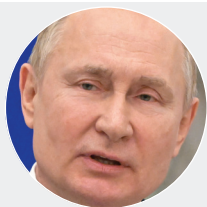


# Russia's nuclear chain of command

Russia's nuclear doctrine presents four scenarios which could justify the use of nuclear weapons, including being faced with overwhelming conventional forces



Russian President  
Vladimir Putin



**1 Authorisation**  
Russian **President** takes decision to use nuclear weapons

**2 Communication**  
Briefcase, known as **Cheget**, kept near president at all times, linking him to central military command

**3 Launch:** Russian **General Staff** can access launch codes and have two ways of firing warheads

**Transmit codes**  
To individual weapons commanders, who would then execute launch procedures

**Backup:** "Perimeter" system allows General Staff to directly initiate launch of land-based missiles



*Cheget (above) does not contain nuclear launch button but instead transmits launch orders to General Staff*

## How Russia might justify using nuclear weapons

- If nuclear weapons or WMD\* are used against Russia or its allies
- If data shows launch of ballistic missiles aimed at Russia or its allies
- If key site is attacked that would undermine Russia's nuclear forces response actions
- If conventional weapons are used against Russia "when very existence of state is in jeopardy"



*RS-24 Yars ballistic missile*

\*Weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons)

Source: Reuters

Pictures: Getty Images, Facebook

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