

# *U.S. military preparing largest deployment to Europe in years*

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Brussels, December 12 (RHC)-- The U.S. military is planning its biggest deployment of troops to Europe in 25 years, with thousands of soldiers preparing to take part in a massive war games at a time of increasingly tensions with Russia.

About 20,000 American troops based in the U.S. will be deployed next year to Europe where they will join some 9,000 other U.S. soldiers already stationed there, said General Christopher Cavoli, the commander of U.S. ground forces in Europe.

The Defender Europe-20 exercise will link several exercises in the region, such as Allied Spirit, Swift Response and a Joint Warfighting Assessment. Nearly 37,000 troops will then take part in the exercise, which will take place across 10 European countries from May to June, Cavoli told reporters at the US Defense Department.

The U.S.-based forces will begin arriving in February, moving 13,000 pieces of equipment, including tanks, artillery and transport vehicles, across 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometers), he said. While Cavoli did not single out Russia as the focus, he said its reunification with Crimea in 2014 changed everything.

The aim is to "demonstrate the US military's ability to quickly deploy a large force to support NATO and respond to any crisis," he said. "Our ability as an army to project power is absolutely fundamental to

anything that we would get done," he said.

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