

Putin Oversees Nuclear Submarine Drills Across Russia

October 18, 2019



Defense Ministry

President Vladimir Putin supervised major test launches of ballistic and cruise missiles on land, air and sea Thursday.

The three-day Grom (Thunder)-2019 exercises involved five submarines, more than 100 aircraft, 200 missile launchers and 12,000 Russian troops.

They aimed to test the readiness of Russia's command structure and how efficiently its orders are carried out in an armed conflict or nuclear war, the Defense Ministry said.

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A Defense Ministry video [showed](#) the launch of a Sineva intercontinental ballistic missile from a Delta-IV class nuclear-powered submarine in the European Arctic. Another video [showed](#) the Kalibr cruise missile launch from a Yasen-class nuclear-powered submarine.

The RS-24 Yars intercontinental ballistic missile was also [launched](#) from Plesetsk Cosmodrome as part of the exercises.

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The drills come at a time when Putin has warned of a burgeoning arms race spurred by the unraveling of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, something he blames on the United States. Washington rejects that and says Russia is the one who has flouted its arms control commitments.

The drill also comes as the U.S.-Russian New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which limits both countries' launcher and warhead numbers, is due to [expire](#) in February 2021.

Moscow has [stressed](#) the importance of extending the New START, while Washington said it will not decide until next year.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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