

Serbia to Host Western ‘Platinum Wolf’ Military Exercise Again – Research Centre

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Serbia looks set to again host a Western military joint exercise for the first time since declaring a moratorium on exercises with foreign militaries following the start of the war in Ukraine, a Serbian research centre reports.



“Platinum Wolf” military exercise held in 2021 in Serbia with Western partners. Photo: Serbia’s Defence Ministry

The Serbian Army will join the “Platinum Wolf” military exercise with members of the US Army and Western partners this year, which will end the moratorium on participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises with all foreign partners introduced after the start of the war in Ukraine, Demostat, a Serbian research centre, has reported.

“It is in the interest of the Serbian Army to increase the interoperability of its units, but the holding of military exercises with Western partners can also be read as a clear indication of the direction Serbia has decided on,” Demostat wrote on March 31.

An indicator of the tendency was the visit of the Chief of the General Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces, Milan Mojsilovic, to Washington in early February, where he also met the Chief

At the end of February 2022, Serbia decided in accordance with the conclusions of its National Security Council and the state's proclaimed principle of military neutrality, that Serbia will suspend all military exercises with foreign partners, both from East and West.

That Serbia will join the "Platinum Wolf" military exercise was previously indicated by Derek Chollet, Counselor of the US State Department, on March 23, when he tweeted congratulations to Serbia for "reengaging with US on defense exercises" with the hashtag "Platinum Wolf".

The "Platinum Wolf 21" exercise has been held in Serbia since 2014, usually in June, with the aim of preparing soldiers for participation in multinational operations.

The last time "Platinum Wolf" was held, in 2021, alongside Serbian and US troops were members of the armed forces of Bosnia, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Britain and France.

Serbia's Defence Ministry did not react publicly to reports about the potential holding on "Platinum Wolf" exercises this year by time of publication.

Serbia, a candidate country for EU membership but not a member of NATO, declared its neutrality in relation to existing military alliances in 2007, with a resolution adopted by the National Assembly.

Despite its refusal to join NATO, often citing the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 over the war in Kosovo, Serbia has since 2006 been part of NATO's Partnership for Peace program, PfP.

Also, despite being portrayed as a Kremlin ally in some media, Serbia has held more joint exercises with NATO and its partners than with Russia.

A Belgrade Centre for Security Policy publication from 2018 noted that, from 2006 until October 2017, Serbia participated in about 150 bilateral and multinational military exercises with NATO and PfP members. "The second on the list of exercise partners is Russia, with which 12 military exercises have been realized in the previous five years," the report noted.