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Hundreds of U.S., European Troops to Take Part in Moldova Exercises

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CHISINAU, Moldova — Some 800 troops from Moldova, the U.S., Romania, Poland and Georgia are taking part in joint military exercises in Moldova, a former Soviet republic that borders Ukraine.

The "Joint Effort 2015"exercises began Sunday and will run until July 25 at a military base in Moldova's second-largest city of Balti, where many ethnic Russians live.

Exercises coordinator Colonel Veaceslav Rusu said the aim of the maneuvers, among the largest ever staged in Moldova, is to test the interoperability of the countries' armed forces. Prior to the exercises, he said U.S. troops trained Moldovan soldiers in using modern communications equipment and consolidating Moldovan military control systems.

Moldova has hosted more military exercises since unrest broke out in Ukraine and Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula last year. Moldova is a member of NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

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