

A Russian Space Nuke? House Intel Chair Sounds Alarm, Urges Biden to Do Something

The White House publicly confirmed on Thursday that Russia has obtained a “troubling” emerging anti-satellite weapon, but says it cannot directly cause “physical destruction” on Earth.

White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said U.S. intelligence officials have information that Russia has obtained the capability but that such a weapon is not currently operational. U.S. officials are analyzing the information they have on the emerging technology and have consulted with allies and partners on the matter.

The confirmation came after Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, urged the Biden administration to declassify information about what he called a “serious national security threat.”

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U.S. intelligence had gathered highly sensitive information about Russian anti-satellite weapons that was shared with government officials over the last several weeks.

Turner gave no details about the nature of the threat, and at the time, the Biden administration also declined to address it. But several leading lawmakers, including House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA), cautioned against being overly alarmed.

Johnson said he was not at liberty to disclose the classified information. “But we just want to assure everyone steady hands are at the wheel. We’re working on it and there’s no need for alarm,” he told reporters at the Capitol.

Rep. Jim Himes (D-CT), the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee, agreed with Johnson, saying in a statement that the classified information is “significant” but “not a cause for panic.”

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Turner’s announcement appeared to catch the Biden administration off-guard. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters at the White House that he already had been due to brief Turner and other senior congressional leaders on Thursday. Sullivan did not disclose the topic or provide any other details related to Turner’s statement.

In Moscow, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov described the claims about a new Russian military capability as a ruse intended to make the U.S. Congress support aid for Ukraine.

“It’s obvious that Washington is trying to force Congress to vote on the aid bill by hook or by crook,” Peskov said in remarks carried by Russian news agencies. “Let’s see what ruse the White House will use.”{eo}

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