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Warplanes Disrupt Drill

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Russian warplanes this week entered airspace above the Sea of Japan where the United States and Japan were conducting drills, causing a halt to part of the exercises, Japan's Sankei newspaper reported Wednesday.

Roman Martov, a spokesman for the Pacific Fleet, confirmed the flights as part of the "regular activity" of the fleet, Interfax reported.

"There were no violations of international rules of the use of airspace or flight rules on the Russian side," Martov said.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshito Sengoku confirmed that the Russian planes had entered the airspace on Monday but did not give details.

Japanese Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara viewed the disputed Kurils Islands from a plane on Saturday. The Sankei speculated that the Russian action could have been in response to the move.

(Reuters)

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