



Second Borei Class Strategic Nuclear Submarine Joins Northern Fleet

OE Watch Commentary: Russia continues to balance its upgraded strategic submarine fleet between the Northern and Pacific Fleet. As the accompanying passage discusses, the Sevmash [Northern Machine building] shipyard in the Arctic City of Severodvinsk has produced its fourth Borei [Boreas-the Greek God of the North Wind] class strategic delivery nuclear submarine. There are now two each in the Northern and Pacific Fleets. The Borei-class submarines carry 16 Bulava intercontinental missiles, each capable of containing 6-10 MIRV warheads (see “Strategic Missile Test for Submarine Slated for Northern Fleet,” *OE Watch*, December 2019).

The first new ballistic missile submarine delivered to the Northern Fleet since January 2013, Knyaz Vladimir [Vladimir the Great], is named after the Prince of Novgorod, Grand Prince of Kiev, and ruler of Kievan Rus’ from 980 to 1015. Knyaz Vladimir is known for expanding Russia, utilizing the Dniepr River to expand into the Black Sea and Crimea and bringing Orthodox Christianity to Russia. He carried his own Bulava [medieval mace]. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

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Source: Thomas Nilsen, “Sevmash shipyard handed over SSBN Knyaz Vladimir to Northern Fleet,” *The Barents Sea Independent Observer*, 1 June 2020. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2020/06/sevmash-shipyard-handed-over-ssbn-knyaz-vladimir-northern-fleet>

On June 1st, the Day of the Northern Fleet, Navy Commander Nikolay Evmenov signed the approval document of the long-delayed ballistic missile submarine...Admiral Evmenov stated that a formal ceremony for the submarine will soon follow. The admiral’s signature is a milestone for the submarine that originally was supposed to be handed over from the Sevmash yard to the Northern Fleet in 2017. Technical problems...delayed both the construction and the commissioning. Last fall, the plan was to deliver the submarine by year-end, as the Sevmash yard in Severodvinsk celebrated its 80th anniversary. Further troubles, though, caused further delays.

In mid-May, Knyaz Vladimir sailed out to the White Sea on its final test voyage, making sure that previously discovered technical challenges were solved.

Following the voyage, the final acceptance certificate was signed at the Sevmash yard on May 28th ...confirming its readiness for transfer to the Navy....Knyaz Vladimir will be the first new ballistic missile submarine delivered to the Northern Fleet since January 2013, when the first of the Borei-class, the “Yury Dolgoruky” entered service.

In contrast to the Yury Dolgoruky, the Knyaz Vladimir has a different exterior. The tower doesn’t have the front overhang, the bow is more streamlined and the superstructure of the hull is changed. The biggest differences, however, are likely inside where more of the control room and steering gear are computerized. Improvements include vertical endplates to the hydroplanes for higher maneuverability, improved pump-jet propulsion system making the submarine quieter.

The submarine can carry 16 Bulava missiles. Each missile is believed to hold 6 to 10 nuclear warheads, bringing the total number of nuclear warheads onboard the submarine up to somewhere between 96 and 160. Gadzhiyevo on the Barents Sea coast will be the submarine’s new home base, together with the six Delta-IV submarines and the “Yury Dolgoruky” Borei-class.

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