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Russia To Develop Weapons To Overwhelm U.S. Missile Defenses

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Russian President Vladimir Putin chairs a meeting on the defense industry at the Bocharov Ruchei state residence in Sochi, Russia, Nov. 10, 2015.

Russia will develop weapons with the ability to penetrate any missile shields deployed across the globe — such as those fielded by the United States — President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday, the TASS news agency reported.

Putin told Russian military leaders at a meeting on Tuesday that Russia would in time develop its own anti-ballistic missile defense systems, but "at this first stage ... we will work on strike systems able to overcome any missile defense system," TASS reported.

The remarks were aimed explicitly at the U.S., which has been pursuing missile defense technologies since the waning years of the Cold War — an issue that has been a source of repeated controversy in U.S.-Russian bilateral relations.

Putin restated Russia's long-held position that U.S. claims that missile defenses are aimed at deterring Iranian and North Korean nuclear threats "only cover up [their] true plans. Their

true aim is to neutralize the strategic nuclear potential of other nuclear countries ... especially our country."

Russia is particularly sensitive to threats to the credibility of its strategic nuclear forces, given the sorry — but rapidly expanding — capabilities of its conventional military forces in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse. Russian military thinkers see nukes as their best defense tool.

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