# NATO rearmament increases risk of war in Europe

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NATO's rearmament in Eastern Europe is increasingly taking on the form of open war preparations against Russia, raising the danger of a nuclear war between the Western powers and Moscow.

On Friday, the Western military alliance completed the first test of its new super-rapid reaction force, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). As part of the "Noble Jump" manoeuvres, the chain of command from NATO Headquarters SHAPE in Belgium was tested via the NATO command in Naples, the German-Netherlands Corps in Münster, and the units in Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the Czech Republic. There were troop movements in the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

The exercise is part of the systematic military rearmament of NATO in Eastern Europe following the pro-Western coup in Ukraine and the subsequent military offensive by Kiev in the east of the country.

Western heads of state and government agreed to the establishment of the VJTF at the NATO summit in September last year in Wales. It belongs to the NATO Response Force (NRF), the NATO rapid reaction force, whose troop strength was doubled in early February to 30,000 soldiers. In an emergency, the 5,000-strong so-called "spearhead" of the NRF can be operational within 48 hours.

A total of 1,500 soldiers participated in the manoeuvres, including 900 from Germany alone. The core of the NRF comprises the 371st Infantry Battalion from Marienberg, in Saxony. According to the German Army, the unit was involved in the exercise and trained at Marienberg. The transfer of the battle group to Poland is planned in the second part of exercise "Noble Jump," in May.

On their web site, the Bundeswehr (German Armed Forces) posted a propaganda video about the "demanding exercise program" of the battalion, under the title "Grenadiers fit for all scenarios." The text accompanying the video says: "They go on patrol in a fictitious crisis area, find and defuse roadside bombs, fall into an ambush and prove themselves in urban warfare." The video itself explains that the Panzer Grenadiers must "be prepared for all crisis scenarios ... as a rapid crisis response element of NATO."

The leading NATO military leaders make no secret of the fact that one of these "scenarios" is war against Russia. "The scenario relates to the Baltic countries. You can think of the context yourself," Czech Major General Jiri Baloun said, according to media reports.

The commander of NATO in Europe, General Philip Breedlove, boasted in an official statement: "NATO military planners have been working tirelessly to enhance NATO's Response Force and implement the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, and today our progress is manifested in the rapid deployments we see happening in locations across the Alliance." These measures were "defensive," but a clear indication that "our alliance has the capability and will to respond to emerging security challenges on our southern and eastern flank."

In reality, the extent and the thrust of the NATO exercise makes clear that it is anything but "defensive" and is primarily aimed against Russia. According to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, "Noble Jump" is only "one of at least 200 NATO manoeuvres planned for in this year."

On his blog "Eyes Straight Forward," military journalist Thomas Wiegold has collected a "list of upcoming multinational exercises … where the Bundeswehr is involved this year primarily in terms of NATO-East and the strengthening of deterrence in relation to Russia."

Among them are: "Persistent Presence 15," a year-round series of manoeuvres in Poland and the Baltic States; "Falcon Viking," a long-distance deployment exercise for the interim VJTF; "Noble Jump;" "Steadfast Javelin" in Estonia; "Saber Strike 2015" in Poland,

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Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; “Iron Wolf” in Lithuania; “BALTOPS 2015,” a US-organized naval exercise in the Baltic Sea; “Swift Response” in Germany, Italy and Bulgaria; and “Silver Arrow” in Latvia.

The culmination will be the “Super-manoeuvre” Trident Juncture, which will take place in Italy, Portugal and Spain from September 28 to November 6. The manoeuvre, which is being prepared by the “Multinational Operations Command leadership” of the Bundeswehr in Ulm, is, according to NATO information “the biggest NATO operation since the end of the Cold War” and is a full-scale war exercise against Russia.

Officially, at least 30,000 soldiers from all branches of the armed forces will be mobilized, including 3,000 from the Bundeswehr. Internally, however, there is already talk of involving 35,000 soldiers. “If the political situation permits, the Americans will also send an aircraft carrier—that is already 5,000 men,” said Lieutenant Colonel Harald Kammerbauer, the spokesperson of the Ulm command in the tabloid *Bild* .

According to the official NATO script, the manoeuvre is about bringing “a border war” in the fictional region of Cerasia “to an end before it expands to the entire region.” Kamon, “the aggressor country in the region, refuses international arbitration and invades southwards in order to seize key dams in Lakuta, which was caught ill-prepared to counter the invasion.”

The scenario called SOROTAN, “sees a stand-off in East Cerasia and a legion of problems caused by the stand-off, including increasing regional instability, violation of territorial integrity and a deteriorating humanitarian situation.”

Although the scenario plays out in Africa, it reads like a blueprint for a possible NATO intervention against Russia in Ukraine.

The British Navy Commander Tristan Lovering said that the scenario was “a battle for the narrative.” The “aggressive military dictatorship, Kamon, together with its proxies and surface-to-air missile systems, wages a hybrid war in the region while simultaneously carrying out a negative ‘strategic communication’ narrative that targets its own people and international opinion.”

This is exactly the propaganda that NATO uses to accuse Russia. Although it provoked the conflict in Ukraine, and has encircled Russia militarily, it accuses Moscow of conducting “hybrid warfare” based on “pro-Russian separatists” in eastern Ukraine, and threatening the entire region.

German Lieutenant General Richard Rossmanith, commander of the “Multinational Command” in Ulm, made it unmistakably clear against whom this manoeuvre is directed. “It is the case that relatively independently of where the exercise is staged it has strategic messages, in terms of performance, about what the Alliance can do,” he said, and added threateningly, “And this message is sure to be received by Mr. Putin.”

The Russian president had recently accused NATO of trying to change the military balance in Europe in its favour and of endangering the nuclear balance. But “no one has been able to intimidate us or exert pressure on us,” he threatened, and announced that the leadership in Moscow would “respond accordingly” to such experiments.

To subdue Russia and enforce its geo-strategic and economic interests in Eastern Europe and Asia, the imperialist powers are willing to risk the danger of nuclear war. As part of operation “Atlantic Resolve,” which serves mainly to increase military support to East European NATO countries, the Western alliance is currently intensifying its patrol flights over the Baltic States.

A recent report by AFP illustrates how in training flights, American fighter jets simulated the dropping of bombs in sight of the Russian border. The report warns of the dangers of “sabre-rattling.” Each side could misinterpret an action of the opponent, “triggering a conflict between two powers with major nuclear arsenals.”

The article entitled, “US, Russian War Games Rekindle Cold War Tensions” quoted Ian Kearns, director of the London think-tank European Leadership Network: “A dangerous game of military brinkmanship is now being played in Europe … If one commander or one pilot makes a mistake or a bad decision in this situation, we may have casualties and a high-stakes cycle of escalation that is difficult to stop.”

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