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Today

## Russian strategic bombers land in Venezuela

By: Ria Novosti on: 10.09.2008 [19:43 ] (66 reads)

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Russian strategic bombers land in Venezuela  
21:58 | 10/ 09/ 2008

MOSCOW, September 10 (RIA Novosti) - Two Russian Tu-160 Blackjack strategic bombers have landed at a military airfield in Venezuela, Russia's Defense Ministry said on Wednesday.

The Tu-160 Blackjack is a supersonic, variable-geometry heavy bomber, designed to strike strategic targets with nuclear and conventional weapons deep in continental theatres of operation.

The bombers will conduct a number of training flights over neutral waters in the next few days and later return to their home base in Russia, the ministry said in a statement.

The planes landed at Venezuela's Libertador airfield and during the flight to the South American country were accompanied by NATO fighters.

"The flight itinerary extended over neutral waters in the Arctic and Atlantic oceans. The Russian bombers were accompanied by NATO fighters," the statement said.

Russia earlier announced it would send a naval task force from the Northern Fleet on a tour of duty in the Atlantic Ocean and participate in joint naval drills with the Venezuelan navy in November.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said on September 1 that Venezuela welcomed the Russian Navy and Air Force on its territory.

"If the Russian Navy arrives in the Caribbean or the Atlantic it may certainly visit Venezuela, we have no problems with that and would warmly welcome it," Chavez said.

"And if Russian long-range bombers should need to land in Venezuela we would not object to that either. We will also welcome them," he said.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20080910/116695660.html>

## 2 Russian strategic bombers land in Venezuela

Posted on Wed, Sep. 10, 2008print email

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Two Russian strategic bombers landed in Venezuela on Wednesday as part of military maneuvers, the government said, announcing an unprecedented deployment to the territory of a new ally at a time of increasingly tense relations with the U.S.

Russia's Defense Ministry said the two Tu-160 bombers flew to Venezuela on a training mission. It said in a statement carried by the Russian news wires that the planes will conduct training flights over neutral waters over the next few days before heading back to Russia.

Also Wednesday, NATO said it ended a routine exercise by four naval ships in the Black Sea. Russia had denounced the exercise as part of a Western military buildup sparked by the Georgia conflict.

The alliance said the four ships - U.S. frigate USS Taylor and three similar vessels from Spain, Germany and Poland - were moving back to the Mediterranean Sea after the 18-day mission.

In Moscow, Defense Ministry spokesman Alexander Drobyshevsky refused to say how long the Venezuela deployment will last or say whether the planes carried any weapons.

The military said NATO fighters escorted the two Russian bombers on their way to Venezuela.

The apparently retaliatory move follows the U.S. deployment of warships to deliver aid to the former Soviet nation of Georgia, barely a month after Russian armor and aircraft crushed the Georgian military in a five-day war.

Earlier this week, Russia said it will send a naval squadron and long-range patrol planes to Venezuela in November for a joint military exercise in the Caribbean.

The deployment of planes will be certain to anger Washington. Relations between the U.S. and Russia have been badly strained by the short war last month between Russia and U.S.-allied Georgia.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/americas/story/680525.html>

### **Tu-160 Blackjack Strategic Bomber, Russia**

Crew4Wingspan, Wings Forward55.7mWingspan With Wings  
Swept35.6mLength54.1mHeight13.1mMaximum Take-Off Weight275tNormal  
Combat Load Weight9,000tFull specifications

The Tu-160 supersonic strategic bomber was manufactured by the Tupolev Aircraft Research and Engineering Complex Joint Stock Company in Moscow and the Kazan based Gorbunov Aircraft Production Association in Tatarstan from 1980 to 1992. Production has since been restarted and a Tu-160 was delivered to the Russian Air Force in May 2000. 14 aircraft are now in service in Russia.

One unarmed aircraft crashed in September 2003, the first crash since the aircraft entered service. Two aircraft are under construction and the first is to be delivered to the Russian Air Force in 2007. The Ukraine destroyed the last of its fleet in February 2001.

