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Russian Military Activities in Asia: Combined Military Exercises and Patrols

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Andrew S. Bowen
Analyst in Russian and
European Affairs

Russian Military Activities in Asia: Combined Military Exercises and Patrols

Historically, Russia has claimed a role as a major actor in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2012, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a policy by which Russia would seek to emphasize and further develop economic and trade opportunities with Asia, in particular with the People's Republic of China (PRC, or China). Although Russia's military focus has been drawn westward since its initial 2014 invasion of Ukraine and has further accelerated since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia has pursued military activities aimed at asserting influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

With most of its ground forces committed to fighting in Ukraine, Russia has maintained a naval and strategic air presence in the Asia-Pacific region. Russia's Pacific Fleet, headquartered in Vladivostok and part of Russia's sea-based nuclear deterrent force, is Russia's primary military force in the region and primary tool for power projection. Russia uses the presence of its Pacific Fleet and strategic bomber force to signal its strength to other powers in the region, including the United States.

Combined Russia and PRC military exercises and patrols are a key component of Russia's signaling strategy. Since 2014, Russia and the PRC have conducted increased numbers of bilateral and multilateral military exercises and combined naval and air patrols, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. These activities also are increasingly conducted near contested areas (such as near Taiwan) or close to the United States, such as off the coast of Alaska. These exercises and patrols have become more complex, involving greater coordination and communication as well as more high-end military equipment and sensitive activities. Despite this cooperation, the Russian and PRC militaries are not interoperable; based on open-source information, it is not clear whether the two governments seek such a high level of military integration.

U.S. officials and some Members of Congress have expressed concerns about Russia's military activities in the Asia-Pacific region and Russia's military relationship with the PRC. Members of the 119th Congress may continue to assess the implications of increased Russian military activities and Russia-PRC military cooperation for U.S. interests and consider whether or not to pursue legislative or other options to address potential concerns. Some in Congress also may seek to shape or monitor U.S. responses through oversight of executive branch policies, reporting requirements, or other measures.

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Introduction and Issues for Congress

Russia has multifaceted diplomatic, economic, and security interests in Asia, including with respect to relations with the People’s Republic of China (PRC, or China). U.S. officials have expressed concern regarding Russia’s military activities in the Asia-Pacific region and the increase in Russia-PRC combined military exercises and patrols.¹ In January 2026, General Alexis G. Grynkewich, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, highlighted broader and growing Russia-PRC military cooperation: “Over the last several years, it’s been both in the maritime domain with increased joint patrols, as well as in the air domain, with long range bomber patrols being conducted jointly.”² Additionally, according to April 2026 congressional testimony by Admiral Samuel J. Paparo, Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, “Russia is expanding its Indo-Pacific footprint even as the war in Ukraine continues to strain Russian capacity. Russia has maintained the pace of air and naval force modernization in its Eastern Military District.”³ Furthermore, Lieutenant General James Adams testified that the Defense Intelligence Agency’s (DIA) 2026 worldwide threat assessment views that,

Russia relies on China as its key partner in countering the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, and almost certainly will advance ties in 2026 by continuing military technical cooperation, combined patrols, and sharing lessons learned from its war in Ukraine.⁴

Additionally, some Members of Congress have expressed concern regarding combined Russia-PRC military exercises and patrols. House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike Rogers, for example, stated during a March 2026 hearing, “In the past two years, we’ve seen Russian and Chinese bombers and warships operating jointly near Alaska. This is a significant demonstration of military cooperation between our two most capable adversaries right off our shores.”⁵

The nature of Russia’s military activities in the Asia-Pacific region and Russia-PRC combined exercises and patrols may be of interest to the 119th Congress. Congress could consider whether or not to pursue the following actions, among others:

- assessing through hearings, investigations, or reporting requirements the potential effects of growing Russian activities in the Asia-Pacific region on U.S. national defense and security strategy, including implications for U.S. alliances and other global commitments;

¹ During March 2026 congressional testimony, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard stated that “[the PRC and Russia] are our primary strategic competitors.” U.S. Congress, Senate Intelligence (Select) Committee, *Worldwide Threats*, hearing, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., March 18, 2026; Diana Nerozzi, “1 Reason Trump Won’t Give Up On Putin Peace Deal—China,” *Politico*, March 17, 2026. For the purposes of this report, *combined* refers to the bilateral or multilateral military operations of countries operating together.

² NATO, “Joint Press Conference,” January 22, 2026, at <https://www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/events/transcripts/2026/01/22/press-conference-cmc-saceur-sact>.

³ Statement of Admiral Samuel J. Paparo, Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Congress, House Armed Services Committee, *U.S. Military Posture and National Security Challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region*, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., April 22, 2026, p. 5; The Russian military divides Russia into five military districts overseeing administrative and operational tasks of forces in their assigned regions. The Eastern Military District covers Russia’s Far East region bordering the PRC and the wider Asia-Pacific region. Jonas Kjellen, “Russia’s Revamp of Military Districts: Back to a Centralized Future?” *Swedish Defense Research Agency*, June 2024

⁴ Statement by Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, Lieutenant General James Adams, U.S. Congress, House Armed Services Committee, Intelligence and Special Operations Subcommittee, *Defense Intelligence Enterprise—Challenges, Priorities, and Resourcing for Fiscal Year 2027*, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., April 16, 2026, p. 12.

⁵ U.S. Congress, House Armed Services Committee, *U.S. Military Posture & National Security Challenges in the Western Hemisphere*, hearing, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., March 17, 2026.

- evaluating existing or prospective legislation, including legislation aimed at strengthening, eliminating, or otherwise modifying sanctions, in response to Russia-PRC military exercises and joint patrols;
- conducting oversight by requiring the executive branch to report to Congress on the implications of Russia-PRC military exercises on U.S. defense strategy, policy, budgetary, and industrial considerations, including current and projected defense projects, as well as any plans to address those implications; and
- engaging with counterparts and other officials in U.S. allied and partner governments to share assessments of, and potentially coordinate responses to, Russia-PRC military exercises and patrols.

