

Russia carries out test for ‘massive’ nuclear strike on West

By James Kilner

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- **Russia test-fired nuclear missiles from land, sea and air, simulating a “massive” [response to Western attacks](#).**
- **[Vladimir Putin](#) warned of “overwhelming” nuclear firepower in response to any attack, citing modern strategic forces.**
- **The exercises included the Yars missile and ballistic missiles from submarines, with practice attacks by **Tu-95 bombers**.**

Russia has test-fired nuclear missiles from land, sea and air as it simulated a “massive” [response to an attack from the West](#).

Vladimir Putin also warned that Russia would respond to any attack with “overwhelming” nuclear firepower as this was its “ultimate” security.

“Taking into account growing geopolitical tensions and emerging new threats and risks, it’s important for us to have modern strategic forces that are always ready for combat,” the president said.

News agencies linked to the Kremlin said the Russian military test-fired a Yars nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile from the Plesetsk launchpad at the Kura testing range on the Kamchatka peninsula.

The Yars missile was developed in secret in 2007. It is a thermonuclear missile that can be armed with four warheads that are individually programmed to strike different targets.

Russia’s Ministry of Defence also said two nuclear-powered submarines in the Barents Sea in the Arctic, and the Sea of Okhotsk in the Pacific Ocean, had fired ballistic missiles that can be armed with nuclear warheads.

Tu-95 strategic bombers also launched practice long-range cruise missile attacks.

On a live video feed, Andrey Belousov, Russia's Minister of Defence, told Putin the exercise simulated Russia's "strategic offensive forces launching a massive nuclear strike in response to a nuclear strike by the enemy".



Tu-95 strategic bombers, like these pictured, have been launched to practise long-range cruise missile attacks. Photo / Getty Images

In September, Putin lowered the threshold to launch a nuclear strike in Russia's military doctrine. Analysts said that Russia's nationwide nuclear test on Tuesday had been expected and planned for several months although, with more nuclear test-firing, there was a sense of increasing nuclear danger.

"Ten days after the US commenced Global Thunder nuclear exercise, Russia said it 'practised launching a massive nuclear strike'," said Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists. "Important to add that these exercises are planned long in advance and not a direct reaction to the other."

[Ukraine](#) is still trying to persuade its Western partners to allow it to fire Western-made long-range missiles at Russia, a move that the Kremlin has warned would trigger a major response.