

Commander: Russia To Complete Experiment On Bulava Missile In 2006

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Russia plans to complete its experiment on the new Bulava sea-launched intercontinental ballistic missile system by the end of 2006, the Russian navy's Commander-in-Chief Vladimir Kuroyedov said Wednesday.

The research and manufacture of the new missile have been going on as scheduled, and only after the process is 70 percent completed can related departments decide when to hand the missile over to the navy and other troops, the Itar-Tass news agency quoted Kuroyedov as saying.

The solid-fuel Bulava missile, which is under a three-year testing program, is capable of carrying up to 10 individually guided nuclear warheads, with a range of up to 8,000 km.

The Bulava (SS-NX-30) is the submarine-launched version of Russia's most advanced missile, the Topol-M (SS-27) solid fuel ICBM.

The SS-NX-30 is a derivative of the SS-27, except for a slight decrease in range due to conversion of the design for submarine launch. The SS-27 has is 21.9 meters long, far too large to fit in a typical submarine.

The largest previously deployed Russian SLBM was the R-39 / SS-N-20 STURGEON, which was 16 meters long. The Bulava will have a range not less than 8,000 km, and is reportedly features a 550 kT yield nuclear warhead.

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