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Russia Deploys Coastal Missiles in Arctic Drills

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Vitaly Nevar / TASS

The Russian military has deployed coastal defense missile systems in the Arctic amid increased military activity in the region.

Moscow renewed interest in the Arctic with the discovery of untapped oil and natural gas reserves and a desire to secure access to the Northern Sea Route — a strategic trade artery that has the potential to reroute East-West global trade flows. A military doctrine signed by President Vladimir Putin in 2014 entrusts Russia's armed forces with maintaining the country's strategic interests in the Arctic.

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A spokesman for the Northern Fleet told Interfax that a Bastion coastal defense missile system had been delivered to a base on Kotelny Island, north of the Sakha republic in eastern

Siberia, to take part in scheduled drills.

“Rocket fire will be launched at a remote target simulating a group of enemy surface ships,” the spokesman was quoted as saying.

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The Bastion system is a unified coastal defense complex which employs the supersonic homing Onyx anti-ship missile designed to defend more than 600 kilometers of coastline against surface ships. One fully-loaded unit carries 36 Onyx anti-ship missiles, which can engage targets beyond the visual horizon.

The Northern Fleet said its Arctic task force arrived on Kotelny on Monday to assist in the drills.

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