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NATIONAL MARITIME POLICY OF RUSSIA ON THE PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN REGIONAL ROUTES

This research is devoted to a topical subject – implementation of the national maritime policy in the Pacific and Indian Ocean regional areas. The current political process in Southeast Asia strongly dictates Russia that it shall pursue an effective maritime policy in this region, ensuring its significant role and place in the new realities of the geopolitical space. Rapid changes in the post-Westphalian world order have significantly changed the balance of power in the world. This circumstance places increased demands on the effectiveness of Russia's not only political but also economic component. The Russian Federation, as a great maritime power whose maritime potential ensures implementation and protection of its national interests in any area of the world's oceans, serves as an important factor of international stability and strategic deterrence. This fact makes it possible to conduct an independent national maritime policy as an equal participant in the international maritime activities. In this regard, the tasks set in the presidential Decree № 327 “On Approval of the Fundamentals of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Activities for the Period until 2030,” dated 25 July 2017 require their practical implementation. The effectiveness of Russia's defense of its political and economic interests depends on the fulfillment of these tasks. Formation of the Indo-Pacific region (IPR) opens up new opportunities for Russia in the implementation of its national maritime policy in this maritime zone. The article discusses in detail the combat composition of the fleet, the construction of new types of ships and their capabilities. The analysis of this problem allows us to outline the main ways of its resolution.

Key words: *Russian national Maritime policy, Kalibr cruise missile carriers, non-nuclear weapons, PLAR, Aug, stealth technology, Indo-Pacific region, far sea zone, NATO.*

In order to protect its interests and ensure its influence on the world military and political situation, the Russian Federation exercises the indisputable right to a naval presence in the strategically important areas of the world's oceans and display of its flag and military force. At the same time, Russia is strictly guided by the principles and norms of international law. Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 327 of July 20, 2017 “On Approval of the Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Activities for the Period until 2030” of July 25, 2017 defines that in the field of naval activities, the state policy is a set of measures united by a common plan aimed at ensuring and implementing Russia's national interests in the world ocean [3].

In our opinion, one of the key directions for Russia in implementing its maritime policy in South-East Asia is the **Pacific and Indo-Pacific regional directions** formulated in the Russian Maritime Doctrine. There is no doubt that this region has a powerful economic and military-political potential, affects all modern international political processes, and Russia's place here should ensure the implementation of the tasks set by the President of the Russian Federation in Decree No. 327 of July 20, 2017 in the field of Maritime activities [3]. At the same time, it is important to take into account the fact that many countries of the Asia – Pacific region are interested in forming a new geopolitical region on the map – the **Indo-Pacific region (IPR)** [5]. But what is the role and place of Russia in the formation and development of the Indo-Pacific region? To answer this question, it is necessary to consider the problem in two aspects: political-economic and military

Political-economic aspect. Despite the fact that the term “Indo-Pacific region” is accepted by the expert community and the political establishment in the West in Russia issues related to it are not discussed in expert or political circles. Obviously, there is a serious explanation for this. We can assume that the birth of a new geopolitical region in some sense goes against the global integration project “Greater Eurasia – a partnership for all,” a project that should be open to all countries of the Eurasian space, including European countries. When announcing this project at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June 2016, Vladimir Putin said: «We and our partners believe that the Eurasian economic Union can become one of the centers for forming a broader integration circuit” [4]. In addition, there is another aspect of this issue – active political and economic support for China as a strategic partner, which does not allow us to actively support the development of the Indian-Pacific region.

This is the contradiction of Russia's foreign policy. Considering the concepts of foreign policy and economic development of the states of the region, we can assume that inclusion of these countries in the “Greater Eurasia” project would have a favorable impact on the overall development of the project, as well as on the economy of Russia as a whole. If the territories of the countries are combined, various transport routes will be available: land and sea, including the waters along the Asian coasts of “Greater Eurasia.” In this case, the Russian Far East, which

occupies the most favorable geopolitical position, will be located at the junction of these territories in case of unification, giving Russia significant benefits as an economic cluster.

This is another step for Russia to regain its historical role as the center of Eurasia (Heartland).

In these circumstances, Russia's participation in the formation and development of the Indo-Pacific region becomes a necessity. Moreover, Russia should become a key player here, creating its own economic development strategy that would maximally express its geopolitical interests in this region. By combining the concepts of the "Northern sea route" and "Greater Eurasia," combining the efforts of the key players such as China and India, with which Russia has long-term favorable relations, South Korea, Indonesia, Japan, and all the economic and political resources of Southeast Asian countries, it would be possible to achieve high economic results. But Russia's participation in the formation and development of the Indo-Pacific region is impossible without the maritime component, as an effective tool for influencing the state's foreign policy activities.

