

Russia, NATO 'Partners'

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The chief of the army's General Staff, Nikolai Makarov, played down on Tuesday the revelation that NATO secretly decided to draft a defense plan to protect its Baltic members bordering Russia.

Secret U.S. diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks disclosed that NATO decided in January to draft a defense plan to cover its members Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Russian officials reacted angrily when the cables were released last week and questioned whether NATO really wanted friendly ties.

But Makarov shrugged off the cables and said Russia continued to see NATO as a partner and would proceed from agreements to expand cooperation reached at the latest Russia-NATO summit last month in Lisbon. ☒

(AP)