

Belarus Announces Joint Drills With Russia in February

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President Alexander Lukashenko and his top brass disclosed details of the so-called “Allied Resolve” drills. president.gov.by

Update at 11:30 a.m. on Jan. 18: Belarus’ defense ministry said Tuesday the exercises will be carried out in two phases, with the first combat readiness stage scheduled to end on Feb. 9 and the drills themselves set for Feb. 10-20.

Belarus’ strongman leader announced that his country and its close ally Russia will stage joint military exercises near NATO’s eastern borders and Ukraine in February, media [reported](#) Monday.

President Alexander Lukashenko and his top brass disclosed details of the so-called “[Allied Resolve](#)” drills amid high tensions over Russia’s troop buildup near the border with Ukraine.

The West has for months warned of a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine, which Moscow denies. Last week the United States claimed Russia is preparing a “false flag” pretext to frame Kyiv as the aggressor.

“Plans have been made to launch the [Allied Resolve] exercise in February,” the ex-Soviet republic’s state-run Belta news agency quoted Lukashenko as saying.

Related article: [Belarus Leader Eyes \\$1Bln Russian Arms Deal](#)

“Please go ahead and set a specific date and announce it so nobody can accuse us of having massed troops all of a sudden and of being almost ready to go to war,” Lukashenko added.

Lukashenko said he and Putin had in December agreed to carry out “strong” military drills across the “Belarusian balcony” of its western and southern frontiers.

“These drills should perfect plans to confront Western powers – the Baltics and Poland, and the south – Ukraine,” he [said](#) in a video shared by the Pul Pervogo Telegram channel, which regularly airs videos of Lukashenko’s briefings with top officials.

Citing the recent migrant crisis that European leaders accuse Lukashenko of orchestrating, Belarus’ military leaders said “Allied Resolve” will take place in response to troop buildups in Poland and the Baltic states.

“[Our] reaction will be absolutely adequate and transparent,” BelTA quoted Pavel Muravyeko, deputy chief of the general staff, as saying.

According to Muravyeko, Poland has deployed 20,000 troops, while the Baltic republics — which gained NATO membership after the fall of the Soviet Union — have deployed more than 12,000.

Viktor Gulevich, chief of the general staff, said more than 23,000 troops deployed in countries on Belarus’ western and southern borders — in addition to 10,000 NATO troops and 300 tanks — posed a security risk to Russia’s ally.

“Our country has to respond to these challenges,” Belta quoted Gulevich as saying.

Belarus and Russia staged massive strategic military exercises involving up to 200,000 troops, titled Zapad-2021, last September.

In 2023, the close allies are scheduled to hold military drills dubbed “Union Shield.”

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