

# Assessing Chinese-Russian Military Exercises

## *Past Progress and Future Trends*

By Richard Weitz

---

### *Summary*

This paper reviews the evolving Chinese-Russian military exercises, assesses their purposes and results, forecasts their future evolution, and evaluates the policy implications for U.S. military planners. The Chinese and Russian armed forces have become each other's most important foreign exercise partner. Since the mid-2000s, China and Russia have conducted an increasingly frequent number and more diverse range of Sino-Russian bilateral and multilateral military exercises. These have included a long-standing series of land drills and, somewhat later, novel maritime maneuvers. Recent years have also seen joint aviation patrols in the Asia-Pacific region, Chinese participation in Russia's annual strategic exercises, and command post exercises simulating combined missile defense tasks.

Unlike the Russian arms sales to China—which have experienced abrupt ups and downs—or their unremarkable defense dialogues, these exercises have remained a prominent and recurring feature of the Sino-Russian defense partnership for more than a decade. They have aimed to improve both forces' capabilities, enhance interoperability, encourage defense industrial collaboration, send signals to third parties, and promote mutual reassurance and confidence building. The drills have become an important tool for the institutionalization of Sino-Russian defense ties without establishment of a formal alliance. Though the United States lacks the capacity to prevent these drills, U.S. planners can prepare for unanticipated scenarios while working with allies and partners in mitigating potential adverse impacts.

### *History and Types of Drills*

The major and longest-standing multinational drills involving Chinese, Russian, and sometimes additional countries' armed forces, have been the "Peace Mission" (*Мирная миссия*) exercises, which have been primarily land force maneuvers lasting one to two weeks. These have varied substantially in size, from

more than ten thousand Chinese and Russian soldiers in Peace Mission 2005 to only slightly more than one thousand troops in Peace Mission 2016 (see appendix). Peace Mission 2005 and Peace Mission 2009 occurred under the rubric of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation (2001), and involved only Chinese and Russian troops. In contrast, the other Peace Mission drills occurred within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This multilateral bloc, led by Beijing and Moscow, has historically focused on promoting economic, social, and security cooperation among members, primarily focused on issues related to central Asia. All six of the then full members of the SCO (China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) participated in Peace Mission 2007. All full members except Uzbekistan—wary of Moscow's military ambitions in central Asia—sent military units to Peace Mission 2010, which occurred in southern Kazakhstan. Unlike the 2005 drills, which involved large-scale land and amphibious maneuvers suited for a conventional war, the subsequent Peace Mission exercises have been oriented toward suppressing a major insurgency or popular rebellion on the scale of those that occurred in Chechnya, Tiananmen Square, or Andijan. They have rehearsed such missions as interdicting guerrillas, liberating hostages, and rendering tactical air support, as well as conducting airborne and special forces assaults. The participating units include personnel from their conventional armed forces, paramilitary forces (such as the internal security units of their interior ministries) and their intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Even when the Peace Mission land drills have included several SCO members, China and Russia have typically provided the largest force contributions; the other states either sent specialized units or observers.

The other main types of Sino-Russian exercises, which have been growing in importance compared to the Peace Mission series, have almost always involved primarily Chinese and Russian units. The main recurring series (*Морское взаимодействие*, often translated as “Naval Interaction” or called “Joint Sea” by the Chinese) has been exclusively Sino-Russian naval drills. **These maritime maneuvers**, typically involving one to two dozen warships in total, have occurred in more diverse locations than the primarily ground-focused Peace Mission exercises. In 2012, China and Russia held their first binational naval maneuver in the Yellow Sea near Qingdao; in 2013, they staged naval maneuvers in the Sea of Japan near Vladivostok; in 2014, their maritime exercise took place in the East China Sea off Shanghai. They staged a two-phase joint naval drill in 2015, first in the Mediterranean Sea and then months later in the Sea of Japan. Their September 2016 joint exercise occurred in the South China Sea. Their July 2017 naval exercises took place in the Baltic Sea, the first time that PLA Navy (PLAN) warships conducted maneuvers in this sensitive region. In September of that year, the naval drills took place in the Sea of Japan and, for the first time, in the Okhotsk Sea. The 2019 naval maneuvers occurred near Japan's Tsushima Island. These binational naval exercises have practiced an increasingly diverse range of tasks, including maritime search and rescue, joint air and anti-submarine warfare, combined air defense, freeing ships seized by pirates, escorting civilian vessels, and underway cargo replenishment. In what may become a pattern, China and Russia in the past few years have begun jointly conducting naval drills **with additional countries**, such as Iran and South Africa.

