

Russian Navy to Stage Massive Drills as Tensions Flare With West

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Over 140 warships, 60 aircraft, 1,000 pieces of military equipment and about 10,000 troops will be involved in the exercises. mil.ru

The Russian military [announced](#) Thursday plans to hold a series of cross-country naval exercises in January and February as tensions with the West continue to mount over Moscow's troop buildup near Ukraine.

The drills will stretch across every body of water bordering Russia and involve more than 140 warships, 1,000 pieces of military equipment, 10,000 troops and 60 aircraft.

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"The main focus of the exercises is to refine the Navy and Aerospace Forces' actions to protect Russian national interests in the World Ocean, as well as to counter military threats to Russia from the sea and ocean," the Defense Ministry said.

It singled out separate drills in the Mediterranean, the northeastern part of the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The naval exercises will also take place in the North Sea near the British Isles and Scandinavia, as well as the Sea of Okhotsk near Japan.

The drills are part of the Russian Armed Forces' 2022 training plan.

They will be held under the leadership of Navy Commander-in-Chief Adm. Nikolai Evmenov.

The Navy's announcement comes as Russia seeks a response from the West on its security demands that include banning Ukraine from ever joining NATO. The U.S. has voiced increasing alarm over Russia's buildup near Kyiv's borders, saying it could attack its pro-Western neighbor "at any point."

The Defense Ministry also announced this week that joint maritime exercises with China and Iran, dubbed CHIRU, will kick off in the Persian Gulf this Friday.

With the countries stepping up their defense cooperation, Russia said it had dispatched the Varyag missile cruiser, the Admiral Tributs large anti-submarine ship and the Boris Butoma sea tanker to Iran's southernmost port of Chabahar.

The Russian, Chinese and Iranian navies will practice rescuing a burning ship to secure international trade routes and releasing a captured vessel to combat piracy and maritime terrorism in addition to exchanging experience, the state-run TASS news agency [reported](#) Thursday, citing Iranian media.

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