

# ORGANIZATION AND CONDUCT OF MILITARY MANEUVERS "EAST 2018" IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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**Abstract:** From 11 to 17 September, the military maneuvers "East 2018" took place on the territory of the Central and Far East Military Districts of the Russian Federation with more than 300,000 participants, more than 10,000 combat units and 1,000 airplanes. Representatives of the Armed Forces of China and Mongolia took part in the maneuvers. In this exercise, there was a military controversy between two contingent opponents in order to play out different options for defense forces' behavior.

**KEYWORDS:** MILITARY MANEUVERS, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, PARTICIPANTS, DIFFERENT OPTIONS, COMBAT, AIRPLANE

## 1. Introduction

In Russia, from 11 to 17 September 2018, the largest military maneuvers "East-2018" took place in the last 40 years. They continued one week until September 17 and took place in two stages. The armies of the Central and Eastern Military Counties of the Russian Federation worked in five Combat Training and Combat Training Centers, four Air Force bases and mixed naval and air training and covered the waters of the North Sea Ocean, adjacent to the Asian part of Russia, Beringovo, Ohoto and Japanese seas with Avacha and Cronoshkin bays.

The Department of Defense of the Russian Federation has timely published information on the start of the maneuvers and invited military observers from 59 countries, including NATO members, even though the maneuvers took place in the Asian part of Russia and were thousands of kilometers from Europe [1].

As provided by the established plans, the troops of the Central Military District Army and 3 Armies of the Far East Military District were some sort of enemy on the battlefield with the so-called "Center" and "East". In the scenarios besides the Land Forces, participation took different types of ships and submarines from the North and Pacific fleets, parts of all types of Air Force and Air Force troops and Airborne troops and military aviation. The maneuvers gained international status, as at some stages of the event took part also military from the People's Liberation Army of China (NEAK) and the Mongolian Armed Forces (BCM).

It is bold to say that the maneuvers were one of the largest in this century in the world - more than 300,000 soldiers, sergeants and officers, more than 1,000 airplanes and other flying equipment, about 80 warships based in various military bases from Asia and Europe and approximately 36,000 armored vehicles: tanks, BTR, MTPL and BMP [2].

Russian Defense Minister Army General Sergei Shoigu confirmed to the media that East-2018 was the largest preparation and conduct event on the territory of the Russian Federation since the time of the West-81 teachings. This exercise was conducted on the territory of the then Soviet Union with the participation of troops from the former Warsaw Pact countries.

## 2.1. Main tasks of the maneuvers

"East 2018" has no analogue in territorial scope - polygons and bases located from the Arctic Ocean coast to the Pacific coast and the adjacent islands have been activated. Participating parties have carried out more than 7,000 km of ground-based transits on their disembarkation and vessels sailed more than 4,000 nautical miles. The main thing in this exercise is that maneuvers are carried out on entire armies and other large divisions. According to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Army General Valeriy Gerasimov these maneuvers are held in several strategic directions with the participation of 2 military districts and under the direct guidance of the Minister of Defense. While the exercise is conducted with one military district in one strategic direction under the direction of the Chief of Staff. On September 13, one of the most important parts of the maneuvers was also observed by the

president and chief commander of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin at the Zukul Gulf in Zabaykallieto.

One of the main tasks of the maneuvers is the rapid transfer of tens of thousands of combat units and hundreds of thousands of Central Russian soldiers into the Far East and the Pacific Coast. But the main task, according to the Head of the General Staff of the Air Force, is to check the actual state of the combat preparation of the parts, the fighting skills of the different types of troops.

The maneuvers took place in 2 stages. During the first stage for 2 days, the staff of the contingent adversaries carried out personnel planning and preparation, realization and expulsion of the relations between the participants, coordination of the actions of the participants and logistic security of the troops. Over the next 5 days troops performed different types of maneuvers: dealing with massive air strikes, countering wing missiles, defensive, offensive, and crawling actions.

The Pacific Navy ships on the high seas reflected air strikes, destroyed the fleets of the contingent enemy, and countered an opposing landing on the Pacific coast. Different types of airplanes and helicopters from the FF Military and Space Forces carried out missile and bomb attacks on ground and air targets. The Chinese Air Forces also participated in the maneuvers to carry out their own and joint tasks.

The most interesting school battles took place at the Zukul district and, as I mentioned, were monitored by Russian President Vladimir Putin and 87 military observers from 59 countries. There were the defense ministers of the three participating countries - Russia, Mongolia and China - who participated in the maneuvering process. The Joint Military Formations of 3 Armies of the East Military District, China and Mongolia, reflected the attack of 2 armies from the Central Military District. After the completion of the substantial part, ten Sergeants and officers from the three countries were awarded by the President of Russia for maneuvering skills and a large-scale military review and a parade of the Zukul polygon [3].

In addition, they used robots, unmanned airplanes, drones, parachute deserts, forced water barriers, and all in a rapidly changing environment. Real-time automated control systems, which have a combat experience on Syrian territory, were actually shown and used.

