

# Russia tensions: US and NATO put ships in Atlantic Ocean as hostility rises



US ships will move into the Atlantic Ocean (Getty)

The US is to re-establish a naval fleet in the Atlantic Ocean amid rising tensions with Russia. The new ships, announced by The Pentagon today, will bolster the NATO presence in the area. The decision reflects escalating worries across Europe and within NATO over Russia's increased military presence and patrols in the Atlantic region. Power competition "The return to great power competition and a resurgent Russia demands that NATO refocus on the Atlantic to ensure dedicated reinforcement of the continent and demonstrate a capable and credible deterrence effect," Johnny Michael, a Pentagon spokesman, said. He added that the new command "will be the linchpin of trans-Atlantic security." The new fleet was approved at the February meeting of NATO leaders.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters following the meeting that "we have seen a much more assertive Russia, we have seen a Russia which has over many years invested heavily in their military capabilities, modernized their military capabilities, which are exercising not only conventional forces but also nuclear forces." The command will begin operations 1 July. It will report to US Fleet Forces, and will initially include 11 officers and four enlisted personnel. Those numbers will eventually increase to more than 250 personnel. Trump on NATO President Trump had been an outspoken critic of NATO before ascending to the presidency. However, just months into his presidency, Trump began to change his mind. Referencing unnamed changes to the group's organisation, the president said that NATO was no longer the pariah he had made it out to be. The next NATO meeting will be in the UK in July and is expected to be Trump's first official visit as president.

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