

Russian Shipbuilder Sets Post-Soviet Record by Building 4 Nuke Subs Simultaneously

By [Matthew Bodner](#)

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One of Russia's most prominent military shipbuilders, Sevmash in Severodvinsk, has set a post-Soviet production record for the most submarines built at one time, with four atomic-powered boats under construction in their yards.

Sevmash is now building two new Borei- and Yasen-class submarines each, a rate of production unheard of in modern Russian history, according to a statement published on the shipyard's website Tuesday.

The new vessels are key to Russia's two-pronged submarine modernization drive, begun under President Vladimir Putin as part of a general rearmament effort.

The Borei-class submarines are Russia's next-generation "boomers" — large submarines packed with nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that lurk in the safety of the ocean depths, ensuring that Russia will always have a reserve of missiles to fire at its enemies if its land-based strategic nuclear forces are obliterated.

In this role, the Borei-class takes over for the now-retired massive Typhoon-class submarines — the largest ever built, with a length of 175 meters and a displacement of 50,000 tons. The Borei-class displaces a mere 24,000 tons, but is 170 meters in length.

Though design work on the Borei-class submarine began in the 1980s, the first ship was not laid down until 1996 and didn't enter service until 2013 — making it the first new Russian nuclear missile submarine fielded since the Cold War.

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Meanwhile, Russia's new Yasen-class belongs to a group of submarines known as hunter-killers. They are designed for a number of missions — such as hunting enemy boomers, defending Russia's own, or sinking enemy surface ships.

Designed in the 1990s to replace the Akula-, Oscar- and Alfa-class submarines, the Yasens are said to be some of the most advanced attack submarines in the world. Despite their size, they only have a crew complement of 90 sailors, leading some to speculate that the ships are highly automated.

Yasens can travel up to 20 knots while remaining relatively quiet, and if need be can race up to 35 or 40 knots, according to international affairs journal *The National Interest* — a very high speed for a large submarine.

Contact the author at m.bodner@imedia.ru

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