

Putin Flies Supersonic Bomber During Tatarstan Visit

February 22, 2024



Putin boards a Tu-160M strategic bomber. **Dmitry Azarov, Kommersant / kremlin.ru**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday [flew](#) a Tupolev Tu-160M strategic bomber, state-run news agencies reported, in what is likely a campaign stunt ahead of the March 15-17 presidential election.

The Tu-160M, a modernized version of a Cold War-era bomber, has two internal bomb bays, each of which can hold up to six cruise missiles or 12 short-range nuclear missiles.

“Together we are observing this unique moment,” Kremlin journalist Pavel Zarubin [said](#) in a video of the takeoff published on his Telegram channel, adding that the flight route was a “military secret.”

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State media [reported](#) that Putin’s flight time totaled 30 minutes, while the Interfax news

agency [quoted](#) the Russian leader as saying after landing that the aircraft had “excellent equipment.”

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporter Zarubin that Putin decided to fly the strategic bomber during a [visit](#) on Wednesday to the Kazan Aviation Plant in the republic of Tatarstan.

Putin previously [flew](#) a Tu-160 during a training exercise outside Moscow in 2005.

The modernized Tu-160M made its first test flight in January 2022, one month before Russian forces invaded Ukraine.

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