

Putin Allies Split Over Using Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Ukraine

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Dmitry Rogozin **Dmitry Rogozin / VK**

At least two high-profile Russian officials have called on the Kremlin to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine in retaliation for an alleged drone strike on Vladimir Putin's Kremlin residence and as the prospect of an imminent Ukrainian counteroffensive looms.

State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin on Wednesday called the attempted strike a "terrorist attack" while claiming it had been orchestrated by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky personally.

"There can be no negotiations ... We will be demanding the use of weapons that can stop and destroy the terrorist regime in Kyiv," Volodin [wrote](#) on Telegram, hinting at the use of tactical nuclear weapons by Russia.

Those calls were soon echoed by Russia's former space chief Dmitry Rogozin, who published a [video update](#) on Thursday from the frontlines in Ukraine's southeastern Zaporizhzhya region, where he is currently working as a military advisor.

“An imminent deadly air fight is anticipated,” Rogozin said, noting that Russian forces were actively preparing for the Ukrainian counteroffensive. Russia could, however, avoid a significant number of casualties by using tactical nuclear weapons against Kyiv preemptively, he added.

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“According to our [nuclear] doctrine we have the right to use tactical nuclear weapons because that’s what they exist for,” he said, calling them a “great equalizer for the moments when there is a clear discrepancy in the enemy’s favor.”

However, the leader of the controversial Wagner mercenary group, Yevgeniy Prigozhin, sounded an unexpected note of caution and warned against making casual threats to use nuclear weapons.

“As a radically-minded person I can say that of course there should be no talk of using nuclear weapons in retaliation for a drone,” Prigozhin [said](#) on Thursday.

Advising those responsible to instead find and punish whoever was in charge of preventing aerial drone attacks and to improve Russia’s military capabilities to allow it to retaliate, Prigozhin said that making such disproportionate threats to the West made them “look like clowns.”

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