

# Russia to Continue Offensive Arms to Balance U.S. Shield - Putin

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Russia will continue developing offensive armaments to counter U.S. missile defenses, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin told reporters on Tuesday.

“We must continue developing offensive systems,” the prime minister said in Vladivostok, adding that it will help “preserve a strategic balance” with the United States which, unlike Russia, is sticking to its missile shield program.

“If we want to exchange information, let the U.S. share its information on missile defense and we will provide information on offensive weapons,” he said.

Putin described talks with the U.S. on a new strategic offensive arms reduction treaty as “positive.”

The START 1 treaty expired on December 5. The new treaty is expected to be signed in early 2010.

Putin said the treaty should contain “certain rules on arms reduction,” which should be “equally understood, easily tested and transparent.”

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama announced at their first meeting in April that the countries would replace the START I treaty as part of their efforts to “reset” bilateral ties.

The treaty’s outline agreed by the presidents included cutting nuclear arsenals to 1,500-1,675 operational warheads and delivery vehicles to 500-1,000.

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