

Former Soviet Republics conduct military exercises

"Joint assistance to an ally if attacked by foreign aggressor"

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CSTO Rapid Reaction Force kicks off exercise in Tajikistan

 *The maneuvers, known as Frontier - 2007, are being held within the Collective Security Treaty Organization with the participation of rapid reaction units from the collective forces of Central Asian countries, which include Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. Other countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization - Armenia, Belorussia and Uzbekistan - have sent observers.*

The "Frontier-2007" exercises have thus entered the second stage. The first stage took place in Moscow last week without any firing drills. The generals were discussing legal issues, such as the legitimacy of joint assistance to an ally if attacked by a foreign aggressor. The collective rapid reaction forces are currently testing out the decisions at the Liaur testing ground near Dushanbe. The main purpose of the maneuvers is to practice quick decision-taking in redeploying joint armed forces to combat operations areas within the Collective Security Treaty.

The First Deputy Commander of the Organization's Joint Staff, Colonel-General Ivan Babichev, says the exercises are set to work out how the collective forces of Central Asian countries could move to Tajikistan - on what basis, on whose orders or at whose request - and how the procedure is implemented. This sort of cooperation between independent states has to be settled by joint effort, for it is jointly that we can respond to modern threats and challenges.

The exercises, code-named "Frontier", are on for a fourth year running and this time they focus on defensive operations. On military legend, Tajikistan comes under attack from armed terrorist groups and needs help from Collective Security Treaty partners. Collective rapid reaction battalions with military hardware and an aviation squadron come to rescue and the enemy is destroyed.

Vladislav Musaelian is the Chief of the Collective Security Treaty's military cooperation secretariat:

"Each time we set different goals. Last time naval vessels and marines were involved and the exercises took place in Kazakhstan near the Caspian Sea. This year the purposes are entirely different. Next year "Frontier-2008" will take place in Kyrgyzstan and will be pursuing other goals. We're moving forward step by step with new targets on the agenda and with due regard for the peculiarities of the region and its climate".

The “Frontier-2007” staff exercise ended on April 6th, after the final shooting drill at the Liaur testing ground and with the participation of heavy artillery, tanks and aviation, including SUKHOI-25 fighter-bombers and MIL-8 and MIL-24 helicopters. For today the Collective Security Treaty Organization embraces seven countries – Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrghyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Galim Faskhutdinov. Tajikistan.

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