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German Media Concerned about Anti-Western Slogans in Russian Military Training Exercises

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German media have expressed concern over the appearance of images of Russian bombs carrying seemingly anti-Western inscriptions.

The images, originally published by Russian military news site Flot.ru on Aug. 7, show military equiment used during joint exercises carried out by the Baltic Fleet. Hand-written slogans in blue markers reading “To Berlin!” and “For Stalin” can be seen on the sides of two bombs in two of the published photographs. In an article published Tuesday by German tabloid Bild, writer Julian Röpcke wrote that the existence of bombs carrying such messages are beyond simple nostalgia for Soviet times and show “dangerous tendencies among the Russian leadership and army.”

The article said that the slogans, evocative of Soviet mottos in use during World War II, demonstrated yet again Russia's aggressive attitude towards the West, particularly after the introduction of amendments to the country's naval doctrine in July. The new version

envisages a focus on deployment of forces in the Atlantic and Mediterranean in response to NATO “coming closer to our borders,” The Moscow Times reported.

Russia’s Ministry of Defense subsequently issued a statement calling the inscriptions “just silliness, a doctored image or simply the desire to play with anti-Russian sentiments,” Gazeta.ru reported.

With patriotic rhetoric growing stronger, wartime slogans and displays of Soviet nostalgia have become increasingly common in Russia. In April, ultra-nationalist Russian biker gang Night Wolves was spotted holding a banner bearing the message "For the Motherland, for Stalin!" during an attempt to cross Europe on their motorcycles to mark the anniversary of the end of World War II, Russian and foreign media reported at the time.

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