

NATO Kicks Off Largest Military Maneuvers Since 2002



Rome, October 20 (RHC)-- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its allies have kicked off their biggest military drills in over a decade in the central Mediterranean. Dubbed "Trident Juncture," the exercises involve some 36,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen from more than 30 countries testing what the military alliance regards its ability to respond to new security threats.

The opening ceremony of the drills was held on Monday in the presence of NATO's military and political leaders at an airbase in the Sicilian city of Trapani, Italy. The city is the operational center for the drills whose live part will begin on Wednesday and run for several weeks, extending into Spain, Portugal and adjacent waters.

NATO Deputy Secretary-General Alexander Vershbow told the ceremony that the exercises would show that the military alliance is capable of dealing with "everything from conventional military engagements to more subtle hybrid warfare techniques and propaganda."

Describing the geopolitical situation far more unstable than the Cold War era, he pointed to Crimea's 2014 decision to rejoin Russia, the ongoing crisis in eastern Ukraine and Moscow's airstrikes against militants in Syria as well as the spread of terrorists groups into Libya and Syria.

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