



Putin Says Russia's New Weapons Are Unmatched; Do Not Violate INF Treaty

Speaking during a December 18 meeting with top military staff in the Russian Defense Ministry's headquarters in Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia's new weapons have no foreign equivalents and will help ensure the country's security for decades to come.

During his talk, Putin specifically mentioned two new weapons — the Kinzhal hypersonic missile and the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle. He said they have significantly strengthened Russia's military capability.



Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, who also addressed the meeting, told the attendees that the Kinzhal missiles, which can be launched from Tu-22M3 bombers or MiG-31K interceptors, have flown 89 patrol missions this year.

The Kinzhal is designed to target U.S. and NATO warships posing a threat to strategic missile systems in Russia's European sector and to destroy NATO missile-defense systems, including the MIM-104 Patriot, the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, and the Aegis Combat System.

Shoigu said the Avangard will enter service with the military next year. Also known as Objekt 4202, Yu-71, and Yu-74, Avangard is a "scramjet" hypersonic glide vehicle that can be carried as a MIRV payload by several heavy ICBMs. It can deliver both nuclear and conventional payloads. The Avangard is capable of accelerating to up to Mach 20 when approaching a target, and is capable of sharp high-speed evasive maneuvers to evade missile-defense systems.

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During the meeting, Putin also rejected the U.S. claim that Russia has developed a new land-based cruise missile in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). Putin asserted that Russia has no need for such a land-based weapon because it already has similar missiles on its ships and aircraft.

An AP report noted that the United States warned this month that it would suspend its obligations under the INF in 60 days if Russia did not return to full compliance. The United States claims that Russia's 9M729 cruise missile violates the INF, which bans all land-based cruise and ballistic missiles with a range of 300 to 3,400 miles.

Putin said the Russian military has successfully tested air-launched Kh-101 and sea-launched Kalibr cruise missiles with a range of 4,500 kilometers (2,790 miles) in combat in Syria.

"It has probably made our partners worry, but it doesn't violate the INF treaty," Putin maintained.

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