Other Sino-Russian maneuvers have occurred more intermittently. In 2016 and 2017, when Beijing and Moscow raised objections to the impending U.S. deployment of advanced missile defenses in Japan and especially South Korea, they conducted computer-enabled command post “Aerospace Security” (*Воздушно-космическая безопасность*) exercises, in which they rehearsed air and missile defense scenarios. The latter drill **simulated** Sino-Russian air and missile defense, operational and mutual fire support, and ballistic and cruise missile strikes. Subsequently, on July 23, 2019, the PLA Air Force and the Russian Aerospace Force conducted their first joint strategic aviation patrol, during which two Chinese H-6K and two Russian Tu-95 bombers **flew** into the overlapping Japanese and South Korean Air Defense Identification Zones. On December 22, 2020, another two Tu-95s, joined by four H-6Ks, **overflew** the Takeshima/Dokdo islands in

the Sea of Japan claimed by both Seoul and Tokyo. The PLA also regularly participates in Russian-run multinational showcase events, such as the tank biathlons and the International Army Games, a form of military Olympics in which various national militaries engage in contests profiling specialized skills. Similarly, the Russian navy now regularly joins the PLAN's annual fleet review.

Since 2018, the PLA has joined Russia's annual strategic command-staff exercise (*Стратегическое командно-штабное учение*), sending contingents to participate in several of the drills and maneuvers. Participation in these large-scale capstone training exercises, which rotate among Russia's four strategic commands, had historically been restricted to the former Soviet states. Whereas the declared Peace Mission scenarios involve suppressing insurgents, terrorists, and popular uprisings, these Russian strategic exercises overtly simulate missions for potential major power conflicts. During *Vostok 2018*, held in September of that year in Russia's Eastern Military District (Eastern MD), approximately 3,000 PLA personnel **deployed** at the Tsugol training range in Russia's Trans-Baikal region, near the intersection of the Russian, Chinese, and eastern Mongolian borders. The following September, a PLA contingent participated in *Tsentr 2019* in Russia's Central MD. Though contingents from India, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan also participated in *Tsentr 2019*, China's 1,600 personnel, as well as PLA tanks and aircraft, **represented** the largest non-Russian contribution. In explaining why the People's Republic of China (PRC) joined Russia's *Kavkaz 2020* strategic exercise, a Chinese defense ministry spokesperson **said** that the participation sought "to further develop the two countries' comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, deepen the pragmatic cooperation in the two militaries' training, and boost the capability of the participating countries' troops in jointly dealing with security threats and safeguarding regional peace and stability."

### *Assessment and Implications*

These regular Sino-Russian exercises have become a foundational tool for institutionalizing bilateral defense ties without a formal military alliance. They aim to improve the independent operational proficiency of both militaries by helping them to learn novel tactics, techniques, and procedures. The two militaries have also demonstrated their increased interoperability, though it is unclear how much this improvement can be credited to the exercises themselves or to the strengthening and modernization of capabilities of both sides' conventional forces. The Chinese and Russian forces seem capable of geographic "deconfliction" in joint operations, with Russian units deploying troops primarily to one location and Chinese contingents mostly operating in an adjoining area. Engaging in these drills is particularly useful for the PLA, whose defense technology until recently lagged that of Russia and whose military has not engaged in large combat operations since its 1979 incursion against Vietnam. The drills give the PLA opportunities to learn from the more experienced Russian forces, who have conducted relatively recent military campaigns in the North Caucasus, Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria in deploying and maneuvering large air, ground, and special forces units in expeditionary operations.

