

Trump: US has better weapons than the 'failed' Russian 'Skyfall' missile

President Trump weighed in on a suspected failed missile explosion in northern Russia, noting U.S. technology is far superior to the "failed" weapon.

The suspected nuclear explosion occurred Thursday off the coast of Russia's Nenoska Missile Test Site, an installation suspected of developing Russia's next generation of advanced missiles. Seven people were reportedly killed.

"The United States is learning much from the failed missile explosion in Russia," Trump tweeted Monday. "We have similar, though more advanced, technology. The Russian 'Skyfall' explosion has people worried about the air around the facility and far beyond. Not good!"

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— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) August 12, 2019

Russian media reported radiation briefly spiked to 200 times the normal rate, according to the *New York Times*, but these reports were later scrubbed from the websites of Severodvinsk, a small city located 25 miles away from the explosion in Russia's Archangel province. Fears over radiation poisoning caused a run on iodine by local residents, which can protect the thyroid gland from absorbing radiation.

Experts and intelligence officials believe the explosion was the result of a botched test of a nuclear-powered cruise missile known by NATO as the SSC-X-9 Skyfall.

"Our working hypothesis is that the event in Russia yesterday was related to Russia's nuclear-powered cruise missile, the 9M730 Burevestnik (NATO name: SSC-X-9 Skyfall)," Jeffrey Lewis, an arms control expert at the Middlebury

Institute, said Friday on Twitter. “Possibly a botched recovery effort involving the Serebryanka [...]”

An August 8 image from @planetlabs showing the Serebryanka, a nuclear fuel carrier, near a missile test site in Russia, where an explosion and fire broke out earlier. The ship’s presence may be related to the testing of a nuclear-powered cruise missile. pic.twitter.com/QhdxuDC91w

— Jeffrey Lewis (@ArmsControlWonk) August 9, 2019

The Serebryanka is a Russian nuclear fuel carrier, which an image from Planet Labs shows was near the test site at the time of the incident. The ship was last reported as of Monday in Murmansk, a port 355 miles from Severodvinsk.

Russia is believed to have conducted a partially successful test of the Skyfall on Jan. 29, preceding the Trump administration’s announcement removing the U.S. from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty on Feb. 2. The missile’s small nuclear reactor theoretically makes it capable of traveling across the globe for an indefinite amount of time. It is also believed to be capable of avoiding conventional missile defense systems.

This isn’t the first incident involving the Skyfall. Russian Navy ships were sent to search for the remains of a Skyfall missile in August after it landed off the coast of northern Russia in March 2018 during a failed test. Putin unveiled the missile that same month, bragging that it renders defense systems “useless.” He went on to make a thinly-veiled threat against the U.S.

“I want to tell all those who have fueled the arms race over the last 15 years, sought to win unilateral advantages over Russia, introduced unlawful sanctions aimed to contain our country’s development ... you have failed to contain Russia,” he said.

“Nobody listened to us. Well, listen to us now.”

Source:

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