

“Serious Incident” Unfolds as NATO Jet Accidentally Launches Secret Missile Near Russian Border

By [Zero Hedge](#)

Global Research, August 12, 2018

[Zero Hedge](#) 11 August 2018

Region: [Europe, Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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Estonia’s defense minister has halted a NATO war exercise in Estonia pending an investigation after a fighter jet deployed in northeast Europe accidentally fired a secret missile during training. Authorities are now searching for the rocket, which was shot over the Baltic country’s airspace by a Spanish fighter jet this week near the Russian border.

Minister of Defense Juri Luik said Thursday during a press conference in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, the air-to-air missile was mistakenly launched Tuesday over southern Estonia has not been found nor did it injure any civilians.

[#Estonia](#) / [#Russia](#) : A Spanish eurofighter accidentally fire a missile near Otepaa, at around 65 kilometer of the russian border v [@TheArabSource](#)
pic.twitter.com/QwQEkgbRKc

— Emmanuel (@EmmanuelGMay) [August 7, 2018](#)

“The Spanish defense minister has apologized and expressed deep regret,” Luik said, adding that the commander of the Spanish Armed Forces has apologized for the mishap.

According to [Fox News](#), Estonian Prime Minister Juri Ratas communicated with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on Wednesday, expressing Estonia’s concern over the “serious incident.”

The Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) is a modern beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile (BVRAAM) capable of all-weather day-and-night operations with a range of up to 100 kilometers (62 miles). Luik told reporters the AMRAAM might have crashed into a remote nature reserve in the eastern Jogevea region — not far from Estonia’s border with Russia.



“The air-to-air missile has not hit any aircraft,” the Spanish Defense Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday. It added that three other fighter jets flew alongside the Spanish Eurofighter before the missile was launched. “After the incident, the planes returned safely

to the Siauliai Air Base.”

On Friday, the Spanish Defense Ministry told [Sputnik News](#) that it would not change its pilots serving in Lithuania over the recent incident.

“The composition of a Spanish squad deployed in Lithuania, jets and crews will not be changed until the end of their mission,” the spokesperson said.

The ministry said NATO, not Spain authorized the flight plan of their planes. The spokesperson noted that an investigation would have to occur before he could give more details about the incident.

“An investigation into the causes of this incident has been launched. The probe is underway and there are no preliminary results [of the investigation],” the ministry added.

Luik urged Spain to conduct a careful investigation of the incident. He also launched a separate internal probe to review the safety regulations of arranging military air exercises in the country.

Until the investigation is complete, Luik said:

“I have suspended all NATO exercises in the Estonian airspace.”

And now it seems Russia’s top brass has complained to [TASS News Agency](#) about the incident.

An official in the alliance’s military structure told TASS on condition of anonymity on Wednesday:

“At the present moment, we cannot confirm the existence of any contacts between the NATO Operations Command and the Russian military on this incident. However, after saying this, I will add that many civilian and military organizations play their role in ensuring international air security. We cannot say anything more on this incident as long as the investigation is going on.”

Well, at least social media has turned this NATO embarrassment into a laugh...

This is why I love [#Estonia](#) and estonians. Somebody in Võrumaa’s Kaagu village made a wooden statue about the AIM-120 [#missile](#) that escaped and disappeared from Spain’s air force over the country. <https://t.co/iW6zaQ8i3d pic.twitter.com/R2XQOzJgNa>

— Laura Halminen (@LauraHuu) [August 9, 2018](#)

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