

Ukraine

CONFLICT UPDATE

Institute for the Study of War, Russia Team
February 18, 10:00pm EST

Russia will likely attack Ukraine before February 21, 2022, as we discuss [here](#). The Kremlin has deployed sufficient military forces and set informational conditions to conduct offensive operations including limited incursions into unoccupied Ukraine, a comprehensive air and missile campaign, and large-scale mechanized drives on Kyiv and other major Ukrainian cities.

ISW's Russia Team is launching a new product line, Ukraine Conflict Updates, in light of this forecast. This daily synthetic product covering key events related to renewed Russian aggression against Ukraine will replace ISW's previous "[Indicators and Thresholds for Russian Military Operations in Ukraine and/or Belarus](#)," which we maintained from November 12, 2021 through February 17, 2022. That document will no longer be updated.

Key Events: February 17, 5pm EST – February 18, 3pm EST

Military Events

The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed that unspecified elements of the 1st Guards Tank Army of the Western Military District (WMD) began redeploying to permanent bases in Nizhny Novgorod after completing exercises on February 18.¹ ISW has not seen evidence that any 1st Guards Tank Army elements have returned to their permanent bases.

Russian Black Sea Fleet flagship *Moskva* conducted artillery exercises as part of ongoing Navy and Aerospace Forces exercises in the Black Sea on February 18.² The *Moskva* repelled an air attack using its artillery systems and fired on various surface targets.

Unspecified naval aviation crews of the Black Sea Fleet conducted aircraft withdrawal and deployment exercises as part of ongoing Russian Navy and Aerospace Forces exercises on February 18.³ Pilots of 10 Su-24 aircraft flew from Crimea to different operational airfields in unspecified locations in Russia. These aircraft may be redeploying to support operations against Ukraine.

Russian Activity

The Russian Federation Council, Russia's upper legislative chamber, will gather for an irregularly scheduled meeting on February 22; the Council has the power to permit Russian military interventions overseas.⁴ The meeting is reportedly to discuss pensions. However, the Federation Council has previously allowed for the use of Russian military forces in Syria. The Federation Council may vote to authorize an overt Russian military intervention in Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov announced on February 18 that Russian President Vladimir Putin will oversee Russia’s “Grom 2022” annual strategic nuclear triad exercises on February 19.⁵ Peskov added that Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko may also oversee the exercises if Putin decides to invite Lukashenko. Peskov said that Putin will observe the exercises from an unspecified “situational center” in Moscow, likely the Russian Ministry of Defense’s National Defense Control Center (NDCC). The Russian military conducting Grom nuclear readiness exercises in the winter is anomalous; the Russian military typically conducts annual Grom exercises in the fall.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova explicitly accused the Ukrainian government of conducting a genocide in Donbas in an interview with Kremlin-linked TV channel NTV on February 18.⁶ Zakharova also accused Western leaders of overlooking genocide.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Russia will not discuss Ukrainian security concerns separately from Russian security demands following talks with Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias on February 18.⁷ Lavrov accused Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky of allowing external Western “management” to decide Ukrainian affairs. Lavrov said that there is no alternative to the Minsk II Accords and criticized Ukraine’s refusal to engage directly with the self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics (DNR and LNR).⁸ Lavrov falsely accused Ukraine of “grossly violating” its Minsk II Accords obligations by intensifying shelling against Donbas on February 17-18. Lavrov accused the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (OSCE SMM) of “veiling” information about Ukrainian ceasefire violations and targeted attacks on civilians in Donbas. Lavrov claimed that an unspecified SMM report from “three years ago” (2018) found that the Ukrainian Armed Forces caused three times more destruction to civilian infrastructure than Russia’s DNR and LNR proxies.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov criticized NATO states’ narratives about a Russian invasion in an interview with Kremlin media outlet RT on February 18.⁹ Lavrov accused NATO states of recruiting mercenaries from Kosovo, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina to “throw Russia off balance” in Donbas.¹⁰ Lavrov claimed NATO previously fabricated a pretext to intervene, insinuating NATO may militarily intervene in Donbas.¹¹ Lavrov reiterated that the Kremlin “will not be satisfied” with NATO’s current answer to Russian security demands.¹²

