

Russian Navy resumes constant presence in World's Oceans

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Russia's Navy has resumed its continual presence in different regions of the world's oceans, Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov told the president at a meeting in the Kremlin on Wednesday.

"There are plans to dispatch ships to the northeast Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea from now to February 3, 2008. The expedition is aimed at ensuring a naval presence and establishing conditions for secure Russian navigation," Serdyukov told Vladimir Putin.

The minister said an aircraft-carrying heavy cruiser, two anti-submarine ships and a tanker left for the Mediterranean on Wednesday, where they will be joined by a Black Sea Fleet missile cruiser and a tanker.

Serdyukov said a total of four warships and seven other vessels of Russia's Northern, Black Sea and Baltic fleets, as well as 47 planes and 10 helicopters, have been dispatched for the mission. Three exercises, involving the vessels and aircraft, are being planned.

In mid-August, Putin announced the resumption of strategic patrol flights, saying that although the country halted long-distance strategic flights to remote regions in 1992 with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing economic and political chaos, other nations had continued the practice, compromising Russian national security.

Russia's strategic bombers have since carried out over 70 patrol flights over the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic oceans, as well as the Black Sea, a senior Air Force official said on Tuesday, adding that NATO interceptor aircraft had escorted Russian bombers during almost all their patrols.

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