

US to Deploy Nukes in the UK for the First Time in 15 Years

Russia has said it would view the deployment as an escalation

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The US will deploy nuclear weapons to the UK for the first time in 15 years in a move Russia will view as a provocation, [The Telegraph reported](#), citing Pentagon documents.

Pentagon procurement contracts show that the US is planning to station B61-12 nuclear warheads at RAF Lakenheath, a base in Suffolk, England. The US pulled its nuclear weapons out of the UK in 2008, and its decision to redeploy them demonstrates the low state of US-Russia relations.

According to *The Telegraph*, Russia said a US deployment of nukes to the UK would be an "escalation" that would require "compensating counter-measures."

The US already has nukes stationed in Germany, Belgium, Italy, Turkey, and the Netherlands as part of NATO's nuclear sharing program. Last year, Russia announced it was deploying nuclear weapons to Belarus amid tensions over the proxy war in Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin pointed to NATO's nuclear sharing program to justify his decision.

The B61 is the US's primary nuclear gravity bomb, and the B61-12 is its newest iteration. It's considered a tactical nuclear weapon, which have a lower yield than strategic warheads. But the B61-12 has a [maximum yield of 50 kilotons](#), more than three times as powerful as the bomb the US dropped on Hiroshima, Japan.

The UK has a nuclear arsenal of its own and [announced in 2021 that it was expanding](#), raising questions about Britain's commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The UK said it

was raising the ceiling of its nuclear warhead stockpile from 180 to 240 and that it would no longer publish information about the number of warheads it maintains in an operational status.

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