

RUSSIA LAUNCHES NEW MILITARY EXERCISES NEAR UKRAINE BORDER

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The Russian military said it had launched drills involving 6,000 troops.

Russia on Tuesday launched new military exercises near Ukraine and in annexed Crimea as it accused the U.S. of ratcheting up tensions by putting several thousand of its own troops on alert.

With the West already accusing Moscow of amassing more than 1,00,000 soldiers on the Ukrainian border, the Russian military said it had launched drills involving 6,000 troops in the south and in the Crimean peninsula annexed by Moscow in 2014.

The drills involve combat firing exercises with fighter jets, bombers, anti-aircraft systems and ships from the Black Sea and Caspian fleets, the ministry said.

The West is accusing Russia of preparing a potential invasion of pro-Western Ukraine and tensions with Moscow have reached levels not seen since the Cold War.

The U.S. has warned that Moscow could manufacture a “false flag” incident in Ukraine.

Ukraine said on Tuesday it had dismantled a group of saboteurs “coordinated by Russian special services” who had planned a “series of armed attacks”.

Ukraine’s SBU security service said it had seized weapons and arrested two residents, one of them a Russian citizen, operating in eastern and central Ukraine.

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