

# Russian Firm Designs New Warship to Replace Sanctions-Slain Model

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A Russian naval design bureau is creating a new class of military vessels, news agency TASS reported Tuesday, in effect replacing a design that was recently scrapped because of its dependence on foreign components.

The new design will be based on the Tiger-class (Project 20382) corvette, a family of small warships built in Russian shipyards for export to customers in Southeast Asia. The Russian navy is now interested in the vessels, which were designed by the St. Petersburg-based Almaz design bureau, said Alexander Shlyakhtenko, the company's CEO.

But rather than offering the navy the existing design, "[w]e are now using [the Tiger-class] to create an entirely new vessel," TASS quoted Shlyakhtenko as saying. "This corvette will be a breakthrough," he said, adding that construction of the first new corvette will begin in St. Petersburg in 2017, with the first ship to join the navy by 2019.

Shlyakhtenko did not specify which shipyard would build the vessel or whether any specific orders had been placed by the navy. Other Russian corvettes have been built at the Northern Wharf shipyards in St. Petersburg.

Shlyakhtenko's announcement comes after a shipbuilding official admitted in May that Russia has been forced to completely abandon its most recently designed class of corvettes: stealth ships known as the Gremyashchy-class (Project 20385) corvettes.

The Gremyashchy-class ships were based on the same Project 20380 corvettes as the Tiger-class ships, but incorporated a variety of high-tech Western-made components.

Western sanctions imposed on Moscow over the Ukraine crisis cut off Russia's access to the components before the first two Gremyashchy ships were completed. They are still being built with Russian components, but plans to build another eight for the navy have been scrapped.

The Almaz bureau's new corvette appears to be a replacement for the lost Gremyashchy-class ships. However, it will be nearly twice their size, displacing up to 4000 tons.

"This ship is very seaworthy due to a new hydrodynamic design — the hull will be new," Shlyakhtenko said, adding that the ship will feature a Russian-built power plant, as opposed to a Ukrainian-built one.

Ukraine last year banned export of certain military and dual-use goods to Russia, cutting Russian shipbuilders off from complex gas turbines and power plants and forcing shipyards to delay construction of most new ships. Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said earlier this month that Russian equivalents will start rolling off assembly lines in two to three years.

Construction of Russia's larger Admiral Gorshkov- and Admiral Grigorovich-class frigates has been temporarily halted while Russia replaces Ukrainian engine imports.

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