Russia's Far East Strategy⁶

Since the mid-19th century, Russia has asserted a role as a major actor in the Asia-Pacific region.⁷ In the immediate post-Cold War period, Russia's primary political, economic, and military focus was on its western borders, relations with Europe, and the United States. Upon returning to the Russian presidency in 2012, Vladimir Putin outlined a strategic policy shift, referred to by observers as the "turn to the East," focusing on developing Russia's Far East region, improving relations with countries in Asia, and reasserting Russia's position as a key regional power.⁸ In practice, Russia's "turn to the East" has prioritized developing relations with the PRC.⁹

Russia's "turn to the East" policy was heavily focused on economic concerns, including expanding and securing new trade and energy markets.¹⁰ Russia's focus on boosting relations in the region arguably increased as Russia became more politically and economically isolated after its first invasion of Ukraine in 2014 and its full-scale invasion in 2022.¹¹ President Putin denied Russia's isolation pressured a turn to the Far East and assert that the Russian government's policy is part of a long-term strategic shift. For example, in September 2022, Putin stated, "We didn't start boosting the Far East because we were preparing a special military operation in Donbass [a geographic region of Ukraine]. This was long before that. It was a strategic choice based on trends in the development of the global economy and, accordingly, the emergence of new

⁶ For purposes of this report, Far East refers to Russia's territories and interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

⁷ Chris Miller, *We Shall Be Masters: Russia Pivots to East Asia from Peter the Great to Putin* (Harvard University Press, 2021); Charles E. Ziegler, *Russia in the Pacific: The Quest for Great Power Recognition* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

⁸ See generally, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated, "We have the opportunity to assume a worthy place in the Asia-Pacific region, the most dynamic region in the world." President of Russia, "Address to the Federal Assembly," December 12, 2012, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17118>; David Lewis, "Strategic Culture and Russia's 'Pivot to the East': Russia, China, and the 'Greater Eurasia,'" *Marshall Center Security Insight*, no. 34 (July 2019); Gilbert Rozman and Gaye Christoffersen, eds., *Putin's "Turn to the East" in the Xi Jinping Era* (Routledge, 2024).

⁹ Jeffrey Mankoff, "Russia's Asia Pivot: Confrontation or Cooperation?" *Asia Policy*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2015), pp. 65-87; Deborah Welch Larson, "An Equal Partnership of Unequals: China's and Russia's New Status Relationship," *International Politics*, vol. 57, no. 1 (2020), p. 796.

¹⁰ CRS Report R44613, *Northeast Asia and Russia's "Turn to the East": Implications for U.S. Interests*, by Emma Chanlett-Avery.

¹¹ Stephen Fortescue, "Russia's 'Turn to the East': A Study in Policymaking," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 5 (2016), pp. 423-454; Gilbert Rozman, "How Did the Ukraine War Change Putin's 'Turn to the East'?" *Asian Perspective*, vol. 47, no. 3 (2023), p. 353.

[centers] of power in the world.”¹² At the same time, despite Russia’s economic development and infrastructure investment plans, Russia’s status in the Far East remains constrained by its reliance on energy exports and increased dependency on the PRC.¹³

As the economic benefits of Russia’s policy remain limited, some analysts suggest that the Russian government increasingly has turned to its military to assert its status as a regional power.¹⁴ According to Russia’s 2023 *Foreign Policy Concept*, Russia occupies a “special position as a unique country-civilization and a vast Eurasian and Euro-Pacific power.”¹⁵ Russia’s primary military asset in the Asia-Pacific region is its Pacific Fleet, headquartered in Vladivostok.¹⁶ Russia’s Pacific fleet has been modernized over the last decade and comprises roughly one third of Russia’s sea-based nuclear deterrent force.¹⁷ Alongside Russia’s strategic bomber force, the Pacific Fleet supports Russia’s power projection in the region by conducting large-scale naval exercises, visiting foreign ports, and patrolling contested areas (such as near Taiwan and the East China Sea).¹⁸ Russia conducts these activities arguably to demonstrate its capabilities as a major regional power and as part of a coercive signaling strategy.¹⁹

A key component of Russia’s Far East strategy and signaling efforts has been an increase in military cooperation with the PRC.²⁰ This cooperation has helped bolster Russia’s position in the

¹² President of Russia, “Eastern Economic Forum Plenary Session,” September 7, 2022, at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69299>.

¹³ Alexander Gabuev, “With Putin in Charge, Russia’s Vassalage to China Will Only Deepen,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 8, 2025; Katrina Northrop et al., “China and Russia Sign More Deals, but Beijing Keeps the Upper Hand,” *Washington Post*, September 11, 2025; CRS In Focus IF13159, *Russia-China Natural Gas Trade*, by Michael Ratner, Michael D. Sutherland, and Cory Welt.

¹⁴ Eugene Rumer et al., *Russia in the Asia-Pacific: Less Than Meets the Eye*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 3, 2020; Daniil Zhukov, “A Tangled Ball: Russian Nuclear Policy, Relations and Risks in Northeast Asia,” *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2025), pp. 91-111; New Eurasian Strategies Centre, “Turning East: How Russia’s Ambitions in Asia Are Confronted by Reality,” September 12, 2025;

¹⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, *The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, March 31, 2023, https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/fundamental_documents/1860586/.

¹⁶ TASS, “Russia’s Pacific Fleet Demonstrates Strong Combat Readiness—Kremlin Aide,” September 2, 2025.

¹⁷ The Pacific Fleet currently has five nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (25th Red Banner Submarine Division), 18 other submarines, 11 principal surface combatants (cruiser/destroyer/frigate), and 23 patrol and coastal combatants, among other ships. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2026*; Alexey D. Muraviev, *Battle Reading the Russian Pacific Fleet 2023-2030*, Sea Power Centre, 2023; Yu Koizumi, “Russian Pacific Fleet Redux: Japan’s North as a New Center of Gravity,” *War on the Rocks*, October 22, 2024; Alexey D. Muraviev, *Moscow’s Pacific Trident: The Submarine Arms of the Russian Pacific Fleet, Early 2025 to 2030*, Sea Power Centre, April 14, 2025.

¹⁸ President of Russia, “July Storm Naval Exercise,” press release, July 25, 2025; TASS, “Russian Pacific Fleet Detachment Sets Off on Long-Range Voyage to Korea Strait,” March 4, 2026; North American Aerospace Defense Command, “NORAD Detects and Tracks Russian Aircraft Operating in the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone,” press release, March 4, 2026; TASS, “Russian Ships Detachment Leaves Chinese Port to Continue Long Distance Voyage,” April 20, 2026.

¹⁹ James Fearon, “Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands Versus Sinking Costs,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 41, no. 1 (1997), pp. 68-90; Ralph Clem, “Military Exercises as Geopolitical Messaging in the NATO-Russia Dynamic: Reassurance, Deterrence, and (In)stability,” *Texas National Security Review*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2018), pp. 130-143; Samuel Charap et al., *Understanding Russian Coercive Signaling*, RAND, 2022.

