

Defense Ministry Prepares for Largest Naval Exercises in Decades

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Defense Ministry said in a [statement](#) Wednesday it is preparing for its largest naval maneuvers in recent decades, sending warships to the Mediterranean and Black seas.

The wargames will take place at the end of this month, drawing warships from all of Russia's four fleets, the ministry said. The Navy aims to practice interacting with the other branches of the armed forces outside of the country.

As part of the maneuvers, marines and paratroopers will practice loading into the warships from the North Caucasus terrain. The Black Sea Fleet, the Baltic Sea Fleet, the Pacific Fleet and the Northern Fleet will be deploying their vessels for the exercise.

The statement didn't mention Syria, which sits on the Mediterranean coast and has been embroiled in a civil war that diplomatically pitted Russia against the Western world. Moscow supports the government, while the United States and other Western powers back the rebels.

Russia has in recent weeks dispatched two amphibious ships with marines, a missile cruiser and a destroyer to Syria to be on standby to evacuate its citizens from the war-torn country if the conflict escalates.

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