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**TOP-SECRET NUCLEAR-CAPABLE SUBMARINE IS CODE-NAMED KANYON BY THE PENTAGON**

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09.12.2016

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Daily Mail, 08 Dec 2016

Russia has tested a terrifying new 'drone' submarine capable of carrying nuclear warheads unmanned within range of the US, it has emerged.

The top-secret nuclear-capable sub, code-named Kanyon by the Pentagon, is feared to have a range of up to 6,200 miles with top speeds of 56 knots.

US security officials detected the test on November 27 after it was launched from a separate Sarov-class submarine though the location has not been revealed.

Rumours of the development of the weapon first emerged in September amid fears it could carry megaton-class warheads - the largest weapons in existence, according to the Washington Free Beacon.

It comes after pictures emerged of Vladimir Putin's 50ft underwater 'robot' that can imitate any submarine in the world and carry out 600-mile spying missions 1,800ft below the surface.

Russian military designers say their 'submarine imitator', called Surrogat, will be capable of travelling at speeds of up to 24 knots for hours on end.

Powered by lithium-ion battery, it will be able to imitate both conventional and nuclear-powered submarines thanks to its 'modular design' which allows it to 'change its functionality'.

It comes as Russia continues to build up its forces on Europe's borders amid heightened tensions between president Vladimir Putin and the West.

It would be used to help Russian navy training but could also be used for 'mapping and reconnaissance' trips, according to Russia's Rubin Central Design Bureau for Marine Engineering.

State media agency TASS reported the bureau as saying the sub's 'ability to carry towed sonar arrays for various applications will help realistically reproduce an enemy submarine's physical fields - acoustic and electromagnetic.

'Today, combat submarines have to be involved for exercises or tests and this practice distracts them from carrying out their basic missions.

'The use of an unmanned imitator will help avoid this and cut the cost of drills. Besides, a submarine without a crew reduces risks while keeping simulated scenarios realistic,' Rubin CEO Igor Vilnit told TASS.

'This apparatus will be distinguished by its simplicity in operation and the low cost of its maintenance and upgrade.

'Now we're holding consultations with Navy representatives to make the imitator fully meet the Navy's requirements,' he said.

In training, the provides for up to 15-16 hours of naval exercises and is capable of 'reproducing an enemy submarine's manoeuvring, including at high speed, over this time', TASS reports.

The unmanned sub will have a displacement of about 40 tons, a cruising range of about 600 miles at a speed of 5 knots and a maximum speed of more than 24 knots.

It is also being designed to withstand a maximum immersion depth of 600 meters.

While negotiations are taking place with the Russian Navy, the design bureau has not ruled out selling the submarines to foreign customers in the future.

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It comes days after it emerged that the Kremlin is set to equip its tanks with advanced new reconnaissance drones, which will be able to circle up to 100 metres and stay in the air indefinitely.

The devices, named 'Pterodactyls', increase Russian ground forces' capabilities at a time when it is building up troops on Europe's borders.

Russian Armata tanks will be equipped with the drones, which will be powered by a cable, and will increase the distance at which they can identify targets.

It comes at a time of heightened tensions between Russia and Ukraine, after the latter began two days of missile tests near Crimea.

The reports emerged as Russia put its air defence forces on high alert and deployed warships in the Black Sea.

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Kaynak/Source: