



Interview with Russian Navy Commander Admiral Korolev

OE Watch Commentary: Russia's recent military developments have included significant efforts to improve the Russian Navy, so far with mixed results. In February 2018 a journalist from Russia's major military newspaper, *Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star)*, interviewed the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Navy, Admiral Vladimir Korolev, who provided a glowing report on the navy's status and plans for the year ahead.

In the interview, Admiral Korolev pointed out how the Russian Navy gained "practical experience" in Syria, firing 100 cruise missiles on ISIS forces and destroying "more than 1,250 targets of illegal armed force elements" from operations in the Mediterranean. The Admiral also mentioned the Gulf of Aden and the African Horn as areas of recent naval success, where Russia worked to decrease terrorism and increase safety. He went on to comment on Russian advances in the Arctic, securing the region for the country's economic development.

When asked about the strong history of the Russian Navy and its relevance to present operations, Admiral Korolev, who has served in his current position for two years, discussed the annual navy leadership operations conference. This year's conference will include, in part, a scientific-historical conference to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Russia's nuclear submarine fleet. Rather than focusing on current operations, "(at) the operational conference...we also will remember the centennial of the day the RKKA [Workers' and Peasants' Red Army] and the RKKF [Workers' and Peasants' Red Navy] were established" by the Soviet government.

The Admiral paints a radiant picture of the Russian Navy's continued development. As he explains, the increased financial and innovative focus recently placed on the navy are proved by the fact that "in just the last five years the figure for time spent underway in Navy combined formations doubled and the average time of missions performed by crews of submarines and ships at sea grew almost by a third. In short, the condition of the Navy always is checked fundamentally by its actions at sea." Admiral Korolev cites the last five to six years as a time of immense naval improvement, including in naval aviation, submarine development, equipping 96 percent of coastal defense troops with cutting edge missiles, personnel training, rescue equipment, and other developments. Coincidentally, these years of development were overseen by Russian President Vladimir Putin and *Krasnaya Zvezda* published the interview a month before the 18 March election, which Putin won by a considerable margin. **End OE Watch Commentary (Johnson)**

Source: Andrey Gavrilenko, "Военно-морской флот – на стремнине развития (The Navy Is on the Swift Current of Development)," *Krasnaya Zvezda Online*, 15 February 2018. <http://redstar.ru/index.php/newspaper/item/36166-voenno-morskoj-flot-na-stremnine-razvitiya>

[KZ] Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Navy has entered a new training year, which for the navy men will be another stage of development and improvement of combat proficiency. What kind of "deck" is beneath your subordinates' feet now and on what does the traditional confidence of sailors in the successful performance of all missions assigned to them rest today?

[Korolev] You mentioned our naval confidence correctly. The Navy began 2018 with significant achievements behind it in all directions and components which feed this confidence, and I would even say this conviction. Our Navy gained inestimable practical experience of combat operations against terrorist groupings on Syrian Arab Republic territory, having brought down 100 cruise missiles on the head of the IGIL, and having carried out more than 400 combat sorties with the destruction of more than 1,250 targets of illegal armed force elements during the carrier group's operations in the Mediterranean. Today this is a Navy which succeeded in operating effectively to lower the threat of maritime piracy in the vicinity of the Gulf of Aden and African Horn and which continues to be present in these areas regularly for guaranteed safety of world shipping. Well, and of course this is a Navy that is successfully developing the Arctic and which has been and remains a guarantor of security of Russia's maritime economic activity in the ocean....

[KZ] It is common knowledge that navy men are capable of performing missions of any difficulty, relying among other things on their own unique historical traditions. What kind of pages of the combat annals will be of help for sailors in 2018?

[Korolev] The Navy leadership operations conference held annually in the N.G. Kuznetsov Naval Academy is in part devoted to these pages... A scientific-historical conference devoted to the 60th anniversary of Russia's nuclear submarine fleet, which we will celebrate this year, will be held as part of this conference. At the operational conference we also will remember the centennial of the day the RKKA [Workers' and Peasants' Red Army] and RKKF [Workers' and Peasants' Red Navy] were established.

[KZ] How is the Navy's oceangoing status confirmed today?

[Korolev] I would say there no longer is a need to confirm the oceangoing status of the Russian Navy. Even stubborn skeptics realize and know that the zone of operations of our Navy's forces has not been enclosed for a long time just by the boundaries of inland seas.... The last five-year plan in which the foundation for Navy development in all directions was laid down speaks best and most graphically of all about the results of this work. In just the last five years, 64 combatant ships and craft, including 3 strategic missile submarine cruisers, 7 multirole submarines, 14 surface combatants, and 39 small combatants were built for the Navy....

...It was thanks to the attentive attitude toward Navy problems on the part of the Supreme Commander, defense minister, and the not indifferent heads of Russian Federation components and cities that we are worthily overcoming all difficulties in short time periods. There are many proofs. I will cite one of the most indicative ones. In just the last five years the figure for time spent underway in Navy combined formations doubled and the average time of missions performed by crews of submarines and ships at sea grew almost by a third. In short, the condition of the Navy always is checked fundamentally by its actions at sea....

[KZ] The Navy includes coastal defense troops. How do things stand with reequipping the Navy's coastal component?

[Korolev] In the last few years the reequipping of the Navy coastal defense troops with Bal and Bastion missile complexes allowed us to take the level of outfitting with state-of-the-art equipment to 96 percent....