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<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2016/10/20/489965/Russian-nuclear-warships-enter-UK-waters>

Russian nuclear warships entering UK waters in 'a show of force'

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The Admiral Kuznetsov, photographed off the Norwegian coast on Monday, is heading for the English Channel with seven other warships.

A fleet of Russian nuclear-powered warships and fighter jets has reached the North Sea and is scheduled to enter UK territorial waters early Friday, amid rising tensions between Moscow and the Western military alliance of NATO.

The Russian flotilla, including the flagship aircraft carrier the Admiral Kuznetsov, should sail down the English Channel before noon on Friday, Britain's Ministry of Defense said on Thursday.

The Russian task force is believed to be on its way to the Mediterranean Sea to support the war on terrorists in Aleppo, Syria, according to Western military analysts.

"It's a show of force and a show of capabilities," said Peter Felstead, editor of *Jane's Defence Weekly*.

"In terms of strike missions, they [the Russians] could just as easily have conducted them with the land-based aircraft they already have in Syria," told CNN.

Pyotr Klintsevich, first deputy of Russian Senate's Defense and Security Committee, said the Russian-fleet was armed and ready for combat missions.

"We understand that such ships are armed, and that they did not just go for a walk with a walking stick," he said.

"The fact that today the military ships, including a first-class vessel, go forward - it's part of combat training tasks," he added.

UK Defense Secretary Michael Fallon said on Wednesday, "When these ships near our waters we will man-mark them every step of the way."

"We will be watching as part of our steadfast commitment to keep Britain safe," he vowed.

Britain's Royal Navy has reportedly dispatched its advanced warships, the Type 45 destroyer HMS Duncan, along with the Type 23 frigate HMS Richmond, to track the Russian vessels.



The Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov with HMS Richmond, a Type 23 Duke Class frigate

A UK Ministry of Defense spokesman said the Royal Navy is closely monitoring the Russian vessels.

“When these ships near our waters we will man-mark them every step of the way. We will be watching as part of our steadfast commitment to keep Britain safe,” he stated.

NATO said in a statement Russia had the right to operate in international waters, but added that the Western military alliance will “monitor the Russian ships as they head for the Mediterranean.”

Russian military experts have denounced the Royal Navy as "weak" and stated Britain is "scared" of Russian nuclear-powered warships - which are due to pass within just one mile (1.6 kilometer) of England.

The Russian Navy said a statement on October 15 when the ships left Russia the voyage was "to ensure naval presence in the important areas of the World Ocean."



A Royal Navy lookout on HMS Richmond in the North Sea watching Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov (L) being escorted on transit to the Mediterranean Sea, October 19, 2016

Relations between London and Moscow have been tense over their differences on the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria.

Russia has been engaged in an aerial campaign against terrorist groups in Syria upon a request by the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad for more than one year.

The UK, along with the United States and some of their allies, has been conducting a so-called anti-terror campaign in Syria and neighboring Iraq for more than two years.

However, they have done little to stop the Takfiri terrorists; instead their air raids have killed many civilians, and caused extensive damage to the country's infrastructure.

Russia along with the Syrian armed forces, have inflicted heavy losses to the foreign-sponsored militants in the Arab country. Their victories worried the West that has actively been seeking the ouster of President Assad.

Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May arrives for an European Union leaders summit on October 20, 2016 at the European Council, in Brussels. (Photo by AFP)

The Russian warships will pass close to the British shore less than 24 hours after UK Prime Minister Theresa May called on European leaders to unite against Moscow and stop what she referred to as "Russian aggression" in Syria.

"It is vital that we work together to continue to put pressure on Russia to stop these sickening atrocities in Syria," she said on Thursday.