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Russia Launches Arctic Commission With Military Overlord at Helm

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The Russian government has set up a federal commission for developing the Arctic, the Kommersant newspaper reported Tuesday.

The commission will coordinate all other bodies involved in the Arctic to evaluate the effectiveness of resource use, make decisions regarding regional development and ensure the realization of priority investment projects, the report said, citing an unnamed government source. It will be headed by Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, who also oversees the country's military, and its mandate will also include jurisdiction over socio-economic, political and military issues.

The Arctic is the object of fierce competition between the U.S., Canada, Denmark, Norway and Russia, all of which have sought to lay claims to parts of it in order to gain access to the region's rich mineral resources.

Russia has stepped up its military presence in the region in recent months. It commenced exercises there Monday involving over 45,000 Russian troops as well as war planes

and submarines in the region.

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