

Polish PM backs US troop stationing

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The US and Poland have drawn up an accord regulating the stationing of US troops in Poland, opening the way for the deployment of US Patriot missiles.

The accord was given the final backing of Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk Friday and will be signed in Warsaw next Thursday, ministry spokesman Robert Rochowicz told AFP.

"Talks on the accord to allow a US military presence in our country have been concluded with success," he said.

The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) is a pre-requisite to setting up a US ground-to-air missile base in Poland. US officials say deployment should start in 2010.

During an October visit to Warsaw by US Vice President Joe Biden, Tusk said his country was ready to join a new US anti-missile system in central Europe.

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates has said the United States wants to deploy SM-3 missiles in Poland and the neighboring Czech Republic in 2015.

Gates' announcement came after President Barack Obama scrapped a plan agreed in 2008 to install a controversial anti-missile shield system in the two countries.

The shield, promoted by President George W. Bush when he was in office, had angered Russia which considered it a threat to Russian security.

The Patriots and SM-3s are part of a new system proposed by the United States.

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