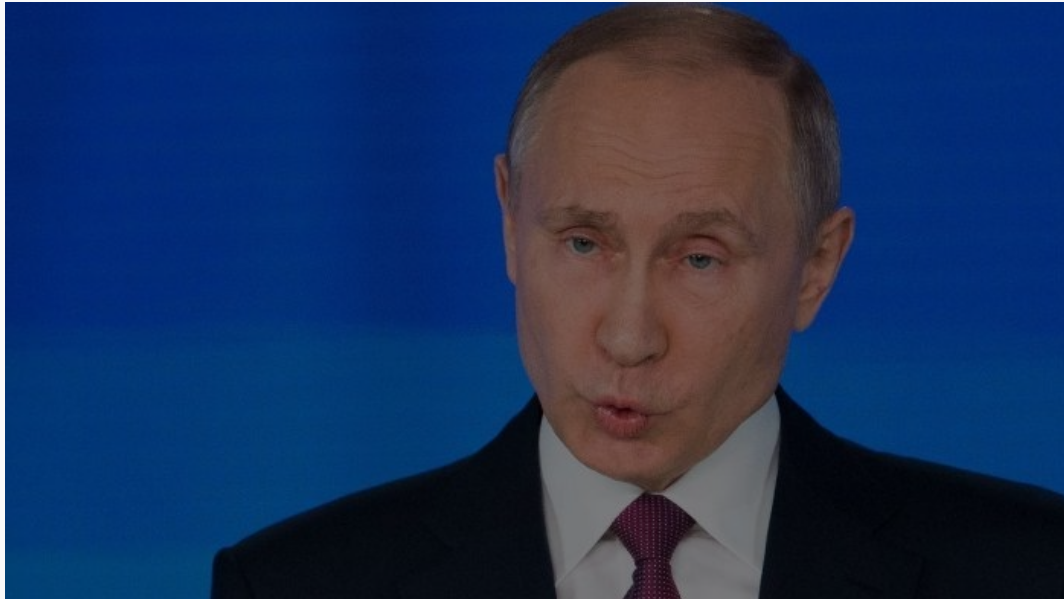


Vladimir Putin's nuclear comments spark fears of Cold War-scale arms race

By defence reporter [Andrew Greene](#)

Updated March 02, 2018 22:55:00



VIDEO: Vladimir Putin says Russia has tested an array of new strategic nuclear weapons. (ABC News)

Vladimir Putin's boast that Russia now possesses unstopable nuclear weapons capable of causing widespread destruction anywhere on Earth has spooked Australia and close allies, while also sparking fears of a fresh global arms race.

Speaking on Thursday 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.

But the Kremlin spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, on Friday denied that Mr Putin's speech would deepen Russia's isolation and said the country did not plan "to get dragged into any arms race".

Senior Australian military figures have told the ABC that Russia's new nuclear capabilities would be a "game changer" if Mr Putin's initial comments were accurate.

"The motivation for Putin announcing it now is unclear, but it could mean a manoeuvrable missile at low altitude and high speed," one high-ranking official said.

Malcolm Davis, a senior defence analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, agreed Mr Putin's threats were disturbing.

"You could be potentially back into a more competitive US-Russian nuclear relationship — reminiscent of the Cold War," Dr Davis warned.

"The hypersonic systems, and the return to Fractional Orbital Bombardment [i.e. via South Pole

RELATED STORY: 'Listen to us now': Putin boasts of Russia's unstopable nuclear weapons

RELATED STORY: US military focus shifts to threat from Russia and China, away from terrorism

MAP: Russian Federation

Key points:

- Kremlin denies Vladimir Putin's speech will deepen Russia's isolation
- But Australian military figures say his comments could be a "game changer"
- US Defence Secretary says Russia, China the main focus of America's national security

Is Putin bluffing or should we be worried?



The Kremlin's enthusiasm for maskirovka — military arts by deception — makes it hard to tell a bluff from a threat, writes Matthew Sussex.

