



Poseidon Torpedo.

Source: Russian Ministry of Defense, [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Посейдон_\(подводный_аппарат\)#/media/Файл:Status-6.jpg](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Посейдон_(подводный_аппарат)#/media/Файл:Status-6.jpg), Attribution: CC BY 4.0

Purpose Posited for Russia’s Poseidon Torpedo and Other “Superweapons”

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OE Watch Commentary

The accompanying excerpted article from *Naked Science*, a Russian website with science-themed articles, discusses Russian reasoning behind the Poseidon 2M39 nuclear-powered torpedo (sometimes referred to as ‘Status-6’), and other so-called “superweapons,” such as the Burevestnik nuclear-powered cruise missile, that Russia has been developing. According to *Naked Science*, the intent of these weapons is not to change the current strategic balance between the United States and Russia, but to maintain it. The author posits that the United States’ increasing missile defense capabilities could one

day nullify the threat of a Russian nuclear strike, thereby overcoming Russia’s main means of strategic deterrence. Since Russia’s economy is not capable of producing enough nuclear ballistic missiles to simply overwhelm these expected defenses, Russia must instead take a more novel approach. The author believes that weapons such as the 2M39 Poseidon are capable of circumventing future U.S. ballistic missile defense capabilities and are presumably a more affordable means of maintaining the current strategic balance.

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Source: Alexander Berezin, Кобальтовый миф: почему Россия не будет травить планету «Посейдоном» (Cobalt myth: Why Russia won’t poison the planet with ‘Poseidon’), *Naked Science* (Russian website with science-themed articles), 31 March 2021, <https://naked-science.ru/article/tech/kobaltovyj-mif-pochemu-rossiya-ne-budet-travit-planetu-posejdonom>

For the Russian MoD’s perspective on its oceanic multipurpose system with unmanned underwater vehicles see <https://youtu.be/zrMdm13exWE>

The most sinister weapons project of all time and peoples is a thermonuclear torpedo designed to cause a nuclear strike and create an artificial tsunami. Never before has any state or entity declared an intention to do anything as dangerous to living things. Therefore, the Russian project “Poseidon”, which promises exactly that, is causing a storm of emotions. However, careful technical analysis shows that in reality it does not do those things, as they write about it in the media. Even if the Poseidon’s strike is designed to radiate vast areas, it won’t last long. And in a year the areas “washed” by it will be absolutely safe. Yet, the new system will really change the strategic balance on the planet — but not in the way everyone thinks.

Let’s try to understand the situation in more detail. In recent years, Russia has been trying to minimize the chances of a serious conflict with the United States. Hardly the only thing that can be done in practice is to guarantee that American missile defense will not give its country a false sense of security against a retaliatory Russian nuclear impact. As the industry observers from the United States have stated: “Today, American missile defense technologies are very mediocre, but on the part of Russian planners it would be careless to believe that it will forever stay that way.” We have already written that if the ‘Starship’ project is implemented, the US can deploy such ICBM defense systems that will make them capable to stop the bulk of Russian thermonuclear warheads. In such conditions, the question itself arises: how can the perspective US missile defense systems be bypassed? Building more Russian intercontinental missiles is going to be useless: it is too expensive. As modern Russian folklore says, “Doesn’t matter how much you feed the wolf, the elephant will still be thicker”: the US economy is much bigger than Russian, to maintain parity simply by building up production of missiles is extremely difficult. But there is another way - to bypass via technological advancement. Just like Tsirkon missile made the air defenses of American ships visibly obsolete, the thermonuclear torpedo Poseidon and a nuclear-powered cruise missile Burevestnik are designed to make obsolete the idea that there can be an effective defense against nuclear weapons by simply learning to shoot down ballistic missiles...