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Russia

Russian officials tout Iskander, MIRV as "21st century weapons"

13:17 | 30/05/2007



KOSTROMA/KAPUSTIN YAR (Astrakhan Region), May 30 (RIA Novosti) - The commander of the Russian Ground Forces, Alexei Maslov, said Wednesday Russia has "a 21st century weapon," following two successful missile tests Tuesday.

Earlier commenting on the tests - of a strategic RS-24 MIRV intercontinental missile launched from the north and a new version of the Iskander (SS-26), an advanced theater-level surface-to-surface missile in the south - Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov said, "Russians need not worry about defense: they can look confidently to the future."

"We now have new [missile] systems at the strategic as well as theater level," Ivanov had said, adding that "these systems can beat any operational and future missile defenses," in a veiled reference to U.S. plans to place part of its missile shield in Central Europe, notably Poland and Czech Republic.

Russian President Vladimir Putin denounced the U.S. plans at a Tuesday meeting with Jose Socrates, the premier of Portugal poised to take over as EU presidency on July 1.

"We believe that attempts to turn Europe into a powder keg and to deploy new kinds of weapons are harmful and dangerous," Putin said.

The RS-24 is a MIRVed version of the operational Topol-M (SS-25), carrying up to 10 independently targetable warheads.

The R-500 is a new cruise missile adapted for the Iskander launcher previously used only with tactical ballistic missiles. With a range of up to 280 km (170 miles), a radar-evading trajectory and a hit error of no more than three meters, it can be effectively used against small targets, including separate missile launchers.

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President Putin inspects Topol-M mobile ICBMs

President Vladimir Putin said Thursday the deployment of mobile Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missile systems contributes a great deal to Russia's national security.

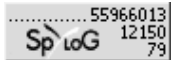


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