

Russian General Warns Of Possible Nuclear War

Nov. 17—Gen. Nikolai Makarov, the chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, stated today, “I cannot rule out that, in certain circumstances, local and regional armed conflicts could grow into a large-scale war, possibly even with nuclear weapons.” Addressing the Russian Public Chamber, a Kremlin advisory body which includes numerous policy heavyweights, Makarov stated that “Russia could be involved in a conflict where weapons of mass destruction could be used... The possibility of local armed conflicts virtually along the entire perimeter of the [Russian] border has grown dramatically.”

Makarov was referring specifically to NATO’s expansion eastward since the collapse of the Soviet Union—including efforts to get Ukraine and Georgia to join NATO—as well as the U.S.-led plan to place missile defense systems along the Russian border. But his remarks are also an unmistakable warning in the context of the British-Obama drumbeat for war against Iran and Syria.

Russian civilian officials emphasized this concern. “Russia can prevent a military operation against

Iran,” the head of the Russian parliamentary Committee for International Affairs, Konstantin Kosachov, told journalists Nov. 10. “A military operation against Iran could have grave consequences. And Russia should make every effort to control emotions, bring negotiations back into the field of political and expert discussion, and not allow any such action against Iran.” The influential parliamentarian went after the new report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), noting that it is “surprising that the document deals with the situation before 2003, while accusations are being brought against modern Iran and today’s leadership.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met in Moscow Nov. 9 with Ali Baquer, the deputy head of Iran’s National Security Council. After the meeting, a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said: “Iran has confirmed that it wants to resolve all outstanding issues with the IAEA. This is incompatible with efforts to impose new sanctions, which will only drive any prospects of negotiations into a dead end.”

Also on Nov. 9, Igor Barinov, a member of the Duma’s defense committee, compared the IAEA report to the Bush Administration’s fraudulent allegations about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction, and said: “We should, in a joint effort with the Chinese, try to prevent the development of events according to the Afghan-Iraq scenario.”