

# Vladimir Putin boasts of Russia's unstoppable nuclear weapons

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VIDEO: President Vladimir Putin boasts of Russia's unstoppable nuclear weapon (ABC News)

President Vladimir Putin says Russia has tested an array of new strategic nuclear weapons that cannot be intercepted.

Speaking at the annual state of the nation address, and with an eye on re-election on March 18, Mr Putin said the weapons included a nuclear-powered cruise missile, a nuclear-powered underwater drone and new hypersonic missiles.

The message to the West was simple:

**"You have failed to contain Russia," Mr Putin said.**

However, the announcement was greeted with scepticism in Washington, where officials cast doubt on whether Russia had added any new capabilities to its nuclear arsenal beyond those already known to them.

## One of the new missiles was said to have 'practically unlimited' range

The **nuclear-powered cruise missile** tested last autumn was also said to have high speed and manoeuvrability, allowing it to pierce any missile defence.

Mr Putin said the **high-speed underwater drone** also had an "intercontinental" range and was capable of carrying a nuclear warhead that could target both aircraft carriers and coastal facilities.

He said its nuclear reactor was 100 times smaller than those that power modern nuclear submarines; it features a super-quick launch time; and its operational depth and high speed would make it immune to enemy interception.

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### Key points:

- Mr Putin said these new weapons make NATO's US-led missile defence "useless"
- He boasted of a cruise missile with "practically unlimited" range
- He said the new weapons will help ensure global stability

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Mr Putin also talked about the **Kinzhal hypersonic missile** (said to be capable of flying 10 times the speed of sound) and the **Avangard hypersonic vehicle** (said to be capable of flying 20 times the speed of sound).

The names for the nuclear-powered cruise missile and the drone haven't been chosen, with the Russian President suggesting the Defence Ministry run a nationwide contest to determine them.

## Putin says the new weapons have made NATO's US-led missile defence 'useless'

The Russian President said it meant an effective end to what he described as Western efforts to stymie Russia's development:

“No-one has listened to us. You listen to us now.”

Mr Putin said the new weapons would help ensure global stability and draw a line under attempts to weaken Russia, including what he called "unlawful sanctions".

And he said Moscow would be ready to use the new weapons not only in response to an attack on Russia, but also in defence of its allies.

Earlier in the speech, Mr Putin had struck a very different tone, ordering officials to halve the number of Russians living in poverty by sharply boosting social and infrastructure spending in an obvious pre-election pitch to voters.

He's expected to easily win another six-year term.

### Step aside Vladimir Putin



Russia is facing a pressing challenge ahead of its own elections — winning over a new generation that's turning its back on Mr Putin.

## The Pentagon said it was not surprised by Russia's announcement, saying it had been watching Russia for a 'long time'

Pentagon spokeswoman Dana White didn't address any of the specific claims of new weapon capabilities, but said the weapons discussed had been in development for "a very long time".

“The American people should rest assured that we are fully prepared,” she said.

John Rood, US under secretary of defence for policy, similarly played down Mr Putin's presentation:

“I think it's broadly consistent with things that have been stated before [by] Russian officials.”

The Trump administration, meanwhile, again accused Moscow of violating a Cold War-era treaty which banned nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with a range of 500-5,500 kilometres.

“President Putin has confirmed what the United States Government has known all along, which Russia has denied: Russia has been developing destabilising weapons systems for over a decade in direct violations of its treaty obligations,” White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said.

[External Link: Foreign Correspondent episode: Happy Birthday, Mr President](#)

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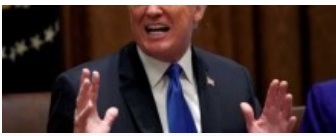
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