²⁰ Richard Weitz, “Assessing Chinese-Russian Military Exercises: Past Progress and Future Trends,” Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), July 9, 2021 (hereinafter Weitz, “Assessing Chinese-Russian Military Exercises”); Dmitry Gorenburg et al., *Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation: An Increasingly Unequal Partnership*, CNA, March 2023 (hereinafter Gorenburg et al., *Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation*); Oriana Skylar Mastro, “Sino-Russian Military Alignment and Its Implications for Global Security,” *Security Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2 (2024), pp. 254-290; Mark Cozad et al., *Future Scenarios for Sino-Russian Military Cooperation: Possibilities, Limitations, and Consequences*, RAND, 2024.

Asia-Pacific region and has served as a platform for the Russian government to promote multipolarity and indicate dissatisfaction with the U.S.-led international system.²¹ According to Department of Defense (DOD, which is “using a secondary Department of War designation” under Executive Order 14347, dated September 5, 2025)²² 2025 annual report to Congress, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China*, “China and Russia [have] deepened their strategic partnership, almost certainly driven by a shared interest in countering the United States.”²³ The 2025 *Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community* (ATA) highlighted concerns posed by Russia-PRC cooperation. The 2025 ATA states, “Cooperation between China and Russia has the greatest potential to pose enduring risks to U.S. interests. Their leaders probably believe they are more capable of countering perceived U.S. aggression together than alone, given a shared belief that the United States is seeking to constrain each adversary.”²⁴ The 2026 ATA assesses this trend is likely to continue, noting that, “Russia is also likely to continue collaborating with other powers, including U.S. adversaries, to jointly oppose the U.S. where their respective interests overlap.”²⁵

One potential aspect of a deeper Russia-PRC partnership is combined military activity, particularly exercises and patrols.²⁶ Since 2017, Russia and the PRC have planned military coordination in five-year road maps, reportedly at Russia’s request. When announcing the (unpublished) 2021-2025 road map, Russian and PRC defense ministers reportedly said it would support “strategic coordination” and inform “strategic military exercises and joint patrols.”²⁷

Russia-PRC Combined Military Exercises and Patrols

Since approximately 2010, Russia and the PRC have increased the frequency of combined military exercises and introduced combined naval and air patrols in the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere.²⁸ According to the 2025 ATA, “For at least a decade, Beijing and Moscow have used high-profile, combined military activities primarily to signal the strength of the China–Russia defense ties.”²⁹ Since 2014, combined training and exercises have been both bilateral and multilateral, have involved PRC participation in Russia’s annual strategic command staff

²¹ The Office of the Director of National Intelligence 2026 *Annual Threat Assessment* states, “Russia views itself as a key geostrategic competitor of the U.S. and seeks a multipolar world order in which Russia reaches and maintains a privileged position, equal to that of the U.S. and other great powers, including China.” Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), *Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community*, March 2026, p. 29 (hereinafter, *2026 ATA*).

²² The Department of Defense (DOD) is “using a secondary Department of War designation” under Executive Order 14347 of September 5, 2025, “Restoring the United States Department of War,” 90 *Federal Register* 43893, September 10, 2025.

²³ DOD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China*, December 2025, p. 5 (hereinafter DOD, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2025*).

²⁴ ODNI, *Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community*, March 2025, p. 30 (hereinafter *2025 ATA*).

²⁵ *2026 ATA*, p. 29.

²⁶ According to one study, “Multinational military exercises are among the most notable demonstrations of military cooperation and intent.” Raymond Kuo and Brian Dylan Blankenship, “Deterrence and Restraint: Do Joint Military Exercises Escalate Conflict?” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 66, no. 1 (January 2022), p. 3.

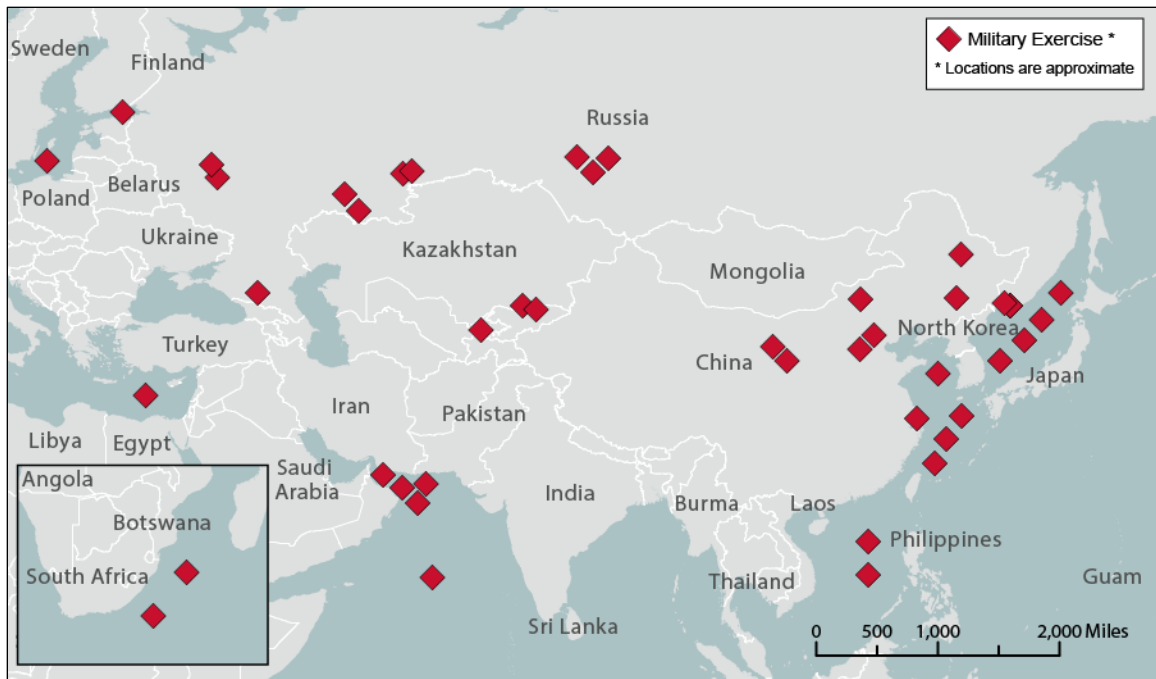
²⁷ Jon Grevatt, “China, Russia Approve 2021-25 Road Map to Increase Military Co-Operation,” *Janes IHS*, November 24, 2021.

²⁸ Gorenburg et al., *Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation*, p. 49.

