

Development of Russian Armed Forces in the Vicinity of Japan

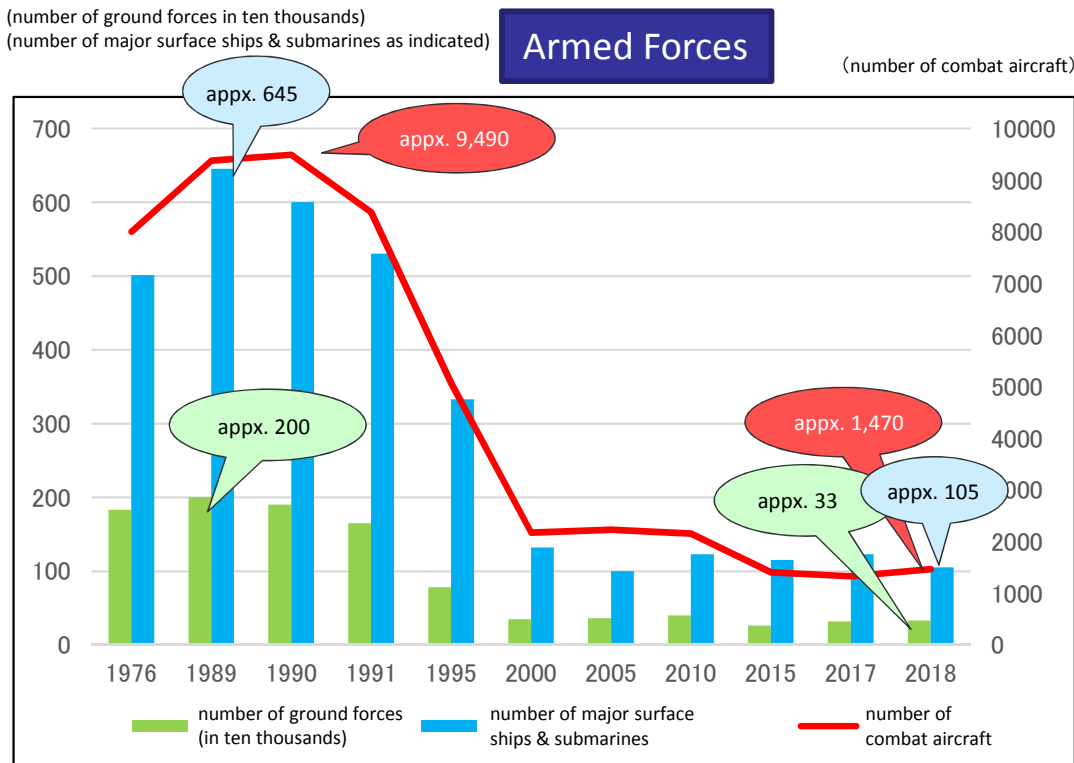
September 2019

Japan Ministry of Defense

Transition of Russian Armed Forces (RAF) in General

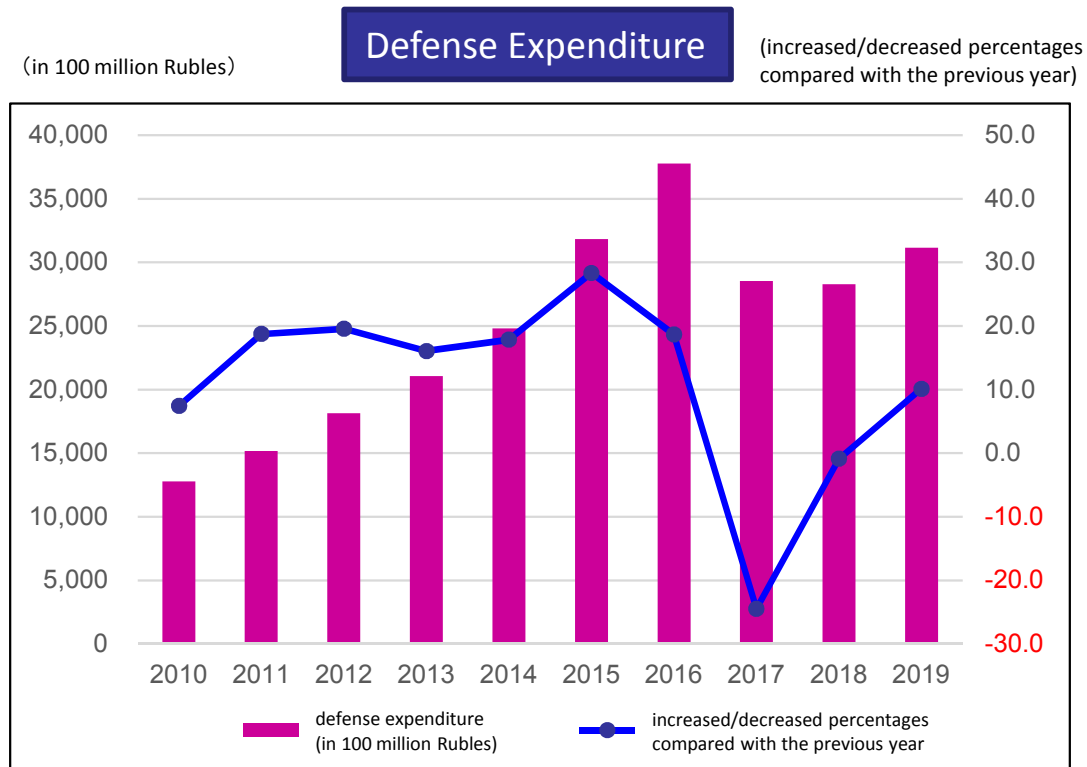
(Source: : Japanese MOD "Defense of Japan", Military Balance, Russian Federal Treasury's Information on Execution of Budgets of the Russian Federation, etc.)

- Russian Armed Forces (RAF) **significantly decreased** since the fall of the Soviet Union (the number fell to roughly 20 percent compared to its peak in the former Soviet era)
 - ⇒ Promotes **military downsizing** such as by shifting from **division-based** to **brigade-based** command structure
- Against the backdrop of rising international oil prices, stagnant Russian economy started to grow since around year 2000 and **defense expenditures increased**
 - ⇒ **Promotes modernization of equipment** (its goal is to achieve the percentage of new equipment up to 70% by 2020)



* 1976: Announcement of Japan's Basic Defense Program 1976, 1989: RAF at its peak (as for no. of combat aircraft, 1990 was its peak), 1990: Start of Soviet armed forces' reduction (as for no. of combat aircraft, 1991 was the start), 1995: Announcement of Japan's Basic Defense Program 1995

** "number of major surface ships & submarines" means the number of combatant ships with a displacement of frigates or above; "number of combat aircraft" means the number of military aircraft other than transport, refuel, etc.



*** Figures of 2010-2018 are executed amounts, figure of 2019 is the initial budget amount of the year.

**** The amount executed for FY2017 registered a year-on-year decrease of around 25% compared to the previous year. Although Russia faced difficult fiscal situations in 2015 and 2016, including decline in economic growth, it is said that Russia ensured necessary budget for national defense in order to achieve the goals of the State Armaments Program by 2020 and other targets. However, having used up the reserve fund set aside for fiscal replenishment, it is presumed that since 2017 Russia's national defense budget is allocated consistent with its economic growth.

