

Russia Deploys Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Belarus: Escalation or Deterrence?

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On March 25, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia will start deploying its tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus. Construction of designated storage facilities for the weapons is planned to be completed by July 1.

The decision to transfer nuclear weapons to Belarus was made after Minsk [allegedly] issued a formal request, essentially mirroring Washington DC's nuclear sharing agreements with several NATO member states. And while the decision was officially made after the [United Kingdom announced it would supply depleted uranium munitions to the Kiev regime](#), the actual reasoning might have to do with much more sinister plans by the United States.

Namely, Warsaw and Washington DC have been [floating the idea of transferring some of the US nuclear weapons stockpiled in Europe to Poland](#). The move has been mentioned several times in recent years, including in early October last year, when Polish President [Andrzej Duda mentioned it in an interview with Gazeta Polska](#). The US has nuclear sharing agreements with the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Turkey, with approximately 100 (mainly air-launched) tactical nuclear weapons deployed in all five countries. Greece also took part in the program, but discontinued its participation in 2001, although it's widely believed Athens still keeps the necessary storage facilities functional.

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko advised against UK plans to deliver depleted uranium munitions to the Kiev regime and [warned that Russia would soon supply Belarus with "munitions with real uranium"](#). However, Putin himself stated that "even outside the context of these events", Belarus still has legitimate security concerns and that "Alexander Grigoryevich [Lukashenko] has long raised the question of deploying Russian tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus". This clearly implies that threats to Minsk transcend the immediate danger of depleted uranium munitions deliveries to the Neo-Nazi

junta in Kiev.

“There is nothing unusual in such a decision, as the United States has been doing this for decades. They have long placed their tactical nuclear weapons on the territories of their allies, NATO countries, and in Europe. In six states – the Federal Republic of Germany, Turkey, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Greece – well, not in Greece now, but there is still a storage facility,” Putin stressed, further adding: “[Russia and Belarus] will do the same, without violating our international obligations on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons”.

He added that Russia is indeed mirroring the United States in this regard and that it’s not transferring the ownership of its tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus, but that it’s simply deploying them to the country and training the Belarussian military to operate and use them in the case of a wider escalation by the US and NATO. The Russian military has already provided Belarus with the necessary upgrades to be able to deliver tactical nuclear warheads. At least 10 (presumably Belarussian Air Force) jets have been assigned and equipped to carry such weapons, although neither side specified what type of aircraft received the said upgrades.

Belarus operates several types of nuclear-capable fighter jets, including the recently acquired Su-30SM and the Soviet-era MiG-29. In addition to air-launched nuclear weapons, Russia already deploys ground-based assets in Belarus, including the “Iskander” systems capable of launching nuclear-tipped hypersonic and regular cruise missiles. Minsk also operates its own “Iskander” units, meaning that those too could be equipped with tactical nuclear warheads, further bolstering the country’s deterrence capabilities. This is particularly important as [Belarus has also been targeted by US/NATO covert/black operations in recent years](#), including an attempted Maidan-style color revolution in 2020.

“We have handed over to Belarus our well-known and very effective ‘Iskander’ system that can carry [nuclear weapons],” Putin stated, adding: “On April 3, we will start training the crews and on July 1 we will complete the construction of a special storage [facility] for tactical nuclear weapons on the Belarussian territory.”

In addition to the “Iskander”, Belarus still maintains a number of Soviet-era nuclear-capable assets, including a substantial arsenal of “Tochka-U” tactical ballistic missiles. These could serve as a secondary delivery option given their shorter range and inferior accuracy when compared to the “Iskander” which boasts a 500 km range, high precision, extreme maneuverability at every stage of flight, as well as a hypersonic speed estimated to be at least Mach 5.9, although military sources indicate that it can go up to Mach 8.7. This makes the “Iskander” virtually impossible to intercept, as evidenced by its performance during the SMO (special military operation). The system also provides a significant advantage over NATO forces in Eastern Europe.

President Lukashenko strongly indicated that Minsk could host Russian nuclear weapons as soon as [NATO implied it could deploy US B61 nuclear bombs](#) to Poland, highlighting that his country’s Soviet-era infrastructure for such weapons remains intact despite US pressure to destroy it during the 1990s.

Belarus is home to a growing arsenal of state-of-the-art Russian military units and equipment, including strategic assets such as the S-400 SAM (surface-to-air missile)

systems, as well as the advanced Su-35S air superiority fighter jets and MiG-31 interceptors, including the K/I variants capable of deploying [the already legendary “Kinzhal” hypersonic missiles](#), which are also nuclear-capable.

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