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Russian Defense Ministry Denies U.S. Claim of Troop Buildup Near Ukraine

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Russia's Defense Ministry on Sunday refuted U.S. claims of a buildup of Russian troops on the border with Ukraine, asserting that the Ukrainian side had in fact been intensifying activity on the border.

Major General Igor Konashenkov, a Defense Ministry spokesman, said that 18 international inspections conducted in airspace over Russia had revealed "no such violations or undeclared military activities on the part of Russia in regions bordering Ukraine," Newsru.com reported.

Konashenkov added that the "active military operations of Ukraine's armed forces on the border with Russia prohibit similar inspections from being carried out in Ukrainian airspace," according to the report.

The Ukrainian side has concentrated more military equipment and troops near the border, Konashenkov said, adding that civilian areas on the Russian side had been shot at, resulting in the death and injury of Russian civilians.

No casualty statistics were included.

The Defense Ministry's comments followed repeated U.S. accusations that Moscow had increased military activity near Ukraine.

On Friday, U.S. Ambassador to NATO Douglas Lute said Russia had amassed about 15,000 soldiers on the border with Ukraine. U.S. State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf made a similar claim on Thursday, accusing Russia of firing artillery into Ukrainian territory.

See also:

US Accuses Russia of Firing Over Border at Ukraine's Troops

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