

# Putin Signs New Doctrine Lowering Threshold for Russia Using Nuclear Weapons

President Vladimir Putin has said the revised doctrine might allow Russia to use nuclear weapons in the case of an attack using NATO missiles.

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Russian President Vladimir Putin points during a meeting with foreign policy experts at a forum in Sochi, Russia, on Nov. 7, 2024. Maxim Shipenkov/Pool Photo via AP



By Chris Summers

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Russia's President Vladimir Putin has signed a new doctrine lowering the threshold for using nuclear weapons, his spokesperson said on Monday.

The doctrine now states that an attack on Russia by any nation using conventional missiles supplied by a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack.

The announcement, made via the Tass news agency, follows the Kremlin's angry reaction to reports President Joe Biden had given

permission for Ukraine to fire U.S.- and NATO-supplied missiles deep into Russian territory.

According to anonymous U.S. officials who spoke to media outlets, Biden has [authorized](#) Ukraine to use long-range missiles provided by the Pentagon to strike targets in the Russian region of Kursk.

Former Russian president and prime minister, Dmitry Medvedev, a close ally of Putin, [wrote on X](#): "Russia's new nuclear doctrine means NATO missiles fired against our country could be deemed an attack by the bloc on Russia. Russia could retaliate with WMD against Kiev and key NATO facilities, wherever they're located. That means World War III."

On Monday, Kremlin spokesman [Dmitry Peskov](#) said the Biden administration was "adding fuel to the fire."

Peskov told the Tass news agency, "If such a decision has indeed been formulated and communicated to the Kyiv regime, then, of course, this is a qualitatively new round of escalation of tensions, and a qualitatively new situation in terms of the involvement of the United States in this conflict."

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Asked on Tuesday if the timing of the signing of the updated doctrine was significant, Peskov said it was published, “in a timely manner” and is, “in line with the current situation.”

## 1,000 Days Of War

Putin’s decision to sign the new doctrine comes exactly 1,000 days after he sent troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

U.S. President-Elect Donald Trump has promised to end the war in Ukraine but his inauguration is not until Jan. 20, leaving the danger of a nuclear disaster in the next two months.

On Sept. 25, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned of the consequences of the United States and its NATO allies allowing Ukraine to use longer-range weapons for strikes deep inside Russia.

He said it would put Russia at war with NATO.

The deliberate ambiguity of the nuclear doctrine is designed to deter NATO from permitting Ukraine to use such weapons, something Zelenskyy has been pressing for.

Russia’s previous nuclear doctrine, confirmed by Putin in 2020, states Moscow may use nuclear weapons in the event of a nuclear attack by an enemy or in response to a conventional attack that poses an existential threat to the Russian state.

As researcher Nikita Degtyarev outlined in an [article](#) for the Open Nuclear Network on Oct. 29, the doctrine has changed several times since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Earlier this month [Pavel Podvig](#), a senior researcher at the U.N. Institute for Disarmament Research in Geneva, said the doctrine originally stated nuclear weapons could be used in the event of “large-scale aggression with conventional weapons in situations critical to Russia’s national security.”

This was changed to “in the event of aggression with conventional weapons when the state’s very existence is in jeopardy.”

Podvig told The Epoch Times he did not believe Moscow would change the disclaimer about “the state’s very existence” being in jeopardy.

## Doctrine Designed To Be ‘Vague’

But he said the doctrine itself was designed to be “vague” and ambiguous so the other side could not second-guess Russia’s moves.

Sam Faddis, a former CIA officer and senior fellow at the Center for Security Policy, wrote on his [Substack](#) on Oct. 31 that “we are dancing along the edge of the abyss.”

“Putin is practicing for the end of the world. Don’t assume he’s just bluffing,” he added.

Tim Ripley, a military analyst and editor of the Defence Eye website, previously told the Epoch Times that Russia’s leadership would use nuclear weapons only if they were desperate.

*Associated Press contributed to this report.*

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