

Japan Protests Russia's Missile System Deployment on Disputed Islands

December 02, 2020



Defence Ministry / TASS

Japan has rebuked Russia's deployment of S-300 surface-to-air missile systems on a chain of islands in the Far East that Tokyo claims as its own, media reported Tuesday.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its S-300V4 large air defense system went on combat duty on Iturup, one of four Russian-held Kuril Islands, Reuters [reported](#) earlier.

Related article: [Russia's Constitutional Reforms Prevent Disputed Islands' Transfer to Japan – Ex-PM Medvedev](#)

Japan's government called Russia's S-300 deployment on what it refers to as the Northern Territories "unacceptable."

"This is not in line with Japan's position on the Northern Territories and is unacceptable," Russia's state-run TASS news agency [quoted](#) the cabinet as saying.

Tokyo has repeatedly lodged similar protests against Russian military drills and internet expansion, which Moscow has rejected.

The S-300 is a mobile, long-range air defense system developed in the 1970s that can detect, track and destroy ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and aircraft. Its radar can destroy targets as far away as 150 kilometers, launching one missile every three seconds.

The United States expects Russia to step up its military activities near Japan under new Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, Commander of U.S. Forces Japan Kevin Schneider was also [quoted](#) as saying Tuesday.

The dispute over the Kurils, which Soviet troops captured in the final days of World War II, has kept Russia and Japan from signing a formal peace treaty to end the war.

A set of constitutional changes that President Vladimir Putin enacted in this summer includes a clause banning territorial concessions, which is viewed as being designed to allow Russia to keep the Kurils and Crimea.

A Russian state-funded poll in early 2019 said that 96% of the islands' adult population [opposed](#) ceding the islands to Japan.

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