

Russia Developing 'Troubling' Anti-Satellite Weapon – White House

By [AFP](#)

February 16, 2024



defense.gov

Russia is developing a space-based anti-satellite weapon that is "troubling" for the United States but poses no immediate threat to people on Earth, the White House said Thursday.

The announcement came a day after some U.S. lawmakers made cryptic warnings of an unspecified but serious national security threat to the country.

Moscow denied the "malicious" and "unfounded" claims, describing them as a White House ploy to try to pass a multi-billion-dollar Ukrainian war aid package stalled in the U.S. Congress.

"I can confirm that it is related to an anti-satellite capability that Russia is developing," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters in a briefing at the White House.

Related article: [U.S. Carelessness Over Aid Bill Costs Ukrainian Lives – And Sends a Dangerous Signal to the World](https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/02/16/russia-developing-troubling-anti-satellite-weapon-white-house-a84098)

"This is not an active capability that's been deployed. And though Russia's pursuit of this particular capability is troubling, there is no immediate threat to anyone's safety," he said.

Kirby confirmed that the Russian weapon was "space-based" but would not comment on reports in U.S. media that it was either nuclear-capable or nuclear-powered.

But he said it would breach the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which both Russia and the United States are parties to — and which bans the deployment of nuclear weapons in space.

The weapon could pose a lethal risk to astronauts in low orbit, along with potentially disrupting vital military and civilian satellites, he added.

"We are not talking about a weapon that can be used to attack human beings or cause physical destruction here on Earth," said Kirby.

U.S. President Joe Biden had been kept informed and had ordered officials to reach out to Moscow over the weapon, although it had not responded yet.

Concern had gripped Washington since Republican House Intelligence Committee chairman Mike Turner issued a public statement on Wednesday referring to a "serious national security threat" and calling on Biden to "declassify all information relating to this threat."

White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan held a closed-door meeting with congressional leaders on Thursday to brief them about the developments.

The early disclosure by lawmakers irked the White House, with Kirby saying they were working out whether U.S. intelligence sources and methods had been compromised.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/02/16/russia-developing-troubling-anti-satellite-weapon-white-house-a84098>