²⁹ *2025 ATA*, p. 30.

exercises, and have included combined naval and long-range strategic bomber patrols. After conducting 7 exercises or patrols in 2019, Russia and the PRC conducted 2 in 2020 (likely because of the COVID-19 pandemic), followed by 7 exercises or patrols annually in 2022 and 2023, and 11 exercises or patrols in 2024 primarily in the Asia-Pacific region (for a full list, see the **Appendix**).³⁰ According to DOD, “In 2024, China and Russia expanded their defense engagement, increasing the frequency, scope, and complexity of their combined military exercises.”³¹ This trend continued in 2025; according to General Grynkewich’s March 2026 congressional testimony, “China’s military cooperation with Russia deepened in 2025, with the two countries conducting their ‘Joint Sea’ combined naval exercise in the Sea of Japan as well as a joint air patrol over the East China Sea and the Western Pacific.”³² The geographic scope of combined military exercises also has broadened since the mid-2010s (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1. Publicly Reported Locations of Russia-PRC Military Exercises, 2012-2024



Source: CRS, using data from media reports, think-tank studies, and official Russian and People’s Republic of China (PRC) press releases.

Note: See the **Appendix** for further information.

Russia and the PRC appear to have derived a range of benefits from these military activities. The size and frequency of exercises and combined patrols has increased, providing both operational and signaling benefits.³³ According to April 2025 testimony by General Christopher G. Cavoli,

³⁰ Gorenburg et al., *Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation*, p. 52.

³¹ DOD, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2025*, p. 5.

³² U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, *To Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States European Command and United States Transportation Command in Review of the Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program*, hearing, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., March 12, 2026.

³³ “These exercises have gradually increased in size, scale, and complexity since their establishment and may offer the two militaries opportunities for modest advancements in combined capabilities during peace time operations. Russia is the PLA’s most consistent and most advanced foreign military partner. China and Russia probably utilize the opportunity to exercise together as a means to highlight military cooperation regionally and globally.” DOD, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2025*, p. 34.

then-Commander of U.S. European Command, “Russia and the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] continue to expand the scope of their regularly conducted, combined-military exercises and increase their training on more sophisticated weapons platforms.”³⁴

These exercises and patrols may have improved trust and familiarity between Russian and PRC forces. Some exercises have involved the two militaries allowing each other access to their respective air and naval bases (such access currently appears limited to military exercises and patrols). Expanding such access could increase the range and presence of combined operations in strategically important areas, such as the Sea of Japan or South China Sea.³⁵ For the PRC’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA), which has had no major combat experience since the late 1970s, exercising with Russian forces offers an opportunity to train with and learn from a military with combat experience from its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.³⁶

In addition to operational military benefits, combined exercises and patrols have a strong political and symbolic component.³⁷ They arguably have enabled the Russian government to signal its displeasure with what it has described as U.S. global hegemony, especially in and around contested or sensitive regions.³⁸ In July 2024, Russian and PRC bombers conducted a combined strategic patrol in international airspace near Alaska for the first time; it was also the first time PLA bomber aircraft entered the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone.³⁹ According to March 2025 testimony by Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, “[Russia] has increased combined military exercises with China to signal shared fortitude against the United States and U.S. allies in the Asia-Pacific region.”⁴⁰ According to General Gregory M. Guillot, Commander of U.S. Northern Command, in March 2026 testimony,

China and Russia are advancing their strategic partnership to counter the United States and its allies... While none of the relationships among our principal adversaries constitutes a formal military alliance, their shared perception of the United States as a threat to their core

³⁴ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, *To Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States European Command and United States Africa Command in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program*, hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., April 3, 2025.

³⁵ Andrew S. Erickson and Gabriel B. Collins, “Putin’s Ukraine Invasion: Turbocharging Sino-Russian Collaboration in Energy, Maritime Security, and Beyond?” *Naval War College Review*, vol. 75, no. 4 (Autumn 2022), pp. 19-20.

³⁶ According to General Christopher Cavoli in his April 2025 testimony, “at the military level, operationally and tactically, [the PRC is] studying the conflict [in Ukraine] very, very hard in ways that we know they would apply ... to any potential conflict in Taiwan.” U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, *To Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States European Command and United States Africa Command in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program*, hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., April 3, 2025.

³⁷ Kaori Kaneko et al., “U.S. Bombers Join Japanese Jets in Show of Force After China-Russia Drills, Tokyo Says,” Reuters, December 11, 2025.

³⁸ Paul Schwartz, “Russia-China Joint Exercises: The View from Russia,” in *Understanding the Broader Transatlantic Security Implications of Greater Sino Russian Military Alignment*, eds. Max Bergmann and Andrew Lohsen (CSIS, 2022), pp. 18-27; Heather Williams et al., “Why Did China and Russia Stage a Joint Bomber Exercise Near Alaska?” CSIS, July 30, 2024.

³⁹ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Hearing to Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States European Command and United States Africa Command in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program*, hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., April 3, 2025.

⁴⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Worldwide Threats*, hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., March 25, 2025. Additionally, the congressionally mandated 2024 Commission on the National Defense Strategy noted that the Russia-PRC partnership “is aimed at challenging U.S. leadership internationally.” Jane Harman et al., *Commission on the National Defense Strategy*, RAND, July 2024, p. 10.

security interests could form the foundation of a wartime partnership, complicating U.S. military planning and advancing each adversary's ability to threaten the homeland.⁴¹

There are limitations to Russia-PRC combined military exercises. Russia and the PRC do not share a formal defense pact, and the two countries' military forces are not interoperable.⁴² Rather than integrating into combined operations and command and control, Russian and PRC units often exercise side by side in highly scripted operations that may not replicate real-world situations and conditions.⁴³ Nevertheless, both militaries may gain from combined exercises, including by exchanging best practices, familiarizing each other with their command practices, and exploring emerging capabilities (such as unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones). Side-by-side operations also may provide an opportunity for the two militaries to practice deconfliction processes, even if their forces are not interoperable.⁴⁴

Combined Ground Activities

The locations of combined ground military exercises have expanded since the mid-2010s (see **Figure 1**). Most land exercises have taken place in Russia's central and western regions and in the PRC's northeastern region. Prior to 2014, most Russia-PRC military exercises, such as the Peace Mission series, were conducted under the aegis of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and nominally characterized by participants as counterterrorism exercises.⁴⁵

Compared with naval exercises (see below), Russian and PRC ground forces' interactions have been less frequent and have involved smaller numbers of troops and command staff—especially since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.⁴⁶ The PRC's largest ground force contribution to Russia's annual strategic command staff exercises occurred during the Vostok 2018 military exercise (in Russia's Eastern Military District), reportedly numbering over 3,000 PLA troops.⁴⁷

⁴¹ U.S. Congress, House Armed Services Committee, *U.S. Military Posture & National Security Challenges in the Western Hemisphere*, hearing, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., March 17, 2026.

⁴² Additionally, both Russia and the PRC continue to express a level of mutual distrust. Reports of leaked Russian planning documents—purportedly from 2008 to 2014—suggested that Russian officials were concerned about the superiority of the PRC's conventional forces. It is unclear to what extent these Russian concerns might persist in light of deepening Russia-PRC ties since 2014. Max Seddon and Chris Cook, "Leaked Russian Military Files Reveal Criteria for Nuclear Strike," *Financial Times*, February 28, 2024; John Stanko and Spenser Warren, "Russian Threat Perception and Nuclear Strategy in Its Plans for War with China," *War on the Rocks*, April 2, 2024.

⁴³ See Michael Connell et al., *Training in the Russian Armed Forces: An Assessment of Recent Reforms and Their Impact on Russian Operations in Ukraine*, CNA, September 2023.

⁴⁴ *Deconfliction* refers to a process of identifying and resolving competing activities in an area of joint or combined operations. Weitz, "Assessing Chinese-Russian Military Exercises," p. 3.

⁴⁵ The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an intergovernmental organization established in 2001 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to strengthen cooperation on a range of issues, particularly in "combating terrorism, separatism and extremism." Other countries have since joined the SCO. SCO, *Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, June 15, 2001.

⁴⁶ According to DOD, "China-Russia exercises during the past few years have been less focused on large-scale troop operations, probably due to the strain of Russia's war against Ukraine." DOD, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2025*, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Weitz, "Assessing PRC-Russian Military Exercises," p. 3.

Combined Naval Activities

Russia views its navy as central to its great power aspirations, both globally and in the Asia-Pacific region.⁴⁸ According to the DIA, “Russia’s Navy very likely will remain Russia’s primary global power projection tool over the next year as its ground forces and the majority of its aerospace forces remain committed in Ukraine.”⁴⁹ The importance of Russia’s navy may be one reason why Russia-PRC naval exercises and patrols have been more extensive than comparable ground military exercises, and may indicate a greater level of familiarity and trust between naval partners.⁵⁰ These naval exercises have included anti-submarine warfare, search and rescue, air defense, anti-piracy, and live-fire operations. In 2024, Russia held its largest naval exercise since the fall of the Soviet Union, named Ocean 2024; the exercise included a PRC naval contingent.⁵¹

Russia and the PRC also have included third countries in their naval exercises. In 2019, Russia and the PRC for the first time conducted trilateral exercises with both South Africa and Iran; subsequent exercises followed in 2022 (Iran), 2023 (combined with South Africa and Iran), 2024 (Iran), and 2025 (Iran). In January 2026, Russia, the PRC, Iran, and South Africa conducted a combined naval exercise.⁵²

On occasion, these exercises have been conducted near sensitive or disputed areas in maritime Asia (for locations, see **Figure 2**). For example, the 2016 and 2024 iterations of the Joint Sea exercise took place in the South China Sea, while Joint Sea 2019 included a circumnavigation of Japan’s Honshu Island via two straits in Japan’s territorial sea. In August 2025, Russia and the PRC conducted their first combined submarine patrol in the Sea of Japan and East China Sea.⁵³ Some observers have suggested that the geographic pattern of Russia-PRC naval exercises in Asia indicates that Russia’s leadership is more willing to engage in exercises that risk antagonizing PRC neighbors than PRC leaders are willing to antagonize European countries.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Some observers argue that the Russian Navy will play an even more central role in Russian power projection in the future. For example, the Swedish Defence Research Agency states, “Widening the perspective, the Russian Navy (which has not yet played a major role in the SVO [Special Military Operation], save for the Black Sea Fleet), is rather viewed as a potential instrument of global influence in the future.” Maria Engqvist, ed., *The Future of Warfare in Russian Military Thinking*, Swedish Defense Research Agency, 2026, p. 9. See also Nikolai Evmenov et al., “Main Trends in the Change of the Nature and Context of Military Threats to the Russian Federation from Ocean and Sea Directions,” *Voennaia mysl’ [Military Thought]*, no. 5 (2023), pp. 19-25; Dmitry Gorenburg, “Russia’s Future Naval Capabilities,” in *The Sea in Russian Strategy*, eds. Andrew Monaghan and Richard Connolly (Manchester University Press, 2023), pp. 168-202; Andrew Monaghan, “Russia’s Naval Futures: New Horizons 2050,” NATO Defense College, December 16, 2025.

⁴⁹ Statement by Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, Lieutenant General James Adams, U.S. Congress, House Armed Services Committee, Intelligence and Special Operations Subcommittee, *Defense Intelligence Enterprise—Challenges, Priorities, and Resourcing for Fiscal Year 2027*, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., April 16, 2026.

⁵⁰ Reid Standish, “China, Russia Launch Joint Naval Drills in Pacific Amid Strengthening Military Ties,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, August 3, 2025.

