



Russia to Focus on Munitions, Instead of Platform Development

OE Watch Commentary: According to the accompanying excerpted article from *Izvestia*, the Russian Federation will now emphasize the development and production of munitions instead of expensive weapons platforms. The *Izvestia* article makes the point that precision munitions, such as the 3M-14 Kalibr-NK (SS-N-30A) land attack cruise missile, launched from older and/or less technologically advanced platforms in Syria were quite successful. Apparently, there has been an ongoing debate in Russian security circles about whether the finite amount of defense dollars are better spent on expensive platforms (aircraft, ships, etc.) or more modestly priced platforms with better munitions. President Putin's recent comments at a meeting of the Defense Ministry Board, appear to make it clear that Russia will favor the latter, as can be seen in the accompanying excerpted Kremlin press release. In practice, this decision means that the 2027 State Arms Program will likely look significantly different from its predecessor, which emphasized platform development. It is important to note that this change does not mean that Russia will stop the development and fielding of technologically advanced platforms, but instead this development will likely slow, and fewer expensive platforms will be produced. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

“A special emphasis must be made on equipping troops with high-precision air, land and sea weapons, unmanned airstrike complexes, and individual equipment for servicemen, as well as advanced reconnaissance, communication and electronic warfare systems...”

-Vladimir Putin

Source: Aleksey Ramm, Sergey Valchenko, Dmitriy Strugovets, “Ставка на высокоточное и высокоэффективное (Banking on Precision and High Efficiency),” *Izvestia Online*, 25 December 2017. <https://iz.ru/687444/aleksei-ramm-sergei-valchenko-dmitrii-strugovets/stavka-na-vysokotochnoe-i-vysokoeffektivnoe>

...Vladimir Putin summed up the numerous arguments about the new National Arms Program (GPV), which have been going on for almost a year,” military expert Vladislav Shurygin told Izvestia. “The defense industry notionally split into two camps. One advocated the maximum funding of the building of new ‘platforms’: tanks, field guns, aircraft, helicopters. Their opponents sought a reduction in the building of platforms to a rational level and allocation of the maximum funding for precision weapons: guided munitions and cruise, aeroballistic, and hypersonic missiles. It was reasonably maintained that even an old aircraft with new precision munitions and missiles would acquire serious possibilities. The argument of the defense industrialists became most intense in November and December of this year. but now Vladimir Putin has closed the books. He supported the supporters of precision weapons.

Their part was taken in his speech by Sergey Shoygu also. The defense minister observed that it was precision missiles: Kalibr, Kh-101, Iskander, and Kh-55, which had been employed against the most important facilities of the rebels...

Arms systems have in the modern world been divided into “platforms” and “munitions” for quite some time now...The previous GPV was oriented toward the building of platforms. The Defense Ministry was to have received 60 T-50, 120 Su-35S, 60 Su-30SM, and 17 MiG-35 fighters, 24 MiG-29K/KUB carrier fighters, and up to 140 Su-34 tactical bombers. The funding for pilot projects for new airborne platforms was far less in the new GPV.

“The experience of Syria showed that special platforms: nuclear-powered destroyers and aircraft carriers, are not needed for the employment of Kalibr. The majority of launches were performed from on board conventional diesel-powered submarines and small guided-missile ships,” military historian Dmitriy Boltenev observed. “The Kh-101 were fired not by the PAK-DA but by modernized Tu-95MSM bombers.

Source: Expanded meeting of the Defence Ministry Board,” *Kremlin Website Press Release*, 22 December 2017. <http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56472>

Vladimir Putin visited the Peter the Great Military Academy of the Strategic Missile Forces, where he took part in an annual expanded meeting of the Defense Ministry Board...

President of Russia Vladimir Putin: Comrades officers, “... Second, our new State Armament Program will get underway next year. We discussed its key features in May and November at our meetings in Sochi and numerous meetings in Moscow. A special emphasis must be made on equipping troops with high-precision air, land and sea weapons, unmanned airstrike complexes, and individual equipment for servicemen, as well as advanced reconnaissance, communication and electronic warfare systems...”

“...as I noted we are detecting further attempts to upset strategic parity by deploying the global missile defence system [Ballistic Missile Defence System] and conventional attack systems that are comparable to nuclear weapons. In terms of strike power and accuracy, they are hardly inferior to nuclear arms. What are they designed for? I believe they serve only one purpose, blackmail, because they create the illusion of a potential unpunished strike...”

“Today our nuclear forces reliably ensure strategic deterrence but we must develop them further. By the end of 2017 the share of modern weapons in Russia’s nuclear triad reached 79 per cent and by 2021 they should be equipped with modern arms by up to 90 per cent. I am referring to missile systems that are capable of confidently overcoming existing and even projected missile defence systems...”