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Russia to Revive Abandoned Arctic Military Airport

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Satellite photo by Google Earth

Russia is reconstructing a long-dormant military airport on its far northern Kola Peninsula as part of a major upgrade of Northern Fleet airstrips in the European Arctic.

The Severomorsk-2 airfield which lies 11 kilometers northeast of Murmansk was shut down in 1998.

Northern Fleet commander Admiral Alexander Moiseyev said it is among the Russian Arctic military airfields to be reconstructed and reopened by 2030.

"The development and construction of the airstrip network in the Arctic area continues. The network development plan until 2030 includes the construction of two [airstrips] in Nagurskoye and Temp, as well as reconstruction of seven airstrips in Severomorsk-1, Severomorsk-2, Severomorsk-3, Rogachevo, Talagi and Kipleovo," Admiral Moiseyev told the

state-run TASS news agency.

Comprehensive investments are needed. After being abandoned 25 years ago, most of Severomorsk-2's facilities and gear on taxiways were looted. The 1,800-meter runway is still intact, but in bad shape with severe cracks that can even be seen from satellite images.

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In recent years, the runway has been used for smaller UAVs operated by Russia's Northern Fleet, whose headquarters is located in the city of Severomorsk, seven kilometers to the northeast of the former air base.

The former seaplane facility at Safonovo, south of Severomorsk in the Kola Bay, will also be re-established, Moiseyev said.

No details were provided on which aircraft could possibly be based at the revived Severomorsk-2. The airstrip upgrade could be a preparation for more advanced UAVs that Russia has said will play an important role in future military plans.

Today, the Northern Fleet has two major air bases on the Kola Peninsula: Severomorsk-1 and Severomorsk-3.

Located on the outskirts of Severomorsk city, the Severomorsk-1 air base has a 3,500-meter runway and is home to maritime surveillance aircraft (Il-38) and anti-submarine helicopters (Ka-27).

The Severomorsk-3 is the air base for the Northern Fleet's fighter jets and is located 28 kilometers east of Murmansk.

There are two other military air bases on the Kola Peninsula as well: the Olenya near Olenogorsk, which is home to long-range Tu-22 bombers, and the Monchegorsk, which houses fighter jets.

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