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Trump Orders U.S. Nuclear Submarines Moved in Response to Russian Provocation

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Former U.S. President Donald Trump announced Friday that he had ordered the repositioning of two nuclear submarines in response to recent threats from former

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. The move, shared in a statement on social media, followed escalating rhetoric between the two figures amid ongoing tensions surrounding Russia's war in Ukraine.

Trump's directive came after Medvedev, who currently serves as deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, warned that Moscow retained Soviet-era nuclear strike capabilities. Medvedev's statement was widely seen as a veiled threat following Trump's earlier demand that Russia agree to a ceasefire in Ukraine within 10 days or face new tariffs. Trump responded by stating he had taken "necessary steps" by ordering the submarines to the "appropriate regions."

"Based on the highly provocative statements of the Former President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev... I have ordered two Nuclear Submarines to be positioned in the appropriate regions, just in case these foolish and inflammatory statements are more than just that," Trump posted. He added, "Words are very important, and can often lead to unintended consequences. I hope this will not be one of those instances."

While Trump did not specify the class or capabilities of the submarines involved, the U.S. Navy's nuclear submarine fleet includes 14 Ohio-class vessels, each capable of carrying up to 24 Trident II D5 ballistic missiles. These submarines are a central component of the U.S. nuclear triad, alongside land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles and strategic bombers. Typically, 8 to 10 of these submarines are deployed at sea at any given time, according to the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

National security analysts noted that while the public nature of Trump's comments is unusual, the underlying military posture has not significantly changed. "The subs are always there all the time and don't need to be moved into position," said Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists. "He grants Medvedev a response to these crazy statements."

The U.S. Navy and Department of Defense declined to comment on Trump's remarks or the movement of any military assets, in keeping with longstanding policy to avoid disclosing submarine locations due to their strategic sensitivity.

Criticism followed the announcement from several figures in the arms control community. Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, called the rhetoric “irresponsible and inadvisable,” noting the potential risks involved when global leaders speak loosely about nuclear capabilities on public platforms.

Medvedev has developed a reputation for aggressive, anti-Western commentary since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Though often dismissed by Kremlin critics as unpredictable, some Western officials believe his statements offer insight into broader Russian government thinking.

Despite the heated exchange, analysts do not view the submarine order as a prelude to direct military action. Evelyn Farkas, former deputy assistant secretary of defense and now head of the McCain Institute, described the move as symbolic rather than operational. “It’s really signaling. It’s not the beginning of some nuclear confrontation, and I would imagine the Russians don’t see it that way either,” she said.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin has given no indication it will meet Trump’s August 8 ceasefire deadline. President Vladimir Putin, speaking Friday, expressed continued interest in peace talks but emphasized that the conflict’s momentum currently favors Russia.

Trump, once known for his rapport with Putin, has taken a more confrontational tone in recent months, accusing the Russian leader of prolonging a brutal conflict and dismissing his behavior as “disgusting.” Whether the latest show of force will influence Russian decisions in Ukraine remains to be seen, but it highlights the elevated stakes and strategic tensions now defining U.S.-Russia relations.