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## Russian warships to patrol Arctic

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David Nowak in Moscow  
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Russia is sending warships to patrol Arctic waters for the first time since the breakup of the Soviet Union, it announced yesterday, in the latest move to increase the country's global military presence.

Russia began sending aircraft carriers to the Mediterranean in December and resumed long-range bomber patrols in August. "We have been talking for a long time about widening our activity in the Arctic," said a navy spokesman, Igor Dygalo. "There is nothing aggressive in it - it is in the interests of security."

Moscow-based military analyst Pavel Felgenhauer said security was not Russia's primary motivation in sending the Navy ships to the Arctic. "This is flag-waving and that's basically it," Felgenhauer said. "Sending a couple of patrol boats to the Arctic won't change anything."

Russia has also been moving to stake its claim to resources that are increasingly accessible as global warming melts Arctic ice.

Moscow recently sent an expedition to plant a Russian flag on the seabed under the North Pole, and said research indicated that a massive underwater mountain range in the area, which is believed to contain huge oil and gas reserves, is part of Russia's continental shelf.