By Kim R. Holmes

President Obama's election hasn't ushered in all the good international feelings he hoped for. Some of our thorniest problems under Bush are getting even thornier: Russia, which rebuked NATO over Georgia's membership by invading Georgia, has bribed Kyrgyzstan into shutting down a U.S. supply base for Afghanistan, pressured Ukraine and others on energy supplies, and threatened the U.S. with retaliation over missile defenses in Europe. North Korea seems to be preparing for another provocative missile test. Iran just tested a satellite that shows its determination to acquire long-range missiles and demanded an apology from the U.S. before it will participate in the high-level talks Obama wants.

At the same time, we are getting a clearer picture of where President Obama is heading on foreign policy and national security. Frankly, it's worrisome. Among the most troubling signals are these actions and statements by Obama and his administration:

1. An OMB official in the Obama administration has said they want to cut 10% from Bush's proposed 2010 defense budget, at a time when the readiness and quality of the U.S. armed forces are seriously strained. We have 30-year old F-15s falling from the skies and the National Guard showing real signs of exhaustion as it is forced to cannibalize equipment at home to support its deployments overseas.

2. The administration has refused to commit to continuing the missile defense sites in Europe; in fact, it has sent out confusing signals and even suggested they could be traded away in a deal with the Russians.

3. The White House reconfirmed Obama's campaign promise not to "weaponize space," which is code for entering into treaty obligations that restrict U.S. military access to space, including for purposes of missile defense. Obama also has pledged to seek adoption of a host of treaties that the U.S. Congress has long resisted, due to their threats to U.S. sovereignty, the Constitution, and our system of federalism. First up appear to be the Law of the Sea Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and the Women's Convention (CEDAW).

4. Administration officials have said that they will launch a new arms control process with Russia that, according to news reports, may be aimed not just at cutting each country's nuclear weapons by 80%, but also at reintroducing restrictions on America's ballistic missile defenses—basically returning to the old strategic mindset that was the basis of the overturned ABM Treaty.

5. They have made incoherent statements on the way forward on Iran, promising on the one hand tougher sanctions while at the same offering high-level direct talks.

6. The Administration has announced the closing of Guantanamo Bay without any clear idea or plan on what to do with the detainees there.

7. The Administration has backed France's full reintegration into NATO's command structure, giving Paris two of the senior command positions including a critical one, based in the U.S., that determines the alliance's future doctrine and oversees training for future scenarios. France's full return could thus weaken American influence in NATO and enhance the power of the European Union within the alliance.

8. The Administration has sent mixed and amateurish diplomatic signals to 1) the Muslim world that imply Islamists' anger is at least partly our fault and that dictators there have nothing to fear from the U.S.; and 2) our Asian allies, saying the U.S. relationship with China was "most important," thus undercutting the importance of our alliances with Japan and South Korea, while at the same time accusing the Chinese of manipulating their currency for trade purposes, which could fuel protectionist sentiments in Congress and around the world. This statement, which required a call from Obama to Hu Jintao to explain, should not have been the subject of their very first conversation.

9. Administration officials have raised the prospects of overturning the "Don't ask, Don't tell" policy on gays in the military.

10. The Administration has rescinded the "Mexico City Policy" implemented under Ronald Reagan and continued by George Bush that restricted U.S. funding for abortions abroad instead of for family planning activities that improve maternal and child health.

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