President Vladimir Putin presided over a Russian Security Council meeting about Ukraine, “growing tension provoked from outside,” and Russia’s security demands in Europe on February 18.¹³ The Kremlin readout provided no additional details.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei discussed “regional and international security” cooperation in the Union State and Russian security guarantees in Europe on February 18.¹⁴ Makei and Lavrov discussed unspecified “agreements” that Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Lukashenko reached in Moscow on February 18.¹⁵ The Russian Foreign Ministry additionally stated that Lavrov and Makei discussed “Russian initiatives on ways to ensure sustainable legal security guarantees.”

Russian State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin accused Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky of violating the Minsk II Accords by refusing to negotiate with representatives from the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics on February 18.¹⁶ Volodin added that Russia’s Investigative Committee opened a criminal investigation on the reports of civilian mass graves in Donetsk on February 16. Volodin said that leaders in Washington and Brussels have been silent on “Kyiv’s crimes” regarding the graves.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin initiated a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting about Ukraine and formally accused Ukraine’s government of “exterminating the civilian population” of the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics (DNR and LNR) on February 17.¹⁷ Vershinin told the UNSC that Ukraine has not implemented any of its commitments under the Minsk II Accords or under UNSC Resolution 2202 and that Russia had no obligations under and was not party to the Minsk II Accords.¹⁸ Vershinin also described DNR and LNR civilian experiences of alleged Ukrainian war crimes, sharing details from the Russian Investigative Committee.¹⁹

Proxy Activity

The Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (DNR and LNR) announced mass evacuations of civilians to Rostov Oblast, Russia, on February 18 ahead of a claimed Ukrainian offensive.²⁰ The Kremlin preplanned and is coordinating this evacuation to support disinformation operations about Ukrainian plans to attack Donbas. DNR Head Denis Pushilin stated that Rostov Oblast government services will care for DNR residents upon their arrival. The DNR Ministry of Emergency Situations claimed that the DNR plans to evacuate 700,000 residents over an unspecified time period.²¹ Kremlin-sponsored media claimed that over 80 buses and an unspecified number of private vehicles arrived in Russia from Donbas as of February 18.²² Pushilin claimed that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will soon order an offensive against Donbas and use multiple launch rocket systems and Western-provided anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons against civilians.²³ LNR Head Leonid Pasechnik called on all residents that are not mobilized to evacuate to Russia “as soon as possible” and appealed to all men to “hold weapons to stand up for their land.”²⁴ The LNR opened at least three checkpoints for evacuations on the LNR's border with Russia.²⁵

Russian President Vladimir Putin authorized a one-time payment of 10,000 rubles to every DNR and LNR refugee on February 18, likely to financially incentivize the migration necessary for the Kremlin's information campaign.²⁶ The Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations organized a refugee center and deployed an unspecified “operational group” in Rostov Oblast on February 18.²⁷ Officials in Rostov reportedly prepared hotels and children camps for refugees.²⁸ The Russian Cabinet of Ministers also took measures to open border crossings between Donbas and Russia on February 18.²⁹ Publicly available metadata showed that Pushilin and Pasechnik prerecorded their announcement videos calling for mass evacuations on February 16, before the DNR and LNR intensified shelling against Ukraine and falsely claimed that Ukraine shelled the DNR and LNR on February 17.³⁰ Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Valery Zaluzhny earlier stated that the DNR planned to conduct a mass evacuation on February 17.³¹

The Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) conducted a false flag car bomb attack against a car reportedly belonging to DNR Militia Chief Denis Sinekov and framed it as a Ukrainian attack on February 18.³² The DNR claimed that the attack occurred near a government building. Journalists affiliated with the Kremlin-linked *ANNA News* outlet recorded the destroyed car. The DNR also conducted checks of its emergency siren system throughout Donetsk on February 18 prior to the false flag attack to support an information operation claiming that Ukraine is preparing to conduct “massive shelling” against Donetsk.³³

The Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (LNR and DNR) rejected Kyiv's offer to meet for a Trilateral Contact Group meeting on February 18.³⁴ LNR and DNR officials said that a meeting with the Ukrainian government is meaningless because Ukraine does not have a real proposal and the meeting is part of a Ukrainian public-relations campaign.

