

Trump Tells Putin: 'I'll Win Arms Race,' U.S. Media Report

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Donald Trump [Nikko / Flickr \(CC BY 2.0\)](#)

U.S. President Donald Trump has reportedly warned Russian President Vladimir Putin by phone that he would win a possible nuclear arms race, amid deteriorating diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Putin, who was re-elected to a fourth term two weeks ago, showed off a new generation of nuclear-powered missiles in a warning to Russia's adversaries earlier this month. After drawing fire for congratulating Putin on his re-election victory, Trump said he wanted the Russian leader's help in solving North Korean, Syrian and other crises.

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In a report citing senior White House officials on Thursday, NBC News [said](#) Putin's March 1 address with animated simulations of a nuclear attack "really got under the president's

skin."

"If you want to have an arms race we can do that, but I'll win," Trump reportedly told Putin during a March 21 call to congratulate the Russian president on his election victory, according to two White House officials cited by NBC.

Trump reportedly went on to say that he hoped Putin's presentation on Russia's new nuclear weapons, allegedly capable of evading a U.S.-built missile shield, was election rhetoric, while touting his recently-secured record \$700 billion defense budget.

The U.S. president ordered his aides to avoid agitating Putin by publicly acknowledging his recent policy shift on Russia, including plans to arm Ukraine with armor-piercing missiles, according to NBC News.

Meanwhile, Russian Ambassador in Washington Anatoly Antonov characterized the phone call between the two presidents as "warm."

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov denied on Friday that Trump had said the arms race quote reported by NBC.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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