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Russian Defense Minister Inspects Troops' Combat Readiness

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Defense Minister Andrei Belousov. **Russian Defense Ministry**

Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov oversaw combat readiness exercises at a military training facility in northwestern Russia, the defense ministry said on Friday.

"Belousov reviewed the organization of combat training of military personnel at one of the training grounds of the Leningrad Military District," the army said in a statement.

The statement added that the training took into account "the characteristics of Western weapons used by the enemy" and was supervised by instructors who had gained combat experience in Ukraine.

Belousov was shown the training of tank crews and drone operators, as well as artillery firing and shooting drills, as seen in a video shared by the defense ministry. He then awarded medals to several soldiers.

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The defense minister also "heard recommendations and issues of improving the effectiveness of the training and support processes for military personnel" in Ukraine, the military's statement accompanying the video said.

In February, President Vladimir Putin formed the Leningrad Military District, which had existed before it was merged with the Moscow Military District in 2010 to create the now-defunct Western Military District.

The recent reorganization was part of broader reforms planned by Russia's military leadership in response to Finland and Sweden joining NATO.

Some military analysts believe Russia recreated the Leningrad and Moscow military districts to prepare for a potential conflict with NATO.

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