



Written by [James Murphy](#) on July 20, 2018

Russia Shows off New “Super Weapons” After Helsinki Summit

On Thursday, Russian television aired various clips of a new generation of nuclear and conventional “super weapons.” The videos come just days after the Helsinki Summit, in which Presidents Trump and Putin reportedly discussed how they might avoid a new arms race.

Both Putin and Trump have recently spoken about the need to avoid a new arms race. Putin has even spoken about the urgent need to extend the new START treaty, which looks to reduce the number of strategic arms that the United States and the Russian Federation each have available.

In a post-summit interview, Putin told Fox News, “I reassured President Trump that Russia stands ready to extend this treaty, to prolong it, but we have to agree on the specifics at first, because we have some questions to our American partner.” Putin added, “We think they are not fully compliant with the treaty, but this is for experts to decide.”

But Putin’s rhetoric does not always match his actions. In March — only weeks prior to his reelection — Putin announced several new nuclear delivery systems, claiming that they could hit virtually any place in the world and evade U.S.-built missile defense systems. Putin denies that the new systems are about an “arms race,” but claims that the new systems are simply “a return to balance” back to the days of mutually assured destruction.

Here’s a brief look at some of the new Russian weapons, along with their (alleged) capabilities:

- The *Kinzhal* or “Dagger” is a hypersonic missile which travels at 1.8 miles per second. It can also, theoretically, dodge missile-defense systems by flying at unpredictable trajectories and maneuvering mid-flight. The Kinzhal is reportedly already in service and is carried by MiG-31 fighter jets.
- The *Sarmat* is a new Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) that can reportedly carry more than 20 nuclear warheads. The range of the Sarmat is practically unlimited. It can fly toward one target, then turn and hit another target thousands of miles away.
- The *Avangard* is a missile designed to defeat missile-defense systems with raw speed. It is first lifted into space on a rocket booster, where its engines fire up. From there, it can travel at a reported speed of Mach 20 (that’s 20 times the speed of sound), roughly 4.3 miles per second — theoretically faster than current missile defense systems can react. This weapon also boasts a “glider maneuvering warhead.”
- The *Poseidon* is a nuclear-powered torpedo that reportedly travels so fast and so deep that it is nearly invulnerable.





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- *Burevestnik* is a nuclear-powered and nuclear-capable cruise missile. A nuclear reactor on board powers the missile so, theoretically, it can stay airborne waiting for targeting instructions so long as the reactor has fuel.

- *Peresvet* is a laser weapon system, which supposedly can focus huge amounts of energy in a very small area. This is a defensive system that could possibly disable incoming missiles, drones, or jets.

The announcement and videos of the new weapon systems, particularly the claims regarding their capabilities, have been received with skepticism by Washington, with insiders not believing that Russia has developed any new systems that the United States isn't already aware of. Back in March, after Putin's initial announcement of the new weapons, White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders hinted that the White House was acutely aware that Russia was developing new weapons systems. "Russia has been developing destabilizing weapons systems for over a decade, in direct violation of its treaty obligations," she said.

The Defense Department also treated Putin's announcement of the new weaponry with a shrug. "We're not surprised by [Putin's] statements," Pentagon spokeswoman Dana White said, "and the American people should rest assured that we are fully prepared."

At any rate, the timing of the release of these videos is interesting. After the Helsinki summit, after which President Trump has been widely condemned for not confronting Putin regarding Russian interference in the 2016 election, why would Russia gloat to the West about all of their fancy new weapons? Was Putin simply spiking the football in the wake of his summit "victory" over Trump? Not likely.

The one-on-one session between Putin and Trump — with only interpreters present — remains shrouded in mystery. No one knows what was discussed. Putin is a former KGB operative, who knows the value of secrecy. And now, Trump has invited Putin to come to Washington for more talks sometime in autumn of this year. Could it be that, just possibly, the leaders of the two most powerful militaries on Earth have more to discuss than a ginned-up media outrage over collusion?

Image: screenshot from [YouTube video](#) about new Russian weapons



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