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Kremlin Dismisses Reports About Alleged Nuclear-Armed Satellite Launch

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A Russian rocket launch. **Roscosmos**

The Kremlin on Monday dismissed German media reports claiming that Russia is preparing to launch a nuclear-armed satellite into space before the end of the year.

A joint investigation by German public broadcasters WDR and NDR with the newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung reported that Western intelligence agencies believe Russia plans to launch a nuclear-armed satellite called Sputnik-S as early as December 2026.

Intelligence allegedly shared among NATO members indicated that the satellite was assembled several years ago and has been stored somewhere in the Moscow region. Warnings issued earlier this month suggested "Sputnik-S" could be placed into orbit within 60 days, where it would be ready for use "within a short time," the media investigation said.

"We haven't seen the report. But there are so many 'alleged' and 'possible' claims in it, attributed to who knows whom, that it's certainly hardly worth taking them seriously," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters during a daily briefing.

Russia's Embassy in Berlin rejected the report as "unfounded insinuations" and part of a "propaganda campaign." The embassy insisted that Russia's activities in space are strictly peaceful and in compliance with international law.

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In October, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency said Russia was developing a satellite designed to carry a nuclear weapon in violation of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which bans nuclear weapons in Earth's orbit.

"A space-based capability such as this could cause rapid and sudden loss or degradation of thousands of satellites operated by countries and companies around the world," the DIA said at the time.

The agency highlighted the impact on communications, navigation, scientific, meteorological, commercial and national security services.

U.S. officials have alleged that Russia has for years been developing a nuclear weapon capable of destroying entire satellite networks, such as SpaceX's vast Starlink internet system that Ukrainian troops have been using.

The White House first publicly confirmed in February 2024 that Russia was pursuing a "troubling" space-based anti-satellite capability. Russia has denied the claims, calling them "malicious" and "unfounded."

Reuters contributed reporting.

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