UNSUPPORTED BROWSER

The browser you are using to view this page is no longer supported by ABC News. We recommend you update to a more modern browser.

[Find out more](#)

TOP STORIES

- Family terrorised by footballer speaks out as CCTV footage emerges of assault
- 'Trade wars are good': Trump defends tariffs
- Bank royal commission rejects CBA request to keep evidence secret
- Recycling in Australia is in crisis. Can it be fixed?
- Opinion: Could Titanic still win 11 Oscars in 2018?
- Putin's nuclear comments spark fears of Cold War-scale arms race
- Veggie patches near homes with old paint more likely to have elevated lead levels: study
- Prince Philip 'was not a racist', Indigenous performer says
- Britain must face 'hard facts' about Brexit, May says
- Third death linked to rockmelon listeria outbreak
- French festival refuses to dump musician who killed girlfriend
- The senior citizen clubs running out of seniors
- **SPORT** Starc the destroyer puts Australia in the driving seat, as it happened
- Meet the family defying the odds in its transition to organic farming
- 'Go home and use heat pack', man with broken neck told
- Sixth infant dies from syphilis outbreak in northern Queensland
- Shot fired during armed robbery at shopping centre in Melbourne's south-east
- Did a Chinese businesswoman just tip \$1.2 million into SA Liberal campaign?
- Years of scandal, infighting culminate in Perth City Council suspension
- Analysis: China cites Australian critics to trash Clive Hamilton's controversial new book
- Jacinda Ardern asks Australia not to deport Kiwi citizens who have never visited NZ
- Underwater sound show imitates life in the womb

Get the headlines to your mobile. NEWS on Messenger



CONNECT WITH ABC NEWS

rather than North Pole] will ramp up the tension, as will the Status 6 Canyon unmanned underwater vehicle.

"The latter, with a 100-megaton Cobalt Jacketed warhead, is particularly nasty — it's designed to produce long-lasting intense radioactive fallout over a wide area, primarily to affect large urban areas."

Earlier this year, US Defence Secretary [James Mattis said countering China's rapidly expanding military and an increasingly aggressive Russia](#) were now the main focus of America's national security, outpacing the threat of terrorism.

While Australian military leaders do not typically focus as much on the threat posed by Moscow as their NATO allies, the presence of long-range [Russian strategic bombers flying out of an Indonesian air base](#) in December did cause alarm.

"That was an unusual event but we were postured quite appropriately should those [Russian] aircraft have come south," Defence Chief Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin told a Senate Estimates hearing on Wednesday.

ABC/wires

Topics: [world-politics](#), [government-and-politics](#), [unrest-conflict-and-war](#), [russian-federation](#), [australia](#)

First posted March 02, 2018 22:32:14

Contact Andrew Greene

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.



YouTube



News Podcasts
Catch up with ABC News programs.



GOT A NEWS TIP? >

If you have inside knowledge of a topic in the news, [contact the ABC](#).

NEWS IN YOUR INBOX

Top headlines, analysis, breaking alerts

ABC BACKSTORY >

ABC teams share the story behind the story and insights into the making of digital, TV and radio content.

EDITORIAL POLICIES >

Read about our editorial guiding principles and the enforceable standard our journalists follow.

FEATURES



Success stories of PNG

A journalist in Papua New Guinea has found there's a hunger for stories about locals who have overcome the difficulties of life in their developing country.



Bullying claim behind Cash outburst is clutching at straws

Michaelia Cash's slur on women staffers in Parliament this week further debased our already-degraded political system, forced Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull back into his post-Barnaby Joyce corner and further exposed a Coalition killing itself with its own mistakes.



The best good news of the week

Millions of Aussies were told to have potentially deadly airbags removed from cars, but there was also some good news and we're here to remind you in case you missed it.



How to talk to your partner about money

Your easy guide to talking to your partner about money.