*These regular Sino-Russian exercises have become a foundational tool for institutionalizing bilateral defense ties without a formal military alliance. They aim to improve the independent operational proficiency of both militaries by helping them to learn novel tactics, techniques, and procedures.*

Additionally, the Sino-Russian exercises enhance interoperability between the Chinese and Russian armed forces even as the PLA's acquisition of more advanced domestically manufactured weapons—including increasingly sophisticated naval platforms and a variety of missiles—is moving the two militaries away from their common Soviet roots. Of course, this consideration could become less important if the Russian armed forces buy substantially more Chinese weaponry in the future. The PRC already produces more advanced unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and IT systems than the Russian industry and has surpassed Russia in its shipbuilding capacity. Just as Russia has at times purchased Western technology to fill gaps in indigenous production, so in the future it might turn to more Chinese sources to compensate for shortfalls in domestic technologies. In the past, Moscow had exploited the Sino-Russian exercises to display weapons systems to potential PLA buyers. Likewise, China might use the drills to showcase its own advanced arms to external clients, including Russian firms.

In terms of diplomacy and power projection, participation in these drills enables the two governments to signal reciprocal support. Through such defense cooperation, Moscow can affirm to Beijing its friendly intentions and trust, while gaining insights into the PLA's evolving military capabilities. Indeed, previous Sino-Russian naval drills have not shied away from regional hotspots. Beijing and Moscow seem to have agreed to take turns holding maritime maneuvers in regions where one party wants to project power and highlight their cooperation with other powerful militaries. For instance, the 2014 naval maneuvers took place near the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands (disputed between China and Japan), while the 2017 Baltic maneuvers highlighted Sino-Russian defense ties in this sensitive region. One Russian analyst [welcomed](#) the PLAN's timely arrival in the Baltic Sea given Moscow's then strained relations with the West. Additionally, the joint exercises provide both parties opportunities to manifest mutual trust, affirm their benign intentions, and stay abreast of each other's evolving military capabilities. They also reassure SCO allies and partners, such as the governments of central Asia and Pakistan, that Beijing and Moscow will shield them from security challenges. Chinese and Russian representatives routinely insist that their military partnership is not directed against third parties. The PLA's presence in *Vostok* 2018 could be explained as a form of reassurance, since the drills in eastern Russia could be seen as designed to enhance Russia's defenses against China. However, the PLA's participation in the *Tsentr* 2019 and *Kavkaz* 2020 exercises in central Russia suggest other purposes, such as sending messages to third parties, including the United States. The Chinese and Russian governments understand that these high-profile military maneuvers, which demonstrate their capacity to project power throughout Eurasia, can attract Washington's attention.

*The Chinese and Russian governments understand that these high-profile military maneuvers, which demonstrate their capacity to project power throughout Eurasia, can attract Washington's attention.*

The future of the Sino-Russian exercise program depends on the overall relationship between Moscow, Beijing, and Washington. As long as China and Russia maintain healthy ties while both states maintain poor relations with the United States, there is a high probability that they will continue to hold frequent joint exercises. Most likely, their military exercises will include practicing new missions in novel places with additional partners. A logical extension would be to rehearse their ability to move beyond deconfliction to better prepare to conduct joint military campaigns, such as suppressing popular uprisings and insurgencies

against friendly regimes in neighboring countries or more integrated counterterrorist and peacekeeping missions. Their navies could rehearse submarine patrol tactics (which would be especially valuable for the PLA), combined noncombatant evacuation operations of their citizens from international crisis regions, or joint interdiction of sea lines of communication or undersea cables. Additional locations for the drills might include the Arabian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, or Africa (perhaps taking advantage of both states having bases in Djibouti). Certain locations would depend on regional sensitivities and might require a local partner, but Moscow and Beijing could secure multilateral participation for some new drills. The Russian navy might try to take advantage of China's growing commercial presence in international ports to seek replenishment and repair services and other global logistic functions. Russia could also push for renewed efforts to hold multilateral exercises involving India to help reduce New Delhi's security tensions with China and Pakistan. The Sino-Indian differences hobble Moscow's goal of building an anti-Western bloc in the heart of Eurasia. Of even greater concern to U.S. planners, Russia might invite the PLA to participate in exercises in the Arctic, where the two countries' economic interests have been converging.

In terms of functional capabilities, China and Russia seem prepared to extend their drills to novel domains like cyber and outer space. Beijing and Moscow have already been aligning their arms control policies regarding these areas. Future Sino-Russian drills could also see the use of advanced drones, electronic warfare tests, artificial intelligence-enhanced systems, and employment of both militaries' new hypersonic missiles. These emerging capabilities are priority areas for Chinese, Russian, and U.S. military research and development given their potentially revolutionary effects on future battlefields. In light of their cooperation on missile early warning systems, China and Russia might at some point even include joint nuclear tasks in future drills, perhaps as part of the nuclear phase of the Russian strategic drills. The United States should cite any such cooperation to justify including limits on Chinese as well as Russian nuclear activities in future strategic arms control mechanisms.

