

# Medvedev Pushes U.S. Before G8

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President Dmitry Medvedev has pressed for binding guarantees that a European missile shield would not weaken its nuclear arsenal, saying the system now planned by the United States could threaten Russia's security after 2015.

Days before he meets with President Barack Obama, Medvedev reiterated on Friday his warning of a return to the Cold War if the United States and NATO do not give Russia enough input in the creation of a missile defense system.

"Let us agree now what kind of a system it will be," Medvedev said at an international legal forum in St. Petersburg.

"And if we do not agree, what we will get is Europe in the early 1980s," he added — a time when the standoff between two nuclear armed superpowers clouded the continent. "I don't want to live in that Europe, and I hope you don't either."

Stern remarks by General Nikolai Makarov to foreign military attaches seemed aimed to add to the pressure on the United States and its allies ahead of Medvedev's meetings with Obama and European leaders at a G8 summit in France on May 26.

U.S. assurances that the shield it is planning would not threaten Russia "are so far nothing but groundless declarations," said Makarov, chief of the armed forces General Staff.

As part of a successful push to improve ties with Moscow, Obama scrapped missile defense plans by his predecessor, and in November Medvedev agreed to a NATO offer of cooperation on missile defense.

But the alliance has given the cold shoulder to Medvedev's proposal for a "sectoral" system dividing the continent into Russian and NATO zones of responsibility.

"It's a paradox: We were invited into organizing this, and now that we have agreed, the opposite is happening. We are being told, 'We will do our thing and you do yours,'" Makarov said.

Russian officials have also stepped up criticism of Obama's scaled-back plan for gradual deployment of shorter-range interceptor missiles, based on land and sea, by 2020.

"We will be happy with any option that ... does not threaten Russia's nuclear forces," Makarov said. "So far, we see no such option. The ball is in the Americans' court."

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