Military-political aspect. At the same time, the Asia-Pacific region is increasingly becoming a zone of military rivalry between the countries of the region. This is an additional factor that complicates the progressive development of trade, economic and political ties among the IPR member countries. What role has history prepared for Russia in these conditions? Naturally, there is no need to talk about any role without a naval component that provides a foreign policy aspect. This is well understood by both political and expert circles in Russia and abroad. Naturally, it is necessary to look for fundamentally new approaches to an effective resolution of the problems of ensuring the political and maritime activities of the state in the far sea zones, such as the Indian-Pacific region in the near, medium and long-term perspectives.

Presidential Decree No. 327 of July 20, 2017 sets out the task of "maintaining strategic stability and international law and order in the world's oceans, including through the effective use of the Navy as one of the main instruments of the Russian Federation's foreign policy" [1]. The doctrine emphasizes that an important component of national maritime policy in the Pacific and Indo-Pacific regional areas is strengthening of positive interaction with the countries of the region turning it into a zone of peace, stability and good-neighborliness, ensuring the naval presence of the Russian Federation in these distant sea zones on a periodic basis or as necessary [1]. It is almost impossible to perform these tasks with the existing combat forces and means either in the short or medium term perspectives.

During the meeting on the development of the armed forces and defense industry in Sochi on December 2, 2019, Vladimir Putin stressed that the Navy will receive two dozen surface, underwater and auxiliary ships and more than four hundred units of missile and torpedo weapons. The Russian President mentioned that these will be 23 carriers of Kalibr cruise missiles, hypersonic Zircons,

new-generation submarines such as Borey-A and Yasen-M, as well as surface ships of the far sea zone. Their coming will ensure our permanent presence in the far sea zones, including the Pacific and Indian Ocean regional destinations.

Recent trips of heavy nuclear missile cruiser “Peter the Great” to the shores of Cuba and Venezuela or visit of our rocket carrier “Moscow” to the Republic of South Africa do not mean the constant presence of our fleet in the distant maritime zones, as the zone of its responsibility are the Barents, Baltic, Japanese and Black seas and only partially the Mediterranean sea. The tasks that the detachments of warships of the Pacific and Black sea fleets solved in the distant ocean zone in the framework of combat training and naval presence in the operationally important areas and of ensuring the safety of civilian navigation in the Horn of Africa and near the Somalia coast about 10 years ago are not an indicator of a permanent presence in the Indian Ocean region. Although some combat experience was accumulated and it was useful in 2014-2018 in campaigns near the shores of Syria.

The main reason for this is the systemic crisis that Russia experienced in the 1990s. Changes began in 2015, when the small missile ships (MRCs) of the Caspian flotilla project 21631 Buyan-M and 11661K Gepard struck with Kalibrs at terrorist targets in Syria, located at a distance of 1.5 thousand km. It was a spectacular and demonstrative blow for the United States and its allies. A total of 26 missiles were fired at 11 targets. It was a turning point in the modern history of Russian Navy. For the first time ships have struck coastal targets. Moreover, these were the Caspian flotilla ships, which military theorists in the United States and NATO did not take into account because of their location outside of distant sea zones.

This fact has shown that Russia possesses long-range non-nuclear weapons and is ready to hit any target, not only in distant sea zones, but also in any land areas. Moreover, this can be done massively, which plays a crucial role in a combat situation. At the moment, the project 21631 Buyan-M and 11661K Gepard ships, as well as the new project 22800 Karakurt-type MRCs, make up the main strike force of the Caspian flotilla, the Baltic and Black sea fleets. They can potentially hit targets in Asia – from Syria to India – and across Europe.

During a meeting on the development of the armed forces and defense industry in Sochi (December 2, 2020), the President of Russia announced that the number of Kalibr carriers will double by 2023. This will not only be small rocket ships, frigates of the far sea zone 20380 and 11356R/M, diesel-electric submarines of the Varshavyanka type project 636 and multi-purpose nuclear submarines with cruise missiles (PLARK) of the Yasen project 885 (08850), but also support vessels, such as patrol icebreakers built according to the new «open» stern concept for the Navy (new types of nuclear icebreakers are planned to be delivered to the Navy after 2020: project 10570 – for the year 2022 and project 10510 – for the year 2024).

Will all the planned activities and the arrival of cruise missile carriers ensure the priority of the presence of the Russian fleet in the far sea zones? Of course,

not. Therefore, at the meeting in Sochi, Vladimir Putin focused on the need for advanced development of the fleet. Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 327 of July 20, 2017 requires that we become the second power among the world navies. The available forces and resources are not enough to fulfill this task, we need ships of the far sea zone – aircraft carriers, frigates, support and supply ships.

