

Satellite Images Show Russia's Arctic Military Buildup – CNN

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The Pentagon said Monday that the U.S. is monitoring Russia's Arctic buildup "very closely." **Vladimir Isachenkov / AP / TASS**

Russia is amassing military bases and is testing advanced weapons on its Arctic coastline as it seeks to secure its northern frontier and melting ice opens a coveted shipping route, CNN [reported](#) Monday.

Russia, one of five Arctic nations staking claims in the region, has strengthened its military presence in the Arctic with new and upgraded bases and airfields that have laid abandoned since the end of the Soviet era.

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Satellite images showed two new radar stations in the locality of Provideniya and Wrangel

Island across from Alaska, as well as a quick-reaction alert force in the Far East port town of Anadyr, CNN reported.

In the eastern Arctic, the images provided by the Maxar space technology company showed an airstrip on the remote Kotelny Island, part of the New Siberian Islands.

Further west, they showed an airfield on Russia's northernmost military base of Nagurskoye, the Rogachevo air base and the Olenya Guba storage facility, which is slowly being built for the unmanned underwater nuclear-powered Poseidon drone.

Previous reporting suggested that Russia was building a [coastal base](#) for the Poseidon, 30 of which are expected to be deployed in the Russian Navy's Northern Fleet along with two in its Pacific Fleet.

The United States views Russia's Arctic buildup — though part of a legitimate defense of its borders — as a “military challenge,” CNN reported, quoting an unnamed State Department official.

“The [ice] melt is moving faster than scientists predicted or thought possible several years ago,” the official said. “It's going to be a dramatic transformation in the decades ahead in terms of physical access.”

The Pentagon [said](#) Monday that the U.S. is monitoring Russia's Arctic buildup “very closely.”

“We have national security interests there,” spokesman John Kirby said at a briefing. “Nobody's interested in seeing the Arctic become militarized.”

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Pentagon officials also expressed concern over Russia's bid to impose its rules on the Northern Sea Route, its newly opened Arctic shipping lane that it views as an alternative to the Suez Canal, CNN reported, citing spokesman Lt. Col. Thomas Campbell.

“Russian laws governing NSR transits exceed Russia's authority under international law,” Campbell said, citing requirements for vessels to have a Russian pilot for guidance and efforts to require foreign vessels to obtain permission before entering the route.

Western efforts to bolster its military presence in the Arctic include U.S. strategic bombers being deployed in Norway this year and the first deployment of a U.S. aircraft carrier since the 1980s in 2018.

The Russian military on March 20 [launched](#) massive Arctic maneuvers near Alexandra Land, part of the Franz Josef Land archipelago, that are expected to include more than 40 separate drills.

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