NASA sees Sanvu strengthen into a Typhoon

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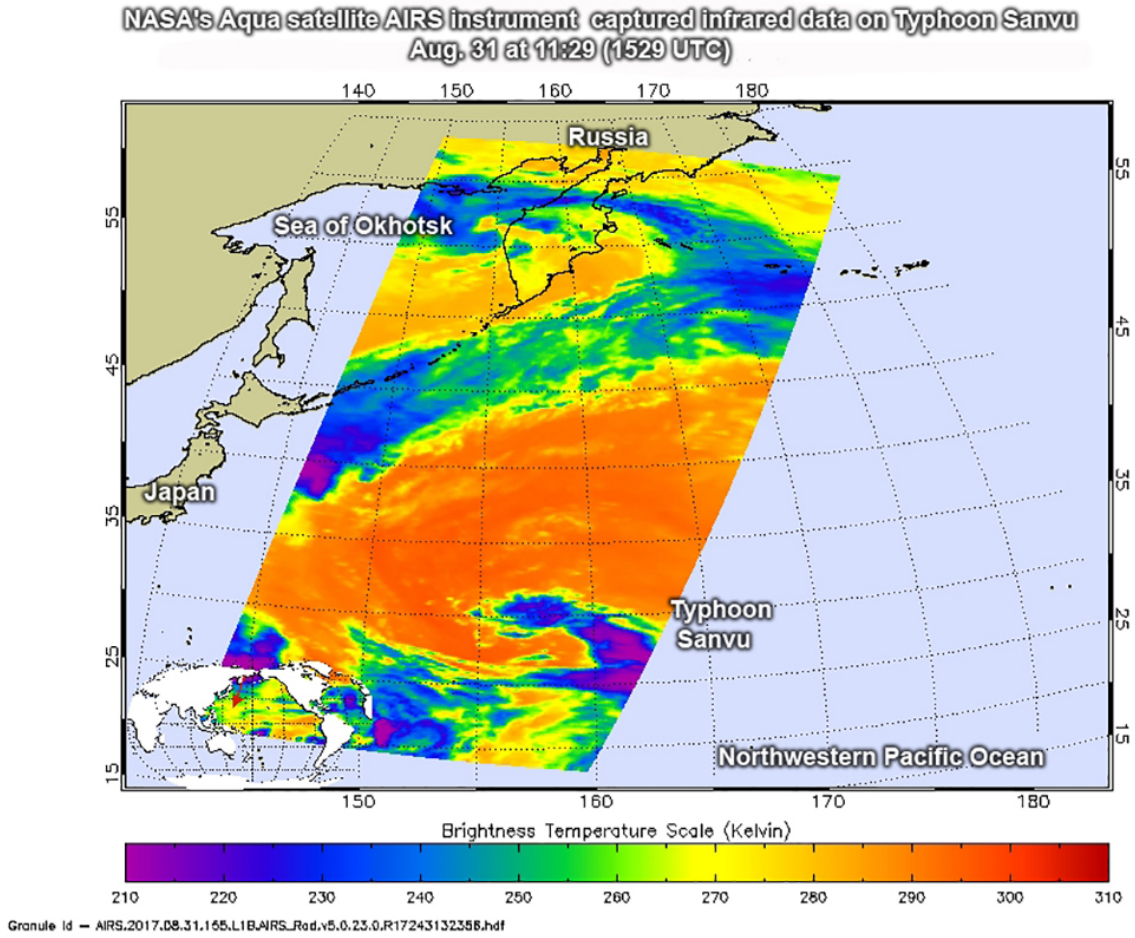

The AIRS instrument aboard NASA's Aqua satellite captured infrared data on Typhoon Sanvu on Aug. 31 at 11:29 (1529 UTC). Strongest storms appear in purple. Credit: NASA JPL, Ed Olsen

Tropical Storm Sanvu continued to strengthen in the Northwestern

Pacific Ocean and NASA's Aqua satellite viewed the storm after it became a typhoon.

The Atmospheric Infrared or AIRS instrument aboard NASA's Aqua satellite captured infrared data on Typhoon Sanvu on Aug. 31 at 11:29 (1529 UTC). Sanvu strengthened into a typhoon around 11 a.m. EDT when maximum sustained winds reached 75 knots (86 mph/139 kph).

Infrared data provides temperature information to scientists. Cloud top temperatures are an important factor when it comes to determining the strength of storms. The higher the cloud tops, the colder and the stronger the storms. The AIRS data showed that the coldest cloud tops were colder than minus 63 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 53 degrees Celsius). Those storms were found around the center of circulation and in band of thunderstorms extending southeast of the center.

NASA research has shown that storms with cloud tops that cold, reached high into the troposphere and had the ability to generate heavy rain.

At 11 a.m. EDT (1500 UTC) on Aug. 30 the center of Sanvu was located near 28.6 degrees north latitude and 143.8 degrees east longitude. That puts the center about 92 nautical miles (106 miles/170.4 km) northeast of Chichi Jima, Japan. Maximum sustained winds increased to near 80 knots (92 mph/148 kph). Sanvu was moving to the north-northeast at 8 knots (9.2 mph/14.8 kph).

The Joint Typhoon Warning Center expects Sanvu to intensify further as it continues moving northeast over open ocean, before becoming extra-tropical near Russia's Kuril Islands. The Kuril Islands are a volcanic archipelago that stretch from Hokkaido, Japan, northeast to Kamchatka, Russia.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center