

NORAD scrambles for Russian bombers

by UPI

COLORADO SPRINGS - U.S. Air Force officials would like Russia to be more open about its increased schedule of strategic bomber flights, the Denver Post reported Tuesday. The North American Aerospace Defense Command, based in Colorado Springs, reported that fighters were scrambled 46 times last year in response to Russian bombers. Such operations had become rare with the end of the Cold War. Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that the big danger is of "something accidental." "We've got good military-to-military relations with the Russians," Mullen said. "My sense is there's no strategic intent to threaten the United States." Russia's flexing of its air power is in response to U.S. plans to locate parts of a missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic. Air Force Gen. Victor Renuart, who commands NORAD, said that Russia has refused to file flight plans, insisting that its bombers remain in air space where that is not required. Russian leaders did agree to announce proposed flights to the Russian media.

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