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7,000 U.S. Cruise Missiles Pose 'Dominant Threat to the Modern World'

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The U.S. will have the capability to unleash a barrage of up to 7,000 cruise missiles at nuclear defense objects in Russia by 2016, a Russian air defense constructor said Monday.

About 5,000 of those will be launched from submarines, Pavel Sozinov, chief designer at the Almaz-Antey arms maker, was cited by Interfax as saying.

"A mass cruise missile strike in the first phase [of a conflict] is the dominant threat in the modern world," Sozinov said.

He cited recent conflicts in Libya and Iraq as examples of this approach.

Russia must take the U.S. strategy into account in planning its air defense agenda, said Sozinov, whose state-run holding is the country's leading producer of air and missile defense systems.

He also said the U.S. missile capabilities are expected to reach a new level by 2020 with

hypersonic and orbital launch systems.

Sozinov cited as examples the X-37 reusable manned spacecraft and DARPA/U.S. Air Force's joint Falcon Project to produce a hypersonic vehicle.

The plans call for a revamp of Russia's missile warning system, which is also set for a sweeping update by 2020, he said.

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