

U.S. could deploy missile shield in Arctic - Russia's NATO envoy

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MOSCOW - The U.S. missile defense program is becoming less predictable with missile shield elements deployed in the Arctic as the worst-case scenario, Russia's envoy to NATO told the Vesti 24 channel.

U.S. President Barack Obama has announced that Washington would not deploy its missile shield elements in Central Europe, due to a re-assessment of the threat from Iran. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on Saturday he decided against deploying Iskander missiles in Russia's Kaliningrad Region, near Poland.

"We knew for sure that there will be ten interceptor missiles in Poland and a radar in Czech Republic, and that we will have our Iskander [missiles] in the Kaliningrad Region... now the U.S. missile elements are to be based on U.S. cruisers, and you can never tell where they will be tomorrow," he said.

He added that the reduction of sea ice in Arctic due to climate change could lead to the all-year-round opening of the Northern Sea Route, is a shipping lane running along Russia's Far Eastern and Siberian coasts that is usually only free of ice for around eight weeks a year.

"The ice would retreat, it would melt, which means that NATO would definitely be present in the Arctic. They have been planning it for a long time, and under the very bad circumstances the U.S. strategic missile defense would arrive there onboard these ships," Rogozin said.

In his interview Rogozin also said that Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) could send it representative to Russia's NATO mission to boost anti-terrorism cooperation with the alliance.

"FSB... is charged with anti-terrorism issues, they would have their own official contacts with appropriate NATO structures," Rogozin said.

In his interview he also praised NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen's efforts to improve relations with Russia.

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