Russia Says No 'Military Need' to Use Nuclear Arms in Ukraine

August 16, 2022

Russia's Defence Ministry Sergei Shoigu. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Russia has no military need to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Tuesday.

"From a military point of view, there is no need to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine to achieve the set goals," Shoigu said at an international security conference in Moscow.

He slammed media speculation that Russia could potentially use nuclear or chemical weapons to compensate for slow progress in its nearly six-month military campaign in Ukraine as "absolute lies."

The likelihood of Russia using nuclear weapons in Ukraine may change if the battlefield dynamic shifts, Gen. Jim Hockenhull, head of British military intelligence, told the BBC in an interview published Friday.

Shoigu said "the main purpose of Russian nuclear weapons is to deter a nuclear attack. Its use

is limited to extraordinary circumstances."

Russian diplomat Alexander Trofimov told the UN's nuclear non-proliferation conference earlier this month that those circumstances include a strike by a weapon of mass destruction or a conventional weapon attack that "threatened the existence of the Russian state."

Trofimov [made clear](#) that the hypothetical scenarios were not "relevant" to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but accused NATO of waging a hybrid confrontation that "dangerously balances on the edge of an open military clash."

Russia's Embassy in Washington on Tuesday [accused](#) the United States of increasing the threat of "a direct military clash of nuclear powers" through "hybrid confrontation" in Ukraine.

"The U.S. steps to further engage in a hybrid confrontation with Russia in the context of the Ukrainian crisis are fraught with unpredictable escalation and a direct military clash of nuclear powers," the Russian mission said in a statement.

President Vladimir Putin put Russia's nuclear forces on high alert days after launching what the Kremlin calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine, fueling fears that the country could deploy its arsenal there.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/08/16/russia-says-no-military-need-to-use-nuclear-arms-in-ukraine-a78583