

# NATO's "Fake News" Russia Scare Increases Defense Waste

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

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*The military of the Russian Federation is organized in four districts – west, central, east and south. Each year one of the districts will stage a division size maneuver. 10,000 to 15,000 soldiers leave their quarters to move against imaginary adversaries. Their training is complemented by various military and civilian staffs exercises. The active part of the medium-size maneuver takes about a week and includes some live firing.*

This year, like in 2009 and [2013](#), the turn was on the western military district to run its quadrennial exercise. It included, as is usual in the western district, units from and within Russia's ally Belarus. The name of this regular training event is simply "West", Zapad in Russian. Zapad-2017 was publicly announced and foreign military observers were invited to watch it.

NATO and its associated media used the occasion to launch a gigantic fear- and warmongering campaign against the Russian Federation. Over months hundreds of news pieces were weaved around dark murmurs from various NATO officials and "experts". Examples:

- [Putin planning to send 100K troops to Baltic border for drills?](#) – CBS – Feb 10
- [Zapad 2017: NATO Should Be Keeping an Eye on Russia's Training Exercises](#) – National Interest – May 7
- [Russia's Zapad Wargames Are Making NATO Nervous](#) – Pop Mech – Jul 17
- [Russia readies for huge military exercises as tensions with west simmer](#) – Guardian – Aug 24
- [China Quietly Looms Over Zapad 2017 Exercises](#) – Diplomat – Aug 28
- [Zapad's goal is 'to frighten us'- Lithuanian president](#) – Baltic Times – Sep 8
- [Could 'Zapad' be a Trojan horse?](#) – CNN – Sep 13
- [100,000 troops will engage in Russia's Zapad-2017 war games](#) – WaPo – Sep 13
- [Russia's Zapad War Games Unnerve the West](#) – USNews – Sep 13
- [The Zapad Military Exercise Reveals Putin's Fear](#) – Bloomberg – Sep 15
- [Russia's Zapad war games raise fears over Putin's intentions](#) – Irish Times – Sep 18
- [Is Russia Practicing a Dry Run for an Invasion of Belarus?](#) – Foreign Policy – Sep 18
- [Zapad War Game 'Larger Than Russia Told Us,' Says Top NATO General](#) – Newsweek – Sep 19

The Zapad 2017 maneuvers ended yesterday. They were exactly what Russia and Belarus had announced – a regular, medium-size training event with no special intent or effect.

NATO and its various spokesperson had done what they like to accuse Russia of. They [created fakenews](#) about the maneuver based on nothing but hot air:

Zapad-2017 concluded earlier this week, by which time it had seriously fizzled out, in Western media terms at least.

...

And the Russians are enjoying a rare last laugh. They point out, with some justification, that their numbers were accurate, there was no dissembling, international borders were respected. All the Russian troops introduced into neighbouring Belarus for the exercise are going home, too. After all the Western accusations that Russia has been waging an information war with the help of “fake news”, who is disseminating “fake news” now, they ask. Is this not further evidence that Western opinion formers are stuck in the rut of Cold War stereotypes? They have a point.

The Western “opinion formers” have, of course, reason to hype everything their selected boogeyman does. That reason is greed. This year nearly all NATO countries increased their military budgets. The U.S. Senate [passed](#) a record \$700 billion trough for the Pentagon with 89 to 8 votes. The more than 10% budget increase was even higher than what President Trump had requested. It broke all earlier commitments:

The \$700 billion is \$91 billion beyond the spending caps outlined in the 2011 Budget Control Act, which demanded a “sequestration” of military spending in order to rein in federal costs.

There was no public outrage over this increase. Meanwhile Russia [cut its 2018 defense budget](#) by 25.5% down to a total of some \$48 billion.

There is obviously little fear in Russia that the U.S. budget increase will effect U.S. military capabilities. The Russians are right. Most of the Pentagon budget goes to waste. The military as well as the politicians know this well. From a recent NYT [piece](#) about options against North Korean missiles:

Intercepting a warhead using missile defenses runs other dangers, White House officials have been told. If the American antimissile systems missed — against a single warhead, which should be the simplest target — it would undercut confidence in an infrastructure the United States has spent \$300 billion to build over the past four decades.”

Missile defense is nonsense. Its principle is to hit one bullet with another bullet at several times the speed of sound and at distances of hundreds of miles. That is nearly impossible to do. Even the staged missile defense tests fail and the system as a whole [does not work](#). The U.S. military is too afraid to use its \$300 billion missile defense boondoggle because that would prove that it is one gigantic scam.

That does not restrain the politicians from [adding money to it](#):

[The new budget] does authorize an additional \$8.5 billion for the Missile Defense Agency to strengthen homeland, regional and space missile defense. That authorization is \$630 million above the Trump administration’s request.

The fakenews warmongering by NATO and western politicians about the Zapad maneuver helped to convince the sheeple that additional welfare projects for the owners of the military-industrial complex are necessary and justified.

Meanwhile health care for all, which would cost much less than missile defense, is too expensive to pass.

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