

# NATO to Briefly Move Command HQ to Romania From Naples

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A British soldier looks on as U.S. military helicopters fly during the "Wind Spring 15" military exercises at Smardan shooting range in Romania.

A top NATO commander says the alliance will briefly move an allied joint force command headquarters to Romania as NATO continues to hone its ability to react to Russia's moves in Ukraine and other security challenges.

U.S. Navy Adm. Mark E. Ferguson III, commander of the Allied Joint Force Command based in Naples, Italy, said Tuesday the command will relocate to Cincu, in mountainous central Romania, for 12 days in June to support a NATO exercise involving 1,000 troops from 21 NATO states.

"This deployment will be the first time a NATO Joint Force Command headquarters has deployed to Romania," Ferguson said in Bucharest during a two-day visit.

Some 350 staff members will test their ability to command and control a multinational

exercise from a forward position, said Lt. Col. Thorsten E. Smoll, public affairs officer at JFC Naples. The facility in southern Italy will remain in charge of the other missions that are currently its responsibility, such as the KFOR force in Kosovo.

"This exercise will test the full operational capability of my staff by shifting command and control between ... Naples and the forward deployed elements in Cincu," Ferguson said.

Cincu is Romania's largest military shooting range, some 180 kilometers (112 miles) northwest of Bucharest.

Ferguson said the exercises were "defensive in nature and are focused on enhancing our interoperability, readiness, and responsiveness."

At the same time, NATO and the U.S. will conduct exercises in Poland, the Baltics, the Baltic Sea

In the Baltics, Striking Force NATO will conduct a major Allied maritime exercise.

The US Navy will also operate missile-defense ships in the Black Sea, while the US Army Europe will conduct a land exercise in the Baltic States.

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