

Obama 'Seeks Missile Defense Deal' With Putin

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The  **Moscow Times**

A confidential letter sent from Barack Obama to Vladimir Putin last month proposed an agreement on the exchange of information on missile defense, a news report said Wednesday.

The proposed agreement is intended to guarantee that neither country poses a threat to the other, and could also include a framework agreement to further reduce their nuclear weapon stockpiles, Kommersant [reported](#).

The letter, delivered to Moscow on April 15 by White House national security adviser Tom Donilon, offered "to develop a legally binding agreement on transparency, which would include the exchange of information and confirmation that our programs do not present a threat to each other's defense forces," the newspaper said.

Obama does not need the consent of Congress to formalize this executive agreement, a State

Department source was quoted as saying. However, it would only be binding for the administration that signs it and any successor would have the right to refuse to comply.

The White House expects to enter talks on what would be a groundbreaking agreement later this year, and Obama and Putin may meet to discuss it in Moscow two days before the G20 meeting starts on Sept. 3 in St. Petersburg, Kommersant said.

The two presidents had planned a bilateral summit in St. Petersburg around the time of the G20 meeting.

A Russian diplomatic source told the newspaper that Russia could accept the offer to work together, because increasing transparency on missile defence would be beneficial in itself, while also enhancing mutual trust.

Security Council chief Nikolai Patrushev has said he will visit the U.S. to hand over Putin's reply, but he has not revealed when the trip will take place, saying only that it "will go ahead when there is a letter" from Putin.

The White House had hoped that Patrushev would deliver the reply by May 20, but a Kremlin source said it was unlikely to be ready by that date, Kommersant said.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday that the letter would be ready by the end of May.

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