

Kaliningrad (Russia)

Territory is 5% the size of Oregon
Roughly one-million residents (half in metro)
Large industrial center
“An imperial gem, and a thorn in everyone’s side”



RUSSIA

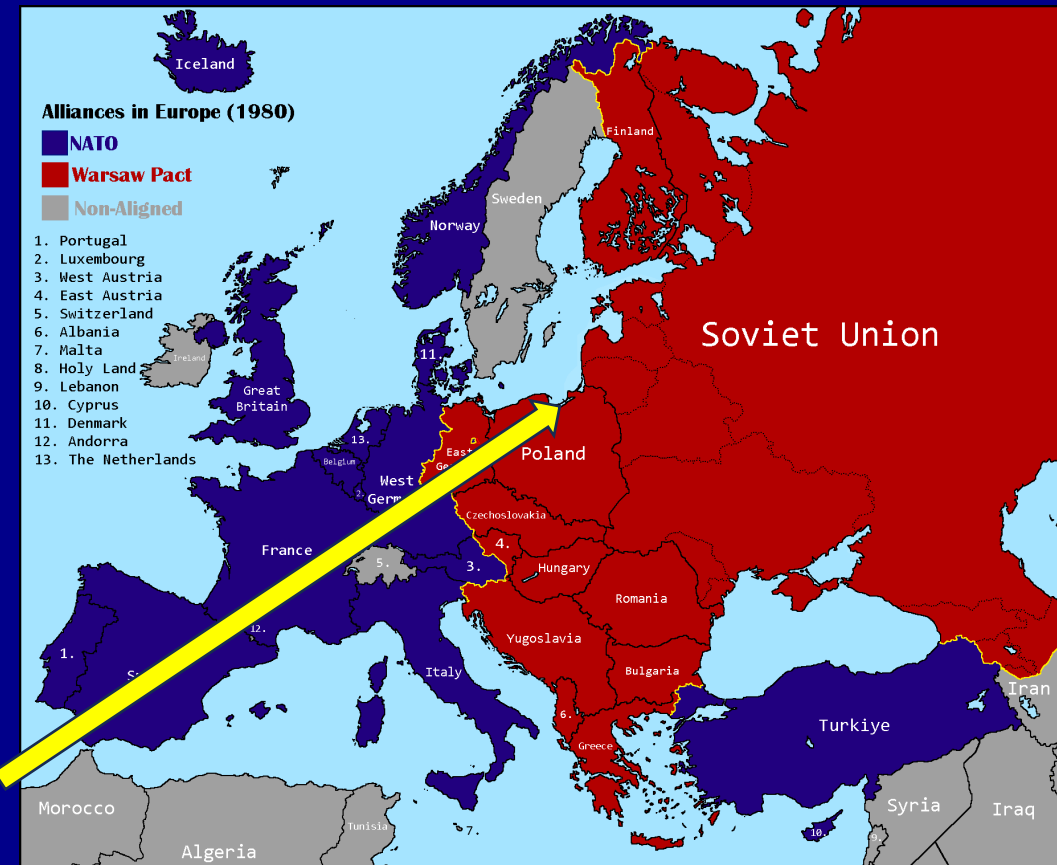
ALSO RUSSIA!

Kaliningrad is a Russian exclave between Lithuania and Poland.

↳ The city sits about 663 kilometers (412 miles) west of the bulk of Russia.

History

- The land was part of many countries including Germany and East Prussia.
 - Post-WWII, the area is repopulated by Russians; only Lithuanians could stay
- How did this ‘split nation’ happen?
- First: After the conclusion of World War II, the Soviet Union was given control of the Kaliningrad territory at the Potsdam Conference.
 - Then: When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the territory remained part of the Russian Federation, surrounded by newly independent countries which over time developed close ties to the West.
 - Finally: Eventually, Poland and Lithuania joined the NATO alliance. (isolating Kaliningrad)



In the 1950s, Khrushchev offered the entire territory to Soviet Lithuania, but the offer was rejected.

↳ Why? it would have added at least a million ethnic Russians to Lithuania proper.

No European nation-state has any claims on the territory



How to visit Kaliningrad?

- Some countries have visa-free agreements: Israel South Korea, South Africa, Serbia, Montenegro Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Latin American countries
- All others need a Russian visa.

Why is Kaliningrad important to Russia today?

- It is one of the largest industrial centers in Russia
- It is the **only ice-free (year round) Russian port on the Baltic Sea**.
 - ↳ As such, it is an important launch point for Russia's naval fleet.
- **Kaliningrad's location also means that Russia has naval vessels stationed behind NATO lines.**
- Along with its fleet, Russia also has nuclear weapons stationed in the territory (source: Lithuania and NATO)
- Nuclear warheads attached to short or intermediate range ballistic missiles stationed essentially inside NATO territory provide Russia with a more assured **first strike capability** due to the limited time it would take the missiles to reach their targets in Europe.



Recent events

2022 – Lithuania imposed a ground-transit ban of EU sanctioned Russian goods through its territory, cutting off the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad Oblast.

It will cut off about half of the goods entering the territory from Belarus, most of which by railroad. It also cuts off Kaliningrad's only oil pipeline from Russia

- ↳ The move comes on top of the EU flight ban of 21 Russian airlines in April 22 (preventing good from being flown into Kaliningrad)
- ↳ The only uninterrupted method of transit left to the territory now is by way of the sea through international waters.

Lithuania is a NATO member, so any direct action toward them triggers Article 5 of the NATO Treaty

Why is Lithuania risking Russia's wrath over Kaliningrad?



NATO troops in region (c.2022)

(devoted to eyeing this territory; many more troops are there too)

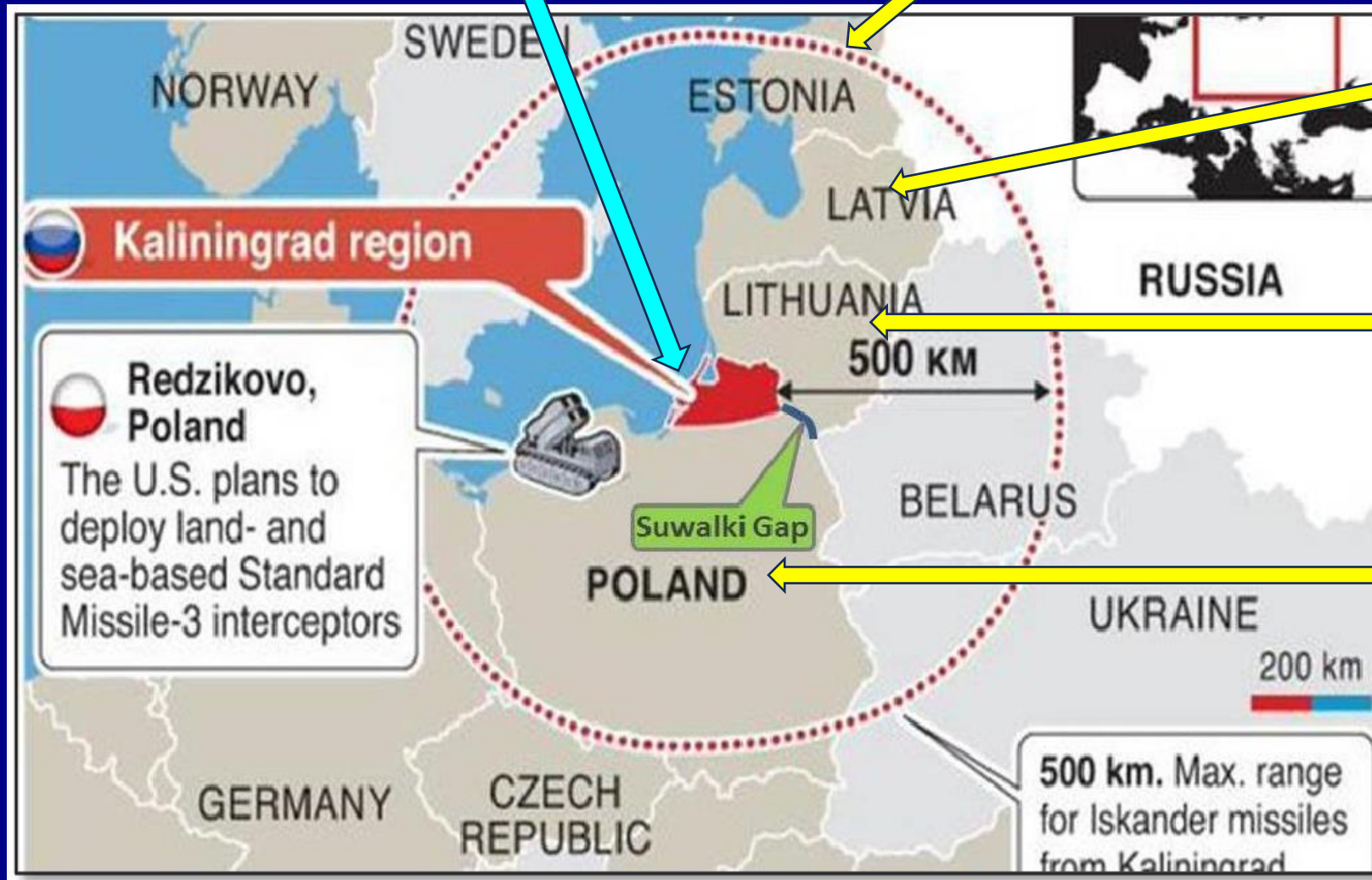
Over 25k Russian troops in Kaliningrad

*In Estonia
1000 troops (led by UK)*

*In Latvia
1200 troops
(led by Canada)*

*In Lithuania
1300+ troops
(led by Germany)*

*In Poland
1200 troops
(led by Poland)*



Annual NATO military exercises in Poland exceed 20,000.