
US seeks to antagonize post Soviet states - Russian expert.

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The U.S. administration is continuing to pursue a policy on disintegration of post-Soviet space, a Russian political expert said Wednesday.

U.S. President George Bush has signed into law legislation supporting a Ukrainian and Georgian bid to join NATO.

The NATO Freedom Consolidation Act of 2007, already approved by the Senate March 15 and the House of Representatives March 26, envisions \$12 million in aid to Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Georgia and Ukraine in 2008, which "have clearly stated their desire to join NATO and are working hard to meet the specified requirements for membership."

"It is just a step in a comprehensive plan to remove Ukraine from Russia's geopolitical space and an important move to destroy the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)," said Leonid Ivashov, president of the Academy of Geopolitical Sciences.

"The Americans are openly interfering in Ukraine's internal political affairs and are determined, if not impudent, in this effort," the expert said.

He said the interference was part of a consistent and well-thought policy the United States has been conducting for many years.

"We can recognize here a multi-vector, systematic approach aimed at destroying the post-Soviet space and removing a number of states, including Ukraine from the former integral geopolitical space of the commonwealth," Ivashov said.

According to the Russian expert, the signing of the document by President Bush conspicuously coincides with a current political crisis in Ukraine.

"We regard this as a double-pronged approach - to apply strong pressure on the Ukrainian opposition to the president and his supporters, and, on the other hand, to support pro-American, pro-NATO forces in Ukraine," he said, adding that the U.S. ultimate goal is to control Ukraine, either through the North Atlantic alliance or through bilateral relations.

As well as being uneasy about the opening of NATO bases on the territory of Russia's former Soviet allies in the Baltic region and Central Asia, Moscow strongly opposes efforts by Georgia and Ukraine to join the alliance, saying the prospect threatens its security and will unleash a new arms race.

Ukraine has been divided on the proposed NATO membership, reflecting major policy differences between the Western-leaning president and the more pro-Russian prime minister, who says the country is not ready for the move.

The idea is unpopular with the largely Russian-speaking population in the east of the country. Opinion surveys have indicated that more than 50% of Ukrainian nationals are against joining the former Soviet Union's Cold War enemy.