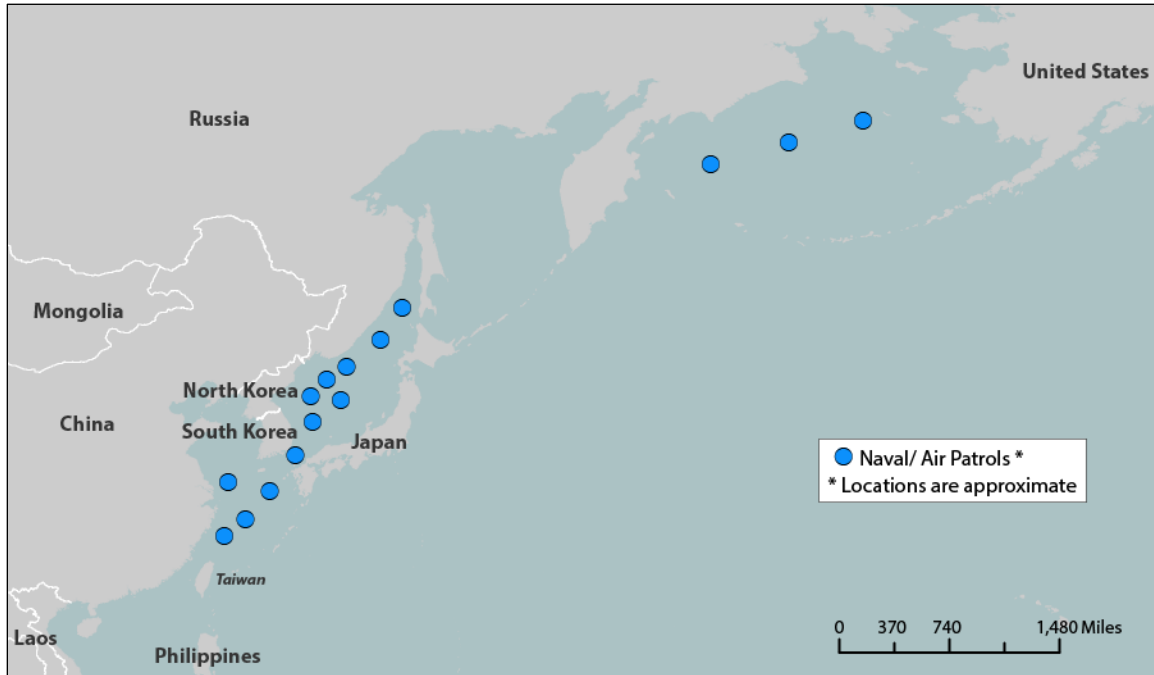
⁵¹ President of Russia, “Ocean 2024 Strategic Command and Staff Exercise,” September 10, 2024, at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75083>; Tomasz Grotnik, “Ocean-2024—Russian Navy Flexes Its Muscles, China Assists,” *Naval News*, September 13, 2024.

⁵² Reuters, “South Africa Probes Iran’s Role in BRICS+ Naval Drills,” January 16, 2026.

⁵³ TASS, “Russian, Chinese Submarines Conduct First Joint Patrol in Asia-Pacific Region,” August 27, 2025.

⁵⁴ “Russia was perhaps more willing to send its troops to an exercise with possible ramifications for its partnership with India than China was to alarm its Western economic partners in Europe.” Gorenburg et al., *Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation*, p. 53.

Figure 2. Selected Publicly Reported Russia-PRC Combined Air and Naval Patrols, 2019-2024



Source: CRS, using data from media reports, think-tank studies, and official Russian and People’s Republic of China (PRC) press releases.

Note: See the **Appendix** for further information.

Combined Air Activities

Russia-PRC air exercises and training since 2014 have become more complex, involving greater coordination and communication (e.g., the use of bilingual command information systems) and more sensitive activities (e.g., strategic bomber patrols).⁵⁵ In 2019, Russia and the PRC began conducting combined strategic bomber patrols, often concentrating these patrols in the Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and the Sea of Japan (for locations, see **Figure 2**). Admiral John Aquilino, then commander of Indo-Pacific Command, testified to Congress in March 2024:

The increasing frequency of combined activity is cause for concern. In addition to naval drills, Russia continues to partner with the PLA in strategic bomber patrols in the western Pacific near Guam. Russia is also increasingly collaborating with the PLA to execute combined air patrols that regularly cross into Japan and the Republic of Korea’s Air Defense Identification Zones (ADIZ), further threatening our allies.⁵⁶

The aforementioned July 2024 combined bomber flight patrol off the coast of Alaska indicated an increased level of cooperation and coordination between Russia and PRC militaries, including allowing access to sensitive strategic bomber airbases (also known as “access transfer”). According to General Cavoli, “These patrols marked the first time Chinese bombers departed from the same airbase with Russian bombers, the first time Chinese bombers entered the Alaskan

⁵⁵ Simone McCarthy, “China and Russia Are Ramping Up Joint Military Drills. What’s Their End Goal?,” *CNN*, September 17, 2024.

⁵⁶ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, *U.S. Military Posture and National Security Challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region*, hearing, 118th Cong., 2nd sess., March 20, 2024.

Air Defense Identification Zone, and the first time Chinese nuclear-capable H-6N bombers took part in a combined patrol.”⁵⁷ In February 2025 testimony, General Gregory M. Guillot, Commander of U.S. Northern Command, noted, “Such ‘access transfer’ accelerates and extends China’s ability to threaten North America in the air domain and raises the specter of coordinated military operations in the event of a strategic conflict.”⁵⁸

Considerations for Congress

Congress has previously introduced legislation regarding various aspects of Russia-PRC military cooperation. Since 2022, some Members of Congress have introduced legislation seeking to address PRC military support of Russia.⁵⁹ The 117th and 118th Congress also passed two National Defense Authorization Acts with provisions related to Russia-PRC military relations.

In the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2024 (P.L. 118-31):

- Section 1649 requires the Commander of Strategic Command to submit a notification to congressional defense committees in the event that he or she determines, in consultation with the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, “that militarily significant cooperation between [Russia] and [the PRC] related to nuclear or strategic capabilities is likely to occur or has likely occurred.”

In the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for FY2023 (P.L. 117-263):

- Section 5523 requires the U.S. Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence, to submit to certain congressional committees a report analyzing the impact of Russia’s war against Ukraine on the PRC’s objectives with respect to Taiwan.
- Section 5599 requires the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of National intelligence as appropriate, to submit to certain congressional committees a report every 90 days on whether and how the PRC has provided support for Russia with respect to Russia’s war against Ukraine for two years or until the Secretary of State determines that the conflict in Ukraine has ended.
- Section 6525 of Division F (the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023) requires the Director of National Intelligence, in consultation with the heads of elements of the intelligence community that the Director deems appropriate, to submit to certain congressional committees a report every 180 days on whether and how the PRC has provided support to Russia with respect to its war against Ukraine for two years or until the Secretary of State determines that the conflict in Ukraine has ended.

Members of the 119th Congress may wish to assess the national and global implications of increased Russian military activity in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as if Russia-PRC military exercises and patrols may pose potential threats to U.S. interests and to the security and stability

⁵⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, *To Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States European Command and United States Africa Command in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program*, hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., April 3, 2025.

⁵⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, *To Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States Northern Command and United States Southern Command in Review of the Defense authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program*, hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., February 13, 2025.

