

NATO Begins Provocative Military Exercises on Russian Border

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Global Research, September 02, 2020

Region: [Europe, Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Intelligence, US NATO War Agenda](#)

Once again, NATO is operating dangerous and bold military maneuvers in regions close to the European Russian border. This time, the country hosting the tests is Estonia, a Baltic State that in recent decades has been characterized by a strong pro-Western and anti-Russian stance. The small European country is occupied by a large contingent of American troops and will be in such a situation until at least September 10, when the operations end.

The tests started on September 1 are already causing a small diplomatic crisis between Russia and the United States. The Russian Embassy in Washington commented on the exercises with great antipathy:

“The Russian Federation has repeatedly offered to the United States and its allies to limit training activities and to divert exercise areas from the line of contact between Russia and NATO. We consider the actions of the US Armed Forces in Estonia provocative and extremely dangerous for regional stability (...) What signal from NATO members want to send us? Who is actually fueling tensions in Europe? And all this is taking place in the context of an aggravated political situation in that region of the European continent. Rhetorical question: how would the Americans react if such shooting were carried out by our military near the US borders?”.

In addition to the diplomatic crisis, military tension broke out in the region last Tuesday. NATO planes that would be used in the exercises were intercepted unexpectedly by Russian fighters while flying over the border area. In addition, **Aleksandr Lukashenko**, president of Belarus, put his troops on high alert and started his own military exercises, understanding NATO’s maneuvers as a provocative and threatening measure, not only against Russia, but also Belarus.

The exercises also begin during a series of events that have raised tensions in the region. On Friday, an American B-52 bomber and a Russian Su-27 aircraft conducted dangerous maneuvers in European airspace, chasing each other. On the same day, similar tensions were reported in the Ukrainian Black Sea. Countries with less military potential are becoming concerned and feel threatened by hostilities, such as Sweden, which has issued a danger warning to its troops.

This is not the first time that the Baltic countries have become the scene of NATO military actions especially aimed at provoking Russia. For years, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have increased their participation in NATO programs, together with Poland, countries that since the end of communism have been adhering to positions against Russia on the international stage. This exercise currently being carried out in Estonia is in its eighth edition, having

already become an annual NATO program. In 2020, Germany, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Spain, United States, Estonia, Finland, France, Netherlands, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom, Czech Republic and Romania are participating in the operations.

The objective, according to its organizers, is to test NATO's defense capabilities against possible attacks on European soil. However, despite the official narrative, the provocative nature of the tests is truly clear, especially when we take into account the current global moment, where the world faces a terrible pandemic, of which the US is precisely the biggest victim. In early 2020, a NATO military program was in preparation, foreseeing a series of audacious exercises in Europe, mainly in the border region with Russia. This program - dubbed "Defender Europe 2020" - was canceled just a few months ago due to the pandemic. At the time, Defender Europe's tests were interpreted as provocative acts against Russia because they foresee a large concentration of American military contingent on the Russian border, which we are also witnessing now in Estonia. Although such tests have been going on for years, in 2020 the implementation of this program in the midst of the pandemic has a much more provocative dimension: Washington is transmitting to Russia its message that it remains awake in the geopolitical scenario.

But this is not the most correct attitude. While the pandemic data on American soil is approaching 200,000 dead and the country is dealing with a strong internal crisis, with violent demonstrations and racial tensions, Washington is preparing war plans and demonstrations of strength in other continents.

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This article was originally published on [InfoBrics](#).

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