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## Russia will hit US missile sites if no deal

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**Russian President Dmitry Medvedev says Russia will target US missile defense sites in Europe if Washington goes ahead with the planned shield despite Moscow's concerns.**

Medvedev said on Wednesday that he will deploy strike systems in the west and south of Russia, and deploy Iskander missiles in the Kaliningrad region in order to counter the risk posed by the European missile defense system, Russia Today reported.

“By my order the Defense Ministry will run in a warning system radar station in Kaliningrad without delay,” the Russian president said.

“In the event of unfavorable developments (in regards to European missile defense), Russia reserves the right to halt further steps in the disarmament sphere and, respectively, weapons control,” Medvedev said.

He added, “Besides, given the inseparable interconnection between the strategic offensive and defensive weapons, grounds may appear for our country's withdrawal from the START treaty.”

The new START treaty, signed by Russian President Medvedev and US President Barack Obama in the Czech capital of Prague in April 2010, replaced START 1, which expired in December 2009.

New START went into force on February 5, 2011. The arms reduction pact would limit Washington and Moscow to a maximum of 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads each.

Russia fears that the plans for missile shields in Europe, including in Romania and Poland, would undermine its nuclear deterrence, and thus has been seeking legally binding guarantees to check it.

During a meeting in Lisbon in late November 2010, Russia agreed to cooperate with NATO on the US-backed pan-European missile system.

Russia's agreement with NATO, however, raised eyebrows as Moscow had traditionally been fiercely opposed to the missile system.

Moscow has called for the shared control of the system but Washington refuses to share the responsibility for protecting NATO member-states with a third party.