Since 1990, there have been no such large-scale military exercises on the territory of the Far East. In 1994, 1996 and 1998 years, joint Russian-American exercises "Maritime Cooperation" were held in the Primor Sea - then Pacific Pacific Navy ships, 7th US Navy and parts of the Marines of both countries were activated.

Since 1994, joint Russian-Japanese teachings have been held on several occasions to help those in distress in marine casualties or disasters. But the number of participants did not exceed 2,000 people.

For the first time in the history of the Russian Federation in August 2003, great strategic exercises were held in the Far East, known as East-03. More than 70,000 military and civilian specialists were involved. Then the teachings were held irregularly, and from 2010 onwards every four years.

Strategic command exercises have been held in recent years once a year, but this year a different form of planned martial training was chosen - maneuvers. Therefore, during the maneuvers, in the opinion of the chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, there is no sense of futility, but action in an environment close to the real.

## 2.2. Purpose of military maneuvers

"What is the difference: Strategic exercises are, as a rule, conducted with one military district in a strategic direction under the direction of the Chief of Staff, and maneuvers - on several strategic areas, where several military areas were present, in this case, troops from The Central Military District and the Eastern Military District, the Pacific Navy and the North Navy.

The centerpiece of the action was near the Zukol district and the maneuvers were carried out under the supervision of the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, - said Army General Chief of Staff of the Russian Armed Forces General Valery Gerasimov at a briefing for foreign attachés, noting that in such Big teachings are mutually beneficial for staff and troops.

He also said that during the Soviet era in the territory of the Kievan, Belorussian and Baltic military districts and the Baltic Sea, the number of participating soldiers, weapons and military maneuvers "West-81" was similar. But with regard to the spatial scope, the depth of regrouping and the armament involved, the current maneuvers are at a much higher level of organization and conduct.

It is remarkable that not only troops from two military districts, two navy troops, troopers and various troops took part in the current maneuvers, but also the governing bodies and subdivisions of the People's Liberation Army of China and the Mongolian Armed Forces. "On the one hand, it is close to the West-81 maneuvers, as there were international partners from the Warsaw Pact countries, but it has greatly expanded geography, routes and horizons of maneuvers," notes TASS military analyst Viktor Litokwyn. He also noted that in 1981 participation took countries that had signed a mutual assistance treaty in an attack on one of them. And there is no such contractual relationship between Russia, China and Mongolia. they are not allies under the current international treaties [4].

According to the press service of Russian President Dmitry Peskov, China's participation in Russian strategic maneuvers talks about the expansion of the two countries' interaction in different spheres. It is not by accident that the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, on 10 September, negotiated an increase in economic cooperation between Russia, China, Japan, the DPRK and South Korea and signed billions of dollars. "All of this will lead to an increase in Russian-Chinese military co-operation, better interaction of different dangers, as well as peacekeeping, stability and security in the region," a Chinese Ministry of Defense press release said. "Enhancing the capabilities of the Chinese Armed Forces, as well as gaining invaluable experience of joint actions with Russian armed forces, will help maintain peace, stability and security in the region," said Kuwa Yanwei, the military attache of China at the Moscow Embassy. He emphasizes that maneuvers are not targeted against any particular third party. He also mentions in East-2018 that more than 3,200 soldiers, 900 ground-handling vehicles, 30 aircrafts, and Chinese-backed turrets were involved.

Like any major event, these maneuvers have begun with a series of preparatory events - more than 20 specialized exercises of generic troops that are accompanied by unannounced inspections and command and staff training. This stiffness in joint actions, where more than 36,000 combat units are moving at the same time, is achieved with a lot of work, and through training sessions a good agreement between the different participants is achieved. At the end of the maneuvers, the Minister of Defense thanked all direct participants and their accompanying people and equipment for good actions under conditions close to actual military action.

For about 10 days, Russia managed to transfer and redeploy more than 160,000 troops to the east, along with the necessary equipment, with the transfer of technology beginning as late as August. 21 formations have been thoroughly overhauled, several

thousand civilian population from the maneuvering area mobilized. In the Southern and Central Military Areas, subdivisions of territorial troops were formed, which were transferred from military transport aircraft to the Eastern Military District to perform combat training tasks [6].

All this has been done in coordination with the other ministries in order not to interfere with the usual transport corridors and the functioning of all civilian structures.

By way of comparison, I could say that in the East-2014 teachings that took place between Baikal Lake and the Pacific Ocean in the east and the southern border of Russia with China and Mongolia to Chukotka and the Arctic Ocean islands involving about 155,000 people.

Viktor Litokin, a military observer and TASS analyst, believes that "everything is related to the professional training, operative art and skills of commanders and staff, and the ability to quickly transfer large forces and assets over long distances" [5].

More than 80 warehouses for fuel and ammunition and 100 points for food were created for the material provision of maneuvers in the eastern parts of Russia. Deputy Army General Army General Dmitry Bulgakov told journalists that "in the interest of the troops of the Cogol (Buryatia) polygons, additional fuel filling stations were built using modern means of fueling and supplying fuel. more than 100 field cuisines operate in the organization of the servicing of the servicemen". According to his words, about 36,000 military servicemen from the Sub-divisions for Material & Technical Service (MTO) took part in the maneuvers. More than 2,000 specialists in military equipment and industrial workers at the military-industrial complex have taken care of the state of the art.