The U.S. analytical and intelligence communities should continue their recent practice of paying more attention to monitoring and forecasting Sino-Russian military interactions. Many analysts (the author included) have been surprised by the extent of Chinese and Russian cooperation. Policymakers need to brainstorm how to respond to unlikely scenarios in advance, such as if PLA forces show up in occupied Georgia or Ukraine, or the Russian navy makes a show of force in the Taiwan Strait, or both militaries conduct sudden maneuvers in Venezuela or North Korea. Additionally, U.S. planners must prepare for contingencies involving both the Chinese and Russian armed forces. Even if they do not operate as a combined force in a joint military operation, Beijing and Moscow could exploit conflicts between the other and Washington to advance their own security interests while the United States is preoccupied elsewhere. For example, if the United States were engaged in a conflict with Beijing over Taiwan, the Kremlin might take the opportunity to become more adventurous in the Baltics.

*The U.S. analytical and intelligence communities should continue their recent practice of paying more attention to monitoring and forecasting Sino-Russian military interactions.*

The United States lacks means to halt or shape the Sino-Russian exercises directly. Washington can exert pressure on third countries not to participate, but arguably it is useful to have states that have good de-

fense ties with the United States, like SCO member India, involved to gain better insights (intelligence) on the drills. The United States should apply a “tolerate but emulate” approach in its own security cooperation with these states, sustaining a robust training and exercise program. U.S. representatives could more profitably exert low-key pressure on host countries to impede any Chinese efforts to exploit its commercial control of foreign ports to support Russian (and ideally Chinese) naval ships.

An interesting question is whether the PLA will play a prominent role in [the Zapad strategic exercise](#) later this year, which could alarm the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) but also make less credible Russian options to use the drills as preparations for attacking Ukraine. In any case, U.S. public messaging should cite the Sino-Russian exercises to emphasize to Europeans the importance of addressing China as a military threat, at least as a supporting player to Russia. This step would supplement the recent U.S. progress in better involving European countries in parrying Chinese military threats in East Asia, as seen in some NATO members’ newly announced Asian-related security statements and Pacific Freedom of Navigation patrols. U.S. representatives should also regularly consult with key U.S. partners beyond Europe and Asia about the Sino-Russian exercises and the two countries’ other joint military ties. ■

*Richard Weitz is senior fellow and director of the Center for Political-Military Analysis at Hudson Institute. His current research includes regional security developments relating to Europe, Eurasia, and East Asia, as well as U.S. foreign and defense policies.*

*This publication was funded by the Russia Strategic Initiative, U.S. European Command in Stuttgart, Germany. Opinions, arguments, viewpoints, and conclusions expressed in this work do not represent those of RSI, U.S. EUCOM, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government. This publication is cleared for public release.*

**This report is produced by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a private, tax-exempt institution focusing on international public policy issues. Its research is nonpartisan and nonproprietary. CSIS does not take specific policy positions. Accordingly, all views, positions, and conclusions expressed in this publication should be understood to be solely those of the author(s).**

© 2021 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies. All rights reserved.



