



Dems Move To Transfer Air Defense Systems From Saudis To Ukraine As Punishment

Description

Because of course it's fantastic timing... NATO plans to go through with scheduled nuclear exercises next week despite the ratcheting nuclear rhetoric surrounding the Russia-Ukraine war, which also only days ago saw President Joe Biden warn of the risk of the world witnessing "Armageddon" in highly controversial remarks.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg confirmed in Tuesday statements that the "Steadfast Noon" exercises, which are held annually and go for about a week, will proceed without delay. "It would send a very wrong signal if we suddenly now cancelled a routine, long-time planned exercise because of the war in Ukraine. That would be absolutely **the wrong signal to send,**" he told a press briefing on the eve of a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels.

He stressed that instead of carrying extra risks during this current heightened climate of tensions, it's best to remain "firm" in conducting predictable behavior. **"If we now created the grounds for any misunderstandings, miscalculations in Moscow about our willingness to protect and defend all allies, we would increase the risk of escalation,"** Stoltenberg reasoned.

As part of the drills, nuclear warhead-capable aircraft will be deployed in mock raids, however, they won't be carrying live bombs, Brussels assures. And yet the entirely *unpredictable* factor is how Russia would react or if its military would possibly decide to 'mirror' such drills.

"Fourteen of the 30 NATO member countries will be involved in the exercise, which was planned before Russia invaded Ukraine in February," the Associated Press details of next week's exercises. "The main part of the maneuvers would be **held more than 1,000 kilometers (625 miles) from Russia**, a NATO official said."

Three NATO members maintain their own nuclear arsenals – the US, France, and Britain, while others host these nukes as part of an alliance nuclear-sharing program. Poland has this month controversially offered to Washington that it's ready and willing to host US nukes in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The US administration has remained cool toward this possibility in the near-term, seeing in

it a likely unnecessary escalation with Moscow.

Yet for all the NATO talk of keeping things “predictable” – including these forthcoming nuclear exercises, some senior NATO officials are still issuing stark warnings, per [Reuters](#):

*A Russian nuclear strike would change the course of the conflict and almost certainly **provoke a “physical response” from Ukraine’s allies** and potentially from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a senior NATO official said on Wednesday.*

The official stressed “unprecedented consequences” would await Russia if Vladimir Putin used nukes in Ukraine and would “almost certainly be drawing a physical response from many allies, and potentially from NATO itself.” The words were issued on the eve of a closed-door NATO “nuclear planning group” meeting.

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Date Created

10/17/2022