

U.S. Interceptors Will Target Russian Nuclear Capability: Commander

Russia says no arms reduction deal without missile defense clause

By [Global Research](#)

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Moscow: Russia insists on the inclusion of U.S. missile defenses in Europe in a new strategic arms reduction treaty between the two countries in order to ensure nuclear parity, Russia’s top military commander said.

Russia and the United States have been negotiating a replacement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty since presidents Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama met in April last year, but finalizing a document has dragged on, with U.S. plans for missile defense in Europe a particular sticking point.

START 1, the cornerstone of post-Cold War arms control, expired on December 5.

“The treaty is some 95% ready, but we still have to resolve some issues, including getting the U.S. agreement to include the missile defense issues in the treaty,” General Nikolai Makarov said in an interview with the Rossiyskaya Gazeta daily published on Tuesday.

Makarov said the previous treaty was skewed in favor of the United States and harmed Russia’s national interests. This time, Moscow wants to make sure that a new deal is based on parity and stability.

“If the Americans continue to expand their missile defenses, they will certainly target our nuclear capability and in this case the balance of forces will shift in favor of the United States,” the general said.

He added that the development of missile defenses would inevitably lead to a new round of the arms race and undermine the true nature of nuclear arms reductions.

Moscow hoped that the controversy over the U.S. missile shield in Europe had been resolved after the Obama administration scrapped plans last year for interceptor missiles in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic.

But the new U.S. phased-in approach for European missile defense, which adds a naval component and could involve not only Poland and the Czech Republic, but also Romania and

Bulgaria makes the potential threat to Russian nuclear deterrent even stronger.

The planned deployment of U.S. interceptor missiles in the Black Sea region has triggered fierce criticism from Moscow.

Makarov said the Russian and the U.S. presidents were deeply involved in the negotiations on the issues that are still holding back the conclusion of the new treaty.

“Whether the new treaty is signed, and how soon this will be, depends on the sides’ readiness to consider each other’s interests,” he said.

“All I can say with certainty is that the issue will be resolved on a parity basis and without any harm to Russia,” the general concluded.

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