

# Dangerous Crossroads: NATO Kicks Off Naval War Games Near Group of Russian Ships

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*The United States and 11 NATO members have started large-scale military drills in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Dubbed “Dynamic Mariner,” the war games will put several NATO ships in a region with a major Russian military presence, at a time of soaring tensions between Moscow and the West.*

The war games are led by NATO Allied Maritime Command, or MARCOM, and will begin Tuesday and run through September 22. It is unclear how many American soldiers are a part of the 1,500 NATO sailors taking part. At least the USS Forrest Sherman is participating.

Dynamic Mariner includes 50 surface ships, five submarines, five patrol planes and helicopters from the United States, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain and Turkey.

MARCOM Deputy Commander French Navy Vice Admiral Didier Piaton said this year’s war games are the largest in the Dynamic Mariner series. “This year’s event includes more assets than ever before, facilitating increased interoperability between our nations and enhancing operational readiness,” he said.

According to a press release [from the US Navy](#), Dynamic Mariner will engage in cross-exercises with Turkish forces to conduct “surface, air, anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), mine countermeasures, amphibious, hybrid, and force protection operations.”

The war games put dozens of NATO vessels in a region with a heavy Russian naval presence. Tensions between Brussels and Moscow are soaring as the West attempts to weaken Russia in Ukraine. The alliance’s provocative war games last year played a significant role in the escalation spiral which ultimately led to Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

Some of the [largest war drills seen since the previous Cold War era](#) were held for months throughout eastern Europe, including on Russia's doorstep. Most critically, Kiev became a [de facto NATO state and hosted major alliance exercises](#). Washington was deliberately crossing Moscow's "[brightest of all redlines](#)."

In the midst of the Ukraine war, NATO continues to [hold major exercises](#), some even with Kiev's participation, in member states like Estonia on Russia's borders, simulating war with Moscow.

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Featured image: NATO exercise *Dynamic Mariner* begins in the Mediterranean. Image by [NATO/Twitter](#)

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