

Putin Arrives in Belarus to Talk Security, Tactical Nuclear Weapons Drills

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Vladimir Putin with Alexander Lukashenko during his visit to Belarus. kremlin.ru

Russian President Vladimir Putin [arrived](#) in Belarus late Thursday for talks with his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko expected to focus on security and joint tactical nuclear weapons exercises.

Earlier this month, Putin ordered the Russian military to conduct tactical nuclear weapons exercises in response to Western “threats and provocations.”

Belarus, which last year agreed to host Russian tactical warheads on its territory amid rising tensions over Ukraine, announced snap inspections of the non-strategic nuclear weapon carriers following the Russian president’s order.

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This week, Russia’s Defense Ministry announced the first phase of the drills in its Southern

Military District, which includes parts of Ukraine that Russia claims to have annexed.

“The second phase of the exercises has to do with the direct participation of our military allies and colleagues from Belarus,” Putin told Lukashenko after arriving in Minsk late Thursday.

Neither Russia nor Belarus have said where exactly the exercises will take place or if they will include any test firings.

The newly appointed Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov also [traveled](#) to Minsk as part of the talks, arriving early Friday to meet with his Belarusian counterpart Viktor Khrenin.

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