The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Japan, South Korea Scramble Jets After Russian-Chinese Air Patrols

December 10, 2025



A Russian TU-95 bomber. **Sergei Kustov (CC BY-SA 3.0)**

Japan and South Korea have deployed fighter jets in response to a joint patrol by Russian and Chinese bombers over the Asia-Pacific region on Tuesday, according to the countries' militaries.

Russia's Defense Ministry said its Tu-95MS strategic bombers and China's H-9 strategic bombers performed an eight-hour flight over the Sea of Japan, the East China Sea and the Western Pacific.

China Military Bugle, the People's Liberation Army's official social media channel, said it was the 10th Russian-Chinese joint strategic air patrol as part of an annual cooperation plan.

"At certain stages of the route, the strategic missile carriers were accompanied by fighters from foreign countries," the Russian Defense Ministry wrote on Telegram, noting that Russian and Chinese fighter aircraft provided air cover along the entire joint patrol.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it scrambled fighter jets to "take tactical measures in preparation for any contingencies" after identifying seven Russian and two Chinese military aircraft over the Sea of Japan and its southern coastal waters at 10 a.m. local time.

It said there was no airspace violation.

Related article: Russian Supreme Court Voids European Convention on Human Rights

Japan's Defense Ministry reacted similarly, scrambling its fighter jets to "strictly implement air defense measures against potential airspace violations."

It said Chinese J-16 fighter jets, two Russian Su-30 fighters and an A-50 early-warning aircraft accompanied the bombers at certain sections of the patrol.

"These repeated joint bomber flights by Russia and China represent an expansion and intensification of their military activities around Japan," Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said on X on Wednesday.

"They clearly indicate deliberate acts of intimidation directed toward our country and constitute a serious concern from the standpoint of Japan's national security," he added.

On Wednesday, South Korea's Defense Ministry said it lodged a protest with the Russian and Chinese defense attaches over the patrol's brief entry into South Korea's air defense identification zone, which extends 12 nautical miles beyond territorial waters.

Russia does not recognize South Korea's air defense zone around airspace that serves as a point of dispute between Seoul and Beijing due to an overlap in air defense zones.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/12/10/japan-south-korea-scramble-jets-after-russian-chinese-air-patrols-a91392