
Abkhazia proposes Russia deploy radar on its territory-1.

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MOSCOW, March 28 (RIA Novosti) - Georgia's breakaway republic of Abkhazia has proposed that Russia deploy a radar on its territory, the president of the self-proclaimed republic said Wednesday.

Sergei Bagapsh said the proposal was in response to Georgia's intention to deploy a U.S. radar on its territory.

"Georgia is an unfriendly country, and moreover it is a country that is constantly preparing for war against Abkhazia," Bagapsh said. "The deployment of a U.S. radar station will be targeted against Abkhazia. That is why we have proposed that Russia deploy a similar station in Sukhumi."

The United States plans to deploy a radar installation in the Czech Republic and a missile base in Poland by 2011-2012, saying the shield is needed to counter possible attacks from Iran. But Russia objects to the plans, treating them as a security threat.

The March 1 Pentagon announcement of plans to deploy a radar base in the Caucasus further fueled Russia's concerns, evoking suspicions that NATO-oriented Georgia could be a possible site. Georgian officials have denied the possibility.

Bagapsh said there already was a radar station that Russia could use in Sukhumi, the capital of Abkhazia, it just requires reactivation.

The Abkhaz president also said that Georgia's possible admission to NATO will only speed up the recognition of sovereignty for his republic and the other Georgian breakaway republic of South Ossetia.

"The sooner Georgia joins NATO the sooner Abkhazia and South Ossetia will become independent states," Bagapsh said.

Tbilisi hopes NATO membership will help it regain control of the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are backed by Russia. Russia helped to end the bloody conflicts in the region in the early 1990s and has maintained peacekeeping troops there ever since.

The U.S. House of Representatives gave a final backing to NATO's further eastward enlargement, including bids from ex-Soviet Georgia and Ukraine on Monday, promising a total of \$12 million in aid to the two countries and former Communist-bloc members Albania, Croatia and Macedonia in 2008. The bill has yet to be signed by the president.

Moscow strongly opposes efforts by Georgia and Ukraine to join the alliance, saying the prospect threatens its security and prompts a new arms race.
