

Medvedev Opens, Touts Radar in Kaliningrad

November 29, 2011

The  **Moscow Times**

DUNAYEVO, Kaliningrad Region — President Dmitry Medvedev opened an early-warning radar station on Russian territory bordering two NATO nations on Tuesday, in a bid to press the United States to back down in a dispute over U.S. plans for a European missile shield.

Medvedev said during the visit to the facility in the Kaliningrad exclave on the Baltic Sea that Moscow was prepared to take other measures to counter the developing shield.

He said opening the station showed Moscow's determination to build up its offensive and defensive capabilities if the United States and NATO pushed ahead with an anti-missile shield that Russia says is a threat to its security.

"I hope this step will be perceived by our Western partners as the first signal of our country's readiness to respond adequately to the threats that the missile defense system poses to our strategic nuclear forces," he told military officials.

The visit was the latest display of Russian resolve by Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir

Putin ahead of parliamentary elections on Sunday in which polls show the ruling party could lose ground.

Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said the radar would reach 6,000 kilometers westward, a reach that Air and Space Forces chief Oleg Ostapenko said exceeded that of existing early-warning stations near St. Petersburg and in Belarus.

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