
Russia accuses US of viewing Europe as nuclear battlefield



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Russia has accused the United States of viewing Europe as a nuclear battlefield, amid tensions over European security.

Russian Ambassador-at-Large Andrey Belousov said Washington's efforts to discuss Russia's non-strategic nuclear weapons suggested the US was considering nuclear use in European theater.

Speaking to Russia's RT television, Belousov said American calls for greater transparency, reductions or elimination of Russia's tactical nuclear arsenal could increase the risk of a nuclear-use scenario involving the US and its European allies.

He accused Washington of diverting attention from US nuclear weapons deployed in Europe and NATO's nuclear-sharing arrangements. Moscow has repeatedly called for the withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from European NATO countries.

Belousov said Russia had reduced its non-strategic nuclear arsenal fourfold in the early 1990s and placed remaining weapons in centralized storage, expecting reciprocal measures from Washington.

He said the collapse of arms-control agreements, US missile-defense plans and nuclear modernization had worsened the strategic environment.

Despite limited prospects, Belousov said Moscow remained open to strategic dialogue with Washington, provided negotiations were based on equal and indivisible security and addressed factors affecting stability.