North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Questions and answers

at the joint press point by the Chairman of the Military Committee, General Petr Pavel and General Hulusi Akar, Chief of Defence of Turkey following the meetings of NATO Chiefs of Defence in Istanbul, Turkey
2015-09-12

MODERATOR: I will now ask if there are any questions from the press corp. If you could please state your name and your media affiliation when asking your question. Yes please, the gentleman in gray.

Q: Good evening sirs. My name is (Inaudible) and I'm from TRT World. Just trying to figure out, from you sir, if Turkey is trying to ask for more support from NATO to create the 109 kilometre safe zone along its border with Syria. Is there is a concerted plan for NATO to help Turkey in driving out ISIS from the region and form the safe zone?

GENERAL HULUSI AKAR: As you know from the very beginning we are very close, coordination, cooperation with NATO and the NATO authorities and the, as they did so far, you know they always emphasizing the support while we were fighting against the terrorist activities and the border security. Again and within this conferences, as a conference, as you know the whole, the Military Committee during the discussions and more than that within the bilateral discussions and we got similar, similar intentions but as you know within this, you know within this efforts there is no NATO plan, you know the whole plan against these activities.

MODERATOR: Thank you. Do we have another question? Gentleman over there, yes please.

Q: From Shanghai News Agency. What about the new action plan or do you have any action to towards the Russian involvement in Syria and Ukraine?

GENERAL PETR PAVEL: We shouldn't probably mix the Readiness Action Plan and Russian deployment to Syria because these are two distinct, distinct things. Readiness Action Plan was initiated in Wales due to Russian events in Ukraine and it was created as a reaction to need for assurance for eastern European countries, members of NATO who felt threatened by Russian unpredictable behaviour close to their borders. So this plan consists of two major sets of measures, one set is our assurance measures aimed at assuring local population that NATO is ready and willing to assist if necessary. The other part, our adaptation measures, which have in mind long term adaptation of NATO to new security environment. In terms of Russian military deployment to Syria, NATO is of course observing very carefully the development, at the point NATO as an institution is not involved in anti-ISIL coalition so there

is no measure taken by NATO to this new development. I think we will have to wait what will be a concrete intention of Russia in the region.

MODERATOR: Yes, lady in the front row please.

Q: Hello. Susanne (Inaudible). My question is to Mr. Pavel. There is unformable information that ISIL has capacity to use chemical weapons. Do we have any information about this matter?

GENERAL PETR PAVEL: There are some reports about indications of use of chemical weapons provided through different sources including open sources through media and organizations presented, humanitarian organizations present in Syria. These are not confirmed and at this point we cannot take any measure. Of course as with the case of other events in the region we are monitoring the situation. We have as you probably know the Centre of Excellence for Chemical, Radiological and Biological Weapons, they are assessing possible impacts of such a use once confirmed so that NATO is ready and can offer adequate solutions.

MODERATOR: Gentleman in the back, behind the camera.

Q: Thank you very much. Speaking foreign language with Translator: My question is as follows. What about the course of action of Daesh and Patriots that are deployed for defence capabilities, are they going to be again deployed?

GENERAL HULUSI AKAR: In English?

MODERATOR: It's as you wish, it's being translated, so whichever language you prefer sir.

GENERAL HULUSI AKAR: Thank you. From the very beginning we are fighting against every kinds of the terrorist organizations. We [inaudible] who they are, what they are doing and then the, similarly we are doing the same against the Daesh; so far we did it, within the [inaudible] issues but additionally only recently we participated in the coalition forces and the open or [inaudible] basis as well, now we are acting, we are operating with the coalition against them and as we do it from the very beginning of the country without making any change within the fundamental policy of Turkey we continue to fight against every kind of terrorist organizations.

Q: [Speaking in foreign language]?

GENERAL HULUSI AKAR: Sorry, yes, so far the allied countries make contribution and support to show the solidarity between the Turkey and NATO and then the [inaudible] some change within the upcoming months but right after that also it being keeping the contact with our allied countries. So depending on the, how you say, the negotiations and the contacts we will, they will support [inaudible] aid defence, missile defence. Thank you.

MODERATOR: We will take another question, gentleman over there please.

Q: Giuseppe Mancini, Agencia Nova. Do you have any plan of land operation in Northern Iraq against the PKK?

GENERAL HULUSI AKAR: The, again, you know we are fighting against terrorist organizations for the security of the country and the nations and we are taking the necessary precautions depending on the conditions so we are monitoring the situation and for the safe and security environment for our country we are carrying out the necessary actions.

MODERATOR: We will take a last question. Sir you have an additional question to what you've already asked?

Q: Yes you mentioned that you've provided, I mean Turkey's open Incirlik Air Base to NATO forces, would we be expecting Turkey to open up more bases in the future as well?

GENERAL HULUSI AKAR: At the moment no.

Q: Thanks.

MODERATOR: I would like to thank the media for their presence. The Generals will now depart and I'm going to stay behind should you have any additional questions or need for clarification. Thank you very much again for coming to this press conference.

Source: https://www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/events/transcripts/2015/09/12/questions-and-answers