

# Large-Scale Russia-Belarus War Games in Response to Deployment of US Missile Shield in Europe

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## Russia Starts Preparing for Zapad-2013 War Games

MOSCOW: This week the Russian Defense Ministry will start preparing for large-scale joint strategic military exercises with Belarus, scheduled for fall of 2013, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Monday.

“Strategic command and staff drills, to be held by [Russian] military districts this week, mark the first step in preparation for the Zapad-2013 exercises with Belarus,” Shoigu said at a Defense Ministry meeting.

Russia and Belarus approved the schedule for Zapad-2013 drills in October last year.

The exercises will be held in September and will focus on practicing defense of the Russia-Belarus Union State in response to the deployment of a US missile shield in Europe.

The two-stage drills, which will also involve “rapid-reaction” units from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), will take place in Russia and Belarus.

Moscow and Minsk held similar large-scale military exercises in September 2009. They involved about 12,500 servicemen and up to 200 pieces of military hardware.

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