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## United States Mission to the OSCE

### Forum for Security Cooperation (19 July 2023)

## **Right of Reply by the Delegation of the United States of America On President Lukashenka's Claim of His Right to Unilaterally Use Russia's Nuclear Weapons**

The Delegation of the United States of America wishes to respond to statements made at the 19 July 2023 Forum for Security Cooperation by the Delegation of Belarus (during its right of reply to the U.S. intervention).

In the U.S. intervention, we quoted President Lukashenka's July 6 statement to the media where he claimed the right and ability to use nuclear weapons placed in Belarus by the Russian Federation. While the Belarus Delegation did not specifically deny that its president had made these statements, it insinuated that the press reports from which the quotes were taken were wholly unreliable.

The United States Delegation stands by the accuracy and relevance of its intervention, and refers all delegations to reporting by the BBC, featuring audio and video of President Lukashenka himself making the statements that we had attributed to him.

[Lukashenko: No one came out of mutiny a hero, Belarus leader tells BBC - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66122337) : <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66122337>

The relevant exchange from the interview (translated from Russian) is as follows:



Source: BBC News

**Reporter:** You recently said you would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons if needed.

**Lukashenka:** Joe Biden could say the same thing, and Prime Minister Sunak, and my friend Xi Jinping and my Big Brother President Putin.

**Reporter:** But these are not your weapons we're talking about, they're Russian ones. It's not your decision to take.

**Lukashenka:** In Ukraine a whole army is fighting with foreign weapons, isn't it? NATO weapons. Because they've run out of their own. So why can't I fight with someone else's weapons?

**Reporter:** But we're talking nuclear weapons, not pistols.

**Lukashenka:** Nuclear, yes. They're weapons too. Tactical nuclear weapons.

As the United States noted in its intervention, such a transfer of control from Russia would violate Article I of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which prohibits each Nuclear Weapon State Party from transferring nuclear weapons or control over such weapons. The public mixed messaging regarding the control of nuclear weapons is both dangerous and unacceptable. The United States would appreciate clarification from the Belarus delegation as to whether or not President Lukashenka has the ability to use these nuclear weapons as he claimed.