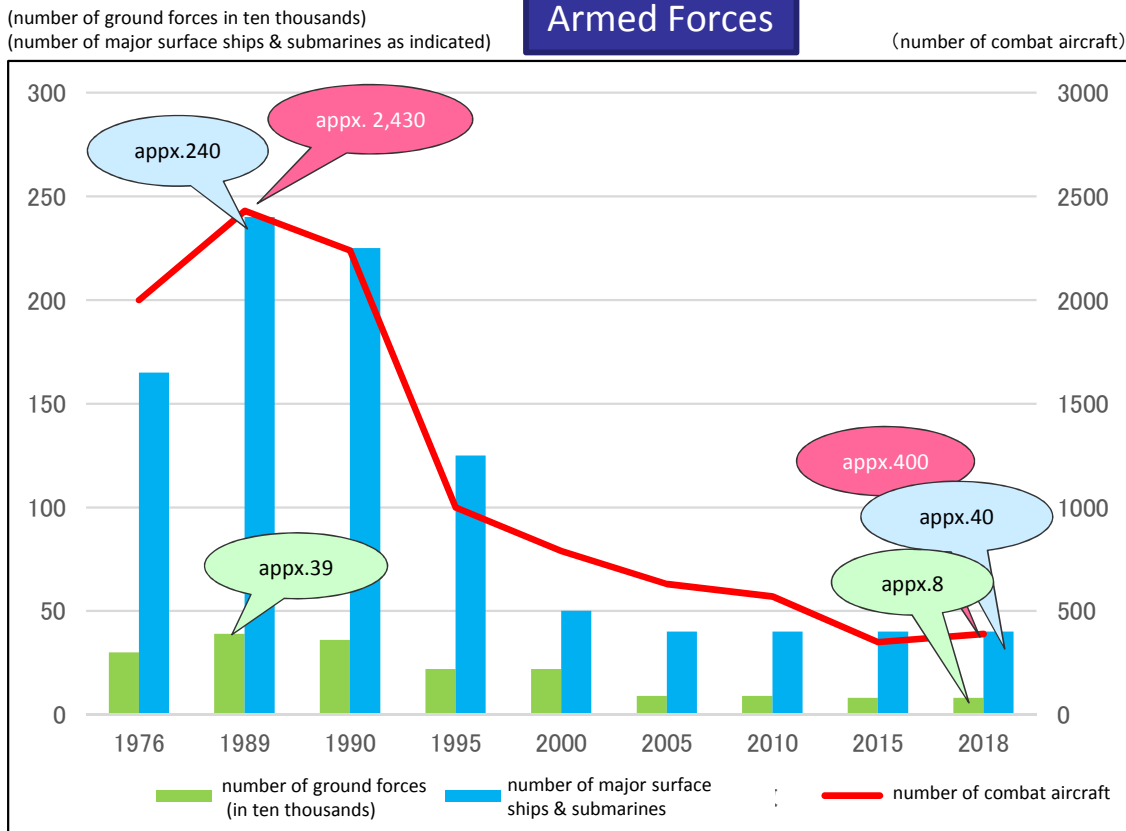
Transition of RAF in the Far East

(Source: Japanese MOD "Defense of Japan", etc.)

- Although RAF in the Far East is significantly smaller than when it was at its peak, Russia maintains a considerable size of military forces including nuclear capabilities.
- New equipment, such as fighters, vessels, short-range ballistic missiles, are also deployed in the Far East as well as in the European region.
- Vessels which could be equipped with cruise missile "Kalibr" (such as modified version of the Steregushchiy-class frigate) are planned to be deployed in the Far East in or after 2018.

* "Kalibr" is a ship-launched long-range cruise missile (SS-N-30 (anti-ship version) has a range of 1,500km (surface ship type) or 2,000km.(submarine type) while SS-N-27(land attack version) has a range of 660km. The missile has been used by Russian Naval attack during military operations in Syria. It is said to be capable of both conventional and nuclear warheads.

Armed Forces



Examples of RAF in the Far East



Borey-class SSBN

(New SSBN deployed in the Far East since 2015. Plans to deploy a total of four, and two had already entered service)



Short-range ballistic missile "Iskander"

(New missile deployed in the Far East since 2013)



Steregushchiy-class frigate

(New frigate deployed in the Far East since 2017. Plans to deploy a total of four, and two had already entered service. Plans to deploy two more improved version equipped with "Kalibr".)



