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Russia's new ICBM about to materialize

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Russia conducted a successful launch of Bulava intercontinental ballistic missile on Friday morning. It was the third launch of the new ICBM this year. Two more launches are required to pass Bulava into service. The two launches need to be successful to let this happen.

The tests of the Bulava missile continue for seven years already. Today's launch has become the 17th - since 2004. Ten of these launches were successful. The first three launches were successful. The following three - in 2006 - ended with failures.

The launches at the end of 2008 and 2009 led to negative results too. Soon afterwards, Russian and foreign media started saying that the country was supposedly no longer capable of building ICBMs. Specialists urged everyone not to come to such conclusions. They said that the tests were conducted to find out the flaws which would then be removed.

In 2010, all the launches of the new missile ended successfully. Officials with the defense ministry said that it would be possible to pass Bulava into service after five successful launches. Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov stated after the tests in July that one could already launch the serial production of Bulava.

The skeptics, who declared Bulava an "unsuccessful project," do not say anything now.

Today's launch was conducted from the Yuri Dolgoruky nuclear submarine.

"The missile was launched from under the water in the White Sea, near Kamchatka peninsula. The flight of the missile was conducted as planned. The warheads arrived to the range ground on time," official spokesman for Russia's Defense Ministry Igor Konashenkov said.

The sea-based intercontinental ballistic missile R-30 Bulava (RSM-56) is a three-stage hard fuel missile. The missile is equipped with the dispensing warhead. The warheads of the missile are capable of changing the altitude of the flight trajectory. They can strike the targets at a distance of up to 9,000 kilometers. The power of each warhead makes up 100-150 kilotons.

Yuri Dolgoruky nuclear cruiser is a Borei class submarine, project 955. The construction of the submarine began in 1996. The submarine currently goes through the process of tests. The submarine is going to be passed into service together with Bulava.