⁵⁹ See, for example, S. 3877 and H.R. 8043.

of U.S. allies and partners. As part of this process, Members may seek to consult directly with the executive branch, conduct oversight individually or through committee briefings or hearings, develop and propose legislative directives or resolutions, or conduct exchanges with counterparts in allied or partner countries.⁶⁰

- If Members of Congress seek further information on the nature and extent of Russia-PRC military exercises and patrols, they could engage with the executive branch through private consultations and/or public or closed hearings or consider legislation requiring the executive branch to provide information or assessments. Currently, Section 1241 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (P.L. 119-60) modifies and extends the annual *Report on Military and Security Developments Involving the Russian Federation* to include “an assessment of the military cooperation between Russia and the People’s Republic of China, including defense trade, joint military exercises, and the sharing of military intelligence.”⁶¹ Congress may consider a separate report on Russia-PRC military activities, including whether to require or request the intelligence community to produce a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on the state and trajectory of Russia-PRC military relations and direct that the NIE be provided in classified and unclassified versions.⁶²
- In conducting oversight of the executive branch, Congress could consider whether to establish an annual reporting requirement to document executive branch actions taken to address issues related to Russia-PRC military exercises and patrols. Congress also could consider specific legislative directives, such as the establishment of a new office or an interagency task force to formulate and implement policies to address Russian military activity in the Asia-Pacific region and Russia-PRC military relations. For example, Congress could direct current working groups or structures to focus on Russian military activity in the region and cooperation with the PRC, such as the “Adversary Alignment” working group established under Section 1273 of the of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (P.L. 119-60), to include the PRC, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Section 1273 requires the working group provide to Congress a report on the “Nature, Trajectory, and Risks of Bilateral Cooperation Between, and Multilateral Cooperation Among, Adversaries of the United States.”

⁶⁰ CRS In Focus IF12858, *Congress and National Security: Selected Tools and Issues for the 119th Congress*, coordinated by Christopher M. Blanchard.

⁶¹ The original reporting requirement is found in Section 1234 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (P.L. 116-283; 134 Stat. 3936).

⁶² The Director of National Intelligence oversees the National Intelligence Council, which produces National Intelligence Estimates. CRS In Focus IF10470, *The Director of National Intelligence (DNI)*, by Michael E. DeVine.

Appendix. Selected Russia-PRC Military Exercises and Patrols, 2003-2024

Table A-1. Russia-PRC Military Exercises, 2003-2024

Date	Name and Description	Location(s)	Participants
August 6-12, 2003	Coalition 2003 The PRC and Russia participated in the first Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) multilateral counterterrorism exercise.	Usharal, Kazakhstan Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, PRC	Multilateral
August 18-25, 2005	Peace Mission 2005 The first bilateral military exercise between the PRC and Russia.	Vladivostok, Russia Shandong Peninsula, PRC	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
March 2-5, 2006	East-Antiterror 2006 SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Ulugbek, Uzbekistan Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Multilateral
May 28-31, 2007	Issyk-Kul Antiterror 2007 SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Lake Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyz Republic	Multilateral
August 9-17, 2007	Peace Mission 2007 SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, PRC Chelyabinsk, Russia	Multilateral
September 4-6, 2007	Cooperation 2007 (also referred to as Sodruzhestvo 2007) SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Khabarovsk, Russia Moscow, Russia	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
April 17-19, 2009	Norak Antiterror 2009 SCO-led command-staff counterterrorist exercise.	Fakhrabad Training Grounds, Tajikistan	Multilateral
July 22-26, 2009	Peace Mission 2009 SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Khabarovsk, Russia Taonan Tactical Training Base, Jilin Province, PRC	Bilateral (PRC, Russia) Observers from SCO member countries (Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)
September 18, 2009	Peace Blue Shield 2009 Naval exercise.	Gulf of Aden	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
September 10-25, 2010	Peace Mission 2010 SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Zhambyl, Kazakhstan	Multilateral
April 22-27, 2012	Joint Sea 2012 (also referred to as Naval Interaction) Naval exercise between the PRC and Russia.	Yellow Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)

Date	Name and Description	Location(s)	Participants
June 8-14, 2012	Peace Mission 2012 SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Sughd Province, Tajikistan	Multilateral
June 10-20, 2013	Cooperation-2013 Counterterrorism exercise between the PRC and Russia.	Beijing, PRC	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
July 5-12, 2013	Joint Sea 2013 Naval exercises.	Peter the Great Gulf, Russia	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
July 27-August 15, 2013	Peace Mission 2013 SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Chebarkul Military Range, Russia	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
May 20-26, 2014	Joint Sea 2014 Naval exercise between the PRC and Russia.	East China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
August 24-29, 2014	Peace Mission 2014 SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Zhurihe Training Base, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, PRC	Multilateral
October 31, 2014	Border Defense Cooperation 2014 Exercise between the PRC and Russia to defend against cross-border criminal and terrorist activities.	Jilin Province, PRC Khasan, Russia	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
Phase I: May 11-21, 2015 Phase II: August 20-28, 2015	Joint Sea 2015 Naval exercise.	Phase I: Mediterranean Sea (Eastern part) Phase II: Peter the Great Gulf	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
September 15-17, 2015	Central Asia-Antiterror 2015 SCO counterterrorism exercises.	Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
May 23-28, 2016	Aerospace Security 2016 The PRC and Russia held an anti-ballistic missile, computer-simulated command post exercise.	Moscow, Russia	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
July 3-14, 2016	Cooperation 2016 The PRC and Russia participated in counterterrorism exercises.	Moscow, Russia	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
September 12-20, 2016	Joint Sea 2016 Naval exercise between the PRC and Russia.	South China Sea (east of Zhanjiang, Guangdong Province, PRC)	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
September 15-21, 2016	Peace Mission 2016 SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyz Republic Balykchy, Kyrgyz Republic	Multilateral
Phase I: July 21-27, 2017 Phase II: September 22-26, 2017	Joint Sea 2017 The PRC and Russia held their first naval exercise in the Baltic Sea. Phase II exercises occurred in the Sea of Okhotsk for the first time.	Phase I: Baltic Sea Phase II: Vladivostok, Russia Sea of Japan Sea of Okhotsk	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)