Su-35 fighter

(New fighter deployed in the Far East since 2014)

Development of RAF in the Far East & Northern Territories (NT)

(Source: Japanese MOD "Defense of Japan", JSO announcements, Russian MOD announcements, media reports, etc.)

- RAF tends to increase military activities including reinforcement of armament in the Northern Territories & Chishima Islands
- Frequency of scrambles against Russian aircraft keeps a high level, and long-range bombers fly around Japan every year
- Frequency of passing through the straits near Japan by Russian naval vessels tends to rise, among these straits the Soya is most frequently used

RAF's Exercise & Training

- Large scale exercise "Vostok 2018" was conducted in Sept 2018 (as announced by Russian MOD)
 - 297 thousand troops, 1,000 aircraft, 80 vessels, 36 thousand tanks and other equipment (largest exercise since the Cold War)
 - Chinese and Mongolian armed forces participated for the first time.

Russian Aircraft Activities

- Average number of JASDF aircrafts scrambled against Russian aircraft per year is approximately 360 times over the past five years(2014-2018), and the number in 2018 is about twice of that in 2008, having a tendency to increase.
- Russian Strategic bombers and other aircrafts circled around Japanese archipelago about once or twice per year over the past five years (2014-2018).

Russian Naval vessel Activities

- The number of Russian naval ships that passed the Soya, Tsugaru and Tsushima straits in 2018 is about 6 times larger than that in 2008, having a tendency to increase. Among these straits the Soya is most frequently used, and about 50 ships passed through the Soya strait a year over the past 5 years.
- In Sep 2018, 28 ships passed the Soya strait marking the highest number since the end of the Cold War.



Plan to Deploy SSMs in Matsuwa Island

Matsuwa Island

*"Bal" & "Bastion" reportedly will be deployed in Matsuwa islands (Nov 2017)

Deployment of Fighters in Etorofu Island

*Su-35 fighters (x3) reportedly had been deployed in Etorofu island (Aug 2018)

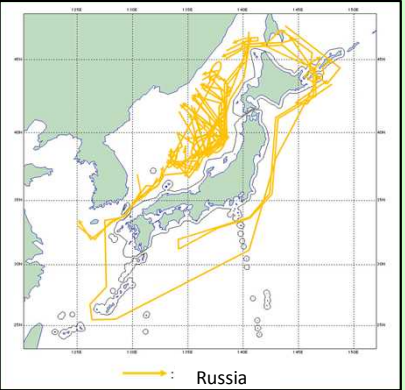
(Sakhalin Info)

Deployment of SSMs in Etorofu & Kunashiri Islands

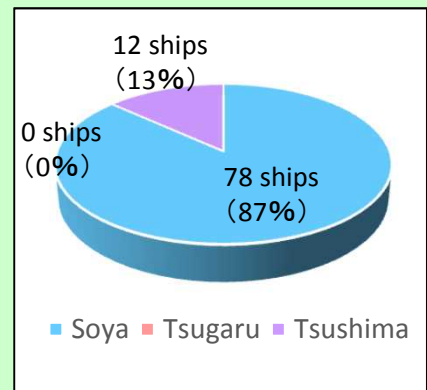
SSM "Bastion"(SSC-5)

SSM "Bal" (SSC-6)

Russian aircraft flight pattern (announced for FY2018)



Russian naval vessels which passed through the Straits(announced for FY2018)



RAF Unit in the Northern Territories (NT)

Stationed Unit

○ Units of **18th Machine Gun-Artillery Division** are stationed at **Etorofu and Kunashiri islands** (the number of deployed troops is appx. **3,500**) to defend against landing forces.

