

Russian Military Starts Drills in Siberia

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Russia's military launched training exercises on Tuesday for its rocket forces in Siberia, Interfax reported, amid increased tensions with the West over Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's region of Crimea.

A spokesman for Russia's Strategic Rocket Forces said about 10,000 troops would take part in the March 25 to 29 exercises in western Siberia's Omsk region and Orenburg in the southern Urals, more than 2,000 kilometres from Russia's border with Ukraine.

Earlier this month, Russia staged a military exercise involving 8,500 soldiers near its border with Ukraine after the toppling of that country's pro-Moscow President Viktor Yanukovich amid a popular uprising and violent street clashes.

The crisis in Ukraine has sparked the biggest confrontation between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War.

NATO's top military commander said on Sunday Russia had built up a "very sizeable" force on its border with Ukraine.

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