



Purpose of Burevestnik Nuclear Powered Cruise Missile Contemplated

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian Federation has been experimenting with a new nuclear cruise missile, the 9M730 Burevestnik (SSC-X-9 Skyfall). The most interesting feature of the Burevestnik is its means of propulsion. The system reportedly has a solid-fuel booster engine and a nuclear-powered sustainer engine. The accompanying excerpted article from *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* Online discusses the purpose of this nuclear-powered cruise missile. The author posits that the Burevestnik is intended to be a “weapon of vengeance, a weapon which would be used after the warheads of intercontinental ballistic missiles ‘work over’ the territory of the aggressor.” A strike by a Burevestnik would be intended to eliminate the remainder of enemy resistance after strategic nuclear weapons were used. As the article notes, the Burevestniks would thus “complete the destruction of all of the aggressor country’s military and civilian infrastructure facilities, leaving them no chance for survival,” intending to negate some concerns about a relatively slow moving and radiation spewing platform. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

“The Burevestnik is a weapon of vengeance, a weapon which would be used after the warheads of intercontinental ballistic missiles ‘work over’ the territory of the aggressor...”

Source: Aleksey Leonkov, Ядерный “Буревестник”: новая крылатая ракета станет “оружием возмездия (The Nuclear Burevestnik: The New Cruise Missile Will Become a ‘Weapon of Vengeance’),” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* Online, 18 July 2019. <https://rg.ru/2019/07/18/iadernyj-burevestnik-novaia-krylataia-raketa-stanet-oruzhiem-vozmezdiia.html>

The Nuclear Burevestnik: The New Cruise Missile Will Become a ‘Weapon of Vengeance’

Among the latest weapons presented to the Federal Assembly by Russia’s President Vladimir Putin on 1 March 2018 was a strategic intercontinental cruise missile, later named the Burevestnik... Since that time the controversies surrounding this missile have not abated. For the most part they relate to the multitude of technical parameters and the integral parts of the missile which have become known to the general public: the aerial nuclear engine, the subsonic speed, the inversion trail (the radioactive exhaust), etc... So yes, the Burevestnik has a nuclear aviation engine with a compact nuclear reactor, created thanks to modern Russian technologies which allow a cruise missile to fly an unlimited time at subsonic speed to any distance.

The Burevestnik is often criticized for its subsonic speed. They say any air defense missile complex can handle it, since the work of the nuclear aviation engine leaves a noticeable “radioactive exhaust.” Undoubtedly, the critics are correct in the case of the use of the Burevestnik in a retaliatory strike under attack. Air defenses and the ballistic missile defense systems of a probable adversary have not yet been destroyed and, naturally, they could detect the missile. But the truth of the matter is quite different.

Like the Poseidon unmanned submarine, the Burevestnik is a weapon of vengeance, a weapon which would be used after the warheads of intercontinental ballistic missiles “work over” the territory of the aggressor. Understandably, after a retaliatory strike under attack by our Strategic Rocket Forces (RVSN) something would remain of the aggressor country’s military and civilian infrastructure (reserve command centers, protected military bases, factories, electric power stations, etc.). Such residuals will allow the aggressor country to continue to wage war against Russia. This is the exact moment when a “weapon of vengeance” is required.

The Poseidons strike coastal sites, and the Burevestniks strike all sites in the depths of the aggressor country’s territory. In so doing it is not a given that the surviving individual air and ballistic missile defense complexes will be able to provide a fully capable defense (there will be many gaps in this defense), and the systems for monitoring the air situation in an ionized atmosphere would be unlikely to see the “radioactive exhaust” of our cruise missile. Moreover, the Burevestnik will maneuver, bypassing detected surviving air defense zones.

In this manner the Burevestniks will complete the destruction of all of the aggressor country’s military and civilian infrastructure facilities, leaving them no chance for survival. How many Burevestniks will be needed for this, I will leave for “behind the scenes” discussions.

Meanwhile, states nurturing aggressive plans against Russia and its allies must know that the flight of the Burevestniks does not only mean the end to all of their hopes for victory, it also means the end to their existence as a state. It is precisely the Burevestniks, and not the Tomahawks, that will bomb the aggressor countries back to the Stone Age, and no other outcome is possible...