Due to the low autonomy of navigation – 15 days, small missile boats of the project 22800 of Karakurt-type in the strategic plan will not be able to solve the problem of permanent presence in distant sea zones. Experts agree that they were built as an alternative during the delay in the construction of frigates of project 11356, for which it is necessary to replace Ukrainian gas turbine installations with domestic analogues. Previously, it was supposed to build aircraft carriers, but they are facing problems that cannot be solved in the near future.

The leading Institute in the field of ship design, the Krylovsky state scientific center, and the main designer of the so-called “big platforms,” the Nevsky PKB, have at least several projects: light, medium and heavy, which can be armed with both conventional and nuclear power plants. But for operations in the far sea zone, it is preferable to have a heavy nuclear ship. At the Krylovsky center, this is an aircraft carrier of project 23650 Storm and at the Nevsky PKB – project 11430 Lamantin with a displacement of 70 to 90 thousand tons and a length of more than 300 meters. They can be used for up to 60 to 90 aircrafts, including unmanned ones. The cost of developing and building just one aircraft carrier is estimated by experts at 300-400 billion rubles. The amount is currently very large and if we take into account the fact that the Navy needs not one, but at least 3 to 4 such ships, not only in the medium, but also in the long term, Russia will not receive them.

The problem is compounded by the fact that aircraft carriers need a support group, i.e., in tactical and operational terms, it should be an aircraft carrier strike group (AUG). A heavy nuclear-powered missile cruiser of project 1144 Orlan-type “Peter the Great” (in combat formation) was designed for “Admiral Kuznetsov.” In the recent past, the Navy had four such ships, and currently there are only two left. The only cruiser “Admiral Lazarev” (former nuclear-powered cruiser “Frunze”) is withdrawn from combat service in the Pacific fleet. In the Northern fleet, “Admiral Nakhimov” is in Severodvinsk awaiting modernization. But the carriers of the project Storm and Lamantin need support and cover ships.

Such ships exist, but are still only in development. This is a nuclear-powered destroyer of project 23560 Leader. But it, like promising aircraft carriers, exists only in the layout. The design of the ship is interesting because it is a plan aimed at the future. It is designed using stealth technology: all weapons are removed inside, the contours and superstructures of the ship are made accordingly. Moreover, the ship is planned to house an arsenal of promising weapons: hypersonic missiles «Zircon», anti-aircraft missile system S-500 «Prometheus», the latest

artillery and torpedo weapons. At the same time, the autonomy of navigation of the Leader destroyers will be limited only by the physical capabilities of the crew. What is important: the power of the ship's nuclear power plant will be comparable to that installed on the most modern American destroyer Zumwalt. This will allow in the future installing on the ship weapons based on new physical principles: laser or electromagnetic guns.

These promising ships exist only in the project. Therefore, the tasks of the fleet's presence as an effective tool for Russia's influence in the far-off sea zones are difficult to implement. The objective reasons for that are: the lack of sufficient forces and resources, including naval bases in remote areas of the world's oceans, as well as restrictions on the autonomy of the ships. The existing ship composition of the three fleets and the Caspian flotilla of Russia do not allow us to assert the opposite.

However, the tasks set out in Presidential Decree No. 327 on the effective use of the fleet as one of the main tools of Russia's foreign policy are urgent and require practical implementation. Moreover, it is required by the historical existence of the Russian state, the effectiveness of defending its political and economic interests. According to Vladimir Putin, the share of modern weapons in the Navy is 68% [2]. Therefore, the progressive development of the fleet and its technological re-equipment forces NATO countries to reckon with it. This is evidenced by the exits of Russian ships to the far sea zone. They distract the forces and resources of the probable enemy. As a rule, the output of ships as a strike force is carried out as part of a group of escort ships and submarines. In addition, even small missile boats of the project 22800 of Karakurt type can affect the geopolitical situation in the world.

The effective use of the fleet as one of the main tools of Russia's foreign policy is possible through the restoration of naval bases in remote sea zones. These are the bases (points of logistics) that the Soviet Union used to have in Camran (Vietnam), Cuba, Socotra island (the Arabian sea), Berbera (Somalia), the Dahlak Archipelago (o. Nokra), etc., as well as the organization of operational squadrons of permanent presence in Maritime zones, such as the former 5th operational squadron of ships (5th operational flotilla), based in the Mediterranean sea. Today, we do not have as many naval bases as the United States. The Tartus naval base in Syria allows us to control the Mediterranean theater of operations, but in the Indo-Pacific region, including off the coast of America, the Russian fleet can only be present sporadically. It is possible to restore bases in Vietnam and Cuba. There is a concept of the necessity to restore them. At least, this task is feasible, but it rests on political problems of a geopolitical nature. All the problems covered in this article are relevant and need to be solved. Therefore, the issues that were raised during the meeting on the development of the armed forces and defense industry in Sochi on December 2, 2019, are a priority for the development of the fleet.

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