The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

New Satellite Images Indicate Ongoing Russian Military Buildup on Ukraine Border

February 11, 2022



Maxar Technologies

New satellite images released by the U.S.-based technology company Maxar appear to reveal continuing Russian military buildup near Ukraine, despite a flurry of international efforts to defuse the Ukraine crisis.

Stephen Wood, a senior director at Maxar, told CNN that the firm identified new large deployments of troops and equipment in annexed Crimea as well as Kursk in western Russia and Belarus, adding to an already unprecedented military buildup that has fueled fears in the West about a possible Russian invasion.

The images released by Maxar and published by a number of U.S. outlets also appeared to show field hospitals set up at two different locations in Belarus.

The publication of the new images comes as Russia is set to kick off large-scale naval drills in

the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. The country on Thursday issued warnings that it will close off Ukraine's coastline for the upcoming missile drills, leading to an outcry from Kyiv.

On Thursday, Russia and Belarus also launched joint military drills in what NATO branded as a "dangerous moment" for European security.

The ongoing military Russian build-up gives Moscow the ability to mount an offensive on short notice should President Vladimir Putin decide to do so, Russian analysts believe.

Rob Lee, an expert on the Russian military and fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute, told The Moscow Times that "the Russian military, as of this week, has all the military capabilities to actually conduct a large-scale invasion."

Related article: No Breakthrough at Berlin Talks on Ukraine Conflict, Russia Says

Similarly, Samuel Charap, a Russian security analyst at the U.S. RAND Corporation, tweeted Thursday night that there was "absolutely no need to be doing what Moscow is doing unless they're creating the option for something qualitatively bigger than anything we've seen."

The Kremlin has denied having plans to attack its neighbor and has accused NATO of arming Ukraine while ignoring Russia's security concerns.

Stalling talks

Thursday saw another round of talks between Russia and the West as British Foreign Ministry Liz Truss traveled to Moscow to meet with her counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

In a sign that the relations of the two countries were at a low point, Lavrov slammed the conversation with Truss soon after he emerged from the two-hour meeting with his British counterpart.

Moscow wanted "not just excuses, but a concrete response from the West to our proposals, which presuppose the inadmissibility of strengthening someone's security at the expense of someone else's security," Lavrov said.

"I cannot say that we have any points of contact here," he added.

In Berlin, Putin's deputy chief of staff Dmitry Kozak said that Russia and Ukraine failed to reach a breakthrough at nine-hour Normandy format talks brokered by Germany and France aimed at reviving the Minsk agreements.

French President Emmanuel Macron earlier in the week flew to Moscow to push for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, a set of arrangements designed to end a war with pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine, but Kozak said Russia and Ukraine fail to agree on their interpretations of the accords.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/11/new-satellite-images-indicate-ongoing-russian-military-buildup-on-ukraine-border-a76340