

NATO Conducts Europe's Largest Air, Missile Exercise Off Scotland

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What the North Atlantic Treaty Organization bills as the largest and most complex air and missile defense exercises in Europe started on May 15 at and near the Hebrides off the western coast of Scotland and will continue until June 3. Some of the drills are also occurring at a military training site in Norway.

Formidable Shield 2021, said NATO Deputy Spokesperson Piers Cazalet, "[shows how Allies are working together to defend NATO forces and populations from the very real threat of missiles.](#)" Though what they are also practicing for it neutralizing missiles – Russian missiles to be exact – that might be fired in retaliation for a NATO attack against that nation and its assets.

This year's iteration of the exercise, held biannually, includes guided-missile warships tracking a missile flying over 12,000 miles an hour, and practicing destroying anti-ship, submarine-launched and supersonic missiles "using NATO procedures."

The exercise is held under the aegis of U.S. Sixth Fleet but is being conducted by Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO.

It includes 3,300 military personnel from ten NATO nations – the U.S., Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain – fifteen ships and dozens of aircraft. To emphasize the Euroatlantic nature of NATO (if not by intent), the flagship this year is the Spanish Navy's frigate ESPS Cristobal Colon.

Raytheon Missiles & Defense boasted of the progress made since the 2019 Formidable Shield, with its president, Wes Kremer, stating, "[Formidable Shield 2021 represents an opportunity to demonstrate the interoperability we have built with our NATO allies over decades.](#)" Raytheon and other American weapons manufacturers are dedicated supporters of NATO and its Euroatlantic values as well as the rules-based international order.

Raytheon provided an inventory of the equipment being employed in the exercise to defend freedom, peace, gender equality in the workplace, carbon emission monitoring and other

missions NATO has appropriated to itself (this is meant to be ironic), including but not limited to sensors, effectors, radars and interceptors “to strengthen collective defense and exhibit the interoperability and integration of allied missile defense systems.”

The arms manufacturer is proud of its role in promoting Euroatlantic core values by providing the following to the exercise, at market rates of course, paid for by NATO nations’ taxpayers:

- Standard Missile-3 (SM-3): an interceptor that destroys incoming ballistic missile targets.
- Standard Missile-2 (SM-2): an interceptor that destroys incoming cruise missile and air targets.
- Standard Missile-6 (SM-6): an interceptor that destroys incoming ballistic missile targets in the terminal phase, air targets and naval surface targets.
- Upgraded Early Warning Radar (UEWR): a radar that provides early warning and detects and tracks incoming ballistic missile targets.

Standard Missile-3s have been deployed in Romania by NATO for the past decade; directly across the Black Sea from Russia.

Increasingly more advanced versions of the anti-ballistic missile are used in the Aegis Combat System developed by the U.S. and its allies. The Pentagon has 66 Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers and 22 Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers capable of being equipped with it. Since 2015 four American Arleigh Burke-class destroyers have been rotated at the Rota Naval Station in Spain for deployment in the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea, where they’re sent to taunt Russia by parading the Standard Missile-3s, which are capable of shooting down Russian missiles. It’s recently been announced that the [American destroyers, deployed to Spain under a NATO arrangement, are to be increased to six.](#)

For all the pabulum of “cruise and ballistic missiles...often [being] the weapon of choice, both for state and non-state actors,” according to NATO’s Cazalet, the current exercise and Raytheon interceptor missiles are designed to intimidate Russia.

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