Russian media outlets amplified false claims by the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) about Ukrainian aggression against Donbas on February 17-18. The LNR claimed that Ukrainian special forces, not LNR militants, shelled a kindergarten in Stanytsya Luhanska on February 17. The LNR added that Ukrainian militants arrived at the kindergarten five minutes before film crews, emergency responders, and representatives from the Joint Center for Control and Coordination of the Ceasefire (JCCC).³⁵ The LNR claimed that Ukraine violated the ceasefire 29 times on February 17 and conducted 20 instances of shelling in Katerinovka Molodezhnoye, Zolote, Geevka Slavyanoserbsk, Krymskoye-Sokolniki, Kalinkova, and Sanzharovka on February 18.³⁶ The LNR also claimed that Ukraine has decided to conduct its main offensive in Svitlodarsk to cut off LNR defenses and transport lines.³⁷ The LNR Internal Affairs Ministry announced that LNR law enforcement is increasing their patrolling, setting up additional checkpoints, and cracking down on curfew violators in response to LNR-claimed Ukrainian aggression.³⁸

Ukrainian Activity

Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov stated that the intensified shelling campaign on February 16 and 17 by Russian proxies were “anomalous events” that significantly changed the

security situation in Ukraine on February 18.³⁹ Reznikov reiterated that the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense assesses that the probability of a “large-scale escalation” is low. Reznikov said that Ukraine’s main task at this time is to “curb this anomaly so that it does not become a prologue to escalation.” Reznikov stated that Ukrainian officials do not observe any Russian force withdrawals despite Russian claims. Reznikov stated that Ukraine’s Defense Ministry counts 149,000 Russian military personnel near Ukraine, including naval and air forces. Reznikov stated that Ukraine’s military attaché in Belarus will observe the main culminating events of the Union Resolve 2022 exercises in Belarus to lower tensions on February 19. Reznikov reiterated that Ukraine does not seek to use force to resolve the war in Donbas and appealed to Ukrainians living in occupied Donbas to not fear Ukraine. Reznikov restated development goals for the Ukrainian military, including elevating Ukraine’s military to NATO standards at the operational level, improving military logistics, increasing the size of Ukraine’s military to 100,000 personnel by 2025, abolishing conscription by 2024, raising defense spending to 3 percent of its GDP, increasing military salaries, and elongating servicemen’s contracts to at least 10 years.

The Ukrainian Ministry of Defense (MoD) stated that Russian proxies injured two civilians and two Ukrainian servicemen in Donbas on February 18.⁴⁰ The MoD reported 33 instances of shelling in Chermalyk, Pishchane, Pivdenne, Shumy, Vodyane, Opytne, Hnutove, Nevel’s’ke, Svitlodars’k, Luhans’ke, Verkh’n’otoretsk’ke, Mironivsk’kiy, and Niu-York in Donetsk Oblast and in Nyzhn’oteple and Troitske in Luhansk Oblast. Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Valery Zaluzhny also reported that Russian proxies fired artillery at a United Nations (UN) humanitarian convoy of 12 vehicles in Schastia, Luhansk Oblast.⁴¹ The MoD stated that Kremlin-sponsored media outlets deliberately edited a video of their February 17 shelling of a kindergarten in Stanytsa Luhanska, Luhansk Oblast, to present Ukrainian forces as the aggressor.⁴² The Ukrainian MoD said that Russian outlets changed their narrative from claiming that Kyiv staged a shelling against the kindergarten to openly accusing Ukrainian forces of actually firing at the kindergarten.⁴³

Ukraine’s Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) called on residents of Donetsk Oblast to not use public transportation and remain indoors due to bomb threats in occupied Donetsk on February 18.⁴⁴ The GUR reported that Russian intelligence services are mining Donetsk civilian infrastructures to stage a provocation and further destabilize situation in Donbas.

