
'NATO COULD BE AT NUCLEAR WAR WITHIN YEAR IF RUSSIA INVADES BALTICS' SENIOR GENERAL CLAIMS

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A senior general has claimed that Nato could be involved in nuclear war within a year if Russia invades the Baltic states, it's reported.

General Sir Richard Shirreff, who was Nato's deputy supreme allied commander for Europe between 2011 and 2014, warns the West needs to act now to avoid "potential catastrophe".

He predicts that the alliance, of which the UK is a member state, could be at war with Putin by this time next year if he orders an attack on Estonia, Lithuania or Latvia, according to The Times.

General Shirreff claims the region is inadequately protected and believes the Russian president senses weakness.

His concerns are raised in his fictional book "2017 War with Russia", published this week.

ReutersRussian S-400 defense missile systemHe warns the West need to act now to avoid being nuked by Russia

He claims that his writing should be a "wake-up call" and that Nato officers should be sent to the area to deter Mr Putin.

Speaking to the newspaper about the Russian president, he said: "He is an opportunist.

"He has talked about it being the will of the Russian people that Russian speakers are united."

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General Shirreff explained that if Russia did invade the Baltic states Nato would be obliged under article 10 of the treaty to come to its defence.

He said: "It means nuclear war because the Russians hard-wire nuclear thinking into every aspect of their defence planning."

Getty ImagesRussia's president Vladimir PutinHe predicts that the alliance could be at war with Putin by this time next year

The 60-year-old warned the direct danger would be Russia threatening to nuke Nato if it retaliates.

However he added that doing so would be a "huge gamble" for Putin so suggests taking deterrent measures now would prevent him doing so.

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Nato has already stepped up defences in the Baltic states, but General Shirreff told the Independent that it needed to raise the bar sufficiently high for any aggressor to say it is not worth the risk."

The situation in the Baltic states is set to be addressed at the Nato summit in Warsaw in July.

Kaynak/Source: