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Russia to Build Drone Factory in Belarus

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Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and Deputy Head of the Russian Presidential Administration Maxim Oreshkin. **president.gov.by**

Russia will build a drone production facility in neighboring Belarus to "ensure security" for its key ally, Belarusian state media reported Thursday.

Kremlin Deputy Chief of Staff Maxim Oreshkin proposed the project during a visit to Minsk, where Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko welcomed the idea.

"It's very important that Belarus has its own [drone] production facilities, which would strengthen both its economy and national security," Oreshkin was quoted as saying by the Belta news agency.

The plant is expected to produce up to 100,000 drones per year once fully operational. Moscow and Minsk will now discuss its location and other details, Oreshkin said, without providing a construction timeline.

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Belta's report did not specify whether the drones would have military applications. However, Oreshkin's emphasis on security suggests potential defense uses. Both Russia and Ukraine have relied heavily on drones in combat and long-range strikes.

Lukashenko said Belarus was "ready" to build the factory.

"We guarantee that you won't build it in Russia the way we would here," he said.

Belarus remains under U.S. and European sanctions for supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine and cracking down on opposition. Russia used Belarusian territory as a staging ground for its February 2022 invasion.

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