

Russia Wants Quicker Build-Up of Military Facilities on Disputed Islands

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Alexei Nikolsky/RIA Novosti/Kremlin/Reuters

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu has ordered the speeding up of construction of military and civilian infrastructure on a chain of islands in the Pacific Ocean where Moscow and Tokyo have rival territorial claims.

Dispute over the islands, known as the Kurils in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan, has strained relations between the two countries since World War II, when Soviet forces occupied four islands at the southern end of the chain.

Shoigu was speaking Monday in Russia's Far East city of Vladivostok while inspecting the eastern military district, his ministry said in a statement. It did not provide more detail.

Moscow has angered Tokyo in recent years by having state officials visit the island chain and stepping up military activities there. Japan says the islands are part of its territory

and wants Moscow to hand them over.

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