

## Major Russian exercises conducted since 2014 in its European territory and adjacent areas<sup>1</sup>

*February 2016<sup>2</sup>*

NAME / AREA	DATE	MAIN FEATURES
Snap Exercises in Western and Central Military Districts	26 February - 3 March 2014	- according to Russian sources, 150,000 army, navy and air force personnel; 90 aircraft; 120 helicopters; 880 tanks; 1,200 other pieces of equipment; and 80 warships <sup>3</sup> - Predominant focus on territorial defence in the west and far north. It began with the large scale redeployment of forces to the Arctic, supported by aerial interdiction and defensive naval operations. <sup>4</sup> - Coastal defence prominent, involving mine-clearing, submarine hunting, and repelling amphibious assaults.
Strategic nuclear forces exercises	26-29 March 2014	Previously scheduled exercise involving 10,000 troops and designed to simulate "massive and simultaneous use of nuclear missiles" <sup>5</sup>
Snap exercises along the Ukrainian border	April - May 2014	40,000 troops reportedly took part, with reporting suggesting the involvement of multiple battalion tactical groups from western and southern MDs. <sup>6</sup>
Strategic nuclear forces exercises	May 2014	President Putin personally took part in the command and control part of the exercises, which included training launches by all three elements of the triad. <sup>7</sup>
Snap Central Military District exercises	21 - 28 June 2014	65,000 personnel; 5,500 pieces of equipment (including 720 tanks, 950 armoured vehicles, 600 artillery pieces & MLRS); 180 aircraft; and 60 helicopters. The stated purpose of the exercise was to prepare a response to possible changes in the military-political situation in Central Asia following NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan. <sup>8</sup> However, the nature of the exercise suggests that the adversary possessed significant conventional capability.
Snap exercises in and around	5-10 December 2014	9,000 troops, 642 tanks and other vehicles, Iskander systems and 55 warships Focus on the rapid reinforcement and subsequent defence

Kaliningrad Oblast		of the exclave. Of particular note was the redeployment of Iskander missile system units from the Russian mainland under protection of the Baltic Fleet and Russian Air Force. <sup>9</sup>
Snap exercises of nuclear forces	February 2015	Conducted in "more than 30 missile regiments" to test the readiness to repel ground 'saboteur' attacks. <sup>10</sup>
Airborne forces exercises in Western Military Districts	February 2015	Tactical exercise on the Pskov training grounds involving 2,000 paratroopers and 500 pieces of equipment <sup>11</sup> Involved securing an airfield and simultaneous combat jump of 1,500 troops
Snap exercises began in the High North but later expanded to other regions of Russian Federation	16-21 March 2015	Conventional and strategic (including nuclear) elements coordinated by operations centre in Moscow. <sup>12</sup> - nearly 80,000 personnel, 12,000 pieces of heavy military equipment, 65 war ships, 15 submarines and over 220 military aircraft - theatres included the High North, the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea and Kaliningrad, and Russia's Pacific coast. <sup>13</sup> - focus on defence of Russia's outlying areas, including the construction of a ferry across the Kerch Straights to Crimea to facilitate its reinforcement; the simulated engagement of enemy warships and drones in the Black Sea; the amphibious reinforcement of Sakhalin; and a mass re-deployment of air and land assets from Leningrad and Smolensk Oblasts to the Arctic. <sup>14</sup>
Snap air force and air defence exercises	25-28 May 2015	Units from Central, Western and Southern Military Districts engaged, as well as long-range and transport aviation <sup>15</sup> - 250 aircraft and helicopters, 12,000 personnel - in parallel with Arctic Challenge exercises in the Scandinavia - included training launches of cruise missiles by long-range aviation
Cooperation 2015	August 2015	Exercises of Collective Security Treaty Organization' rapid reaction forces on the training grounds in the Pskov region - 2,000 troops, 200 pieces of equipment and 40 aircraft and helicopters from Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, - the scenario of "localizing an armed conflict and eliminating illegal armed formations in the Eastern European region" <sup>16</sup>
Union Shield 2015	September 2015	Russian-Belorussian operational exercise, held on Russian training grounds - approximately 8,000 soldiers, 400 pieces of equipment, 80 aircraft and helicopters <sup>17</sup> - defensive scenario focused on improving interoperability between Russian and Belarussian armed forces
strategic nuclear forces	September 2015	Initially tested the ability to detect the use of radiological, chemical or biological weapons against Russia,

