

THE PEEDIN FAMILY NEWSLETTER

Serving as your missionaries in Lithuania

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ZAPAD UPDATE ... SEPTEMBER 14-20, 2017...

Russia is currently planning a joint military drill with Belarus which borders Lithuania. It is called "Zapad 2017" which translates as "West 2017." The Lithuanian president has said this is a "demonstrative preparation for war with the West." The Russian Ministry of Defense has stated that its railway traffic to Belarus will increase by 83% this year. All of these statements now reflect the current reality of these "large-scale war games." "Russia is billing it as modest exercises under 13,000 troops, but everything points to probably the largest military exercise in post-Soviet history," says the Director of Russian Studies (American Enterprise Institute). Reports are now stating that the entire "exercise" may involve up to 100,000 people. Moscow has confirmed over 4,000 rail cars to Belarus to transport tanks and other military hardware. History has shown that these type of military exercises have preceded Russia's invasion and conflict with Georgia (former Soviet republic) and also as a cover for its attacks of Ukraine (also a former Soviet republic). NATO has obtained intelligence that Russia plans to send troops and resources to Belarus and when they leave, they will leave equipment and permanent forces behind. Russia already has solid control of Belarus in that Belarus depends on Moscow for oil and gas imports, exports of food and industrial production, and loans. The Kremlin has major control of media and information available to Belarusian people. All of these things, as well as widespread pro-Russian sentiments provide an open door for Russia's actions in Belarus. Recent polls in Belarus show a majority of people approve of Russia's annexation of Crimea and remain generally pro-Russian. The Central European Policy Institute states that Russian forces in Belarus would only "increase pressure on Baltic countries and Poland." Many feel that leaving troops behind in Belarus provides Russia with more advanced forward bases in Europe and fears of further annexation by Russia. All the former Soviet Union countries in this specific area (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland) are fearful of how and when this may effect their freedom as independent nations. Will Zapad 2017 be a harmless and transparent military exercise or will it act as a springboard for conflict in Europe? September 14-20 are the posted dates for these "exercises," but the overall effects and outcomes will be seen in the months that follow. Fear continues to rise in the hearts of all Lithuanians for themselves and their country.

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PRAISES AND REQUESTS

- + Please continue to pray for Lithuania as the actual dates of Zapad 2017 near and fears escalate. "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled ..." Matthew 24:6.
- + Continue to pray for increased monthly financial support. If you would like to support our family, please send your gifts to CMC. Please mark all donations for "Peedin." All gift are tax deductible.

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