
**Information on the Complexes of the Strategic Offensive Forces of the USSR That
Were Presented During the Exercise ZAPAD 81**

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During the exercise "ZAPAD 81", Marshall of the Soviet Union Ustinov, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union, introduced the following complexes of the strategic offensive forces of the USSR to the invited Defense Ministers of the Socialist states:

1. The RSD-20 medium-range strategic missile complex
2. The "Kiev" Project 1143 aircraft carrier.

Both complexes constitute major focal points for strategic reconnaissance by the US and all of the other NATO countries.

Their protective concealment from enemy reconnaissance is accomplished by an effective system of security and deception at the sites and when deployed prior to and at the beginning of a potential war.

Comrade Minister Ustinov requested that these two strategic systems be treated as classified command information and that information on them be restricted to a very limited number of personnel.

Even in the Soviet army, only leading cadre are provided information about these two system.

I. RSD-20 strategic medium-range missile complex (NATO designator: SS-20)

1. Strategic designation

- Participation in first and follow-on massed nuclear weapon strikes by strategic offensive forces of the Soviet Union (Strategic Rocket Forces, missile-equipped nuclear submarines, Long-Range Aviation)

- Destruction of objects of military and strategic-military importance on the territory of all European NATO countries and in the maritime regions adjacent to them.

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2. Characteristics

- The missile complex has been in the inventory of the Strategic Rocket Forces of the Soviet Union since 1970.
- It is characterized by long range, high mobility, rapid operational readiness, and great accuracy; belongs to the 3rd generation of this missile system.
- Used against area and point targets.
- The US and the other NATO countries do not currently have any missile complexes that are even nearly equivalent, nor will they for the next several years.

3. Technical specifications

- | | |
|--|---|
| - Range: | approx. 4,500 km |
| - Launch vehicle: | three-axle special vehicle |
| - Weight of launch vehicle with missile: | 84 tons |
| - Launch weight | 37 tons |
| - Warhead: | multiple warhead, comprising
3 individual warheads |
| - Nuclear yield of each individual warhead | megatons |
| - Mean deviation of individual warhead in target: | 300 meters |
| - March speed of launch vehicle with missile: | 50 km/h |
| - Achievement of launch readiness after march: | 40 - 60 minutes |
| - Launch readiness of missiles from prepared position: | after 6-8 minutes |

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4. Operational capabilities

- In terms of organization, the rocket complex is divided into regiments, each with 3 departments, with a total of 9 missile complexes.
- Each regiment can destroy 27 targets with the 9 missile complexes.
- Each regiment has enciphered information on a total of 1,000 targets. After making the appropriate inputs, each missile complex can be re-targeted within 15 - 20 seconds.
- For each regiment, 2 - 3 or more launch areas are prepared and precisely dimensioned in the western and southwestern part of the USSR.
- No engineer-type preparations of the launch sites are required. The missiles are launched from a vertical position on the launch vehicle, which is brought into position on the paths or clearings within 6 - 8 minutes.
- Preparation of the missiles for launch and launch are conducted by remote control from the department command point.
- During a period of heightened tension or prior to the beginning of a potential war, the regiment performs continuous maneuvers between the launch areas; the regiment can operate independently from location.
- Personnel are housed and fed in special vehicles that were constructed specifically for the Strategic Rocket Forces and that meet all requirements of military life.

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II. "Kiev" Project 1143 aircraft carrier

1. Strategic designation

The "Kiev" aircraft carrier in a potential war operates in the inventory of corresponding operative fleet groups and accomplishes the following missions:

- Destroy offensive aircraft carriers of the US and other NATO countries on their march routes to operating areas and in operating areas.
- Seek and destroy missile-equipped nuclear submarines of the US and other NATO countries on their march routes to operating areas and in operating areas.
- Cover Soviet missile-equipped nuclear submarines during their deployment in operating areas and during their return to support points.

- Support Soviet amphibious troops during their landing on and occupation of coastal regions.

3. Technical specifications

- Construction began: 1971
- Commissioned: 1976
- Displacement: 41,370 tons
- Length: 270 meters
- Width of light deck: 50 meters
- Cruising range: 14,850 km
- Speed: 58 km/h
- Draft: 10.5 meters
- Crew: 1,880 persons

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3. Weapons

- VSTOL aircraft and helicopters: 38 YAK-38M light fighter-bombers (radius of action: 195 km)
or
36 Ka-27 anti-submarine helicopters (radius of action: 120 km)
- Missile complex to engage offensive aircraft carriers: "Basalt" system with 18 P-500 missiles (range: 500 km)
- Missile complex to engage missile-equipped nuclear submarines: "Vikhr" system with a range of 25 km and submerged depth of 500 meters
- Anti-aircraft missile complex for air defense: "Sturm" anti-aircraft missile complex with a range of 33.5 km; "Osa-M" anti-aircraft complex with a range of 9 km

4. Reconnaissance systems

Communications intelligence and radar reconnaissance at distances of up to 800 km

5. Electronic warfare systems

"Koltzo" system with a range of 300 km

The aircraft carrier "Kiev" has covered 240,000 km on the world's oceans in the five years since she was commissioned and has accomplished all of the missions assigned to her with good and very good results.

[Translated by Grace Leonard for The Cold War International History Project]