

CANCEL GROM, STEADFAST NOON NUCLEAR EXERCISES

Written by John Hallam
Sunday, 16 October 2022 11:48 -

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PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT

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Failure to Cancel Grom and Steadfast Noon nuclear exercises sends 'precisely the wrong signal', could be catastrophic.

Holding both the Grom (Russian) and the Steadfast Noon nuclear exercises as scheduled not only sends precisely the 'wrong signal' (to use NATO secy-General Jens Stoltenberg's words, when arguing the opposite), but could, potentially at least, be utterly catastrophic in the current fraught atmosphere of nuclear threats, both (explicitly) from Russia, and (implicitly) from NATO.

Back in November 1983, NATO embarked on a series of military exercises known as 'able archer'. These exercises did not even involve troops on the ground – they were 'command post' exercises. However, the culminating point of the exercise was to have involved heads of

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state/government pressing buttons for a simulated nuclear strike.

Able Archer was a rehearsal for the apocalypse. It had one glitch. The Kremlin did not think it was a rehearsal, and postured its nuclear forces accordingly.

NATO had, until the last moment, no idea that Russia thought it likely that Able Archer might be not a simulated nuclear strike, but an actual nuclear strike, and might be contemplating a pre-emptive strike of its own.

In part because of the Serpukhov-15 incident on 26 September '83, in which the world had been saved by Colonel Stan Petrov, in part because details of NATO military plans had been leaked to the Kremlin who then saw that a strike against Moscow was NOT imminent, and in part because at the last moment, the involvement of heads of state and government was cancelled, Able Archer did not culminate in a real apocalypse. It remained an exercise.

Steadfast Noon Involves the use of nuclear-capable aircraft over the UK, Belgium, and Norway.

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Grom likewise involves nuclear capable fighter-bomber aircraft.

Both, like Able Archer, will involve exercise of the command and communications infrastructure for global thermonuclear war.

We are as close as we want to be (and much much closer than we want to be) to global thermonuclear war for real. Arguably closer right now even than during the Cuban Missile Crisis whose 60th anniversary is now.

Practice runs for the apocalypse, like Able Archer, are – even in the best of times – inherently risky.

At a time of extreme nuclear tension such as now, they are downright foolhardy.

NATO Secy-General Jens Stoltenberg has stated that cancellation of Steadfast Noon would send 'precisely the wrong signal'.

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He is as deeply wrong as it is possible to be. The opposite is the case.

REFUSAL to cancel Steadfast Noon sends precisely the wrong signal and risks catastrophic miscalculation and misunderstanding. Whatever Putin will or will not do about Russia's scheduled GROM exercises, which it seems will overlap Steadfast Noon.

The sensible thing to do is to cancel both Grom and Steadfast Noon as exercises in nuclear chest beating that truly speaking ought never to take place, but which are especially foolhardy in the current fraught geopolitical context. Mutual cancellation would signify a reduction in temperature and tensions that could lead to a negotiated solution or at least reduce the risk of global nuclear war. Refusal to do so sends precisely the wrong signal. Even if Putin will NOT cancel GROM, Steadfast Noon ought to be scrapped.

It is high time that both Russia and the US/NATO signed onto and implemented a series of nuclear risk reduction measures starting with commitments to **No First Use** of nuclear weapons.

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A series of nuclear risk reduction measures are detailed here:

<https://www.abolition2000.org/en/working-groups/nuclear-risk-reduction/>

October 16 is a day of action at US, NATO, and Russian diplomatic missions in NY commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and urging measures to make nuclear war less likely.

https://mcusercontent.com/2a584c1eabc6219b898fb8a2a/files/e96a965c-0bd5-1d76-890a-3c0c3b9dbe82/October_16_Defuse_Nuclear_War_Manhattan_New_York_b.pdf

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