

Russia Holds Drills With Nuclear Submarines Amid Attack on Ukraine

Thursday 3 March 2022, by [CORBETT Jessica](#) (Date first published: 1 March 2022).

The military exercises, which also include land-based missile systems, come just two days after Putin put the nation's nuclear forces on "special alert."

Russia further elevated concerns about global [catastrophe](#) on Tuesday as its "nuclear submarines sailed off for drills in the Barents Sea and mobile missile launchers roamed snow forests" in Siberia just days after Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine and [put](#) his nation's nuclear forces on "special alert."

"Drills with nuclear weapons are never acceptable and are particularly dangerous in tense times."

Anti-nuclear campaigners who have condemned the Russian leader's actions over the past week also blasted the military exercises that Russia's Northern Fleet said were designed to "train maneuvering in stormy conditions," [according to](#) the *Associated Press*.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) tweeted the report and said that "drills with nuclear weapons are never acceptable and are particularly dangerous intense times."

Drills with nuclear weapons are never acceptable and are particularly dangerous in tense times.

Russia should heed 2021 [@NobelPrize](#) Laureate Dmitry Muratov & [@BeaFihn](#)'s joint call in [@novaya_gazeta](#) to join [#nuclearban](#): <https://t.co/btoNjMV5Zj> <https://t.co/mT0hcajiGo>

— ICAN (@nuclearban) [March 1, 2022](#)

The *AP* reported that the Russian military "didn't say whether the drills were linked to Putin's order on Sunday to put the country's nuclear forces on high alert amid Russia's war in Ukraine. It also was unclear whether the exercises represented a change in the country's normal nuclear training activities or posture."

Along with demanding an end to the "illegal" invasion, ICAN [said](#) Sunday that Putin's alert order "is incredibly dangerous and irresponsible, especially during a time of war and high tension."

The group urged all nuclear-armed states to stand down their forces and "refrain from threatening to use weapons of mass destruction," warning that any use of them "would cause catastrophic humanitarian suffering and the fallout—radioactive, economic, political."

ICAN continued:

Right now, the dangerous policy of so-called nuclear deterrence is used to enable the continued invasion of Ukraine by Russia. It does not keep the peace, it allows for war to be carried out against Ukrainian people.

Any theory which is based on the willingness to mass murder civilians and is kept in check by little more than sheer luck will eventually lead to a horrific humanitarian catastrophe. That's what is being risked right now, and it must stop.

Russia and the United States collectively account for about 90% of all nuclear warheads, [according to](#) the Federation of American Scientists. Both countries have subs, land-based systems, and bombers capable of launching the weapons.

During Putin's speech last week announcing the invasion of Ukraine—an air and land assault that has included alleged [war crimes](#)—the Russian leader [made](#) what was widely seen as a thinly veiled threat to retaliate with nuclear weapons if any other nation intervenes.

Anti-war campaigners have also [responded](#) with alarm to a Monday referendum that paves the path for Belarus to host Russian nuclear weapons.

The US and NATO have done well to avoid engaging in nuclear threats and signaling, condemning Putin's reckless nuclear saber-rattling. They should also make clear that a US/NATO nuclear first strike is off the table in Putin's war in Ukraine.
<https://t.co/tT3nzzgeaY>

— Global Zero (@globalzero) [March 1, 2022](#)

Despite the recent developments, the Biden administration so far has not changed U.S. nuclear alert levels.

While denouncing Putin's war in Ukraine and imposing economic sanctions, U.S. President Joe Biden has indicated he does not plan to engage in a military conflict with Russia.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki [made clear](#) Monday that the Biden administration will not impose a no-fly zone, emphasizing that implementation could require the U.S. military to shoot down Russian planes, which could lead to a full-blown war with Russia.

Writing Tuesday for *Responsible Statecraft*, Emma Claire Foley of Global Zero [outlined](#) various scenarios that could result in nuclear action over Ukraine, from Putin making good on his threats to “an accidental first strike in response to misinterpreted or incorrect intelligence or uncontrolled escalation of a relatively small-scale, conventional military incident.”

“Very little seems certain about the tragic situation in Ukraine or the future of U.S.-Russia relations,” she wrote. “But as long as the status quo around nuclear weapons persists, the real risk of escalation from a regional conflict to a global conflagration will be with us. The difficult question that must be answered is how we build a path out of the darkness of the present moment to a world free from their threat.”

ICAN continues to call on all countries, especially the nine nuclear-armed nations, to join the Treaty

on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which [entered](#) into force last year.

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P.S.

Common Dreams

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2022/03/01/russia-holds-drills-nuclear-submarines-amid-attack-ukraine>