

Russia Backs UN-Controlled Space Shield to Protect Earth

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The  Moscow Times

Russia could rekindle missile defense relations with the United States by proposing a shield to defend Earth from stray comets, Kommersant [reported](#) Tuesday.

The new program, codenamed "Strategic Earth Defense" and backed by Russia's envoy to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, won acclaim from President Dmitry Medvedev, several unidentified diplomats told the daily.

The proposal — reminiscent of the Reagan-era Strategic Defense Initiative, commonly known as "Star Wars" — envisages a global air, missile and space defense system capable of intercepting an array of objects, from military rockets to comets and asteroids on a collision course with Earth.

The system is to be controlled by the United Nations, not national governments — which would give Russia, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, leverage in its operations.

The proposal capitalizes on America's fondness for "saving the world" and doing such a task together with Russia, one diplomat said.

"There's a prototype for this in American culture," he said. "Just think of the [1998] movie 'Armageddon,' in which Bruce Willis saves Earth together with Lev Andropov, a Russian who goofs around the universe with a monkey wrench and a bottle of vodka."

It remained unclear when the proposal would be put forward. A global affairs analyst said it is unlikely to make Washington drop its current plans for a missile defense shield near Russia. The United States says that shield is to defend against conceivable attacks from the Middle East, but Moscow views it as a potential threat.

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