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Researchers Locate Possible Launch Site for Russia's New Nuclear-Powered Missile – Reuters

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Maxim Shipenkov / EPA / TASS

Two U.S. researchers claim to have identified a new potential deployment site of Russia's nuclear-armed cruise missile Burevestnik, Reuters reported Monday.

Decker Eveleth, an analyst with the CNA research and analysis organization, and Jeffery Lewis of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey said they identified a construction project near a nuclear warhead storage facility 475 kilometers north of Moscow as Burevestnik's possible new deployment site, Reuters reported.

The satellite imagery of the site, which is known by two names, Vologda-20 and Chebsara, "suggests something very unique, very different. And obviously, we know that Russia is developing this nuclear-powered missile," Lewis said.

Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists said that the Vologda imagery seems

to show launch pads and other features "possibly" related to Burevestnik, but that he could not make a definitive assessment.

President Vladimir Putin boasted that the "invincible" Burevestnik has an almost unlimited range and can evade American missile defenses when he unveiled it in 2018.

But the missile, which NATO dubs the Skyfall, has had a poor test record and Western experts question its strategic value.

The Burevestnik is believed to have exploded during efforts to recover it from the sea in northern Russia in August 2019 after it crashed in secret rocket engine tests, killing five scientists.

Russia's Defense Ministry and its Embassy in Washington did not respond to Reuters regarding the researchers' assessments and the strategic value of the Burevestnik.

A Kremlin spokesman told Reuters that these were questions for the Defense Ministry and did not comment further.

The U.S. State Department, the CIA, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the U.S. Air Force National Air and Space Intelligence Center declined to comment.

NATO also did not respond to questions about how the alliance would respond to the weapon's deployment.

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