

# NATO to send thousands of troops to forward bases in the Baltics and Eastern Europe

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will expand its military infrastructure in Eastern Europe and deploy thousands of additional troops to areas bordering the Russian Federation, NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg said Wednesday just prior to NATO discussions in Brussels.

The alliance agreed to a “set of principles to enhance NATO’s deterrence posture,” Stoltenberg said in a statement to the media.

NATO officials agreed to various measures to enhance NATO’s military positions in Eastern Europe, including more NATO bases, more pre-positioned military equipment, thousands of additional combat troops, and stepped up preparations for cyber and asymmetric war.

This infrastructure will serve as the basis for a new multinational vanguard force, tasked with leading continuous NATO war games along Russia’s western flank. The enlarged NATO presence is aimed at “detering” Moscow, the NATO chief said.

“Russia has used military force to change borders and threaten neighbors. We will have as much presence in the East as needed. We have to be able to defend all allies against any threat,” he said.

The new force would “be rotational” and “be complemented by necessary logistics and infrastructure,” he said. The multinational composition of the force would “make clear that an attack against one ally is an attack against all allies,” Stoltenberg said.

These measures build upon the already staggering militarization of Eastern and Central Europe orchestrated by the NATO governments. During the past year, US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter has announced deployments of US military hardware and forces to Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland. NATO’s Rapid Reaction Force and other

US and NATO forces joined with Lithuanian regulars to conduct exercises near the Russian border, including five simultaneous NATO war drills beginning on November 9.

The new force will come in addition to the NATO Response Force (NRF) established in 2002, and the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), formed as the lead unit of the NRF in 2014. As Stoltenberg boasted on Wednesday, NATO’s Rapid Response Force has tripled in size since its formation.

NATO’s elite armies will benefit from at least two new bases on the soil of NATO’s “Eastern allies,” the NATO secretary announced.

NATO will decide on further increases to its armed presence in Eastern Europe during talks scheduled for June and July, Stoltenberg said. He went on to trumpet NATO’s recent increase in military aid to Turkey and launch of an international military headquarters in Romania.

The US and European ruling elites are engaged in a predatory drive to intimidate, dominate and ultimately carve up Russia. Toward this end, they have carried out a general military buildup in Eastern Europe, Poland, and the Baltic states, seizing on the crisis produced by the US-backed February 2014 coup in Ukraine, and the ensuing secession of Crimea from Ukraine, to justify breakneck war preparations.

“NATO faces pressure now on its eastern border and in the Mediterranean, and today we need to unite round a clear plan to deploy troops and ships to deter any aggression and the threats that we’ve seen. And we want to see faster deployment of those troops,” British defense secretary Michael Fallon said Wednesday.

According to NATO strategists, the latest round of war preparations is intended to ready the alliance for both near term scenarios involving “hybrid warfare”

against Russian-backed paramilitaries in the Baltics as well as a head-on confrontation with Russia's military.

As the Center for Strategic and International Studies alleged in its recent report "Evaluating Future US Army Force Posture in Europe," Russia is preparing to use guerrilla and asymmetric methods to probe NATO's weaknesses in the East.

In lines that could easily have served as the inspiration for Stoltenberg's new multinational force, CSIS warns that Russian strategy will be designed to remain "below NATO's Article 5 ("an attack against one is an attack against all") threshold."

At the same time, the CSIS planners envision the outbreak of conventional warfare, involving tanks, artillery, and all-out warfare "aimed at seizing and conquering capitals."

Such cataclysmic scenarios are considered as inevitable within US ruling circles, as the actions of the US government make clear. The latest NATO escalations come barely one week after the Obama administration released plans to more than quadruple its allocations for US forces and military operations in Europe. On February 2, the White House authorized the Pentagon's European Reassurance Initiative, or ERI, which includes nearly \$3.5 billion in additional forces, weapons and training programs.

While continuing to pour vast sums into the Pentagon's European projects, Washington also seeks to mobilize European and Middle Eastern militaries on behalf of its aims. The US "wants more from its allies," US Defense Secretary Carter said Wednesday.

On the same day, Great Britain held military exercises in Jordan involving some 1,600 British troops and over 300 military vehicles. The drills were designed to prepare for the sudden deployment of 30,000 soldiers to Eastern Europe, military sources told British media.

"This is much more about us being prepared to join the US in Ukraine than it is in Syria," an unnamed British Army Source told the *Telegraph*.

Meanwhile, Washington is preparing actively for a nuclear confrontation with Russia.

The Pentagon's fiscal 2017 budget unveiled this week allocates \$3.2 billion for a "nuclear modernization program" to build up the US force of nuclear submarines, bombers, Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) and nuclear-equipped cruise missiles.

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), a Department of Energy agency that handles development of nuclear warheads, is slated to receive another \$12.9 billion. Military analysts estimate that the US is on track to spending more than \$700 billion over the next 25 years on the US nuclear arsenal.



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