# Russian Espionage Targets British Troops' Phones During NATO Exercises in Estonia



British troops participating in NATO exercises in Estonia have been targeted by Russian espionage efforts aimed at hacking their mobile phones to extract sensitive personal data. This includes the contact details of their families, potentially to manipulate or extract additional sensitive information. The operation, dubbed Steadfast Defender, involves around 16,000 UK soldiers and is one of the largest military drills since the Cold War.

Ahead of the exercises, British personnel were cautioned about potential cyber threats from Russian agents, with specific warnings against the use of mobile phones that could be compromised. Russia has previously been suspected of similar activities, including electronic attacks on NATO forces and interference with civilian systems such as airline navigation.

The security concerns extend beyond the exercises, with indications that Russian operatives have also gathered data from phones in the UK to target individuals in Ukraine, where former UK special forces members are active. British forces are advised to avoid using phones previously used near UK military sites to mitigate risks of tracking and targeting by Russian forces.