

Russia to Focus On Frigates, Corvettes In New Armaments Program

Defense-aerospace



The Project 11356 frigate Admiral Grigorovich is one of several types of medium-sized surface combatants that Russia will build in future, as it has decided that destroyers and cruisers are too bog and too expensive. (Internet photo)

MOSCOW - The new Russian armaments program calls for a gradually reduction in modernization of old armaments and prioritizes the construction of new warships for the Navy, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin told Russia 1 TV channel.

"We will gradually abandon modernization of old weapons although we have to admit that modernization is a normal phenomenon like the creation of new armaments. However, there can be no endlessly numerous modernizations. Otherwise they will stop the creation of new armaments. The new armaments program is innovative and includes completely new approaches. They are mostly related to the creation of smart weapons, automatic communications and reconnaissance systems. The troops will get modern communications which have always been a weakness," he said.

"Robotized systems appear. We are completing the design of new unmanned vehicles both ground and airborne. The space grouping is intensively renewed. (We develop) high-quality navigation, reconnaissance and many other things," Rogozin said.

"Today we stake on "muscular" warships - frigates and corvettes of the near and distant sea zone which are no big targets for the adversary but rather agile and maneuverable means which can hit back exactly like a major warship," he added.

"If we speak about aircraft carriers, the Russian defense industry is technically and technologically capable of building a warship of such displacement. There is a technical project and work is ongoing. But there is a question to the military whether they need such a warship. We have to remember that in contrast to the global ocean power the United States we are a great continental power with different priorities," Rogozin said.

A source in the military-defense complex earlier told TASS that in the coming years Russia will be building frigates and corvettes armed with high-precision guided missiles. "We have to first and foremost build corvettes and frigates and stop thinking about universal landing ships which fulfil mostly transportation rather than combat tasks. Corvettes and frigates are the maximum we can afford at present. The economic potential of the country does not allow building bigger ships such as destroyers," he said.

There are only several countries in the world that can afford building fleet destroyers. They are the main warships only in the US Navy (Arleigh Burke-class destroyers). In other countries, serial production of destroyers is limited, according to the source.

Russia is currently engaged in serial production of corvettes of projects 20380 and 20385 and frigates of projects 11356 and 22350. The Baltic fleet has four corvettes of project 20380 (Steregushchy, Soobrazitelny, Boiky and Stoiky) and another eight corvettes, including two of the upgraded project 20385, are under various construction stages at the Northern Shipyard in St. Petersburg and the Amur Shipyard.

The Northern Shipyard is building, in particular, the Retivy and Strogy corvettes of project 20380 for the Baltic fleet, as well as the Gremyashchy and Provorny of project 20385. The Amur Shipyard is building four corvettes of project 20380 for the Pacific fleet - the Sovershenny, Gremyashchy, Russian Hero Aldar Tsydenjapov and Rezky.

The Black Sea fleet received two frigates of project 11356 (the Admiral Grigorovich and the Admiral Essen). The third frigate for the fleet, the Admiral Makarov is undergoing government acceptance tests. The second troika of frigates of project 11356 will be built for the Indian Navy which will also receive technologies for the construction of such frigates.

The lead frigate of project 22350, the Admiral Gorshkov, is undergoing test trials. The second frigate of the project, the Admiral Kasatonov will be floated in the third quarter of 2017.

Frigates of projects 11356 and 22350 are armed with Caliber missiles and can strike at surface warships and ground targets. Navy experts say the serial production of corvettes and frigates at shipyards of the United Shipbuilding Corporation decreases construction costs. Besides, the rejection of big displacements is vital as Russian defense appropriations decrease.

In the interview, Rogozin spoke about prospects of the Perspective Airborne Complex of Long-Range Aviation (PAK DA). "As for the strategic bomber, we completed unique work at Kazan Aircraft Works and used a new technological basis to restore the electron-beam welding. It is necessary to create a titanium center wing on which the Tu-160 technology has always been based. We shall definitely restore the craft on a new technical basis with new electronics and armaments.

"But it does not mean that we abandoned plans to create the Perspective Airborne Complex of Long-range Aviation. Work is beginning on it and on also on the perspective airborne complex of military-transport aviation and a medium airlifter. The decision has been recently made in Sochi. We shall build it and the aircraft will appear on the threshold of 2023-2024," Rogozin said.

"Later this year we plan to take off a small light transport aircraft. For our compact army it is important to have a possibility of rapid re-deployment to any theater of warfare where a threat emerges. Therefore, we shall repel any aggression of potential adversary not by big numbers, but with skills and mobility of our armed forces," the deputy prime minister said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier told a meeting which drafted the armaments project for the armed forces up to 2025 that the new state armaments program for 2018-2025 will increase the combat potential of the Russian armed forces.