Ukrainian Joint Forces Operation Commander Oleksandr Pavlyuk stated that the Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) fired 32 122 mm shells at a kindergarten and other structures in Stanytsia, Luhansk Oblast on February 17.⁴⁵ Pavlyuk stated that Russian proxy forces shelled Ukrainian positions 49 times, 39 of which used artillery systems prohibited by the Minsk II Accords. Pavlyuk maintained that Russia and its proxies seek to commit atrocities against the people of Ukraine and that such violence is a part of a larger military and information campaign. Pavlyuk called on international media to document the atrocities committed by Russian and Russian-backed forces while denying Russian claims of “genocide.”

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated that Russian and Russian proxy allegations that Ukraine is preparing to conduct offensive actions against chemical production facilities in Donbas are disinformation on February 18.⁴⁶ Kuleba reiterated Kyiv’s commitment to reaching a diplomatic – not military – solution to the war in Donbas.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov discussed the growing threat of Russian military aggression against Ukraine at the NATO defense ministerial meeting in Brussels on February 18.⁴⁷ Reznikov said that NATO officials discussed involving Ukraine in strengthening cybersecurity and jointly countering misinformation. Reznikov noted that several NATO defense ministers invited Ukraine and Georgia to join NATO summit in Madrid in June 2022. Reznikov also informed NATO about the proxy shelling of a kindergarten in Stanytsa Luhanska, Luhansk Oblast, on February 17.

Ukraine’s delegation to the United Nations asked the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to discuss Russian proxy shelling of Stanitsa Luhanska and condemned Russia’s “hybrid war” against Ukraine on February 17.⁴⁸ Ukraine’s delegation condemned the Russian Duma’s proposal to recognize the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics as “tantamount to [Russia’s] deliberate withdrawal from the [Minsk II Accords].” The delegation called on Russia to take a “constructive stance” on making progress

within existing agreements and warned that Russia would bear full responsibility for the collapse of the Minsk II Accords.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky advocated for the creation of a “global [security] document” guaranteeing Ukraine’s security in an interview with *RBK Ukraine* on February 17.⁴⁹ Zelensky called for the document to include security guarantees for Ukraine and to be implemented by “all world leaders.” He said that the objective of the document should be to support the financing, training, and rehabilitation of Ukraine’s armed forces. Zelensky reiterated that it is in the international community’s interest to strengthen Ukraine’s military because Ukraine protects Europe more broadly by deterring “any further [Russian] encroachment.”

US Activity

US President Joe Biden said on February 18 that he is “convinced” that Russian President Vladimir Putin has decided to invade Ukraine in the “coming days” and will target Kyiv.⁵⁰ He stated that Russia and Russian proxies in Donbas increased disinformation and likely “false flag” attacks to frame Ukraine as the aggressor. Biden emphasized that the United States and its allies will defend NATO territory and their collective security and will continue to support Ukraine with diplomatic and lethal aid. Biden called on Russia to keep diplomatic options open and warned that Russia will face economic sanctions and global outrage for escalating its aggression.

United States Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Michael Carpenter stated that Russia increased its troop deployments from approximately 100,000 personnel as of January 30 to approximately 169,000 to 190,000 personnel as of February 18 despite publicly announcing troop withdrawals.⁵¹ This figure includes Russian forces deployed in Belarus and occupied Crimea. Carpenter stated that the US Government assesses that the Kremlin deployed amphibious assault landing ships of Russia’s Baltic Sea Fleet and Northern Sea Fleet to the Black Sea to augment Black Sea Fleet forces but did not specify that this deployment was in order to support an offensive. Carpenter noted that the Russian government continues to plan to fabricate pretexts to justify an invasion of Ukraine. Carpenter stated that Russia continues to conduct cyber operations against the Ukrainian defense and banking sectors. Carpenter accused Russia of violating the OSCE Vienna Document of 2011 for its unwillingness to credibly explain or properly notify European neighbors about Russia’s military buildups under the rubric of training exercises.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu discussed Russia’s military buildup near Ukraine on February 18.⁵² Austin called for “de-escalation, the return of Russian forces surrounding Ukraine to their home bases, and a diplomatic resolution.” *TASS* reported that the Russian Ministry of Defense said that the United States initiated the call to discuss “international security issues of mutual interest” without providing more details.⁵³

