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NATO chief details bloc's criteria for shooting down Russian jets

Decisions to engage aircraft violating airspace are based on individual threat assessment, Mark Rutte has said



NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, Brussels, Belgium, September 23, 2025. © Dursun Aydemir / Anadolu via Getty Images

NATO decides on a case-by-case basis whether to shoot down Russian aircraft it suspects of violating the military bloc's airspace, Secretary General Mark Rutte revealed on Tuesday.

His remarks followed a bloc meeting to address claims that three Russian jets entered Estonian airspace last week. Moscow has denied the accusations, citing a lack of

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NATO evidence and confirmed Russian military data.

Rutte cited *“a strong statement of solidarity and resolve”* issued after the meeting and said Supreme Allied Commander in Europe Alexis Grynkewich *“has the tools and authorities he needs to ensure our defense.”*

Asked by a reporter whether NATO would *“shoot [down] any manned or unmanned Russian aircraft which violates the alliance airspace,”* Rutte replied, *“The decisions on whether to engage intruding aircraft, such as firing upon them, are taken in real time and are always based on available intelligence regarding the threat posed by the aircraft.”*

He claimed that during the alleged Estonian incident *“NATO forces promptly intercepted and escorted the aircraft without escalation as no immediate threat was assessed.”*

Earlier this month, Poland accused Russia of deliberately flying multiple unarmed drones into its airspace. Speaking on Monday at a United Nations Security Council gathering on the Estonian allegations, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said Moscow should not *“whine about”* a possible takedown of its aircraft over Polish territory.



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Russia's deputy UN ambassador, Dmitry Polyansky, stated that neither Poland nor Estonia had provided sufficient evidence to support their accusations, noting that the only damage in Poland during NATO's response to the drone incident came from a Polish air-to-air missile that hit a house.

Polyansky accused European NATO members of fabricating the incidents with Russia to pressure the administration of US President Donald Trump into adopting a more confrontational policy toward Moscow.

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M Michael Lawrence 9/23/2025 at 7:05 PM 0

Just imagine the conversation yeh,but no,but ,maybe ?

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Nelson 9/23/2025 at 6:57 PM 0

If these Russian fighter jets were flying at normal speed they would have probably flown through half of Estonia in 12 minutes

[Reply](#)

Akula 9/23/2025 at 6:53 PM 0

This weirdo doesn't understand his job function and he doesn't even understand the words that are coming out from his.mouth

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Seneca Junior 9/23/2025 at 6:45 PM 0




They probably will shoot down a Russian plane or two sooner or later to test the waters.
Russia may allow this red line like all others to be crossed as well but once she eventually loses her patience then all bets will be off

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Peter Frohwein 9/23/2025 at 5:57 PM

9

Rutte is a liar and a War Criminal, and cannot be trusted.
NATO wants a direct war with Russia, and is doing everything possible to get it. NATO and fools like Rutte are 100% insane !
Trump should have pulled out of NATO YEARS AGO !

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Hornet 9/23/2025 at 6:03 PM ↕

0

«NATO wants a direct war with Russia»
Then why haven't they gotten into a direct war with Russia?

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Richard 9/23/2025 at 6:07 PM ↕

6

Because NATO prefers to do it using a proxy.

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Mud 9/23/2025 at 6:30 PM ↕

-1

That directly contradicts what I responded to. I'm not the one you should have replied to.

[Reply](#)



joje ja 9/23/2025 at 6:31 PM ↕

0

Eastern European NATO is a danger for western European peace, big mistake letting Eastern Europe in to NATO. The tree stooges, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are all dangers lunatics hyping for escalating the conflict, Poland isn't much better.

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Brian Pfeiffer 9/23/2025 at 6:43 PM ↕

0

It's because the US and NATO are cowards, they only attack countries who can't fight back. They know if they attack Russia, the citizens of the US, UK, and EU will not