"The Tu-160 Blackjack can carry nuclear and conventional weapons including long-range nuclear missiles."The purpose of the aircraft is the delivery of nuclear and conventional weapons deep in continental theatres of operation. The aircraft has all-weather, day-and-night capability and can operate at all geographical latitudes.

The performance of the Russian Tu-160 is often compared to the US B-1B. The aircraft has an operational range of 14,000km and a service ceiling of 16,000m. The maximum flight speed is 2,000km/h at high altitude and 1,030km/h at low altitude.

Kazan Aircraft Production Organisation (KAPO) has been given a contract to upgrade the Russian Air Force's 15 Tu-160 bombers. The Tupolev upgrade package will include new targeting systems, upgraded cruise missiles and electronic warfare suite. The first upgraded aircraft was delivered in July 2006.

#### **BOMBER DESIGN**

The bomber's airframe has a distinctive appearance, with the wing and fuselage gradually integrated into a single-piece configuration. The airframe structure is based on a titanium beam, all-welded torsion box. Throughout the entire airframe, all the main airframe members are secured to the titanium beam.

The variable geometry outer tapered wings sweep back from 20° to 65° in order to provide high-performance flight characteristics at both supersonic and subsonic speeds. The tail surfaces, both horizontal and vertical, are one piece and all-moving.

The Tu-160 uses fly-by-wire controls. The aircraft is equipped with three-strut landing gear, a tail wheel and a brake parachute. For take-off, the aircraft requires a concrete runway of 3,050m.

#### TU-160 COCKPIT

The crew of the Tu-160 comprises a pilot and co-pilot, a navigator, and an operator. The four crew are equipped with zero / zero ejection seats, which provide the crew with the option of ejecting safely throughout the entire range of altitudes and air speeds, including when the aircraft is parked.

In the cockpit and cabins, all the data is presented on conventional electro-mechanical indicators and monitors, and not head-up displays or cathode ray tube displays. The Tu-160 has a control stick for flight control as used in a fighter aircraft – rather than control wheels or yokes, which are usually used in large transporter or bomber aircraft.

#### WEAPONS

The Tu-160 can carry nuclear and conventional weapons including long-range nuclear missiles. The missiles are accommodated on multi-station launchers in each of the two weapons bays.

The Tu-160 is capable of carrying the strategic cruise missile Kh-55MS, which is known in the West by the NATO designation and codename AS-15 Kent. Up to 12 Kh-55MS missiles can be carried, six in each bay. The Kh-55MS is propelled by a turbofan engine. The maximum range is 3,000km, and it is armed with a 200kt nuclear warhead.

"The purpose of the Tu-160 Blackjack strategic bomber is the delivery of nuclear and conventional weapons deep in continental theatres of operation." The weapons bays are also fitted with launchers for the Kh-15P, which has the NATO designation and codename AS-16 Kickback. The Kh-15P Kickback has solid rocket fuel propulsion, which gives a range up to 200km. The Kickback can be fitted with a conventional 250kg warhead or a nuclear warhead. The aircraft is also capable of carrying a range of aerial bombs with a total weight up to 40t.

#### TU-160 AVIONICS

The aircraft is highly computerised, and the avionics systems include an integrated aiming, navigation and flight control system, with a navigation and attack radar, an electronic countermeasures system, and automatic controls.

#### TURBOFAN ENGINES

The aircraft propulsion system consists of four NK-32 augmented turbofan engines, which each provide a maximum thrust of 25,000kg. The engines are installed in two pods under the shoulders of the wing. The air intake incorporates an adjustable vertical wedge.

The bomber has an in-flight refuelling system. In the inoperative position, the refuelling probe is retracted into the nose of the fuselage in front of the pilot's cabin. The aircraft fuel capacity is 160,000kg.

<http://www.airforce-technology.com/projects/tu160/>



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