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U.K., Germany Make First Joint Interception of Russian Aircraft Near NATO Airspace – Reports

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Il-78 Midas refuelling plane **Alex Beltyukov (CC BY-SA 3.0)**

The British and German air forces carried out their first joint interception of a Russian aircraft near NATO airspace, the BBC reported Wednesday.

The U.K. Royal Air Force and the German Air Force reportedly scrambled two Typhoon fighters to intercept an Il-78 refueling plane near Estonian airspace Tuesday.

The Il-78 was said to fail to communicate with air traffic control in Estonia, a former Soviet republic that has been a NATO member since 2004.

"The interception itself was routine, but it is the first time such an operation has been carried out together by the two countries," the BBC wrote.

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The British and German jets were then redirected to intercept a Russian An-148 regional jet airliner that was allegedly flying close to Estonian airspace.

Russia has not yet commented on the interceptions.

The reported interceptions are part of NATO's Baltic air policing mission that member countries carry out on a four-month rotational basis.

There was no immediate evidence of any link between the interception and Tuesday's incident between a Russian Su-27 fighter jet and a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drone.

The reported collision marks the first publicly known direct contact between Russian forces and the United States since Moscow invaded U.S. ally Ukraine last February.

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