## Appendix

### MAJOR CHINESE-RUSSIAN MILITARY EXERCISES

Exercise	Participants	Purpose	Location	Forces
Peace Mission 2005 (Aug 18–25, 2005)	Russia, China	Neutralizing anti-aircraft defenses; enforcing maritime blockades; conducting amphibious assault missions	Russia's Vladivostok port, then China's Shandong Peninsula	Some 10,000 troops in total; while most troops (8,000 versus 2,000) were Chinese, Russia provided the most sophisticated equipment, including Tu-160 and Tu-95 bombers
Peace Mission 2007 (Aug 9–17, 2007)	Russia, China, and SCO members	Suppressing Islamist insurgency and/or popular rebellion	Urumqi in China's Xinjiang, then Russia's Chelyabinsk military training range	6,500 personnel and 80 aircraft, including 2,000 troops from Russia and 1,600 from China
Peace Mission 2009 (July 22–27, 2009)	Russia, China; SCO members attended as observers	Theater-level combined anti-terrorist campaign	Russia's Khabarovsk, then China's Taonan base	6,500 troops, of which about 1,300 came from Russia and China
Peace Blue Shield 2009 (Sep 18, 2009)	Russia, China	Joint maneuvering and anti-piracy drills	Gulf of Aden	Several ships already in area
Peace Mission 2010 (Sep 10–25, 2010)	Russia, China, and SCO members	Three-phase counterterrorism exercise	Southern Kazakhstan	Some 5,000 troops, 300 major combat pieces such as tanks, and more than 50 combat planes and helicopters; Russia and China each contributed about 1,000 troops
Naval Interaction (Joint Sea) 2012 (Apr 22–27, 2012)	Russia, China	Rescuing hijacked ships; escorting commercial vessels in pirate-infested waters; joint air defense; maritime search and rescue; anti-submarine warfare	Yellow Sea off China's Qingdao Port	Russia sent four combat ships and three supply vessels; China sent 16 surface ships, two submarines, and 13 aircraft
Peace Mission 2012 (June 8–14, 2012)	Russia, China, and SCO members	Counterterrorism; counterinsurgency; air and ground strikes; encirclement and suppression; pursuit and vertical interception	Tajikistan's Chorukh-Dayron training range	More than 2,000 troops and 500 vehicles in total; Russia and China each sent about 350 troops
Naval Interaction (Joint Sea) 2013 (July 5–13, 2013)	Russia, China	Similar to Naval Interaction 2012, but larger and more sophisticated	Russia's Peter the Great Gulf	4,000 personnel and some two dozen combat vessels in total
Peace Mission 2013 (July 27–August 15, 2013)	Russia, China	Campaign-level counterterrorism exercises	Chebarkul military range	Thousands of virtual troops as well as 900 Russian troops and 600 PLA troops

Naval Interaction (Joint Sea) 2014 (May 20–26, 2014)	Russia, China	Counterterrorism; anti-piracy; air and missile defense; anti-submarine warfare; escorting vessels; search and rescue missions; recapturing seized ship	East China Sea	Russia sent a Slava-class guided-missile cruiser, other ships, and two fighter planes; China sent destroyers, frigates, attack submarines, and warplanes
Peace Mission 2014 (August 24–29, 2014)	Russia, China, and SCO members	Counterterrorism and counterinsurgency; combating separatism; liberating occupied zone	China's Zurihe training base	Russia sent 1,000 troops, more than 100 military vehicles, and warplanes and helicopters; China sent 5,000 troops, 400 combat systems, and warplanes and helicopters
Naval Interaction (Joint Sea) 2015 (Phase I: May 11–12, 2015; Phase II: August 20–28, 2015)	Russia, China	Live-fire exercises, at-sea replenishment, cargo transfer, escorting missions, and troop control; radioactive, chemical, and biological protection; anti-submarine and anti-aircraft training	Mediterranean Sea, then Peter the Great Gulf and Sea of Japan	For the first phase, Russia sent a guided-missile cruiser, frigate, hoverborne guided-missile corvette, landing ship, and an MB-31 tugboat, while China contributed two frigates and a replenishment ship; for the second phase, Russia sent 16 surface ships, two submarines, 12 aircraft, nine amphibious vehicles, and 200 marines
Peace Mission 2016 (September 15–21, 2016)	Russia, China, and SCO members Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan	Countering terrorism, separatism, and extremism in mountainous terrain	Western region of Issky-Kul, Kyrgyzstan	The drills involved about 500 Russian soldiers and 300 PLA soldiers, as well as 40 aircraft and dozens of armored vehicles, helicopters, UAVs, fighter-bombers, tanks, and armored vehicles
Naval Interaction (Joint Sea) 2016 (September 12–19, 2016)	Russia, China	Simulated beachhead battles, maritime search and rescue, anti-submarine warfare, combined air defense, and seizing and protecting islands	The South China Sea, near China's southern city of Guangdong	Russia sent anti-submarine destroyers and other ships, helicopters, and almost 100 marines; China contributed several types of destroyers, multirole frigates, submarines, and 160 marines
Aerospace Security 2016 (April 29, 2016)	Russia, China	Air and missile defense	Moscow	Computer-based command post exercise
Naval Interaction (Joint Sea) 2017 (Phase I: July 21–28, 2017; Phase II: September 22–26, 2017)	Russia, China	Anti-piracy, maritime rescue, air defense, anti-submarine warfare, ship-to-ship combat, joint landing and inspection, maritime search and rescue, underway cargo replenishment	Phase I: Kaliningrad, Baltic Sea; Phase II: Sea of Japan and Sea of Okhotsk	Russia sent two corvettes, a rescue tug, helicopters, fighter-bombers, and military transport planes; China contributed a destroyer, a missile frigate, and a supply ship
Aerospace Security 2017 (December 11–16, 2017)	Russia, China	Air and missile defense	Beijing, China	Computer-based command post exercise
Peace Mission 2018 (August 24–29, 2018)	Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and SCO members (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan)	Anti-terrorism operations and fighter jet air strikes	Cherbarkulsky Training Ground in Chelyabinsk Oblast (Central Military District)	Russia sent 1,700 troops; China sent 750 personnel