***Foreign Policy* reported on February 18 that four anonymous US intelligence officials stated that Russia is drafting a “kill list” targeting Ukrainian politicians and other prominent individuals in case of a Russian invasion of Ukraine.**⁵⁴ US intelligence sources said that Russia may either arrest or assassinate prominent political figures, anti-corruption activists, and Belarusian and Russian dissidents living in Ukraine.

US Vice President Kamala Harris and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg emphasized US, NATO, and European commitments to opposing Russia’s military buildup at the Munich Security Conference on February 18.⁵⁵ Harris emphasized NATO’s commitment to Ukrainian sovereignty and desire to engage in open dialogue with Russia. Harris stated that the US is committed to inflicting severe economic sanctions should Russia engage in aggressive action against Ukraine.

United States Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Polish Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak discussed US-Polish security cooperation in Warsaw on February 18.⁵⁶ Austin commended Poland for serving as a model NATO ally and devoting 2 percent of its national budget to modernizing Poland’s military.

Austin and Blaszczak reiterated that the entire NATO alliance stands in solidarity with Ukraine and will continue to work to overcome any challenge to peace and stability in Europe.

The Washington Post reported on February 17 that Russia's February 15 claim that it began withdrawing elements of the Western and Southern Military Districts was deliberate disinformation to hide additional deployments toward Ukraine's borders.⁵⁷ *The Washington Post* reported that four anonymous US officials said they had received "credible information that Russia's claims may be part of a disinformation campaign designed to mislead" the United States. The Russian Defense Ministry released videos claiming to depict tanks and heavy equipment redeploying from areas near Ukraine after announcing force redeployments on February 15.⁵⁸

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated on February 17 he plans to meet with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in an undetermined location in Europe next week (February 20 to 27) provided there is no further Russian invasion of Ukraine.⁵⁹ Blinken stated that the US continues to track Russian efforts to fabricate claims to justify an invasion of Ukraine. The US Department of State reported that these claims may include terrorist bombings, discovery of mass graves, or chemical weapons attacks.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with Polish Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau on February 17.⁶⁰ Blinken expressed support for Rau's initiative to launch a Renewed European Security Dialogue at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to facilitate diplomacy with Russia. Blinken thanked Rau for Poland's assistance with US citizens leaving Ukraine and reiterated his support for Ukraine's sovereignty.

US President Joe Biden and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi discussed ongoing diplomatic and deterrence efforts in response to Russia's military escalation at the Ukrainian border on February 17.⁶¹ Biden and Draghi reiterated their commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and their readiness to impose severe economic costs against Russia if it further invades Ukraine.

NATO Activity

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated that NATO has not observed signs of any Russian force withdrawal or de-escalation during his opening remarks at a NATO defense ministerial meeting on February 17.⁶² Stoltenberg stated that NATO is devoted to continuing strong political and practical support for both Ukraine and Georgia.⁶³ Stoltenberg stated that NATO will continue to work towards finding a diplomatic and political solution with Moscow. Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov participated in this ministerial and said that the NATO defense ministers praised Ukraine's restraint and commitment towards political and diplomatic solutions.⁶⁴ Stoltenberg welcomed European allies increasing their presence in NATO's east and emphasized NATO's unity in combatting Russia's aggressive actions.

Other International Organization Activity

N/A

Individual Western Allies' Activity

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock stated that Germany is prepared to pay a high economic price and suggested that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline will not materialize if Russia invades Ukraine during the Munich Security Conference on February 18.⁶⁵ Baerbock stated that NATO is not going to negotiate over Ukraine's head.⁶⁶ The German government had refrained from explicitly mentioning targeting Nord Stream 2 as part of its sanctions against Russia for a renewed offensive against Ukraine prior to the Munich Security Conference on February 18. The Kremlin has not responded to Baerbock's statement as of February 18.

