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## **WAR GAMES: RUSSIA AND CHINA JOIN FORCES AGAINST GLOBAL US MISSILE SHIELD**

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13.10.2016

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IB Times, 13 October 2016

Russia has joined China in trying to block the U.S. from upgrading its missile-defense network in Europe and Asia, Bloomberg reported Wednesday.

While Moscow has protested plans for the extensive NATO-operated system for years, it's message to Washington was particularly forceful this week as relations between the two nations have reached an all-time low over disputes in Syria. At a security conference in China, Russian Lieutenant-General Viktor Poznikhir warned that the U.S. was trying to establish a global military dominance by expanding its missile system.

Russian military experts believe that the U.S. hopes to gain the capability to strike any region of the world, including Russia and China, with nuclear-tipped missiles with impunity, he said at the Xiangshan Forum in Beijing.

Chinese Major General Cai Jun blasted plans by Washington and Seoul to deploy a high-tech missile defense system known as the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) in nearby South Korea. Cai claimed that installing the system may trigger an international arms race that could "even expand to outer space" as Russia and China consider a tactical response to the U.S.'s military aspirations. In September, Russian and Chinese navies conducted joint exercises in the disputed South China Sea and Putin announced last year that Russia plans on developing a counter-system capable of piercing NATO's missile shield.

As the U.S. expands NATO's military infrastructure, Russia and China have become increasingly agitated. In May, the U.S. established ballistic missile defensive Aegis Ashore sites in Romania and Poland, joining mobile theater ballistic sites in Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, France and Italy. That same month, Russia and China conducted a joint anti-missile exercise and have already planned a second drill in 2017. The US and NATO allies are currently developing additional sea-born ballistic missile capabilities.

The U.S. claims its missile defense systems in Europe and Asia are intended to counter potential missile threats from "rogue states" such as Iran and North Korea. Russia and China reject this explanation and believe they're being held hostage by U.S. foreign policy. Both countries also criticized the U.S. for withdrawing from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which barred the U.S. or Russia from building or testing missile defense systems.

The news comes as Russia makes steps to expand its own military presence worldwide by establishing a permanent airbase in Syria and considers opening more foreign bases in countries such as Cuba, Vietnam, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

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Kaynak/Source: