U.S. Troops Enter Moldova for Joint Military Exercise

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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U.S. troops will participate in a joint military exercise with Moldovan troops from May 3 to 20, the Moldova.org news portal reported Monday.

Nearly 200 soldiers from the American 2nd Cavalry Unit and 58 technical units of the U.S. Army will join 165 troops from the Geniu Battalion, 22nd Peace-Keeping Battalion and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Brigades of the National Army of Moldova for a two-week long training exercise, named Dragon Pioneer 2016.

Dragon Pioneer 2016 will involve 58 mobile units from the United States, 11 battle and supply vehicles, 18 Humvees and 29 medical and transport cars, joined by 40 Moldovan transport and supply vehicles.

Along with a joint 71st commemoration of the end of World War II on May 9 in the Moldovan capital, there will be training in fortifying exercises, overcoming obstacles, building bridges, structure destruction, surviving in battlefield conditions, offering medical assistance and

evacuating wounded soldiers, according to Moldova.org.

The U.S. troops crossed into central Moldova at the Sculeni checkpoint on May 2 and passed through the town of Falesti before heading southeast on the M14 highway to the town of Negresti, about 20 kilometers northwest of the capital, Chisinau.

The leader of the country's Socialist Party, Igor Dodon, called the exercise a "military occupation," and called for roads to be blocked by protesters. However only a dozen people showed up to protest and the U.S troops continued undeterred, Radio Liberty reported.

In response to the criticism, Moldovan Defense Minister Anatol Salaru said that "Dodon's cavalry have forgotten to leave" Moldova since the arrival of Soviet forces there in 1944, referring to the continued presence of Russian soldiers in the self–declared republic of Transdnestr.

Moldova joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program in 1994.

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