North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Doorstep statement

by the NATO Secretary General at the start of the Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting
2012-12-04

Good morning.

As you know, the situation on NATO's south-eastern border is of great concern. Turkey has asked for Alliance support. And we stand in full solidarity with Turkey.

I would expect NATO Allies to make a decision later today. I am confident we will demonstrate our determination to deter against any threats and defend our Ally. Because this is what our Alliance is all about.

As we have already made clear, any deployment would be defensive only. It would in no way support a no-fly zone or any offensive operation.

I have already told that to foreign minister Lavrov in the spirit of full transparency. And I expect NATO ministers to repeat it when we meet in the NATO-Russia Council shortly.

The dialogue between NATO and Russia is based on reciprocal transparency, trust and confidence. And our aim remains to build a strategic partnership. This year we have made good progress on practical cooperation, in areas such as Afghanistan, counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics.

We are going in the right direction. But we need to put new energy into our relationship, and look at how we can boost cooperation over the next years.

Tomorrow, we will meet the foreign minister of Georgia, a dedicated partner and one of the countries which aspires to join the Alliance. We will recognize the progress that Georgia has made and encourage all parties to keep up the momentum of democratic reforms. Georgia has shown exemplary commitment to our mission in Afghanistan and tomorrow, we will discuss with all our partners in ISAF the question of long-term funding for the Afghan forces as part of the broad international effort. This is an essential part of our shared strategy for a stable Afghanistan.

We are committed to play our part in developing appropriate, coherent and effective funding for the Afghan forces. And the Afghan government has committed to take on more and more of the funding over time. Making sure that those commitments are met will be vital for Afghanistan, for NATO and for the whole international community.

With that, I am ready to take your questions.

Question NTV Turkish Television: Mr Secretary General I have two small questions. First, do you think that at this North Atlantic Council this afternoon you will have the unanimity in order to support the increase of air defence capability of Turkey and can you give us roughly the schedule of the deployment, bearing in mind that we will still need the advice or the report of SACEUR.

NATO Secretary General: Yes, I would expect the Council of Ministers to take a decision this afternoon to enhance Turkey's air defences with the aim to ensure the defence and protection of the Turkish population and Turkey's territory. After that it is for the individual Allies who are capable to deploy Patriot missiles to take their decisions in full respect for domestic parliamentary procedures. But I would expect Germany, the Netherlands and the United States to be able to deploy Patriot missiles to Turkey. Once the political decision has been made it will be followed by the practical deployment. When that exactly will happen will depend on a number of practical issues that will be sorted out in the near future. So I cannot give you an exact date but I will tell you that the actual deployment will take place within weeks

Question DPA: Secretary General, Secretary Clinton and President Obama have issued strong warnings to President Assad against using chemical weapons against the Syrian population. How big do you think is the risk and the danger that Assad might be willing to use chemical weapons using scud missiles against Turkey as well?

NATO Secretary General: The Syrian stockpiles of chemical weapons are a matter of great concern. We know that Syria possesses missiles. We know they have chemical weapons and of course they also have to be included in our calculations and this is also the reason why it is a matter of urgency to ensure effective defence and protection of our Ally Turkey. Let me add to this that the possible use of chemical weapons would be completely unacceptable for the whole international community and if anybody resorts to these terrible weapons I would expect an immediate reaction from the international community.

Question BBC: Could I just follow up on that Secretary General, could you just explain - you said the Patriots will be there for defensive purposes. Could you explain exactly what they would be doing? And also, given the warnings from President Obama and Hillary Clinton, should they be doing more than just defensive, if chemical weapons are being used? Should NATO be doing more than just worrying about Turkey's own defences?

NATO Secretary General: The purpose of the possible deployment of Patriot missiles is to protect the Turkish population and Turkish territory against missile attacks. That is its specific purpose. And, I would like to stress once again, that this is a purely defensive measure. We have no intention to prepare offensive operations, so the purpose of this possible deployment is to ensure effective defence and protection of Turkey.

NATO Spokesperson: Thank you very much, that is all we have time for right now. But of course the Secretary General will answer your questions after the NATO Russia Council and after the meeting of the 28, 28 Foreign Ministers.

Source: https://www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/events/transcripts/2012/12/04/doorstep-statement