



April 17, 2015

Russia

Russian Activity in the Arctic, Kotelnny Island





Assessment:

In 2013, Vladimir Putin signed a decree to re-establish Russian territorial claims and military presence along its northern shores to protect its interests in the region. Those interests include significant oil and gas reserves in the Laptev Sea basin as well controlling the Northern shipping lanes along its north coast. Since the end of the Cold War in the 1990's, Russian forces had abandoned many of these remote military installations along the nation's northern and eastern coasts and on the northern islands. Kotelny (Kotel'nyy) Island is located off the northeastern coast of Siberia and has been home to an actively maintained civilian meteorological station on its northwest shore for several decades. During the summer of 2013, Russian Northern Fleet engineers landed on Kotelny Island to re-open the air base at Temp (Tempa) to facilitate further engineering efforts to expand the air field and build a permanent military base (Figure 1). Two interim piers were constructed to facilitate construction, one near the air base and another approximately 7 kilometers north along the shore. The recently formed 99th Arctic Tactical group is reportedly stationed at the base. Imagery from April 05, 2015 shows the condition of the base as the area emerges from the bitter cold of winter.

Analyst Comments:

Temp Air Base

The air field is actively being maintained and snow removal has been conducted (Figure 2). The imagery shows at least fifty pieces of military equipment parked near the administrative and control buildings of the air base in addition to the air field operations equipment. There are a number of temporary housing structures at the base, including tents and other modular housing structures. The runway is cleared and measures 1,570 meters long by 56 meters wide.

Location:

Temp (Tempa) Military Base,
Kotelny (Kotel'nyy) Island, Russia

Coordinates:

75.7686N 137.5825E

Date of Report:

April 17, 2015

Date of Imagery:

April 5, 2015



Inland Base

At the inland base, approximately 5 kilometers north-northeast of the air base, permanent living facilities are in place (Figure 3). The imagery shows a central command center with several connected structures that include living quarters and other operations. Snow removal has occurred with ongoing maintenance of the roads around the base. Steam is visible in the imagery and steam pipes are observed radiating from a heating and power plant. A fuel storage area where 52 tanks are located is also visible in the imagery, just northwest of the central part of the base. Construction appears incomplete on several structures and suggests that further expansion of the base will likely occur in 2015.

Approximately 4.5 kilometers north-northeast from the air base and about one kilometer southwest of the inland base is a facility to support communications and radar operations (Figure 4). Two radomes, one 33 meters and one 17 meters in diameter, are present at this site. In addition, a nine-meter radome, possibly a weather radar, is located on a tower at this facility. Numerous heavy trucks are visible on the roads that lead to the northern pier area, and on the road that leads to the air base. Some appear to be distributing sand onto the roadways for traction.

Sources:

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- Pettersen, Trude. "Russia Re-Opens Arctic Cold War Era Air Base." *Barents Observer*, October 30, 2013. Accessed April 17, 2015. <http://barentsobserver.com/en/security/2013/10/russia-re-opens-arctic-cold-war-era-air-base-30-10>.
- "Russia's Arctic Ambitions." Stratfor Global Intelligence. September 18, 2013. Accessed April 17, 2015. <https://www.stratfor.com/video/russias-arctic-ambitions>.

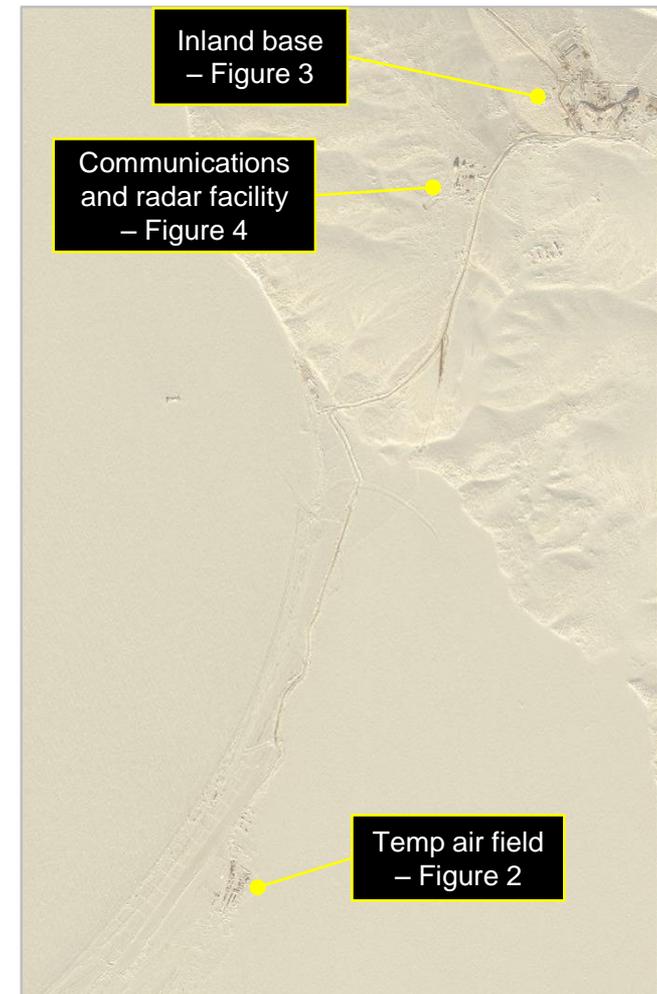


Figure 1. Temp air overview, April 05, 2015



Figure 2. Temp air base activity, April 05, 2015



Figure 3. Temp inland base activity and construction, April 05, 2015



Figure 4. Temp air base communications and radar facility, April 05, 2015



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