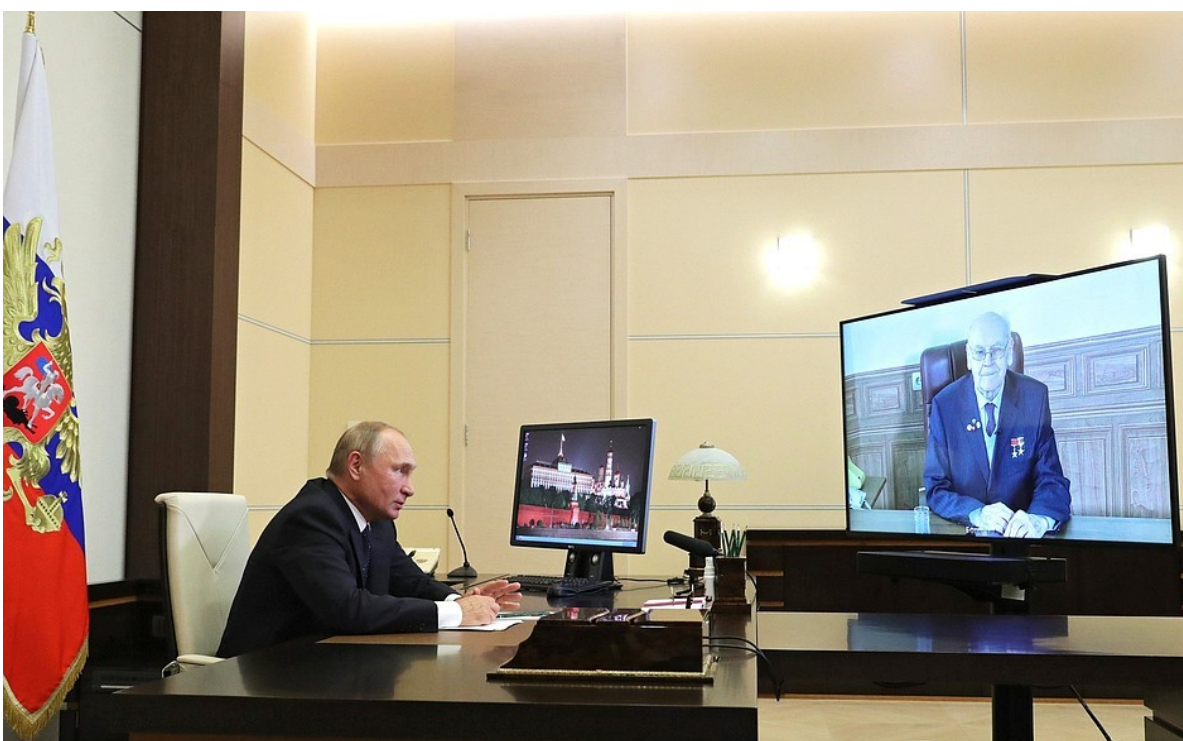


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Conversation with Gerbert Yefremov • President of Russia

8-10 minutes





3 of 3

During the videoconference with Professor Gerbert Yefremov.

In 1956, Gerbert Yefremov graduated from the Leningrad Military Mechanical Institute majoring in Instrument Engineering and signed up with OKB-52 (currently JSC MIC *NPO Mashinostroyenia*). He devoted his entire life to this enterprise, holding positions of design bureau head, chief designer and CEO.

During the videoconference, Vladimir Putin informed Gerbert Yefremov about the Executive Order he had signed on awarding him with the Order of *St Andrew the Apostle the First-Called* with swords.

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President of Russia Vladimir Putin: Mr Yefremov, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on Gunsmith Day, and in your person everyone who is engaged in the work that is crucial for Russia's defence and security.

Gerbert Yefremov: Thank you, Mr President.

Allow me, first of all, to wish you good health. And second, I want to tell you that I am completely overwhelmed with your attention. I will try to say a few words later. I am happy to communicate with you again, especially on this holiday. Thank you!

Vladimir Putin: Many a generation, we can say that hundreds of thousands of people throughout many years devote themselves, their efforts and their lives to pursuing critical tasks, designing new and unparalleled weapons that are capable of defending our

country from any assaults from outside. We will always appreciate their labour, which is comparable, without exaggeration, with a heroic feat because gunsmiths as well as the military stand guard over our Fatherland.

I said a number of times that for decades we were always in a position of having to catch up. You are well aware of that. This concerned nuclear weapons, then long-range strategic aviation, and later also intercontinental missiles, which specialists call delivery systems. This always put our nation in a very challenging and even precarious position. In fact, there were moments when we were threatened while we had nothing to respond with. In reality, let me reiterate, it was an obvious and dangerous violation of the strategic balance.