<b>exercises</b>		- proceeded to test the readiness of mobile ballistic missile launchers to operate in the conditions of “a simulated enemy’s air and ground attacks” <sup>18</sup>
<b>Center-2015</b>	September 2015	95,000 personnel, over 7,000 pieces of equipment and 170 aircraft and helicopters. <sup>19</sup> - started with snap drills involving some of the Central Military District forces, airborne troops, transport aviation and air forces of Western and Southern Military District. <sup>20</sup> - scenario of reacting to a conflict in Central Asia, but with use of full spectrum of military capabilities
<b>Strategic nuclear forces exercises</b>	October 2015	Testing operation of the command and control system - included training launches by three elements of the strategic triad and use of sub-strategic (most likely dual-use) systems: land-based Islander and sea-based Kalibr cruise missiles <sup>21</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The information contained in this table has been compiled by the European Leadership Network and forms part of February 2016 publication “Towards a New Equilibrium: Minimising the risks of NATO and Russia’s new military postures”. For more information visit [www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org](http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org) or follow us on twitter @theELN

<sup>2</sup> The biggest Russian exercise since 2014 was the September 2014 *East* drill in the Eastern Military District, with the participation of 155,000 personnel and over 4,000 pieces of equipment.

<sup>3</sup> [http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11905664@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11905664@egNews)

<sup>4</sup> [http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11905692@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11905692@egNews)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/armies/2014-03-26/6\\_strike.html](http://www.ng.ru/armies/2014-03-26/6_strike.html)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.army-technology.com/news/newsrussian-military-starts-exercises-after-ukraine-crackdown-on-activists-4220928>

<http://rt.com/news/154588-russia-drill-ukraine-operation/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/23/putin-military-exercises-ukraine-border>

<sup>7</sup> [http://russianforces.org/blog/2014/05/multiple\\_missile\\_launches\\_duri.shtml](http://russianforces.org/blog/2014/05/multiple_missile_launches_duri.shtml)

<sup>8</sup> [http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11962677@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11962677@egNews)

[http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11963425@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11963425@egNews)

<sup>9</sup> <http://rt.com/news/214667-russia-drills-kaliningrad-region/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://tass.ru/en/russia/777221>.

<sup>11</sup> [http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12008939@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12008939@egNews)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/anatomy-of-a-russian-exercise\\_2914.html](http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/anatomy-of-a-russian-exercise_2914.html)

<sup>13</sup> [http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12010900@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12010900@egNews)

<sup>14</sup> [http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12010807@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12010807@egNews)

[http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12010708@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12010708@egNews)

<sup>15</sup> <http://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/1993782>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.rferl.org/content/csto-military-exercise-estonia-russia-belarus-kazakhstan-kyrgyzstan-tajikistan-nato/27203792.html>; <http://tass.ru/en/russia/815206>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://belsat.eu/en/articles/union-shield-over-8000-russian-belarusian-troops-take-part-joint-war-game/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://tass.ru/en/russia/818934>

<sup>19</sup> <http://tass.ru/en/russia/819367>

<sup>20</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2015-09-11/1\\_center2015.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2015-09-11/1_center2015.html)

<sup>21</sup> [http://russianforces.org/blog/2015/10/russia\\_tests\\_command\\_and\\_contr.shtml](http://russianforces.org/blog/2015/10/russia_tests_command_and_contr.shtml)