

US Military Marches East to Consolidate Front Against Russia

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Members of the Polish army, left, and Ukrainian military cadets stand in formation during the 2014 NATO Rapid Trident Training media day.

MOSCOW – US military is expanding its training exercises and coordinating the activities of its allies pitting Europe against Russia, Daniel Zubov from Rossiya Segodnya's Center for International Journalism and Research said Thursday.

"While continuing to denounce alleged [Russian military involvement](#) in Ukraine, the American military marched east this September, participating in training, drills, and exercises spanning from Latvia to Turkey. It coordinated with its military allies in between – including in Ukraine – consolidating a front which extends 2,600 kilometers," Zubov stated.

"[Collaboration between the Ukrainian and American militaries](#) was the central point of President Poroshenko's visit to Washington, DC," Zubov said referring to the Ukrainian leaders's visit to Washington on September 18, where he met with the US President Barack Obama in a bid to seek economic and military aid.

"His request for military assistance found support in Congress, where the Foreign Relations Committee quickly passed the Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014, but his request for an immediate transfer of powerful weapons, was declined by President Obama," Zubov noted.

US President Barack Obama authorized US Secretary of State John Kerry to [allocate \\$25 million](#) to the Ukrainian government Wednesday, according to a memorandum released by the White House. Nevertheless, US military aid to the government of Ukraine does not include "lethal assistance," US National Security Council spokesperson Caitlin Hayden told RIA Novosti Thursday.

"The United States has also begun a process led by the US European Command and Department of Defense civilian and military experts to work with Ukraine to improve its capacity to provide for its own defense and set the stage for longer-term defense cooperation," the fact sheet released by the White House on September 18 reads.

This process encompasses several steps along [American army's new eastern front](#).

"Beginning in Riga, 47 participants from 15 countries are meeting from September 15 -26 for two operations, Steadfast Pyramid and Steadfast Pinnacle, where they will prepare for "exercising command and control during the planning, preparation and conduct of current and future operations." These exercises are at the "forefront" of NATO's response to the

situation in Ukraine,” Zubov says noting that “about 900 kilometers due south, 1,300 NATO troops are conducting drills at the Yavoriv Training Center near Lviv in Ukraine as part of the US-led Rapid Trident.

According to Zubov, on September 8-10, the Ukrainian Navy has been conducting military exercises in the Black Sea with “Romania, Turkey, Spain, Canada, and the United States in operation Sea Breeze.” Ukrainian military has also joined NATO in Operation Saber Guardian at the Novo Selo Training Range in Bulgaria.

“Before the year is out, Ukraine will be included in [two more NATO exercises](#) due to its Observer status in the NATO South-East Europe Brigade,” Zubov notes.

“If Poroshenko, Longo [Major General Richard C. Longo, US Army Europe Deputy Commander], and the NATO brass have their way, a “bigger and more complex” and “sophisticated” military presence in Ukraine will further militarize the 2,600 kilometer European front against Russia, returning to the darkest and coldest days of the last century,” Zubov stressed.

European security has been a concern for NATO, who has been increasing its presence near Russia’s borders, citing the need to better protect its allies, and suspending entirely its cooperation with Moscow.

The relations between Russia and the West have deteriorated over the Ukrainian crisis that escalated to a military operation in mid-April, once Kiev sent troops to eastern Ukraine to suppress independence supporters.

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