And now, for the first time in our contemporary history, Russia has the most cutting-edge types of weapons that are far superior to all earlier and current weapons in terms of their power, capability, speed, and, which is crucial, precision. Nobody else in the world has this type of weapons, at least at the moment.

In this connection, on Gunsmith Day, I congratulate the designers and manufacturers of the Peresvet laser system, Kinzhal hypersonic air missile, Poseidon nuclear-powered unmanned underwater system, Burevestnik unlimited-range cruise missile, *Zircon navy-based hypersonic missile, and other types of weapons that are already delivered or will be delivered shortly to our army and navy.*

But the Avangard system has a special place among them as it has a manoeuvrable hypersonic block that moves at over 27 times the speed of sound and changes its trajectory both vertically

and horizontally. The Avangard is not just a new system, it is a new type of strategic weapon.

The US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 forced Russia to start designing hypersonic weapons. We had to do that in response to the US deployment of the strategic anti-missile system that potentially could actually neutralise and reduce to nothing all of our nuclear potential.

Mr Yefremov, this has not happened thanks to you and your colleagues. I remember monitoring the launch of the first experimental gliding block in Plesetsk back in June 2001. That launch was a success.

In the ensuing years we made every possible effort to achieve agreements with the US side on stopping work on the strategic anti-missile defence system or on its joint implementation in missile-threat directions, including with European countries' participation. However, all our attempts proved futile.

In this context, in 2004 we launched large-scale work on implementing your ideas. We publicly informed everyone about that; I spoke about it publicly. To all appearances, no one believed us back then. They thought we would not be able to do it.

In December 2018, the final launch was made. Thus all the testing was successfully completed.

Mr Yefremov, since December 2019, the first strategic missile regiment with the Avangard system has been put on full combat alert.

This is a tremendous development in the country's life and ensuring its security, without any exaggeration. It is also

undoubtedly a tremendous event in your life.

The results of your work can hardly be overstated. You were not only the originator of this technological idea as it is authored by you. Under the current conditions, the implementation of your idea is undoubtedly comparable to the accomplishments of the nuclear and missile projects by the Soviet Union conducted by outstanding Soviet scientists Igor Kurchatov and Sergei Korolev. Your work is equal to that for us today.

Today is a holiday for all those who design Russia's weapons – it is a holiday of all weapons designers and producers, and on this day I signed an Executive Order on awarding you with the Order of *St Andrew the Apostle the First-Called* with swords. You fully deserve this combat decoration. It is with crossed swords because your efforts, the work of all your colleagues from chief designers down to workers, as I said, is akin to a heroic deed.

I congratulate you on this high decoration. I wish a happy holiday to you and the many thousand staff of the military-industrial complex.

All the very best you. Thank you very much.

Gerbert Yefremov: Thank you so much, Mr President. It comes as a total surprise for me.

I must say that I appreciate your attention not only to me but to all my colleagues in the defence complex and our NPO Mashinostroyenia, our staff, our suppliers, everyone.

I mean to say that you are certainly not a weapons designer and you are not supposed to be one. However, you are our main appraiser, the chief examiner of the things we create – complexes

and systems – and, of course, the main controller. Your understanding of all the technical properties which were duly revealed to the world, a demonstration that it is not sci-fi but a reality, it shows your ability, which all others lack, I think.

Let me say in this respect that this is also your holiday, and I want to wish you a happy Gunsmith Day. I should say we used to have many holidays in the past related to our business – strategic missile forces, the Navy, the Navy Day, and space forces. We also celebrate Science Day, Engineering Worker Day. Now, following your call, we will also celebrate Gunsmith Day on September 19.

I would only like to ask you to take it as referring to us in terms of new features and properties our missiles will possess: unique, crucial and so needed by the country, something that you understand perfectly.

Thank you very much, I think I will be able to convey your greetings to our staff, our partners within the corporation and allied industry men. I am utterly overwhelmed by this. And, of course, thank you very much for the great decoration. Thank you.

Vladimir Putin: Mr Yefremov, you have just said a few words about your enterprise, the OKB, where you have worked for many years, your entire life. I want to tell you that you have a very worthy successor. I am sure that he told you about one of our discussions after an unsuccessful series of tests. This does happen, regrettably. The question arose what is to be done next.

Gerbert Yefremov: I was always well-informed, Mr President.

Vladimir Putin: So, when there were only two of us, I asked him, “Will you finish the work?” He confidently replied with amazing words. He said, “Give us a chance, and we will do it.” And six

months later it was brought to a close.

Gerbert Yefremov: He is a worthy successor. Thank you for the decoration, Mr President, for your support and understanding. It is all very moving.

Vladimir Putin: Please pass on my best wishes to everyone.

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