



Russia Hints at Taking Kiev, Odessa; U.S. Warns of Russian Space Nukes

The United States has reportedly cautioned its allies that Russia is planning to deploy a nuclear weapon or a mock warhead into space sometime this year, Bloomberg claimed on February 20, citing anonymous sources.

Last week, U.S. media reported that American intelligence had obtained information that Russia may already have deployed undisclosed anti-satellite weapons, possibly including nuclear weapons, to Earth's orbit, or that it is planning to do so.

Moscow has firmly rebuffed these claims, while Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated these claims are simply a ploy to persuade U.S. lawmakers to authorize more military aid to Ukraine.



AP Images
Dmitry Medvedev

In Bloomberg's article on February 20, sources allege that Russia is indeed developing space-based weapons meant to knock out satellites. They alleged that Moscow does not presently appear to have plans to actually detonate orbital weapons, but argued there is the risk of a nuclear accident that could disrupt a third of all satellites in orbit and undermine global communications systems.

Speaking on February 20, Russian President Vladimir Putin maintained that Moscow's position "is clear and transparent: We have always been categorically against the deployment of nuclear weapons in space." Russia has not only called on the likes of the United States to uphold treaties against weaponizing of space, but has also repeatedly recommended strengthening them, he added.

Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu also underscored that Moscow "has not deployed and does not intend to deploy nuclear weapons in space."

In turn, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby has dismissed claims that the United States warning is a "ploy" to raise funds for Ukraine, describing them as "bollocks" and proclaiming that Washington's worries are genuine.

Per the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, originally signed by the United States, the Soviet Union, and the U.K., deploying any type of nuclear weapon in orbit would be illegal. The accord has also been signed by more than 100 other countries.

On February 22, former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev warned against supplying Ukraine with F-16 fighter jets, claiming such a move would risk triggering a nuclear conflict.

"An accidental, unintentional outbreak of a nuclear conflict is not something to be discarded, which is why all those machinations around Ukraine are dangerous," Medvedev admitted in an extensive interview with Russian journalists, as quoted by TASS.



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Medvedev cited the U.S.-designed aircraft as a possible trigger, stating that Kyiv wants them despite lacking the ground infrastructure to run them.

“So if one of those planes takes off from a NATO nation [on a Ukrainian mission] — what would that be? An attack on Russia. I shall not describe what could happen next,” he said. “Such a development may not be even sanctioned by the NATO leadership and the US.”

Russian officials previously warned that delivering F-16s to Ukraine would be provocative, considering that the jets can deploy nuclear gravity bombs.

Medvedev said Russia’s standoff with the United States and its allies was not at a stage that would compel people to hide in a nuclear shelter, but described it as worse than the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. The doomsday clock “is ticking” and has “sped up considerably,” he added.

The doomsday clock — a representation of the likelihood of a global catastrophe maintained by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists — is presently 90 seconds to midnight, having increased by 10 seconds last year.

Also, Medvedev hinted that Russia might have to continue fighting Ukraine until it takes Kyiv and the coastal city of Odessa.

Both cities have “Russian roots” but are being run by U.S.-led enemies of Moscow, meaning they present an existential threat, according to Medvedev, who currently serves as deputy head of Russia’s National Security Council.

The remarks were extracts from an interview that Medvedev gave to Russian media, which he shared on social media on Thursday.

“Where should we stop? I don’t know,” he said, adding that a lot of “serious work” lies ahead.

“Will that be Kyiv? Probably. This should be Kyiv too. If not now, then sometime later. There are two reasons. Kyiv is a Russian city, and a threat to the existence of the Russian Federation emanates from it,” he said.

In a separate video, Medvedev addressed the southern Ukrainian port of Odessa, urging it to “return home.”

“We in the Russian Federation have long been waiting for Odessa, if only because of its history and what kind of people live there and what language they speak. It is our Russian city,” he claimed.

In May 2014, 42 pro-Russia Ukrainians were burned to death in Odessa, a predominantly Russian-speaking city, having been trapped by a mob that championed the Western-backed protests in Kyiv that would later overthrow the democratically elected government of Ukraine.

Medvedev identified the source of the threat to the existence of Russia as an “international brigade of the opponents of Russia, led by the US,” whom he claimed are in control of Kyiv.

Meanwhile, talking to reporters on Wednesday, February 21 regarding Ukraine’s accession to the European Union, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said she did not expect the Commission to finalize the negotiation framework before the European elections in early June.

Until now, an upcoming publication of the document — detailing a set of specific guidelines, milestones, and basic principles — had been expected, so that after the 27 member states approved the paper, Kyiv and Brussels could begin accession talks in earnest.



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The claim that delaying Ukrainian EU membership would intentionally boost Putin’s Russia appears to have been quietly forgotten.

After all, the main conflict during December’s European Council summit was about whether the EU could get all its member states to agree to start membership negotiations with Ukraine. Any delay caused by Hungary was portrayed as a direct attack on Ukraine and the EU as a whole.

Having said that, it seems the same sense of urgency does not apply to von der Leyen. “We are still working on the negotiation framework,” von der Leyen announced, explaining, “My best guess is that it will not be ready before the European election but afterwards because I see the development of the different negotiation positions [and] this will take its time — but I guess around summer, the beginning of summer we’re going to be ready.

As per Politico, the remarks rippled through diplomatic circles in Brussels. Ukraine’s staunchest backers wanted to begin talks as soon as possible and particularly wished to avert having to deal with the issue during Hungary’s term at the helm of the EU, when Budapest assumes the Council’s rotating presidency in July, right after the elections.

Kyiv was also quick to voice its anger, urging the Commission to reconsider and abide by the promised schedule instead. “I do not see the reasons why it would be difficult,” Ukraine’s EU ambassador Vsevolod Chentsov said, adding that if the Commission is facing any problems, Kyiv was “ready to discuss and see how to overcome those.”



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