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Russia Slams 'Foreign Meddling' in Belarus, Rules Out Immediate Military Aid

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Russia criticized alleged foreign involvement in Belarus's post-election protests while the EU said it does not recognize the election's outcome. **Dmitri Lovetsky / AP / TASS**

The Kremlin said Wednesday that events in Belarus did not yet warrant Russia's military involvement, while Russia's foreign minister admitted shortcomings in the disputed presidential elections.

Both, however, criticized alleged foreign interference in the post-Soviet country's affairs following major protests against Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's claim to victory on Aug. 9.

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A collective military pact details security guarantees between Russia and Belarus "but there's

currently no such need [to send assistance],” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Wednesday, according to the RBC news website.

The Kremlin previously said Russian President Vladimir Putin had told Lukashenko that his country was ready to assist Belarus, if necessary, as part of the pact.

Peskov added Wednesday that foreign interference in Belarus is “unacceptable.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov joined in the condemnation of what he said were attempts from abroad to take advantage of unrest in Belarus, though he noted that its elections “were not ideal.”

"No one is making a secret of the fact that this is about geopolitics, the fight for the post-Soviet space," Lavrov said in a televised interview.

Lukashenko himself has alleged that NATO deployed tanks and planes near the Belarusian border.

On Wednesday, Lukashenko ordered reinforcements of the state border “to prevent the flow of militants, arms and money to finance unrest from other countries.” He also ordered the military to monitor the movements of NATO troops in neighboring Poland and Lithuania.

Ahead of the vote, the Belarusian leader accused the Kremlin of dispatching mercenaries to Minsk to stir unrest.

Following an emergency summit of the European Union’s heads of state, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Wednesday that the EU does not recognize the Belarusian election outcome.

EU ministers agreed last week to draw up new sanctions against people behind election rigging and violent protest suppression in Belarus. Germany has said even stronger penalties should be considered.

AFP contributed reporting.

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