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| THE VOICE OF RUSSIA http://english.ruvr.ru/2012\_03\_12/68216782/   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **NATO holds naval games in the Arctic**  Tags: [Arctic](http://english.ruvr.ru/arctic/), [military exercises](http://english.ruvr.ru/tag_9502657/), [World](http://english.ruvr.ru/world/), [Politics](http://english.ruvr.ru/politics/), [Commentary](http://english.ruvr.ru/comments/)   |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Mikhail Aristov](http://english.ruvr.ru/by_author/4468696/) | Mar 12, 2012 14:50 Moscow Time |  |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  |   The ‘Cold Response’ 2012 maneuvers have got under way in the Arctic, bringing together 16,000 servicemen and a large number of warships from 14 NATO countries, including the United States, Britain, Canada, France and the Netherlands. Sweden is also taking part in the drill along with the NATO countries. The participants in the war games which will last till March 21st will be practicing interaction in case of an armed conflict and joint operations in a terrorist attack. The Voice of Russia’s Mikhail Aristov has more details.  Terrorist organizations exist in the Middle East, Latin America, Asia and North Africa but there are none in the Arctic. Igor Korotchenko of National Security Journal, comments.  "The current military drill takes place amid NATO’s increased activities in the Arctic. Apparently, NATO is set on obtaining a share of the Arctic resources and is carrying out the naval exercises to demonstrate that its geopolitical and diplomatic efforts lean on military might."  Though devoid of terrorists, the Arctic abounds in gas, oil, gold and diamond reserves. As scientists predict, the global warming and ice melting will make the Arctic resources accessible. Fully aware of this, countries, including NATO, have been involved in disputes over their share of the Arctic wealth. Canada has been in dispute with the US, Denmark – with Canada. Even countries far from the Arctic, among them China and Korea, are building icebreaker fleets just in case. The shortest sea route between Western Europe and the Asia-Pacific region lies along the Russian coast and is known as the Northern Sea Route. The Northern Sea Route is a key Arctic resource which has been developed by Russia since long ago. According to Vladimir Yevseyev of the International Security Center of the Institute of Global Economy and International Relations, NATO could have held the drill on the territory of Canada.  "Nevertheless, the exercises are being held on the territories of Norway and Sweden, in close proximity to the Russian borders. They might thus be seen as a provocation. Russia has all grounds for concern given that the ships equipped with the Spanish-made Aegis Combat Systems can be deployed in the Arctic."  Aegis is a ship-based system provided with long-range radar that can track air targets at a distance of up to 400 kilometers. It also boasts SM-3 missiles and fire control systems with elements of Artificial Intelligence. Russia is keeping a close eye on the military activities in the Arctic, Igor Korotchenko says.  "Russia is creating two Arctic mobile brigades which will ensure effective operations in any part of the Arctic."  The new combat ships which are currently under construction at Russian shipyards should mark the renewal of the Russian Arctic Fleet. A couple of assault ships of the Mistral class which are being built in France will head for the Arctic as well. And the Russian submarine fleet will undergo an overhaul in the near future. While modernizing its naval forces, Russia is determined to resolve territorial disputes through negotiation. Moscow is sure that a dialogue should rely on diplomacy, not on military might. | |