

War Games at Russia's Doorstep: NATO Kicks Off Naval Drills in Black Sea with Ukraine

By [RT](#)

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Ukraine is hosting naval military exercise in the Black Sea with NATO forces, involving 2,500 troops and some 150 military vehicles, from warships and helicopters to armored cars.

The host nation of Sea Breeze 2015 has deployed 1,000 troops, nine warships and eight aircraft for the drill. The US has sent 1,000 troops as well as five warships, two submarines and six aircraft.

The remaining 500 troops, six warships, three submarines and six aircraft were provided by Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Turkey, the UK and the non-NATO nations Moldova and Sweden.

"The exercise is meant to boost trust and security in the region, [and to increase] the compatibility between the Ukrainian Navy and the navies of NATO members and partner countries," the Ukrainian Defense Ministry said in a statement.

Sea Breeze is held in Ukraine's Odessa and Nikolaevsk region not far from Russia's Crimea, which Kiev and its foreign sponsors consider to be Ukrainian. It will last till mid-September. Ukraine will participating in a total of 11 NATO drills in 2015.

NATO is also currently conducting another war game, called Swift Response, in Germany, Italy, Bulgaria and Romania. It is one of the largest such events since the Cold War and is planned to last until September 13. A separate exercise, called Simple Strike, is under way in the Baltic.

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Russia, which calls NATO exercises in Europe provocative, has just completed a joint naval drill with China, called Naval Cooperation. It was held in the Far East and has been described as unprecedented in scale.

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