

In a recent article, The Times discusses Russia's "new" foreign policy position as a graceful extension of an olive branch but common sense tells experts not to get so excited. Russia came out on January 28th with a chain of statements about supporting the Obama Administration because of its willingness to reconsider current U.S. missile defense shield plans in Poland and the Czech Republic. This so-called "olive branch" is a statement that the Russian's will not position Iskander short-range missiles in Russia's Baltic enclave (a plan they announced the day after the 2008 Presidential election) so long as the United States backs down from its plans for the shield in Poland and the Czech Republic. How thoughtful of the Russian's to back out of a missile program it can't afford and hasn't even begun.

"Militarization does not help solve problems. We are against spending more money on military efforts," stated Putin to the Times. This is an interesting statement coming from the same government that recently invaded Georgia, and still plans to increase troop levels in South Ossetia.

The Obama Administration should not give into the bullying of the Russian government, especially in the arena of missile defense. Ariel Cohen of the Heritage Foundation believes this would be a signal of U.S. weakness on an array of issues. Endless attempts by the U.S. government to convince Russia that the shield is directed towards the threat of rogue Middle Eastern governments have fallen on deaf ears as far as rhetoric is concerned. Kremlin's own ballistic missile experts agree that the shield would not be able to counter Russian strength, a message The Heritage Foundation hopes is relayed.

Copyright 2009 The Heritage Foundation. www.heritage.org Reproduced with permission. All rights reserved.