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Kremlin Slams Idea of NATO Downing Russian Planes

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A MiG-31 fighter jet. **Fedor Leukhin (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

The Kremlin on Friday slammed the suggestion that NATO allies shoot down Russian planes entering their airspace as "reckless," after U.S. President Donald Trump said alliance members should do so.

Several NATO countries say Russian fighter jets and drones have violated their airspace in Europe over recent weeks, accusing Moscow of testing the alliance.

Asked on Tuesday whether he thought NATO states should shoot down any Russian planes that violate its airspace, Trump said: "Yes, I do."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Friday denounced what he called "irresponsible statements about the need to shoot down Russian aircraft, which are, at the very least, reckless, irresponsible and carry dangerous consequences," in an interview with Russian state TV.

Peskov did not specifically refer to Trump and instead cast the calls as coming from Europe.

Related article: Russia Is Testing NATO With Drones and Disinformation. Here's How the West Should Respond.

A string of recent aerial incursions, including in Romania, Poland and Estonia, have tested NATO unity and exposed gaps in air defense rules and equipment on the U.S.-led alliance's eastern flank.

Moscow has publicly denied accusations of airspace violations.

Peskov's latest comments came after Bloomberg reported that British, French and German diplomats warned their counterparts from Moscow that NATO is prepared to shoot down Russian aircraft in response to further airspace violations.

In what Bloomberg described as a "tense meeting," European envoys confronted Russian diplomats over last week's alleged incursion into Estonian airspace by three MiG-31 fighters.

Following the meeting, they reportedly concluded that the violation was a "deliberate tactic ordered by Russian commanders."

Russian diplomats argued that the flights were responses to Ukrainian actions against annexed Crimea and claimed that NATO support for Kyiv had put Europe into direct confrontation with Moscow.

The extensive notes taken by Russian delegates led European officials to speculate that they had been ordered to "provide a detailed readout of the NATO position up the chain of command" in Moscow, Bloomberg said.

In his interview Friday, Peskov claimed Estonia provided no evidence of the MiG-31 incident, and called Tallinn's rhetoric "yet another significant escalation of tensions near our border."

On Thursday, Russian Ambassador to France Alexei Meshkov told French radio that NATO shooting down a Russian aircraft under the pretext of an alleged airspace violation "would be war."

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said he supported the idea of targeting Russian jets if they violate members' airspace.

"The U.K. stands ready to robustly defend our airspace against any incursion," a British government spokesperson told Bloomberg.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said he "supports all measures necessary" and was coordinating responses with London, Paris and Warsaw.

AFP contributed reporting.

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