Pantsir Air Defense System aboard new Russian Corvettes

OE Watch Commentary: Russia is now modernizing her fleets by concentrating on new strategic missile-launching submarines, brown-water and green-water missile boats and large amphibious landing ships. The *Karakurt*-series missile-launching corvettes are the coastal waters larger equivalent of the shallow-draft *Buyan-M.* which gained recognition on 7 October 2015, when a group of Caspian Flotilla ships (the Missile Ship Dagestan and three *"Buyans": Grad Sviyazhsk, Uglich, and Velikiy Ustyug*) conducted a strike using 26 cruise missiles against targets in Syria. The missiles flew more than 1,500 kilometers over the south Caspian, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. (See: "Small Boat Cruisin' for a Bruisin'," *OE Watch*, September 2018) The *Karakurt*-class vessels entered Russian naval service in 2018. (Karakurt is a type of spider with a dangerous bite.) These are the most modern ships in the Russian surface navy. With the addition of the Pantsir-M air defense missile and gun system to the vessels, the new vessels should be able to attack and defend equally well. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

"The Project 22800 Karakurt MRKs are considered to be the most numerous and most modern ships supplied to the Navy today. In total, 18 Karakurt ships have been ordered for the Navy. According to the plan, they should be divided evenly between the Pacific, Baltic, and Black Sea fleets."

Source: Roman Kretcul and Bogdan Stepovoi, "Harsh Voyage: Arctic Trial of New Russian Karakurt Project Small Missile Ship", *Izvestia*, https://iz.ru/1044007/roman-kretcul-bogdan-stepovoi/surovyi-pokhod-novyi-mrk-proekta-karakurt-protestiruiut-v-arktike, 5 August 2020

Harsh Voyage: Arctic Trial of New Russian Karakurt Project Small Missile Ship

The new modification of the Project 22800 Karakurt Small Missile Ships (MRK) -- the newest ships of the Russian Navy -- will be tested off the coast of the Arctic. Sources state that the redeployment of the third Odintsovo series MRK from the Baltic Sea to the Northern Fleet is currently under study. The final decision is pending. In the course of the sea trials it will have to perform combat training missions in harsh climatic conditions. According to experts, the Karakurt-class ships are perfect for operations in the White and Barents seas, but first they have to undergo a durability test.

The main difference of an Odintsovo-series ship from its predecessors is the presence of the naval version of the Pantsir-M antiaircraft missile and artillery system onboard. It consists of eight launchers and two 30-mm six-barreled rapid-fire automatic cannons. The system can shoot down cruise and anti-ship missiles, UAVs, aircraft, and helicopters. The missiles can engage airborne targets out to 20 kilometers. Targets that manage to get closer are met with the automatic cannons.

At the start of July, Navy Commander-in-Chief Admiral Nikolay Yevmenov stated that the Baltic Fleet will be augmented with six Project 22800 ships built by Pella Enterprise. Four of them will be equipped with the Pantsir system. The first such ship, the Odintsovo, put to sea for state trials at the end of June...

It is expected that the Odintsovo will be part of the 1st Guards Battalion of the Baltic Fleet's 36th Missile Boats Brigade. Its ships are stationed at the naval base in Baltiysk (Kaliningradskaya oblast). The first ships of this project -- the Mytishchi and Sovetsk -- are already carrying out combat service there.

Currently, it is not possible to carry out full-fledged missile firings by Karakurt ships in the Baltic Sea, according to Admiral Valentin Selivanov, ex-chief of the Navy Main Staff..."In the Soviet period, the area in the Baltic from Poland to the Gulf of Riga was shut down for this purpose. It was forbidden for all ships and vessels to go in there, as well as for aircraft overflights. Up to 30 ships were patrolling its perimeter around the clock, making sure no one entered the range. At that time...the range of the ship missiles was from 80 to 300 kilometers. Times have changed. A large part of this territory today is the economic zone of Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania, and the missiles have become much more powerful and can reach further. Therefore, full-fledged firings are conducted in the Northern Fleet area -- where there are suitable ranges. Incidentally, they allow testing of not only cruise missiles, but also air defense munitions. The newly-built Russian ships have conducted tests over the full range of their weapons, including missile systems, on the Northern Fleet ranges. The Navy cannot accept these ships without such tests."

According to military expert Dmitriy Boltenkov "the MRK is primarily intended for missile strikes from coastal areas. There are many bays in the Russian northern seas, where they can hide and deliver surprise strikes against enemy ships. Moreover, the Karakurt ships are capable of firing Kalibr cruise missiles not only against surface targets, but against ground targets as well.

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The Karakurt ships are built with the use of stealth technology and are equipped with modern combat command and control, target detection, target designation, and communications systems. The ship is fitted with a 76.2-mm AK-176MA artillery mount. Yet the main attack asset of this ship is the Kalibr cruise missile. In addition, they can be armed with Oniks supersonic anti-ship missiles....

Orlan-10 drones are based aboard the ship with a range of up to 120 kilometers for use as reconnaissance aircraft and fire adjustment. The UAV will make it possible to make these stealth ships virtually invisible, since it is possible to launch a UAV into the sky to assess the situation, instead of activating radar, the signal of which can be detected by enemy radar....