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**STATEMENT BY MR. KONSTANTIN GAVRILOV,  
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY SECURITY AND  
ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 984th PLENARY MEETING OF THE  
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

8 September 2021

**Agenda item: Any other business  
Subject: On the “Zapad-2021” joint strategic exercise**

Mr. Chairperson,

In accordance with the 2021 training plan of the Russian armed forces, the “Zapad-2021” joint strategic exercise will be conducted from 10 to 16 September under the direction of the Chiefs of the General Staffs of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus. The exercise will be the concluding stage in the joint training of our two countries’ armed forces this year.

In implementation of the provisions of the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, the Russian Federation circulated an F30 notification regarding the forthcoming military activity via the OSCE Communications Network on 13 November last year. An F25 notification on the key parameters of this exercise was sent via the OSCE Communications Network on 30 July this year. A briefing for military attachés on the preparations for the “Zapad-2021” joint strategic exercise was organized at the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation on 20 August.

All told, up to 200,000 personnel will take part in the exercise on the territory of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, together with around 80 airplanes and helicopters, up to 760 pieces of military equipment (including 290 tanks and 240 artillery guns, multiple-launch rocket systems and mortars) and up to 15 ships.

Those involved in the exercise from the Russian side are the military command structures and troops of the Western Military District, part of the military command structures and troops of the Central Military District, airborne troops, long-range and military transport aviation forces, and ship formations and groups of the Baltic Fleet.

Military contingents from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Serbia and Sri Lanka have been invited to take part in the exercise on Russian territory. The armed forces of China, Vietnam, Myanmar, Pakistan and Uzbekistan will be represented by military observers. In

accordance with the agreed arrangements, the foreign States' military contingents had all arrived at the Mulino training ground in the Nizhny Novgorod region by 3 September.

The maximum number of military unit personnel involved in the exercise – a parameter covered by the Vienna Document 2011 – will not exceed 6,400 military personnel on the territory of the Russian Federation.

The military command structures and troops are scheduled to return to their permanent bases by mid-October after their participation in the exercise.

Under the exercise scenario, a fictitious politico-military situation will be used when working through the various aspects of the training. The scenario is based on a situation involving an escalating conflict between opposing coalitions of imaginary States. Several territorial and State formations have been set up for training purposes on the territory of the Russian Federation. A fictitious State – the “Polar Republic” – will simulate the actions of an adversary. Having well-developed armed forces at its disposal, the adversary, so it is envisaged, attempts to exert coercive pressure on the “Central Federation”. The escalation of tensions spills over into an armed conflict.

Under the exercise scenario, the military command structures, troops and forces being trained will in this situation perform combat training tasks related to countering air strikes by a fictitious adversary and conducting reconnaissance and search, defensive and offensive operations to localize the armed conflict and defeat the adversary.

The exercise scenario does not involve specifying the adversary. It is an imaginary adversary. No rehearsal of aspects related to the conduct of military operations against any specific States is envisaged.

It is planned to use nine training grounds on the territory of the Western Military District of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation for the troops' practical activities: Mulino (Nizhny Novgorod region), Kirillovsky (Leningrad region), Strugi Krasnye (Pskov region), Pogonovo (Voronezh region), Khmelevka and Pravdinsky (Kaliningrad region in both cases), together with three air force training ranges, namely, Dobrovolsky (Kaliningrad region), Dorogobuzh (Smolensk region) and Volsky (Saratov region).

Practical activities by general-purpose naval forces will be conducted in the southern part of the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland.

It should be noted that the Russian Ministry of Defence adheres scrupulously to the principle of maximum transparency in the conduct of combat training events. Information on such events has at all stages been posted in advance on the Ministry of Defence website and disseminated by Russian news agencies and by foreign media.

As the “Zapad-2021” exercise unfolds, it will also be covered on the website of the Russian Ministry of Defence and by the media. It is planned to invite diplomatic and military officials accredited in the Russian Federation as observers during the active phase. That stage will take place at the Mulino training ground.

Allow me to point out that the “Zapad-2021” exercise is of a strictly defensive nature and is aimed at training troops in the conduct of military operations under modern conditions and at enhancing the interoperability of the command structures of the armed forces of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus and of allies and friendly States.

In closing, we should like to emphasize that, as part of the voluntary Russian initiative to move the areas of large-scale exercises away from the Russia-NATO line of contact, the troops' main practical activities will be conducted on the territory of the Russian Federation at a considerable distance from the western State border.

Upon conclusion of the exercise, information will also be relayed to the military attachés.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.