

Russia Stages Scaled-down War Games With China, India

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Vostok-2022 will deploy 50,000 Russian and foreign troops, 140 warplanes and 5,000 pieces of military equipment. **Vadim Savitsky / Russian Defense Ministry press office / TASS**

Russia launched large-scale joint [military exercises](#) with China, India and several other countries in the Far East on Thursday, although they involved far fewer troops and hardware than in previous years amid Moscow's six-month invasion of Ukraine.

A total of 50,000 troops will take Vostok-2022 (East-2022) war games — compared to 300,000 who participated in the same drills four years ago.

Vostok-2022 will also involve 140 warplanes and 5,000 pieces of military equipment, a fraction of the 1,000 military aircraft and 36,000 equipment seen in 2018.

“This is going to be the smallest strategic-level exercise in years because the entire ground forces potential is engaged in operations in Ukraine,” Konrad Muzyka, director of the Poland-based Rochan military consultancy, [told](#) Reuters.

Muzyka estimated that up to 80% of Russia's eastern military district manpower had been deployed in Ukraine, saying it's likely the Russian military was committing no more than 15,000 of the troops for this year's Vostok military exercises.

Alongside China, Russia and India, there are 11 other countries taking part including Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Algeria, Syria and a number of former Soviet states.

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Vostok-2022 involves paratroopers, aviation forces, as well as Federal Security Service (FSB), Federal Guard Service (FSO) and interior and emergencies ministry troops at nine firing ranges in the country's Far East, according to the Russian Defense Ministry.

India is [sending](#) a 75-member detachment for the drills, including Gurkha troops and navy and air force representatives, Bloomberg reported.

The Chinese military at the exercises will include army, air and naval forces.

Russia's Defense Ministry says the two countries' navies will "assist ground troops" in the coastal area of northern and central parts of the Sea of Japan, and "defend maritime communications and areas of maritime economic activity."

Beijing and New Delhi have refused to criticize Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, though both countries have steered clear of incurring secondary sanctions by providing Russia with military assistance.

"Today, soldiers and officers from 10 countries are standing in single formation, and a total of 14 countries are taking part in the exercise," Russia's Deputy Defense Minister Yunus-Bek Yevkurov [said](#) at the opening ceremony Wednesday.

"We're connected not only by the need to strengthen military security near our borders, but also by the long friendly relations between the countries," Yevkurov said.

The war games, which will run until Sept. 7, are divided into two stages, according to Russia's Defense Ministry.

The first three days will see exercises to practise repelling enemy airstrikes, engaging them in fire and conducting defensive and offensive actions.

The final four days will involve the management of a "strategic operation in the eastern direction," the Defense Ministry said.

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