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Russia, U.S. Army Chiefs Hold Rare Call Amid Ukraine Escalation

By AFP

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Russia's Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov. **kremlin.ru**

The Russian and U.S. army chiefs held a rare phone call last week amid escalation in Ukraine, officials from both sides have said.

Direct contact between Moscow and Washington has almost ceased to exist amid Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and the Kremlin has said it considers the United States a direct participant in the conflict.

The call, between Russia's Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov and the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Charles Brown, occurred on Nov. 27 and was held at the request of the Russian side, both Moscow and Washington said.

"The leaders discussed a number of global and regional security issues to include the ongoing conflict in Ukraine," Brown's spokesman told AFP.

It was the first call between the pair since Brown took over the role in October 2023.

The Russian defense ministry said Gerasimov had informed Brown about Russian military drills in the eastern Mediterranean, announced as Moscow conducts air strikes to support its ally, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, in quashing an Islamist-led rebellion.

“This information was given with the goal of preventing possible incidents in connection with the presence of U.S. and NATO ships near the area of Russian drills,” it said in a statement on Telegram.

It did not mention Ukraine or any other topic.

Citing a U.S. military spokesperson, the New York Times reported that the pair discussed Russia's new Oreshnik hypersonic ballistic missile.

Brown also expressed U.S. concern over the deployment of North Korean troops to support Russia's army on the battlefield, CNN reported.

Tensions between Russia and the United States have escalated since Donald Trump won the presidential election in November.

The outgoing Biden administration has given Kyiv the green light to fire U.S.-supplied ATACMS missiles on Russian territory, while Russia lowered its threshold for the use of nuclear weapons.

In response to Kyiv striking Russian border regions with Western weapons, Russia said it “test fired” a never-before-seen nuclear-capable missile in a strike on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro.

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