



## The Kinzhal Air Launched Missile is a Modified Iskander SRBM

**OE Watch Commentary:** The accompanying excerpted article from *Izvestiya* discusses features of Russia's newly announced Kinzhal air-to-surface missile. The Kinzhal is intended to be fired from a MiG-31, as the aircraft reportedly functions as a first stage booster for the missile. The MiG-31 also launches Russian anti-satellite missiles. Russia has saved substantial costs and research and development time by basing the Kinzhal on the existing Iskander SRBM surface-to-surface missile, instead of developing a new missile from scratch. The adoption of existing technologies, and repurposing (if feasible), is standard practice in the Russian Armed Forces. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

**Source:** Aleksey Ramm, “Кинжалный удар «Искандера» (The Iskander's Kinzhal Strike),” *Izvestiya*, 2 March 2018. <https://iz.ru/715127/aleksei-ramm/kinzhalnyi-udar-iskandera>

*The Russian Armed Forces have received the Kinzhal aviation missile system, Vladimir Putin stated in a message to the Federal Assembly. The “heart” of the new system is a hypersonic missile capable of performing complex maneuvers. It strikes targets with high precision within a radius of more than 2,000 kilometers. On 1 December last year, the latest aviation missile systems commenced trial combat duty in the Southern Military District. According to experts, video during the President's speech showed the aviation version of the ground-based Iskander operational-tactical missile system. It is modified for high-altitude supersonic launch. Meanwhile, the Kinzhal is categorized as defensive weaponry.*

*“The video clearly shows a modified Iskander system series 9M723 aeroballistic missile suspended under the fuselage of a MiG-31,” Dmitriy Kornev, editor-in-chief of the Internet project Military Russia, noted. “The missile cone is streamlined with several tapers. It can also be observed that the engine compartment has a characteristic barrel shape. In contrast to the ground-based version of the Iskander, the Kinzhal missile has a remodeled tail section and smaller vanes. Also, in the tail of the missile there is a special cap. Apparently, it protects the engine nozzle when flying at supersonic speed. The cap separates after the missile launch from onboard the MiG-31.”...*

*“Accelerated to supersonic speed, the MiG-31 acts as a ‘first stage’ which increases by several times the flight range and speed of the 9M723. After launch, due to the increase in altitude and dive, the missile gains hypersonic speed as well as the necessary energy for maneuvering,” Dmitriy Kornev noted. “Although the 9M723 is considered to be aeroballistic, its trajectory in the terminal phase is quite complex. Due to the energy obtained, the rocket can perform complex maneuvers.”*

*According to the expert, this product has special units to overcome antimissile defenses — decoy targets and jamming generators. The 9M723 can be equipped with optical or radar homing heads. The first detects the target, combining what the camera sees with a picture stored in its memory. It is best suited for striking stationary objects. The second looks for targets in reflected radar signals. It serves to destroy mobile targets, in particular ships.*

*“The 9M723 is a fully developed and tested system. It has a homing head, a system to overcome antimissile defenses, and maneuvering capability,” military historian Dmitriy Boltenkov noted. “It would take at least 7-10 years to create an aviation missile with similar capabilities from scratch. A further two-three years would have been spent on testing. In the case of the Kinzhal, the developers and military managed with just eight years. It is also quite understandable why the MiG-31 was chosen as the carrier. The Mig-31 has a high load capacity and powerful engines. It is the only one capable of accelerating to supersonic speed and also launching the five-ton 9M723 missile.*

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MiG-31.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin Blog, <http://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/790th-Fighter-Regiment/i-wSTNGqR/A>, CC 4.0.