Date	Name and Description	Location(s)	Participants
December 2-13, 2017	Cooperation-2017 Counterterrorism exercises.	Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, PRC	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
December 11-16, 2017	Aerospace Security 2017 The PRC and Russia held an anti-ballistic missile defense computer-simulated command post exercise.	Beijing, PRC	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
August 24-29, 2018	Peace Mission 2018 SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Chelyabinsk, Russia	Multilateral
September 11-17, 2018	Vostok 2018 The PRC participated in Russia's large-scale military exercise.	Siberia, Russia Far East, Russia	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
April 29-May 4, 2019	Joint Sea 2019 Naval exercise between the PRC and Russia.	Qingdao, PRC East China Sea Yellow Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
July 23, 2019	Combined Strategic Air Patrol 2019 The PRC's People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) and the Russian Aerospace Forces conducted a combined long-range air patrol in the Indo-Pacific region for the first time.	Sea of Japan East China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
September 16-21, 2019	Tsentr 2019 The PRC participated in Russia's annual war games.	North Caucasus, Russia Western Siberia, Russia	Multilateral
October 11-22, 2019	Cooperation 2019 Counterterrorism exercises.	Novosibirsk, Russia	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
November 9-22, 2019	Field Training Exercise of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus Experts' Working Group on Counter-Terrorism The PRC, Russia, and members of ASEAN conducted military counterterrorism exercises.	Guangxi, PRC	Multilateral (PRC, Russia, ASEAN members)
November 24-30, 2019	Naval Operation Mosi First trilateral exercise with the PRC, Russia, and South Africa.	South African coast	Multilateral (PRC, Russia, and South Africa)
December 27-30, 2019	Marine Security Belt 2019 First trilateral naval exercises with the PRC, Russia, and Iran.	Gulf of Oman Indian Ocean	Multilateral (PRC, Russia, and Iran)
September 21-26, 2020	Kavkaz 2020 (Caucasus 2020) The PRC participated in the Russian military's large-scale annual exercises.	Southern Military District, Russia Black Sea Caspian Sea	Multilateral

Date	Name and Description	Location(s)	Participants
December 22, 2020	Combined Strategic Air Patrol 2020 Air patrol.	Sea of Japan East China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
August 9-13, 2021	Interaction 2021 Large-scale exercise between the PRC and Russia.	Ningxia, PRC	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
September 11-25, 2021	Peace Mission 2021 SCO counterterrorism exercise.	Orenburg, Russia	Multilateral
October 14-23, 2021	Joint Sea 2021 Naval exercise.	Sea of Japan East China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
November 19, 2021	Combined Strategic Air Patrol 2021 Air patrol.	Sea of Japan East China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
January 18-20, 2022	Marine Security Belt/CHIRU 2022 Anti-piracy patrols/naval exercises.	Gulf of Oman Northern Indian Ocean	Multilateral (PRC, Russia, and Iran)
January 24, 2022	Peaceful Sea 2022 Naval exercise.	Arabian Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
May 24, 2022	Combined Strategic Air Patrol 2022 Air patrol.	Sea of Japan East China Sea Western Pacific Ocean	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
September 1-7, 2022	Vostok 2022 Russian military exercises, involving multiple countries, including the PRC, in Russia's Far East.	Russian Far East, Siberia	Multilateral
September 26, 2022	Combined Naval Patrol 2022 Naval patrol.	Bering Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
November 30, 2022	Combined Strategic Air Patrol 2022 Air patrol.	Sea of Japan East China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
December 21-27, 2022	Joint Sea 2022 Naval exercise.	East China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
February 17-27, 2023	Mosi II 2023 (also called Operation Mosi) Naval exercise with the PRC, Russia, and South Africa.	South African Coast	Multilateral (PRC, Russia, and South Africa)
March 15-19, 2023	Marine Security Belt 2023 Naval exercise with the PRC, Russia, and Iran.	Gulf of Oman	Multilateral (PRC, Russia, and Iran)
June 6-7, 2023	Combined Strategic Air Patrol Strategic air patrol by the PRC and Russia.	Sea of Japan East China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
July 5-11, 2023	Combined Naval Exercise 2023 Naval exercise.	Shanghai, PRC	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
July 20-23, 2023	Joint Sea 2023 Air and naval drill in the Sea of Japan.	Sea of Japan	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)

Date	Name and Description	Location(s)	Participants
August 2023	Combined Naval Patrol 2023 Russia-PRC naval patrol near Alaska.	Bering Sea East China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
December 14, 2023	Combined Strategic Air Patrol Air patrol.	Sea of Japan East China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
March 11-15, 2024	Marine Security Belt 2024 Combined naval exercise with the PRC, Russia, and Iran.	Gulf of Oman	Multilateral (PRC, Russia, and Iran)
June 25, 2024	Border Defense Cooperation 2024 Anti-terrorism exercise between the PRC and Russia.	Heihe, Dongbei, PRC Blagoveshchensk, Russia	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
July 3-5, 2024	Combined Naval Patrol Russia-PRC naval patrol.	Korea Strait (near Jeju Island) to the East China Sea Transited Osumi Strait, Japan Pacific Ocean	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
July 14-17, 2024	Joint Sea 2024 Naval exercise.	Guangdong Province, PRC South China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
July 25, 2024	Combined Strategic Air Patrol The patrol involved bombers from both countries flying over the Bering Sea for the first time. The U.S.-Canadian North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) intercepted two Russian and two PRC bombers flying near Alaska.	Bering Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
July 28, 2024	Combined Naval Exercise Naval exercise in the Gulf of Finland.	Gulf of Finland	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
September 10-27, 2024	Northern/Interaction 2024 Naval exercise.	Sea of Japan Sea of Okhotsk	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
September 27, 2024	Combined Naval Patrol Following Northern/Interaction Naval Exercise.	Sea of Japan	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
September 10-16, 2024	Ocean 2024 Russia-led naval exercises.	Far East Coast, Russia Sea of Japan	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
October 7, 2024	Joint Naval Drills Anti-submarine and air defense drills.	East China Sea Philippine Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)
November 29-30, 2024	Combined Strategic Air Patrol Air patrol.	Sea of Japan East China Sea	Bilateral (PRC, Russia)

Sources: CRS, using data from official Russia and People’s Republic of China (PRC) press releases; Department of Defense (DOD), *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China*, December 2025; Matthew Stein, *Compendium of Central Asian Military and Security Activity*, Foreign Military Studies Office, January 20, 2021; Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), “China-Russia Joint Military Exercises,” <https://Chinapower.csis.org/data/china-russia-joint-military-exercises/>; Richard Weitz, “Assessing China-Russian Military Exercises: Past Progress and Future Trends,” CSIS, July 2021; Dmitry Gorenburg et al.,

Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation: An Increasingly Unequal Partnership, CNA, 2023; Oriana Skylar Mastro, “Sino-Russian Military Alignment and Its Implications for Global Security,” *Security Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2 (2024), pp. 254-290; and media reports.

Notes: For inclusion in the table, an event had to be confirmed by at least two sources. Some events included in other data sets were excluded if no corresponding information could be located. The table is limited to events conducted through 2024 and confirmed by the 2025 *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China*. The table includes events conducted under the auspices of the SCO but does not include Coast Guard exercises. Locations are approximate.

Author Information

Andrew S. Bowen
Analyst in Russian and European Affairs

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