The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Says Completes Snap Pacific Drills

By AFP

April 20, 2023



Nuclear-powered submarines of the Russian Pacific Fleet enter the Pacific Ocean during an alert exercise. **Russia's Defense Ministry / TASS**

Russia said Thursday that it had finished snap navy drills in the Pacific, stressing its forces were ready to repel "aggression" during an armed conflict at sea.

Last week Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said the country's Pacific Fleet, headquartered in the port of Vladivostok, had launched surprise combat drills as tensions rage with the West over Ukraine.

President Vladimir Putin on Monday said a "surprise inspection" had taken place "at a very high level".

On Thursday, the Defense Ministry said the exercises had been completed and the forces were returning to their bases.

"Snap drills confirmed the high readiness of the troops (forces) of the Pacific Fleet to solve the problems of repelling the aggression of a potential enemy from the direction of ocean and sea," the ministry said in a statement.

During the exercises in the Sea of Japan, the Sea of Okhotsk and the Bering Sea, forces practiced searching and destroying submarines, "repelling large-scale rocket and aviation attacks" and launching rockets, torpedoes and artillery fire against seaborne and ground targets.

Strategic missile carriers and long-range bombers flew to a "central part of the Pacific Ocean" to imitate strikes on enemy targets.

Air defense forces repelled a mock enemy air attack with the deployment of S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems, Pantsir-S missile and artillery systems and radar stations, Moscow said.

The exercises in the Pacific involved over 25,000 Russian military personnel and 167 warships and support vessels, including 12 submarines.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/04/20/russia-says-completes-snap-pacific-drills-a80892