

**War in Ukraine**

## Zelenskyy boasts of new long-range weapon days after strikes inside Russia

Kyiv has steadily been extending its ability to hit targets deep behind enemy lines



A satellite image of the air base in Pskov, about 700km inside Russia © Planet Labs/Reuters

**John Paul Rathbone** in Kyiv YESTERDAY

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Ukraine has built a new long-range aerial weapon that can hit targets 700km away, the latest sign that the country is strengthening its nascent arms industry.

The announcement, made by Volodymyr Zelenskyy on social media overnight on Thursday came days after the Kremlin accused Kyiv of launching a strike that hit the Pskov air base, about 700km inside Russia. The attack destroyed at least two Ilyushin Il-76 military cargo planes.

Kyrylo Budanov, Ukraine's head of intelligence, on Friday said the strike was carried out from Russian territory. "We are working from the territory of Russia," he told The War Zone website.

The Ukrainian president did not provide any more details about the new weapon but he said Kyiv was working on further increasing its range.

"The [range] of our weapons, new Ukrainian weapons, is 700km [and] the task is [to extend that] further," Zelenskyy [wrote on Telegram](#), the messaging app.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion began just over 18 months ago, Kyiv has steadily been extending its ability to hit targets deep behind enemy lines. It has also used foreign-supplied artillery and missile, such as US HIMARS and British Storm Shadow

missiles, to hit Russian targets on Ukrainian soil.

However, to strike within Russian territory, Ukraine has had to develop homegrown solutions as its western allies have refused to provide it with long-range weapons to attack Russia itself.

Last week, Oleksiy Danilov, head of the security council, said a new but unspecified [Ukrainian-made cruise missile](#) had hit a Russian air defence system in Russian-occupied Crimea, calling it a “new product . . . absolutely flawless”.

Russian officials on Friday said their air defences had intercepted several drone attacks in the country’s western regions, with no major damage or injuries reported.

Kyiv has a policy of neither confirming nor denying attacks on Russian soil, which have become an almost daily occurrence.

Drone attacks on Russia have been too limited to have had a major military impact; their purpose has been to inflict political and psychological harm, officials and analysts have said. However, that may be changing.

Russia has sunk several cargo ships around the Kerch bridge that links the Russia mainland to the Crimea in order to create a barrier to protect it from recent attacks by Ukrainian marine drones.

Russia may also have redeployed some of its air defence systems from the Kuril Islands, which Japan claims as part of its territory, and moved them to western Russia, [according to a report in Japan’s Kyodo News](#) based on the analysis of satellite imagery.

Yuriy Borisov, head of the Roscosmos space agency, on Friday said Russia’s new Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile complex, is now ready for combat duty.

The Sarmat, Russia’s largest ever ballistic missile, was first tested last year and has been in development for more than a decade. It is designed to carry a payload of up to 10 heavy warheads. Moscow has said that the complex can hit targets 10,000km to 18,000km away.

Zelenskyy’s remarks about Ukraine’s new long-range weapon comes as Kyiv seeks to enhance its defence industry to make more weapons on home soil, especially of artillery shells, which are crucial for its counteroffensive.

It has started making Nato-standard 155mm artillery shells, Zelenskyy [said this week](#), “not enough. very little for the front. but it is already many times more than before”.

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On Thursday, Kyiv also struck a preliminary deal with British defence company BAE Systems that seeks to eventually produce 105mm light guns, a kind of artillery, within Ukraine.

The British agreement came days after Ukraine and Sweden signed a statement of intent to strengthen co-operation in the production of CV90 armoured vehicles, which are made by a Swedish unit of BAE.

German defence company Rheinmetall has also said it will open a plant in Ukraine to build armoured vehicles, in association with Ukroboronprom, the Ukrainian state-owned defence group.

*Additional reporting by Roman Olearchyk in Kyiv*

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