

## 'No tradeoff' with Russia on NATO growth, missile shield - Bush

By [Global Research](#)

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01/04/2008 13:42 KIEV, April 1 (RIA Novosti) - The U.S. president said on Tuesday there will be no deal with Moscow on withdrawing American support for Georgia and Ukraine's NATO bids in exchange for Russia's acceptance of a U.S. missile shield in Europe.

Speaking at a news conference in Kiev after talks with President Viktor Yushchenko, George W. Bush signaled his support for the two ex-Soviet states' requests to enter the Membership Action Plan (MAP), a precursor for membership in the Western military alliance.

Asked by a reporter about rumors that Washington could strike a bargain with Moscow, he said: "That is a misperception - I strongly believe that Ukraine and Georgia should be given MAP, and there's no tradeoff, period."

The U.S. intends to deploy 10 missile interceptors in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic, which it says will provide defense against 'rogue states' such as Iran, the plans that Moscow views as a direct threat to its own security.

Moscow also vehemently opposes NATO's further expansion. The Kremlin threatened in February to target missiles at Ukraine if Kiev joins NATO and allows Western military facilities on its territory.

At the news conference, President Yushchenko reiterated his promise to hold a referendum on the country's entry to NATO, but pledged his support for membership in the alliance.

"We will hold a referendum on NATO membership... The Ukrainians are a wise people" and they will make their choice, he said.

However, he said NATO membership would be the "best response to all the basic and fundamental interests of Ukraine."

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