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NATO to Hold Its Largest-Ever Air Exercises in June

US Air National Guard will deploy 100 aircraft as part of the drills

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NATO is preparing to hold [its largest-ever air exercises](#) this June, known as Exercise Air Defender, that will involve 220 aircraft and 10,000 personnel from 24 nations.

The drills will include a massive deployment of aircraft from the US Air National Guard, which is tasked with defending the homeland but, [according to Defense One](#), also maintains units for “prompt mobilization during war.”

The exercises will mark the largest US air forces deployment to Europe for NATO drills since the alliance was founded in 1949. The purpose of the drills is to simulate what the US would have to do if the war in Ukraine spread into NATO territory.

“This is now putting the alliance together quickly, with a credible force, to make sure that if Russia ever lines up on the NATO border, that we’re ready to go,” said Lt. Gen. Michael Loh, the head of the Air National Guard. “We’re going to defend every inch.”

The drills will take place from June 12-23 and will stretch from Iceland to Romania, with most flights taking place over Germany and the North Sea. The massive show of force is a clear message to Russia and comes as the US and NATO are escalating support for their proxy war against Moscow in Ukraine.

Finland, which [formally joined NATO on Tuesday](#), will participate in the drills. By admitting Finland, NATO has more than doubled its territory on the Russian border, a region that will now inevitably be further militarized.