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Largest Russian Naval Deployment Since Cold War Enters Sea of Japan

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Yuri Smityuk / TASS

A squadron of 28 Russian naval ships has been seen entering the Sea of Japan in what was described as the largest Russian naval deployment in the area since the Cold War, Japanese military officials said.

Russia's Defense Ministry has announced last week that 40 of its Pacific Fleet warships were taking part in missile drills in the Sea of Japan and the Sea of Okhotsk.

On Tuesday, Japanese media published reports saying Japan's Ministry of Defense had observed 28 Russian naval ships sailing toward the Sea of Japan this week.

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The ships did not enter Japanese territorial waters and did not engage in "dangerous

activities," Japanese military officials were quoted as saying by The Asahi Shimbun publication.

"We have been paying attention to Russian moves, and also we have to be vigilant in the sea, air and land," Japanese government official Yoshihide Suga told reporters in a televised broadcast on Tuesday.

Suga noted that Japan has lodged a protest with Russia over the militarization of the Kuril Islands (named the Northern Territories in Japan), an archipelago at the heart of Tokyo's territorial dispute with Moscow.

Recently, Japan also protested Russian World War II commemorations on the islands.

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