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Kremlin Walks Back Criticism of Trump's 'Golden Dome' Missile Defense Plan

By AFP

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Jim Watson / AFP

The Kremlin said Wednesday that U.S. President Donald Trump's proposed "Golden Dome" missile shield was a "sovereign matter" for the United States, softening its tone after earlier criticism that the plan could destabilize global security.

Trump, who ordered the project a week after his inauguration in January, said the system would deploy missile interceptors in space to defend against ballistic and hypersonic threats. He unveiled initial funding details on Tuesday, calling it "important for the success and even survival of our country."

"This is a sovereign matter for the United States. If the United States believes there is a missile threat, then of course it will develop a missile defense system," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

“That is what all countries do,” he said, adding that the situation would eventually require renewed contacts to “restore strategic stability,” a reference to broader nuclear arms talks.

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Peskov’s remarks came two days after a phone call between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin that the U.S. president described as having “gone very well.”

Earlier this month, Moscow criticized the “Golden Dome” proposal, warning it could lead to the militarization of space. In a joint statement, Russia and China called the plan “deeply destabilizing.”

The “Golden Dome” name echoes Israel’s Iron Dome air defense system, which has intercepted thousands of short-range rockets since 2011. The U.S. system, however, would be aimed at defending against long-range and hypersonic threats.

China, which has deepened its strategic partnership with Moscow in recent years, repeated its criticism of the U.S. plan on Wednesday, calling it a threat to international security.

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