

Video: European Security, EU-Russia Relations and NATO Drills in the Black Sea Region

By [South Front](#)

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The price of natural gas on the European market has fallen by more than 20 percent due to favorable weather conditions and expected LNG supplies from the United States, which should eliminate the shortage of gas in storage facilities.

The European Union has launched an arbitration process within the WTO against the Russian Federation for 290 billion euros. The reason is Russia’s policy of import substitution as a response to Western sanctions.

Simultaneously, there were signals that the West is ready to negotiate with Moscow on European security issues.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/28.12.2021_IMR_Europe.mp4

A decrease of the West’s aggressive rhetoric always follows a drop in prices on the European energy market.

December 28 came with good news in the Luhansk People’s Republic, where no fire violations have been recorded in the last 24 hours. In the Donetsk People’s Republic, the shelling continues.

The activity of US military aircraft near the Donbass region has increased. On December 27, a USAF RC-135V Rivet Joint with the call sign HOMER19 patrolled along Eastern Ukraine. On December 28, he was joined by a USAF E-8C Joint STARS surveillance aircraft with the call sign REDEYE6 and was also accompanied by a Ukrainian Air Force IL-76MD.

The appearance of US aircraft over these particular frontlines is quite rare, unlike the provocative flights over the Russian borders in the Black Sea. According to the Russian Deputy Minister of Defense, the deployment of reconnaissance and combat aircraft over the

Black Sea has increased by more than 60% compared to last year.

In the Black Sea, reconnaissance drones and bombers are accompanied by regular raids conducted by warships of the US and other NATO member countries, executing dangerous maneuvers off the coast of Crimea.

The most recent provocation took place in the Sea of Azov in early December. The Ukrainian vessel 'Donbass' was heading to the Kerch Strait, posing a threat to shipping. It was escorted by the Russian coast guard.

In 2021, there were 15 NATO military drills which took place in the Black Sea region, including the Sea Breeze 2021 exercise, organized jointly by Ukraine and the United States with total participation numbering 32 countries.

Moscow has consistently decried the provocative actions on its borders. Russian **President Vladimir Putin** said that the United States had approached the "threshold of our house" with missiles and Russia will not tolerate it. The Kremlin demanded that Washington provide security guarantees and warned of a military response.

Russia's switch from the traditional rhetoric of diplomatic concern to the language of ultimatums forced the West to declare its readiness for negotiations to stabilize the situation in Eastern Europe.

According to a representative of the White House National Security Council, representatives of both Russia and the United States will hold talks on January 10. They will be held within the Strategic security dialogue and will be devoted primarily to arms control and the situation on the Russian-Ukrainian border. A meeting of the Russia-NATO Council is expected to take place on January 12.

The Russian side expresses concern that these negotiations may be used by the US and NATO as a tool to distract attention and work as a delaying tactic on the eve of aggression against Russia.

At the same time, there is hope that the crisis can be overcome by reaching a compromise between Washington and Russia. The interests of Ukraine will traditionally not be taken into account, and the European energy market will be the subject of bargaining.

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