

NATO increases support for Ukrainian regime, warns of renewed fighting

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NATO defense ministers agreed on Thursday to provide increased military support to the right-wing puppet regime in Ukraine. The military alliance will establish a new fund for assisting in the detection and removal of land mines, and begin sharing air traffic information from airbases in Norway, Poland and Turkey.

NATO's deepening ties with the virulently anti-Russian regime in Kiev increases the danger of a war of annihilation between the world's two largest nuclear armed powers.

Opening the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg reported that the situation on the ground in Ukraine remained unstable, primarily due to alleged Russian involvement in the restive Donbass. According to Stoltenberg, this requires beefing up NATO's presence in the region.

"Ceasefire violations persist. And there is still a risk of a return to heavy fighting," he warned. "Russia continues to support the separatists with training, weapons and soldiers. And it has large numbers of forces stationed on its border with Ukraine." Stoltenberg concluded by asserting that NATO's commitment to Ukraine is "unwavering."

The supreme allied commander of NATO forces in Europe, US General Philip Breedlove, warned that President Vladimir Putin was preparing to escalate fighting in eastern Ukraine. "I don't think Mr. Putin is done in eastern Ukraine," Breedlove stated. He made unsubstantiated claims that US officials had observed Russian troops on the Ukrainian border engaging in the "stocking of important supplies, ammunition, etc., to levels that would support operations."

NATO defense ministers agreed on Wednesday to provide Breedlove with the authority to deploy troops

on a much shorter notice in the region. Stoltenberg stated that this would give the supreme allied commander the ability to "alert, stage and prepare our troops to be ready to go." The decision was made to facilitate the deployment of the newly formed 5,000-strong Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) which has been tasked with mobilizing against Russia within two days, if called upon to do so.

The regime in Kiev, which came to power in the wake of the fascist-spearheaded Maidan coup last year, has deployed the military and far-right paramilitary groups in an unsuccessful effort to stamp out opposition among separatists in the country's eastern Donbass region. Both sides have traded accusations of repeated violations of a tenuous ceasefire agreement signed earlier this year.

The news of increased support for Ukraine comes on the heels of NATO's announcement that it will triple the size of its Response Force and establish new command centers in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Romanian, Bulgaria and Poland. The command centers are being established to facilitate NATO military exercises and oversee the deployment of the VJTF.

The decision made at this week's meeting complements Defense Secretary Ashton Carter's announcement this week that the US will station hundreds of tanks, armored vehicles and heavy artillery pieces in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Poland and Romania.

Carter and Ukrainian Defense Secretary Stepan Poltorak also met on the sidelines of the NATO meeting on Wednesday. According to the Department of Defense, they discussed continuing US military aid to the Kiev regime. Carter promised Poltorak the delivery of 100 additional Humvees by mid-July and confirmed plans to incorporate Ukrainian armed forces

into future military exercises and training operations. They also discussed ongoing Ukrainian National Guard training exercises being carried out in western Ukraine.

Military advisers from the United States and Great Britain are currently involved in training exercises at a military base in Yavoriv, Ukraine. Great Britain announced this week that it would double its spending on the program to \$9.4 million. Canada and Poland are preparing to deploy military advisers to Ukraine later this year to take part in the training exercises.

The US has also been providing the Ukrainian regime with “non-lethal” military equipment, including Humvees, body armor, night vision goggles and medical aid. Lithuania’s ambassador to Ukraine, Marius Yanukonis, told reporters last weekend that his country was prepared to be the first government to send arms to Kiev.

While the administration of US President Barack Obama has discussed providing Ukraine with weapons such as anti-armor missiles, it has not yet made an official decision to openly arm the regime. The current version of the 2016 US defense budget, if passed by Congress and signed into law, would provide \$300 million for military assistance to Ukraine, at the president’s discretion.

In another manifestation of NATO’s growing hostility towards Russia, the alliance’s defense ministers agreed on Thursday to deliver a military support package to non-member Moldova. NATO is seeking to counter Russian influence in the country which lies between Romania and Ukraine. Russia has maintained several hundred soldiers as peacekeepers in the breakaway region of Transnistria since the early 1990s. Ukraine and Moldova both recently passed laws that make it much more difficult for Russia to resupply its troops in the region.

Russian Vice Premier Dmitri Rogozin, who recently declared that Moscow would always support Transnistria and guarantee its socio-political stability, met with his Moldovan counterpart in the Russian capital this week to discuss relations between the two countries.



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