

Nuclear Weapons and Economic Woes: The Highlights of Putin's Federal Assembly Address

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Kremlin Press Service

With presidential elections just weeks away, Vladimir Putin's annual address to the Federal Assembly on Thursday was [widely expected](#) to be a campaign speech, rather than the traditional roadmap for the year ahead.

Speaking from Moscow's Manege exhibition hall, Putin set out Russia's goals for the next six years and beyond with the help of infographics and animated videos. He focused on developing Russia's economy, infrastructure, health care and education.

But in an unexpected move, the president devoted nearly thirty minutes of his two-hour long speech to discussing — and showing off in a series of videos — Russia's newly improved nuclear missile capabilities.

Here is a selection of the highlights from the address:

On Russia's missile capabilities

"We are not threatening anyone and we are not going to attack."

"We would consider any use of nuclear weapons against Russia or its allies to be an attack on our country. The response would be immediate."

"I hope what was said today will sober any potential aggressor or unfriendly gestures towards Russia, like the deployment of an ABM system and the development of NATO infrastructure close to our borders. That should be seen from the military point of view as inefficient, financially costly and simply useless. Nobody listened to us before. Listen to us now."

On Western sanctions

"Trying to hold Russia back did not work."

On technology

"Falling behind in technology is the main threat and enemy to our country. If we do not change the situation, it will inevitably intensify."

On poverty

"We must address one of the key goals for the coming decade — ensuring long-term growth in the real incomes of citizens and halving the level of poverty in six years."

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On the economy

"Russia must not only gain a firm foothold as one of the world's five largest economies by the middle of the next decade, but increase our GDP per capita by one and a half times."

On demographics

"This trend will continue in the coming years and will become a serious obstacle to economic growth."

"Over the next six years, we will allocate at least 59.9 million dollars for demographic development."

"Life expectancy needs to exceed 80 years by the end of the next decade."

On attracting foreign talent

"It is important to make it easier to get Russian citizenship. The focus should be on people that the country needs — young, healthy, well-educated people."

On democracy

“Russia has established itself as a democratic society on an independent path. To go forward, to develop dynamically, we must increase freedoms by strengthening the institutions of democracy, local government, the structure of civil society, the courts. We must be a country open to the world.”

On Russia's role in the Arctic

"Our Arctic fleet has been and will continue to be the strongest in the world."

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