Visits by the Russian President & Defense Minister

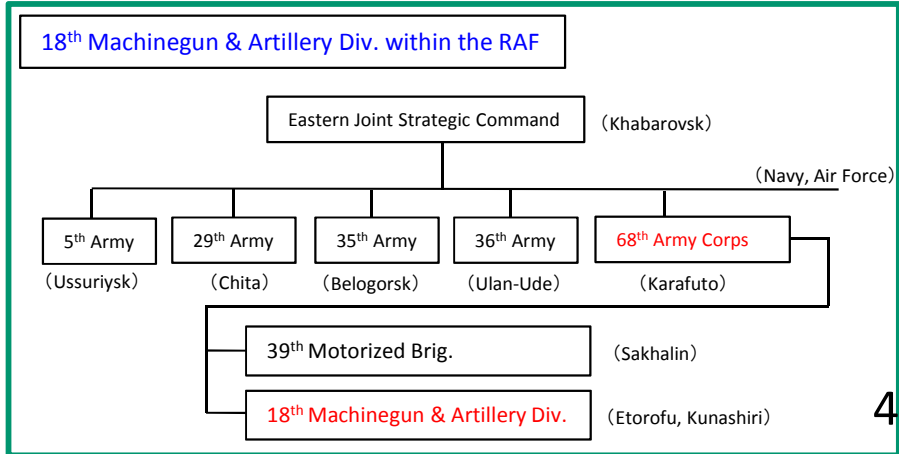
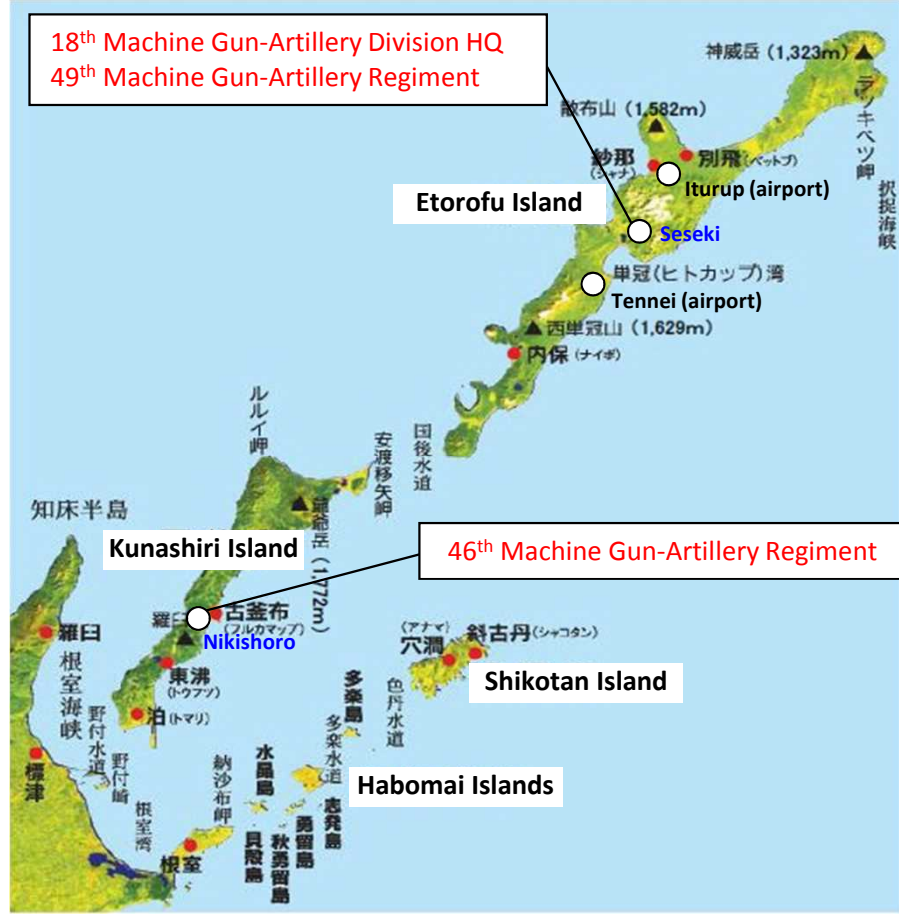
- In Nov 2010, the then president **Medvedev** visited **Kunashiri isl.** for the first time as the **head of the state**. The then Defense Minister Serdyukov visited the NT in Feb of the following year.
- In Jul 2012, the PM Medvedev and three ministers visited Kunashiri isl.
- In Aug 2015, the PM Medvedev and three ministers visited Etorofu isl.
- In Aug 2019, the PM Medvedev visited Etorofu isl.

