

## Russia and USA sign secret defense memorandum

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Deputy Defense Minister of the Russian Federation, General Yury Baluyevsky and his counterpart, U.S. Admiral Michael Mullen, signed a memorandum on defense cooperation in Washington.

“The memorandum specifies the plan of defense cooperation and the compatibility of the armed forces of the two countries in 2008. It was a very fruitful, productive discussion that both parties benefited from, and the chairman desires to keep the content of those discussions between him and his counterpart,” Navy Captain John Kirby, a spokesman for Mullen, said.

A source at the Defense Ministry of Russia said before that the talks between the two military officials would most likely be devoted to the elements of the U.S. missile defense system in Europe.

It is an open secret that the Pentagon plans to deploy ten interceptor-missiles in Poland and a radar station in the Czech Republic. The first U.S. missile can appear in Europe already in 2011, whereas the rest of the system is said to be complete in 2013.

Baluyevsky started his visit to the USA Tuesday. The general will conduct talks with US Deputy National Security Advisor James F. Jeffrey and Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation John Rood.

Baluyevsky will also visit U.S. naval base Kings Bay in Georgia. His visit to the United States will continue before December 7. A regular session of the Russia-NATO Council will take place on December 7 in Brussels. Officials will reportedly discuss issues connected with the Conventional Arms Forces in Europe Treaty.

Commenting on U.S. suggestion regarding the missile defense system, Baluyevsky stated that he did not see anything new in them, Interfax reports. “What can we talk about at all if the USA is determined to work on the third missile defense position zone in Eastern Europe?” the general said.

Washington insists its plans for missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic are aimed at countering a looming Iranian ballistic missile threat, not Russia's vast nuclear arsenal, AFP reports.

But the Russians have argued that the Iranian threat is not imminent, and that missile defense systems in eastern Europe could be turned against Russia's nuclear deterrent.

Source: agencies

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