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Russia Conducts First Pacific Long-Range Cruise Missile Test

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Russia's Pacific Fleet launched the Kalibr cruise missile on a ground target in the Sea of Japan.
Screenshot Russian Defense Ministry

The Russian Navy has for the first time fired long-range Kalibr cruise missiles on a ground target in the Sea of Japan, the Russian military announced Tuesday.

The Pacific Fleet's statement follows concerns voiced by U.S. defense officials that the Kalibr, which will for the first time allow Russian warships to conduct long-range strikes against land targets, would offset U.S. advantages in the Pacific region.

"Today, the Pacific Fleet frigate Marshal Shaposhnikov for the first time launched the Kalibr cruise missile on a ground target from the waters of the Sea of Japan," the Russian military said.

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The cruise missile hit its coastal target at a range of more than 1,000 kilometers, it added in an announcement on the Defense Ministry's website.

The head of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Adm. Phil Davidson, testified to Congress last month that Russia will begin fielding Kalibr cruise missiles across its Pacific Fleet in 2021.

According to his reported written testimony, the missiles will give the Russian military "substantially increased anti-ship capabilities and the ability to conduct long-range strikes against land targets for the first time."

Davidson added that Russia is upgrading its Pacific forces with advanced fighters and longer-range bombers, as well as air defense and land-based anti-ship cruise missiles.

"These improvements are designed to restrict access to regions of the Pacific Ocean near Russia's coast, while simultaneously expanding Russia's ability to project power across the region and into the Arctic," he was quoted as saying.

Russia has previously fired Kalibr cruise missiles from Mediterranean Sea-based vessels at militant targets in Syria to support regime army offensives.

President Vladimir Putin said in 2018 that Russian warships armed with Kalibr missiles would be on permanent standby in the region to counter the terrorist threat in Syria.

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