



Sky-watching in the Cold

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian MOD has put a lot of equipment and effort into improving the air defense posture of the Arctic approaches into Russia. The new radar are supposedly capable of detecting small and electronically-masked objects in flight. Russian air defenders are well aware that the shortest route between Russia and the US is over the North Pole. While many of the Arctic exercises are mounted against small groups of “terrorists” and “jihadists,” as the accompanying article indicates the prevention of strategic attack is a priority mission of the air defense community. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“‘Inspections of this type take place every three to five years,’ Colonel Bogodukhov stated. ‘We are committed to achieving a score no lower than ‘good’ and I consider that if it is less than that, we have no right to be serving.’”

Source: Aleksandr Panyushkin, “Глаза и уши ПВО (The Eyes and Ears of Air Defense),” *Na Strazhe Zapolyarya (On Guard in the Polar Region)*, 1 June 2018.

According to the regimental commander, Colonel Daniil Bogodukhov, the radar regiment monitors everything that flies past in its zone of responsibility, including civilian aircraft. There is a single goal -- in no circumstances to allow a violation of the border.

“Foreign aircraft are constantly flying along our frontiers. Mostly these are Finnish border and forestry patrol helicopters. That is no big deal although they sometimes approach within a kilometer of our territory-which does not contravene international norms in any way. Intelligence-gathering aircraft from countries of the North Atlantic Alliance quite often ‘drop by’ to take a look. These need to be watched closely.”

During the winter training period the unit’s personnel provided radar support for Northern Fleet aviation. Recently, the regiment assisted Tu-95 strategic bombers on a long-range flight. It has frequently supported Tu-22M3 strategic bombers on flights over the Arctic Ocean and western Atlantic. This makes a major contribution to enhancing our defense capabilities...

“We have...technologies that identify and track UAVs. They have been tested and proven their effectiveness. Because combat drones are the main problem and source of danger emerging from terrorist organizations, we have proven that we can successfully counter them.”

...The radar regiment includes more than 10 sub-units that are stationed across a fairly large area. In a recent exercise scenario, a group of saboteurs attacked a radar battalion based in Zapolyarnoye. An anti-terrorism sub-unit from a motorized rifle formation in Pechenga came to its assistance. With our forces in close coordination, the enemy was very rapidly eliminated. Similar exercises have been held...and the troops have always displayed an outstanding level of military proficiency.

There is also close coordination and constant exchange of information with Russian Federation Federal Security Service border forces. Not everything can be detected with radar so intelligence from visual means is always useful.

...The main event of the upcoming summer training period is an inspection by the Russian Federation Defense Ministry Main Directorate for Performance Monitoring and Oversight...personnel are being prepared...hardware is being evaluated, and supplies accumulated. There will soon be an expedition to the Ashuluk training ground, where combat missions will be handled directly in field conditions.

“Inspections of this type take place every three to five years,” Colonel Bogodukhov stated. “We are committed to achieving a score no lower than ‘good’ and I consider that if it is less than that, we have no right to be serving. Especially since in recent years the regiment has been completely re-equipped. We now have advanced equipment and it is...operationally ready. In terms of performance and specifications, it has no equal in the world. It is mobile, which makes the radar regiment more survivable and more capable in combat.”



THE RUSSIAN WAY OF WAR by LESTER W. GRAU and CHARLES K. BARTLES

At any given time, assessments of the Russian Armed Forces vary between the idea of an incompetent and corrupt conscript army manning decrepit Soviet equipment and relying solely on brute force, to the idea of an elite military filled with Special Operations Forces (SOF) who were the “polite people” or “little green men” seen on the streets in Crimea. This book will attempt to split the difference between these radically different ideas by shedding some light on what the Russian Ground Forces consist of, how they are structured, how they fight, and how they are modernizing.

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