

Russia Says NATO's Decision is 'Lose-Lose' Situation



Moscow, April 2 (RHC-Interfax), -- Russia said Wednesday neither Russia nor NATO would benefit from the Western alliance's decision to put on hold mutual cooperation.

Noting the NATO decision to freeze military and civilian cooperation with Russia has created a "deja-vu effect", Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Alexander Lukashевич, said that "the wording of the NATO statement calls to mind the war of words during the Cold War."

NATO's foreign ministers gathered in Brussels on Tuesday for a closed-door meeting and decided to suspend the bloc's practical cooperation with Russia.

Lukashевич recalled that the military bloc suspended cooperation with Moscow in 2008 following a brief Russia-Georgia armed conflict, but returned to cooperation citing the "all-weather" nature of mutual relations.

"It is not too hard to imagine who will benefit from the freezing of joint Russia-NATO work to counter modern threats and challenges to international and European security, like fighting terrorism, piracy, natural and industrial disasters," said the spokesman.

Neither Russia nor the NATO countries will be the winner, he added.

Meanwhile, Moscow rejected NATO allegations that Russia was mulling aggressive plans threatening Western countries.

"The claims about Moscow's allegedly aggressive plans creating threats to the NATO countries are absolutely groundless," the Interfax news agency quoted Russian envoy to NATO, Alexander Grushko, as saying.

Grushko added: "NATO's moves to protect Eastern European countries make no sense." The 28-member NATO started air drills on Tuesday over the former Soviet republic of Lithuania with emergency landing and search and rescue operations.

"The aim of these exercises is to wake up the Cold War instincts and to prove NATO's necessity in the current safe conditions," Grushko said, adding that Russia "in any case" will take all necessary steps to reliably guarantee its security.

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