Estonia delivered an unspecified number of Javelin anti-tank systems to Kyiv, Ukraine, on February 18.⁶⁷

Lithuania's Foreign Ministry called on Lithuanian citizens to leave Ukraine immediately on February 17.⁶⁸ The ministry noted that the Russian military aggression may make it “impossible to leave the country.” The ministry also recommended Lithuanian citizens not travel to Belarus.

UK Minister of State for Europe and North America James Cleverly gave a statement on Russia's military build near Ukrainian borders at the United Nations Security Council on February 17.⁶⁹ Cleverly reiterated UK support for the implementation of the Minsk II Accords and Ukrainian sovereignty. Cleverly condemned the Russian State Duma's request that Russian President Vladimir Putin recognize the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics as independent and called on Russian authorities to reject that request. Cleverly called on Russia to engage in diplomatic processes to resolve the situation peacefully and “stand down” all its troops. Cleverly emphasized that if Russia chose to launch an attack, Russia would be met with “strength” and significant sanctions.

Belarusian Activity

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko discussed unspecified joint responses to falsely claimed Western aggression on February 18.⁷⁰ Lukashenko stated that Russia and Belarus are “on the verge of a conflict” with the West and need “to look for possible ways to repel a possible [Ukraine-based] attack.” Putin noted that both leaders will “collectively take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the two countries in light of the growing NATO military activity on the Union States' external borders.” Putin stated that he and Lukashenko discussed the contents of his latest interactions with Western leaders and claimed that the US and NATO did not “adequately perceive” Russia's security demands. Lukashenko stated that Belarus and Russia will continue to conduct joint military exercises and will respond to the West via military exercises or diplomatic channels.

Putin noted that both leaders may jointly preside over unspecified military exercises on February 19, which Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov later confirmed would be Russia's strategic nuclear missile GROM exercises. Putin claimed that the “Union Resolve-2022” exercises did not “threaten anyone.” Putin additionally claimed that Ukraine systematically violates human rights in Donbas. Putin claimed that Kyiv will “restore civil peace in Ukraine and lift tensions” if it implements the Minsk II Accords and negotiates with representatives of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (DNR and LNR). Putin accused Kyiv of sabotaging efforts to grant the DNR and LNR greater legal autonomy, grant amnesty to proxy fighters, and hold Ukrainian elections in the DNR and LNR. Lukashenko claimed that he and Putin have never discussed an invasion of Ukraine and accused the West of “frightening the whole world,” pushing Ukraine toward a provocation in Donbas, and conducting a hybrid war against Russia and Belarus. Putin said that the West will introduce sanctions against Russia and Belarus regardless of the situation in Ukraine to slow down Russian and Belarusian development. Putin warned that US allies will face economic consequences after imposing sanctions upon the Kremlin. Lukashenko also announced that Putin ordered the construction of a port in Leningrad Oblast to transport Belarusian fertilizers to help offset Western sanctions.

Russian and Belarusian forces continued the joint Russia-Belarus Union Resolve 2022 exercises at various training grounds in Belarus on February 18. The Belarusian Armed Forces practiced live-fire counterattacks under cover from air attacks carried out by a mock enemy at the Gozhsky Training Ground in Grodno, Belarus.⁷¹ Unspecified Belarusian special operations forces practiced landing measures and practiced destroying an enemy force at the Brest Training Ground.⁷² Russian Naval Infantry of the Eastern Military District worked alongside mechanized Belarusian units to hold a defensive line during a simulated battle at the Obuz-Lesnovsky Training Ground in Baranovichi, Belarus.⁷³ Belarusian servicemen conducted counter-sabotage and counter-reconnaissance exercises in unspecified locations in the Gomel Oblast.⁷⁴ Pantsir-S (surface to air missile) elements of the Russian Eastern Military District conducted electronic fires and covered troops in an air defense exercise in Luninets.⁷⁵ Two Tu-22 strategic bombers of the Russian Aerospace Forces additionally patrolled Belarusian airspace.⁷⁶

Other International Activity

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