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Putin Denies Russia Reopening Cold War Spy Base in Cuba

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Cuba's President Raul Castro (R) decorates Russia's President Vladimir Putin with the Order of Jose Marti during a ceremony at Havana's Revolution Palace.

President Vladimir Putin on Thursday denied media reports that Russia's Defense Ministry was set to reopen a Soviet-era spy post in Cuba that was once used to gather U.S. intelligence.

"Russia is capable of solving its tasks in the sphere of defense capabilities without this component," Putin said at a news conference in Brazil on Thursday, according to a transcript on the Kremlin's website.

"We have no plans to renew the work of this base," Putin added.

The base at Lourdes, just south of Havana, was Moscow's biggest center abroad for gathering intelligence from radio signals during the Cold War. It was set up in 1964, in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis. It closed its doors in 2001.

Russian business daily Kommersant had cited an unnamed defense official on Wednesday as

saying that an agreement had been signed during Putin's visit to Cuba to reopen the base, leading to a flurry of speculation that Russia was preparing to intensify intelligence efforts against the U.S.

See also:

Russia Set to Reopen Soviet-Era Spy Post in Cuba

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