

Dangerous Crossroads: US Deploys Patriot Missiles in Poland directed against Russia

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MOSCOW — Moscow is deeply concerned with the plans of the United States to deploy Patriot missiles in Poland near the Russian border, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Thursday.

Poland said in late January it would deploy a battery of U.S. Patriot missiles to the town of Morag, just 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the border with the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. The missiles were originally planned to be stationed near Warsaw.

“We are concerned by the misguided anti-missile activities of the United States on the territory of Poland. We do not understand the aims for deployment of Patriot air defense missiles near the Russian border,” Andrei Nesterenko said.

“Such unilateral steps on behalf of the United States cannot but raise our concerns,” the diplomat added.

In February, Polish President Lech Kaczynski ratified also the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the United States, laying out the terms for the deployment of U.S. troops on Polish soil.

Poland demanded the Patriot theater air defense systems, designed to counter tactical ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and advanced aircraft, when it agreed to host part of the planned U.S. missile shield in Eastern Europe, and insisted the deployment go ahead even after Washington modified its missile defense plans.

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