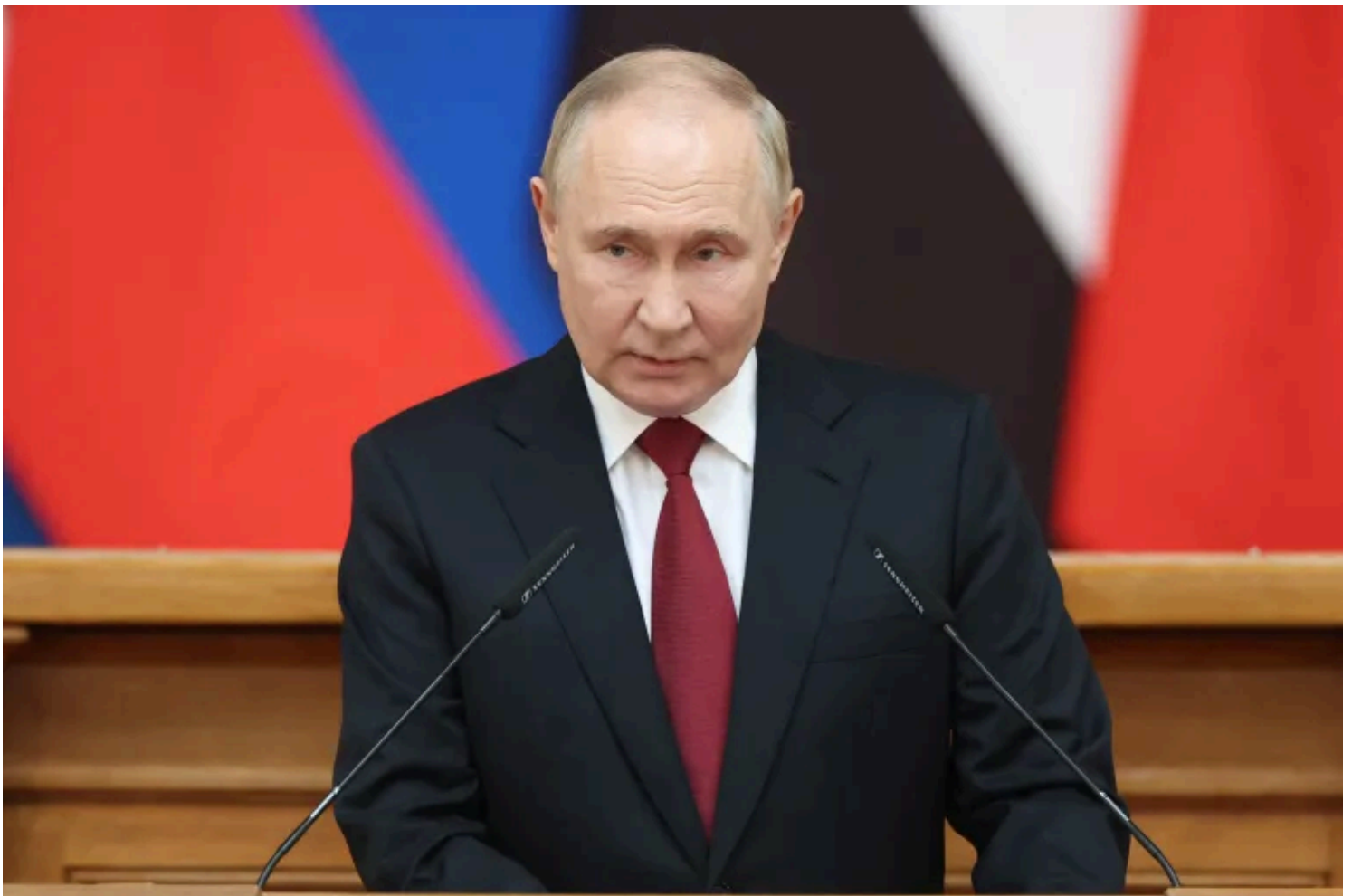


News | NATO

Russia says US missiles in Germany signal return of Cold War

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz welcomes the plan, says it is ‘something of deterrence and it’s securing peace’.



Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks at the BRICS Parliamentary Forum in Saint Petersburg, Russia [Handout via Reuters]

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The United States’s decision to station long-range missiles in Germany could lead to a Cold War-style “direct confrontation”, Russia has warned, as

Chancellor Olaf Scholz hailed the move.

The White House announced the decision on Wednesday during a [NATO summit](#) in Washington, arguing the stationing of long-range weapons, including Tomahawk cruise missiles, in Europe acts as a deterrent.

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“We are taking steady steps towards the Cold War,” Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told a Russian state TV reporter on Thursday.

“All the attributes of the Cold War with the direct confrontation are returning.”

Washington’s move has prompted criticism in Germany, even among members of Scholz’s Social Democrats.

Defending the decision, Scholz told reporters at a NATO summit in Washington it is “something of deterrence and it’s securing peace, and it is a necessary and important decision at the right time.”

The US on Wednesday said the “episodic deployments” of long-range missiles to Germany will begin in 2026.

The White House said it would eventually look to permanently station them in Germany, and the missiles would “have significantly longer range” than current US systems in Europe.

“Exercising these advanced capabilities will demonstrate the United States’ commitment to NATO and its contributions to European integrated deterrence,” it said in a joint statement with the German government.



Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz speaks during NATO's 75th anniversary summit in Washington, US [Yves Herman/Reuters]

Russia's ambassador to Germany warned the German government of a further deterioration in relations between Moscow and Berlin if the deployment goes ahead.

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“It is to be hoped that the German political elites will reconsider whether such a destructive and dangerous step, which contributes neither to the security of the Federal Republic of Germany nor the European continent as a whole, is advisable,” Sergei Nechayev said.

“Not to mention the irreparable damage to German-Russian relations.”

German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius told broadcaster Deutschlandfunk that the deployment decision addressed a “very serious gap” in the country’s capabilities.

The German army does not have long-range missiles that launch from the ground, only cruise missiles that can be fired by aircraft.

The announcement led to an outcry in Germany, where the deployment of US missiles brings back painful memories of the Cold War.

Ralf Stegner, a member of parliament for Scholz’s Social Democrats, told the Funke media group that the missile decision could signal the start of a new “arms race”.

“This will not make the world safer. On the contrary, we are entering a spiral in which the world is becoming increasingly dangerous,” warned Stegner.

Sahra Wagenknecht, a prominent far-left figure in Germany, told the Spiegel weekly that US missile deployment “increases the danger that Germany itself will become a theatre of war”.

The 1980s deployment of US Pershing II ballistic missiles in West Germany at the height of the Cold War prompted widespread demonstrations, with hundreds of thousands coming out in pacifist protest.

US missiles continued to be stationed through the reunification of Germany and into the 1990s.

But following the end of the Cold War, the US significantly reduced the number of missiles stationed in Europe as the threat from Moscow receded.

NATO countries – spearheaded by the US – are rushing to bolster their defences on the continent in the wake of Russia's 2022 invasion of neighbouring Ukraine.