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Russia to Expand Long-Range Bomber Flights Amid Ukraine Clash

By The Moscow Times

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Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu on Monday said Russia would expand long-range bomber patrols that have raised hackles in Europe and the United States.

NATO last year reported a threefold increase in Russian strategic nuclear bomber flights near the airspace of several of its members as Moscow moved to reassert its military muscle during a clash with the West over Ukraine.

"These flights are carried out routinely and we do not intend to abandon this practice," Shoigu was quoted by the TASS news agency as saying.

"In the future we plan to open up new military patrol regions," he added without specifying which regions.

Last year Shoigu said Moscow was talking with the Seychelles, Singapore, Nicaragua

and Venezuela to set up airbases for Russian strategic bombers — extending their reach to several key strategic areas in the Southern Hemisphere and along the equator.

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