Vostok 2018 (September 11–17, 2018)	Russia, China, and Mongolia (first non-Soviet Union nations to participate in exercise)	Strategic command and control of combined arms operations and numerous operational and tactical skills	Russia's Eastern Military District	Russia deployed some 300,000 personnel, 1,000 aircraft, and 36,000 tanks and armored vehicles; China contributed 3,200 personnel, 900 tanks and armored vehicles, and 30 aircrafts and helicopters
Naval Interaction (Joint Sea) 2019 (April 29 – May 4, 2019)	Russia, China	Live-fire drills, joint air and anti-submarine defense, and joint submergence rescue	Yellow Sea off China's Qingdao Port	Russia sent a rescue vessel, an anti-submarine warship, a destroyer, and a corvette; China sent a submarine rescue ship, guided-missile destroyers, and guided-missile frigates
Joint Aerial Strategic Patrol 2019 (July 23, 2019)	Russia, China	Combined aerial patrolling	Sea of Japan and East China Sea	Two Russian Tu-95 strategic bombers and two Chinese H-6K bombers
Tsentr 2019 (September 16–21, 2019)	Russia, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan	Improving strategic command and control of combined arms operations and numerous tactical skills; scenario focused on a terrorist threat emanating from central Asia	Russian training grounds Totsky, Donguz, Adanak, Chebarkulsky, Yurginsky, and Aleysky (Central Military District)	Some 130,000 Russian military personnel participated in total, along with more than 20,000 pieces of major military equipment, 600 aircraft consisting of warplanes, helicopters and drones, and 15 warships; China sent 1,600 air and ground troops, battle tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, combat aircraft, and bombers
Naval Operation Mosi (November 27–December 1, 2019)	Russia, China, South Africa	Protecting navigation and security of maritime economic activities, surface gunnery exercise, helicopter cross-deck landings	Off the Port of Cape Town	Russia sent a Slava-class missile cruiser, a tanker, and a rescue tug; China sent a frigate; South Africa sent a frigate and a replenishment ship
Operation Marine Security Belt (December 25–29, 2019)	Russia, China, and Iran	Fighting terrorism and piracy; exchanging experience in maritime rescue operations	Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean	Russia sent a frigate, a tanker, and a sea tug; China sent a guided-missile destroyer; Iran sent two frigates, a corvette, a hovercraft, a Coast Guard vessel, and a catamaran
Kavkaz 2020 (September 21–26, 2020)	Russia, China, Armenia, Belarus, Myanmar, and Pakistan (observers: Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkey)	Improving strategic command and control of combined arms operations and numerous tactical skills	Russian training grounds in the Southern Military District along with the Caspian and Black Seas	Russia deployed 80,000 personnel, 250 tanks, 450 infantry fighting vehicles, and 200 artillery systems; China contributed a joint director's department, joint campaign command post, synthetic battle group, command and support team, aftermarket support team, and health and anti-epidemic team
Joint Aerial Strategic Patrol 2020 (December 22, 2020)	Russia, China	Combined aerial patrolling	Sea of Japan and East China Sea	Two Russian Tu-95 strategic bombers and four Chinese H-6K bombers

Source: Author's own analysis based on multiple sources.