TOP STORIES

- Family terrorised by footballer speaks out as CCTV footage emerges of assault
- 'Trade wars are good': Trump defends tariffs
- Bank royal commission rejects CBA request to keep evidence secret
- Recycling in Australia is in crisis. Can it be fixed?
- Opinion: Could Titanic still win 11 Oscars in 2018?
- Putin's nuclear comments spark fears of Cold War-scale arms race
- Veggie patches near homes with old paint more likely to have elevated lead levels: study
- Prince Philip 'was not a racist', Indigenous performer says
- Britain must face 'hard facts' about Brexit, May says
- Third death linked to rockmelon listeria outbreak

JUST IN

- Tasmanian voters head to the polls on election day
- Could Titanic still win 11 Oscars in 2018?
- Meet the family defying the odds in its transition to organic farming
- Veggie patches near homes with old paint more likely to have elevated lead levels: study
- Recycling in Australia is in crisis. Can it be fixed?
- One man's mission to shine a light on ordinary Papua New Guineans
- We sent Double J's Zan Rowe to get a hearing test. Here's what happened
- Britain must face 'hard facts' about Brexit, May says
- Bank royal commission rejects CBA request to keep evidence secret
- The difficult and dangerous road to Raqqa

MOST POPULAR

- Bullying claim behind Cash outburst is clutching at straws
- Superyacht wanted by FBI seized in Bali amid hunt for missing billions
- 'Listen to us now': Putin boasts of Russia's unstoppable nuclear weapons
- 'Beautiful, darling boy' chokes to death on bouncy ball
- 'Go home and use heat pack', man with broken neck told
- Trump catches White House officials off guard, announcing tariffs on steel, aluminium imports
- Jacinda Ardern asks Australia not to deport Kiwi citizens who have never visited NZ
- Yes, the 'cheerleader effect' is real
- Trump's tariffs not great for Australia, but terrible for the US
- Teenage 'Terminator' blows away opposition at Comm Games swim trials

ANALYSIS & OPINION

- Could Titanic still win 11 Oscars in 2018?
- China cites Australian critics to trash Clive Hamilton's controversial new book
- Trump's tariffs not great for Australia, but terrible for the US
- Is Putin bluffing? It's hard to say how worried the West should be
- When Mardi Gras is over, Indigenous LGBTI people still walk a lonely road
- How celebrity power can affect the stock market — for better or worse
- 【分析】澳大利亚存在冒着经济崩溃风险的“僵尸经济”吗？
- Yes, the 'cheerleader effect' is real
- Bullying claim behind Cash outburst is clutching at straws
- A-League flare-up continues catastrophic season for competition caught in a bind

SITE MAP

Sections

[ABC News](#)
[Just In](#)
[Australia](#)
[World](#)
[Business](#)
[Entertainment](#)
[Sport](#)
[Analysis & Opinion](#)
[Weather](#)
[Topics](#)
[Archive](#)
[Corrections & Clarifications](#)

Local Weather

[Sydney Weather](#)
[Melbourne Weather](#)
[Adelaide Weather](#)
[Brisbane Weather](#)
[Perth Weather](#)
[Hobart Weather](#)
[Darwin Weather](#)
[Canberra Weather](#)

Local News

[Sydney News](#)
[Melbourne News](#)
[Adelaide News](#)
[Brisbane News](#)
[Perth News](#)
[Hobart News](#)
[Darwin News](#)
[Canberra News](#)

Media


[Video](#)
[Audio](#)
[Photos](#)

Subscribe

[Podcasts](#)
[RSS Feeds](#)
[NewsMail](#)

Connect

[Upload](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Suggest a Contributor](#)

 [Change to mobile view](#)

This service may include material from Agence France-Presse (AFP), APTN, Reuters, AAP, CNN and the BBC World Service which is copyright and cannot be reproduced.

AEDT = Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time which is 11 hours ahead of UTC (Greenwich Mean Time)