Renewal of Equipment & Facility Development

- Tanks, self-propelled artillery, MLRS, SAM, helicopters, etc. are deployed at the NT.
- In Feb 2011, the then president Medvedev **instructed** the then Defense Minister Serdyukov **to take necessary steps to modernize the equipment in the “Kuril” islands***.
- In Mar 2011, Russian General Staff allegedly developed **a detailed plan to renew equipment of forces stationed at the “Kuril” islands**.
- In Mar 2016, the Russian Defense Ministry announced that it **plans to deploy surface-to-ship missiles (SSMs) “Bastion”(SSC-5) and “Bal”(SSC-6) in the “Kuril” islands** by the end of the year. (In Nov 2016, the Pacific Fleet newspaper revealed that **units equipped with SSMs “Bastion” and “Bal” were on duty in Etorofu and Kunashiri islands, respectively**.)
- It was reported that **Etorofu island’s new civilian airport became dual use with the military in Jan 2018 and that three fighters (Su-35) were deployed at the airport in August of the same year.** **

* “Kuril” is a Russian geographical name which refers to Northern Territories and Chishima islands .
 ** On Etorofu island, a new civilian airport opened in 2014. There is also a military airfield on the island known as Tennei airfield (“Burevestnik” airfield) where helicopters (Mi-8) are deployed

(Source: Japanese MOD “Defense of Japan”, Russian MOD announcements, IHS Jane’s, media reports, etc.)



Military significance of Northern Territories (NT) and Chishima Islands from Russian viewpoint

Comments from diplomatic magazines and media

(Source: The National Interest, Russian media, Soviet Military Power 1989, Google Map, etc.)

- The “Kuril” islands [i.e. NT and Chishima Islands] are important for major surface ships deployed at Vladivostok to maintain unfettered access to the Pacific.
- As its missile range became longer, the former Soviet Union developed so-called “Bastion(fortress) Strategy” that allowed them to easily defend their SSBNs, and the islands became even more valuable to Russia.
- Deployment of SSMs “Bastion”(SSC-5) to the island(Etorofu Island) is intended to keep enemies away from the Sea of Okhotsk, which is a suitable area for new Borei-class and other SSBN (deployed at Petropavlovsk) activities.

*“Bastion(fortress)”: U.S. DoD report “Soviet Military Power 1989,” etc., refer to “bastion” as the ex-Soviet SSBN’s operating area close to its territory protected by using shore, naval, and air assets in conjunction with topographical features. The Russian Northern fleet and Pacific fleet are believed to set “bastion” around the Barents Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk respectively.

**According to Russian MOD, Pacific Fleet conducted survey to consider deployment of Russian forces at Matua and Paramushir islands. Also, media reported that there are plans to construct military bases at Matua and Paramushir islands starting from 2018, as well as deploy surface-to-air missiles (SSMs) “Bastion”(SSC-5) and “Bal”(SSC-6) at these islands (Russian government has not made any announcement on this matter)【Izvestia & RIA Novosti, 29 Nov 2017】

Deployment of Russian military forces around Japan

* Due to sea-ice, it is usually difficult to pass through the Soya strait and straits around Etorofu and Kunashiri islands from January through April.



Ranges of SSMs (for illustrative purposes)

