

NATO Secretary-general calls for “transformation” of NATO into a fighting force against Russia and China

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As the United States, the UK and other NATO powers surge weapons into Ukraine, the NATO alliance is being transformed into a fighting force capable of directly waging wars with Russia and China.

Using the war between Russia and Ukraine as a pretext, NATO has already mobilized its 40,000-strong rapid response force against Russia. But this is only the beginning of a far broader transformation of the alliance in preparation for what US military planners have called “great-power conflict.”

In an interview with the *Telegraph*, NATO General-Secretary Jens Stoltenberg said this transformation aims “to move from tripwire deterrence to something which is more about deterrence by denial or defence. This is already in process. We have to ensure that we continue to be able, in a more dangerous world, to protect and defend all Nato allies.”

Stoltenberg made clear that while the immediate pretext for the “transformation” of NATO is the war in Ukraine, China is as much a target as Russia.

“We are finalizing the work on the new strategic concept that will be agreed at the Nato summit in June...And there, I expect China to be an important part.”

China, he claimed, is investing heavily in “new modern nuclear capabilities, long-range missiles that can reach all Nato territory...It is also of concern that we see that Russia and China are working more and more closely together.”

Since 2014, Stoltenberg said, “we have implemented the biggest reinforcement of Nato since the end of the Cold War.”

A critical aspect of this transformation will be the absorption into NATO of a whole series of states near

Russia’s borders.

On Monday, the *Times of London* reported that Finland and Sweden are poised to join NATO within a matter of months. The *Times* said membership for both countries was a “a topic of conversation and multiple sessions” during “talks between the alliance’s foreign ministers last week attended by Sweden and Finland.”

The *Times* reported that Finland is expected to apply in June, with Sweden to follow shortly.

Stoltenberg insisted that “the very decision to welcome Finland to NATO can be made very quickly and then it is a formal process in the capitals or parliaments to ratify it.”

Over the weekend, NATO held a series of war games in Lithuania, termed “Rising Griffin.” The exercise involved 1,000 troops and 200 vehicles.

Describing the exercise, the US Department of Defense wrote, “NATO’s enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) Battlegroup Lithuania joined up with a battalion from the US Army’s 66th Armored Regiment for training manoeuvres in the Baltic state’s dense forests.

“For Exercise Rising Griffin, troops performed a road march from their base in Rukla to the training grounds at Pabrad?, showcasing their ability to communicate and move together.”

“To demonstrate Allies’ determination to defend Alliance territory, the US Army extended the deployment of the 3rd Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment after Russia invaded Ukraine. It was the fourth battalion to be sent to Lithuania since 2019, when the Lithuanian government requested the deployment of a cavalry squadron.”

Since 2016, NATO has stationed “enhanced forward presence” battlegroups stationed in, Poland, Estonia,

Latvia and Lithuania, each of which are NATO member states near Russia's borders.

The *Guardian* noted that “The war in Ukraine has led the alliance to further bolster its presence in the region, with multinational battalions to be dispatched to Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia. The military presence in Lithuania has been increased from approximately 1,200 to roughly 1,600 soldiers and equipped with new hardware, such as the German army's light and mobile Ozelot anti-aircraft system.”

In a visit to the Ukrainian capital of Kiev over the weekend, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson called the Ukrainian defense of Kiev “the greatest feat of arms of the 21st century.”

Meanwhile, the true extent of US and NATO involvement in the conflict is becoming clear. Georges Malbrunot, the senior international correspondent of *Le Figaro*, wrote on Twitter, “‘Elite SAS special forces units have been present in Ukraine since the beginning of the war, as have the American Deltas,’ confides a French intelligence source.”

Malbrunot said that he recently traveled to Ukraine alongside two foreign fighters. He told a French news program, “I had the surprise, and so did they, to discover that to enter the Ukrainian army well, it's the Americans who are in charge.” He said that the American footprint was “significant.”

The massive buildup of NATO takes place as the war in Ukraine enters a new phase, and the NATO powers are seeking to rout Russian forces on the battlefield. “Another battle is coming, the battle for Donbas,’ Dmytro Kuleba, Ukraine's foreign minister, said Sunday on NBC's “Meet the Press.”

Speaking at NATO headquarters last week, Kuleba said, “The battle for Donbas will remind you, and I regret to say it, but this is true, the battle for Donbas will remind you of the Second World War.” The battle will see “large-scale operations, maneuvers, involvement of thousands of tanks, armored vehicles, planes, artillery... This will not be a local operation, based on what we see in Russia's preparations for it. Russia has its plan, we have ours. And the outcome will be decided on the battlefield.”

The United States has transferred \$2.5 billion of weapons to Ukraine since the start of the Biden administration. “The United States is surging resources, weapons, military equipment, but also diplomatic

resources to support the Ukrainians,” Jake Sullivan, President Biden's national security adviser, said on CBS's “Face the Nation' Sunday.



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