The very high level of relocation and reconciliation of NACS troops was marked by the military attache of the PRC in Russia, Kuy Yanwei. "I want to sincerely thank the Russian side for the wonderful organization and location of the Zugol polygon in Buryatia, where conditions for exercises and rest were created," he told the media after the maneuvers ended.

The army of the Central Military District is involved in the teaching with all its personnel. "These are unprecedented large-scale maneuvers in which we engage with great pride and where new forms and means of action will be applied, some of which have been tested in a real Syrian setting," said the Commander of the District Lieutenant General Alexander Lapin. These maneuvers are not a mass regrouping and transfer of troops, and they consist of various combat episodes that will be played on different polygons in eastern Siberia.

According to the Chief of Staff of the General Staff of the RF, "the main objective of the" East 2018 "maneuvers is to verify the actual level of training of the military formations, which can be assessed only by the scientists of the respective scale, the maneuvers performed on a bilateral basis a superior form of verification of combat mastery, ground, air and maritime capabilities of troops and armies from both military districts. " According to General Gerasimov, maneuvering features are the two-way format of both action and management at all levels.

During the conduct of the tactical episodes, robotics, unmanned aircraft, parachute air landing, the activities of a specialized mobile brigade and other tactical tasks were widely used.

For the participants, a complex and rapidly changing environment was developed, requiring quick, operational and sometimes non-standard solutions.

The troops carried out tasks of conducting dynamic maneuvering, keeping escorting artillery fire accompanied by air strikes from the military-space troops. Also a counter-attack with forced water partitioning in complicated conditions is also carried out. All of this was united in a general scenario involving action on land, air and water. And one more thing - the solution to these tasks fell on three armies: Russian, Chinese, and Mongolian, who together had to solve the assigned tasks.

After the major part of the maneuvers was completed before the President of Russia, the defense ministers of the three countries and the observers held a parade of the participants in the Tsugol polygon, involving more than 25,000 Russian soldiers, more than

7,000 military and special equipment around 250 planes and helicopters, Chinese and Mongolian soldiers.

Here I have to mention some of the technology that is involved in East 2018 - modernized Iskander missile complexes, upgraded T-72s with improved features, modernized T-80s and new T-90s. In Military Space Force, these are the new Su-34 and Su-35 aircraft, the Mi-28 and Mi-35 thrusters. The Pacific Fleet and the North Navy are ships with modern Calibre rocket systems and others. And also ships of a perfectly new class, which logistically provide the forces in marine and ocean waterways.

Already on August 23, the CBO press service reported that the Su-24 bombers, MiG-31BM interceptors, and Su-25 assault rifles from the Chelyabinsk Oblast, the Perm and Krasnoyarsk regions, were transported to the Eastern Military Operational Airports. A total of 30 aeronautical units. The crews have gone through more than 4,000 km, making several refueling at Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk airports.

At the NATO headquarters, maneuvers were considered to prepare Russian military for large-scale global conflicts. On August 28 in Brussels, Dylan White, as a representative of the North Atlantic pact, commented on the conduct of the maneuvers. East-2018 demonstrates focusing on preparing Russia's armed forces for large-scale conflicts, which complements the picture we see from earlier - more decisive Russia, which has significantly increased its military budget and its military presence, "he said. your statement. Here I can mention that the military budget of the Russian Federation is less than 10% of the US military budget, which according to the latest data is more than 15 billion dollars.

The NATO official also stressed that Russia is not obliged to observe the rules of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in conducting maneuvers regarding information on maneuvers and invitations of foreign observers because the venue is outside the sphere of dissemination of the OSCE, whose boundary is Ural.

On September 6, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation informed the military attachés about the content of the international maneuvers "East 2018". "Despite the fact that maneuvers are taking place several thousand kilometers from Russia's western borders, speculative comments appeared in some media in Western Europe, in which Russian maneuvers are attributed to aggressive focus on NATO and the EU", - finds a deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation General Colonel Alexander Fomin. He drew attention to the military attachés "to the complete and obvious absence both in the preceding and in those maneuvers of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces, though small signs of anti-Nato direction."

### 3. Conclusions:

1. The "East 2018" maneuvers are the most extensive exercises conducted in Russia in Soviet times, involving more than 300,000 troops, more than 36,000 military units and 1,000 airplanes, all of them generations of troops from the aircraft of the Russian Federation;

2. Maneuvers have gained international status with the involvement of military from China and Mongolia; they have been watched by Russia, China and Mongolia Defense Ministers and 91 military observer from 59 countries;

3. Through these teachings, a Russia emerged, which regained its strength and sought to regulate the conflict points around the world with its diplomacy and determination. It has shown that it should take into account the claimants of world powers;

4. A summit between the leaders of Russia, China, Japan, DPRK, South Korea and others was held immediately before the maneuvers in Vladivostok. the Eastern Economic Forum signed many contracts between the participants and which is also a prerequisite for enhancing economic and military cooperation between the countries of the region.

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