

Russia's Tsentr-2019 Military Drills: Vehicle Crashes, Ballistic Missiles and More

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Russia, China and India held joint anti-terrorism exercises with Pakistan and four Central Asian republics last week.

Nearly 130,000 troops, 20,000 pieces of equipment, 600 aircraft and up to 15 warships were [rolled out](#) across eight Russian training grounds for the Tsentr-2019 (Center-2019) drills.

The Sept. 16-21 war games, which President Vladimir Putin [observed](#) Friday with his counterpart from the ex-Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan, did not go off without a hitch, however.

At least two combat vehicles were destroyed in a [landing exercise](#) in Orenburg region that day, the Defense Ministry confirmed following media leaks [showing](#) the scale of the destruction Sunday.

“Both vehicles were damaged in a collision with the ground as a result of faulty parachute systems,” the ministry [said](#) in a statement carried by the state-run TASS news agency.

The Russian military said no crew members were on board the destroyed combat vehicles, but anonymous reporting [suggested](#) at least five paratroopers had been hospitalized with injuries in the BMD-2 mishap.

The Defense Ministry-funded Zvezda television channel [described](#) Friday’s landing by 1,500 paratroopers and 200 BMD-2s as “the first and largest in Russian military history.”

Friday’s active phase at the Orenburg region’s Donguz training range also [featured](#) rocket launchers, ballistic missile systems and air defense systems.

“I can’t hear myself,” a Zvezda reporter shouted into the microphone as explosions [shook windows](#) in a booth where Putin sat overseeing the drills.

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