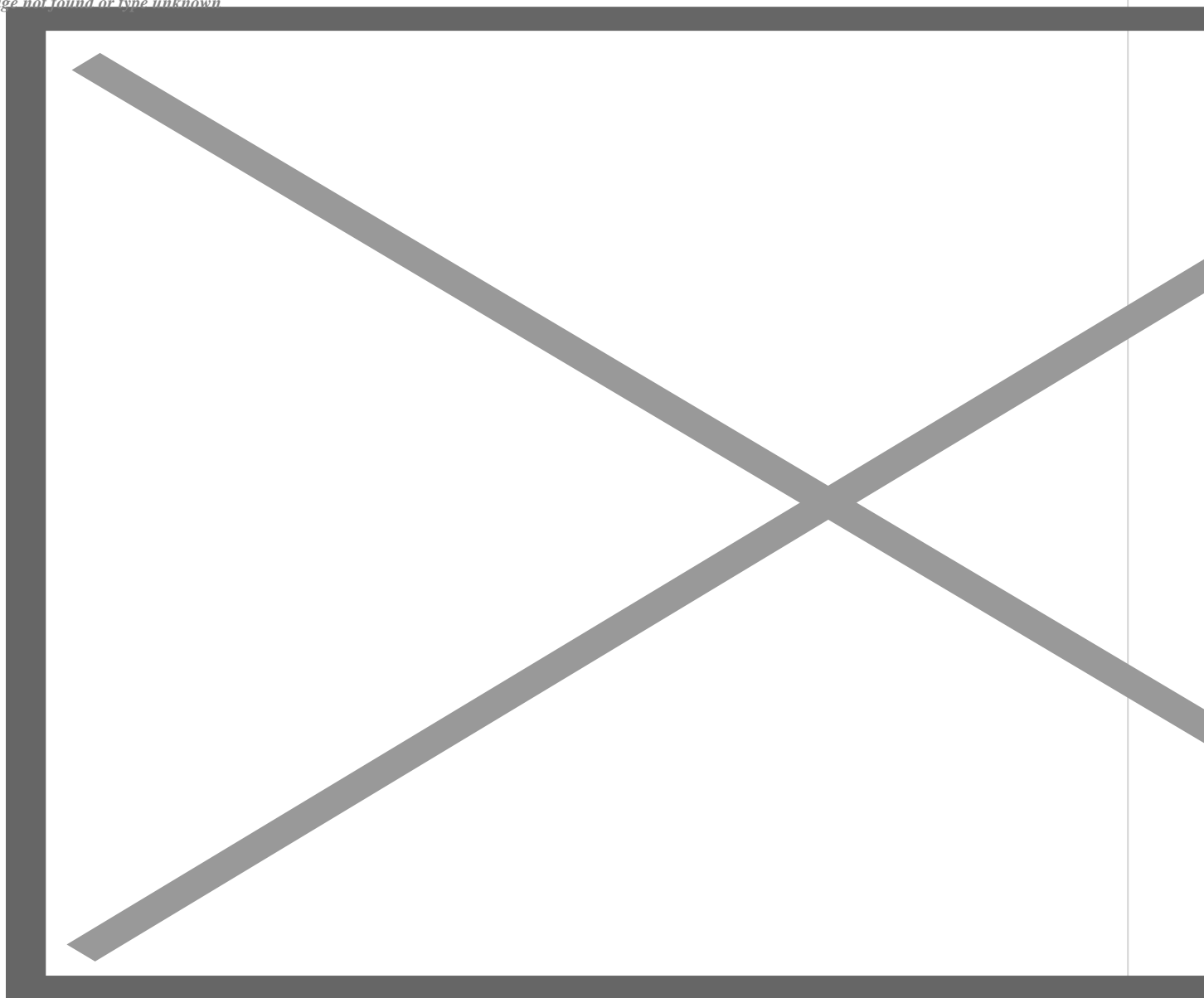


German anti-war activists rally against NATO's biggest ever air drills over Europe

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German anti-war activists rallied in front of the Wunstorf Air Base against NATO's 'Air Defender 23' military drills on June 10, 2023.

Berlin, June 11 (RHC)-- German anti-war activists have rallied in front of the Wunstorf Air Base against U.S.-led NATO's 'Air Defender 23' upcoming military drills, demanding a ceasefire in Ukraine and removal of U.S. nuclear weapons from their country.

Germany is playing host to the biggest air deployment exercise in NATO's history, in what the German and American officials call "a show of force" to "impress allies and potential adversaries such as Russia."

The Air Defender 23 exercise is planned to start on Monday with 10,000 participants and 250 aircraft from 25 nations responding to a simulated attack on a NATO member country. The United States alone is sending 2,000 U.S. Air National Guard personnel and about 100 American aircraft to take part in the 12-day training maneuvers.

According to the local police, activists from all over northern Germany came together at the Wunstorf Air Base in the Hanover area, which serves as a logistical hub for the international Air Defender 2023 maneuver. Several North German peace groups called for the protest, including the Neustadt/Wunstorf peace initiative, the Bremen Peace Forum, and the North German Peace Conference.

The protesters carried flags and posters with peace symbols, but anti-NATO slogans could also be read displaying messages such as "Peace with Russian and China, Out of NATO," and "Peace in Ukraine and with Russia, stop the war, negotiate now" among others.

The demonstrators demanded that the federal government work for an immediate ceasefire in Russia-Ukraine war. They said the upcoming 'Air Defender' maneuver is sending the wrong signal, which could lead to a further escalation of the conflict.

"This is not funny and this is not a harmless maneuver. This is about life and death. This is about calling in the danger of the third World War," said Gerhard Biederbeck, an anti-war activist.

"The maneuver contributes to more rearmament," said Biederbeck. "Right now every measure should be taken to diplomatically solve the Russian-Ukrainian conflict."

Another activist called on German leaders to divert politics toward peace, calm, and negotiations. "NATO is calling for an air war over Germany. Germany is leading this maneuver assumes military responsibility," said Ekkehard Lentz.

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