

Russian nuclear submarines ramp up combat patrols to Cold War levels amid tensions with West

Underwater fleet is now at strengths last seen during Soviet Union, claims top commander

By Patrick Knox

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RUSSIAN subs are patrolling the seas at levels last seen during the Cold War, it has been claimed today.

Admiral Vladimir Korolyov, the commander-in-chief of the Russian navy, said his submarine crews spent more than 3,000 days under the water last year alone.



Commander looks up the periscope of Russia's Yury Dolgoruky nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine.

In an interview a state news agency spokesman, Admiral Korolyov, bragged: "It's an excellent level." When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the Russian navy was forced to scrap many relatively new ships.

Others lay rusting in harbors.

But now Vladimir Putin has pumped so much money into the military, Russia now claims it is once again a power to be reckoned with.

Meanwhile Royal Navy Trafalgar class hunter-killer subs are being kept busy hunting and tracking their Russian counterparts on behalf of NATO.

The increase in Russia's military capacity comes amid tensions with the West over Ukraine, the Baltic states and Moscow's meddling in the Syrian civil war.



Russia's Yury Dolgoruky nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine prepares to leave the Russian Northern Fleet base in the town of Gadzhiyevo last week



The Yasen-class submarine is launched

Admiral Korolyov was also speaking after the launch of a new Yasen-class nuclear-powered attack submarine, called the Kazan, which is so quiet it is difficult to track.

He said: "It represents the cutting edge of nuclear submarine design."

The Russian navy is planning seven Yasen-class submarines armed with torpedoes and long-range Kalibr cruise missiles.

The cruise missiles have already been tested during the Russian campaign in Syria.

In November the Sun revealed how multiple nuclear-powered Russian submarines were being hunted off the UK coast.