

Separating Fact and Fiction Amidst Fearmongering Reports About Russian Space Nukes

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The most rational option would be to pressure Ukraine into recommencing peace talks with a view towards ending the conflict and resuming arms control talks afterwards. The problem is that rationality hasn't prevailed thus far, however, since risky zero-sum and ideologically driven policies take precedence among US policymakers nowadays.

Americans were terrified for a brief moment after a Republican congressman cryptically tweeted about the existence of a pressing national security threat, but it later turned out that they were exaggerating the impact of new intelligence on Russia's alleged space weapons program. [Most reports](#) about lawmakers' classified briefing on this conclude that the anti-satellite weapon at the center of this scandal, which [might either be nuclear-armed or -powered](#), hasn't yet been deployed and might not be for some time.

The emerging consensus is that this congressman sought to hype up the so-called "Russian threat" in order to pressure the House to pass the Senate-approved bill designating \$60 billion more to [Ukraine](#). Nevertheless, their stunt served to prompt a discussion about the militarization of space, and this has in turn predictably led to more anti-Russian fearmongering. In reality, it was the US that formally initiated this long-running and hitherto unofficial process through Trump's creation of the so-called "Space Force".

The pretext upon which this decision was made was that Russia and China were already secretly militarizing space, so it made sense from the US' perspective to formalize the latest round of this "race" in order to secure as much public funding for America's related programs as possible. About the aforementioned trend, while it's difficult to discern fact from fiction, there's a logic to those two exploring creative means for neutralizing the US' space-based communications and targeting systems.

After all, a significant share of its global military force is dependent on some sort of space-based support, with GPS being the most well-known but by no means the only such form of this. In the worst-case scenario of a hot war between them, the failure to at least interfere with these systems' operation would enable America to retain its strategic advantage, thus raising the chances that those countries would lose. That said, their programs remain secret, and no major details have been confirmed.

Even so, Russia might be experimenting with nuclear-powered anti-satellite weapons or even nuclear-armed ones, not to deploy right away but to keep up their sleeve for negotiation purposes aimed at encouraging the resumption of arms control talks upon the end of the Ukrainian Conflict. Its officials [already said](#) that they're not interested in this until after that proxy war is over because the US betrayed their trust by having Kiev attack some of the same strategic sites that it earlier inspected.

According to the latest reports, the US doesn't yet have the means to counteract this theoretical threat, hence why it's such a cause for concern among some. The most rational option would therefore be to pressure Ukraine into recommencing peace talks with a view towards ending the conflict and resuming arms control talks afterwards. The problem is that rationality hasn't prevailed thus far, however, since risky zero-sum and ideologically driven policies take precedence among US policymakers nowadays.

Circling back to the previously mentioned Republican congressman who spilled the beans about the US' latest intelligence for the presumable purpose of pressuring the House to vote for more Ukrainian aid, they might have actually inadvertently sabotaged this cause. Comparatively "reasonable" foreign policy hawks might question why the US wants to give so many billions of dollars to Ukraine that could otherwise be much better invested in researching solutions to this theoretical threat instead.

It's too early to confidently predict the future of the Senate's bill since the House will [return from recess](#) on 28 February and a lot can happen before then to move the needle either way, but the point is that there's no real connection between Ukraine aid and alleged Russian space nukes. Even that threat itself isn't yet deployed and might not be for some time, if ever, since it could always be kept out of service upon agreement on a new strategic arms pact before the current one expires in 2026.

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