of tax write-offs as well. Now, let's get to the employee: Obviously, having a car and a phone means that you can use them togeth-

their appearance as benefits to other employees.

Without these benefits there are more taxes to pay for everyone, and since the image of the taxman here still has Brezhnev eyebrows and an "eeny, meeny, miny, moe" tax-collection strategy, no one wants to pay any

University of New York in Prague and is the editor of the online publication Russia Today, [www.russiatoday.com](http://www.russiatoday.com). He pens the column, The Naked Historian, for [www.uspoliticstoday.com](http://www.uspoliticstoday.com). He has two cars, but claims to use them in emergency situations only.

# Russia's political posturing is a disservice

## POSTVIEW

U.S. efforts to station a missile shield in what used to be Warsaw Pact territory have Moscow making threatening noises and reviving its Cold War posturing.

Russian President Vladimir Putin says the shield will threaten his country's security, and that Russia would be forced to direct its missiles against targets in the United States or Europe if the shield is deployed. And, last week, Russia made a great show of testing its own new multiple-warhead intercontinental missile.

The point of all this rhetoric and chest-beating is not to prove that Russia can overcome a U.S. shield. The fact is the shield could not possibly threaten Russia — and the Kremlin knows it. The point is to aggravate the political divide in Europe and to win points at home.

According to Tim Williams, head of the European Security Programme of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, the Russian arsenal contains 1,700 to 2,200 strategic nuclear warheads. The United States wants to put 10 interceptor missiles in Poland.

Putin and every military officer in Russia can do the math. Moreover, the still-unproved shield is designed to protect against relatively low-tech missiles launched from countries with basic weapons technology, not the sophisticated missiles

docked in Russian silos.

The United States cannot — and has never been able to — defend against the Russian arsenal, according to Rick Lehner, a spokesman for the U.S. Missile Defense Agency. The shield will not change that fact.

Russia's leaders also say they are miffed that the United States began developing the shield, and courting Eastern Europe, without informing them. This assertion is so dishonest that those propagating it should be ashamed.

When the United States withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2001, it did so with the stated intention of building a shield. Since then, the United States has been talking to Russia about its desire to build missile defenses, according to U.S. Ambassador to NATO Victoria Nuland.

Despite these longstanding talks, Russian officials are pretending to be surprised by U.S. plans. In a January interview with *The Prague Post*, Russian Ambassador to the Czech Republic Alexey Fedotov said, "If you do something in the neighborhood, just ask the neighbors. That's all. Just tell

them."

In an effort to extend the olive branch even further, U.S. officials asked Russia this spring to participate in the shield, sharing radar facilities and data, according to Nuland, who would like to see a "complete umbrella from Vancouver to Vladivostok." But Russia would have none of it.

So what's with all the saber-rattling coming from the east? The answer is plain: Russia sees a divided Europe and wants to exploit that division to weaken the NATO alliance and foment anti-Americanism, both of which play to Putin's political advantage.

Władysław Stasiak, head of Poland's National Security Office, believes that Russia "is using missile defense as a political tool to divide the allies and disintegrate the alliance."

Williams agrees, likening the strategy to the one Russia is using in its energy policy. "The Russians have found a rather disunited Europe easy to deal with when it comes to energy supply," he says, and are using the same tactics with the missile shield.

Whether the Czech Republic decides to host the base or not is up to its government. But the public deserves an honest debate about the issue — and Russia's misinformation campaign is only serving to muddy the waters.

29). I have to tell you that al (of course, they are ex the behavior of Czech do unprofessional. They completely lack thy, courtesy and manner even worse, they have no wrong and inappropriate. They are constantly talki how bad they have it, ho money they make.

In reality, patients do (should not) care about d ings. Part of the training teach young doctors how their personal feelings fro ing with their job. They l way to go ...

I delivered my first ba mer by cesarean section, Podolf in Prague. I can s really happy how everyt there treated us for one v we were hospitalized.

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DAGMAR PIKHARTOVÁ  
GENERAL MANAGER  
[dpikhartova@praguepost.com](mailto:dpikhartova@praguepost.com)

FRANK KUZNIK  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
[fkuznik@praguepost.com](mailto:fkuznik@praguepost.com)

WILL TIZARD  
MANAGING EDITOR  
[wizard@praguepost.com](mailto:wizard@praguepost.com)

MONROE LUTHER  
PUBLISHER  
[EagleTexas@aol.com](mailto:EagleTexas@aol.com)