

Moscow Reportedly Planning Imminent Airstrikes and Cruise-Missile Attacks on Aleppo's Outskirts

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Russian Defense Ministr

Russia's only aircraft carrier, the Soviet-era flagship Admiral Kuznetsov, is preparing to launch imminent attacks on Syrian rebel positions near Aleppo, according to reports by the news agencies Interfax and Gazeta.ru.

The Russian Navy will reportedly strike areas on the outskirts of Aleppo with aircraft aboard the Admiral Kuznetsov, also using several other ships in a flotilla that just arrived in the Mediterranean, including the nuclear-powered Pyotr Velikiy battlecruiser and two large destroyers.

The Russian military will reportedly target rebel forces outside the city, hoping to starve militants inside Aleppo of potential reinforcements. An unofficial Defense Ministry source told reporters that Russia used a recent "humanitarian pause" to airstrikes in Aleppo to

regroup and collect intelligence on the locations and movements of “terrorist groups.”

For more on Russia's naval efforts in Syria, see: [Putin's Great White Fleet: Behind Moscow's Military Messaging Failure, A Threat of Serious Force](#)

According to Gazeta.ru's sources, Russia's Navy also plans to fire several long-distance “Kalibr” cruise missiles at targets near Aleppo, though it remains unclear which ship would actually fire these weapons.

“In Russian naval parlance,” The Moscow Times' Matthew Bodner wrote in a September 2014 story, “the Kuznetsov is not a proper aircraft carrier but rather a heavy aircraft-carrying cruiser, about half the size of a modern U.S. Nimitz-class aircraft carrier. But the Kuznetsov's cruiser capabilities mean that in addition to launching fighter planes, the warship can pummel enemy surface vessels with anti-ship guided missiles.”

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