North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Joint press point

by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Poland, Tomasz Siemoniak, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Grzegorz Schetyna
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Foreign Minister Schetyna and Defence Minister Siemoniak, it's a great honour to be here in Warsaw and to meet with both of you and to discuss the common challenges we are facing as Alliance. And you are responsible in your country for giving great contributions to the NATO Alliance as Foreign Minister and as Minister of Defence.

It's good to be in Warsaw because Poland is a strong and very committed ally. And we face great challenges and uncertainties both to the East and to the South. So we must keep NATO strong, both as a political alliance and as a military alliance.

The Wales Summit where 28 heads of State and of Government met set a very clear course for the Alliance. Our focus now is to implement those decisions in full.

The Readiness Action Plan will ensure that we can respond even faster to fast moving crises with the Spearhead Force which can deploy within days. And it continues presence and activity in the Eastern part of our Alliance.

Poland is really making an important contribution to our collective defence with planes, ships, forces and a multinational headquarters in Szczecin. Poland has moved decisively to implement the defence pitch we made together in Wales. Soon, Poland will reach the NATO benchmark of spending 2% of gross domestic product on defence. And by doing so, Poland stands as an example for many other Allied countries; because it is crucial that we are able to increase defence spending to invest in our collective security.

You are making significant investments in new equipment and new capabilities. And you play a key role in our missile defence system. So I am really grateful to the service and sacrifice of the Polish troops in the NATO operations from Kosovo to Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, we now have the necessary legal framework to launch a new mission to train, advise and assist Afghan forces from next year. I will continue to count on Poland's support also in this mission. So thank you very much both of you. I look forward to working closely with you both in keeping our Alliance strong in the future.

Q: Mister Secretary General, what do you see as a bigger threat to NATO Allies: Russia or the Islamic State? And I have a connected question which is: "Can we still speak of ceasefire in Eastern Ukraine?" Thank you!

JENS STOLTENBERG (NATO Secretary General): I think we have to understand that NATO as an Alliance is facing different challenges. And the nature of the challenges we are facing in the East and in the South are different.

But the... And the threats we are facing are also different. But the answer is in many ways the same. And that is that we have to keep NATO strong. And whether we are speaking about threat and challenges coming from the East or from the South, we speak about different challenges, different threats.

But the most important thing we can do is to keep NATO strong. And the best way we can do that is by implementing the decisions we have taken; to enhance our military capabilities; to make our forces more ready; and to continue with the reassurance measures we've already put in place in the Eastern part of the Alliance. The second question...?

Q: The ceasefire.

JENS STOLTENBERG: The ceasefire... Well, we are concerned about the situation in Ukraine. We welcome the ceasefire. And we regard it as an opportunity. At the same time, we see that there are several violations of the ceasefires. That's something which gives us reason for great concern. I will commend the government in Ukraine for doing a lot to both respect the ceasefire; but also to contribute to a political solution.

And it is important that Russia uses all its influence to make sure that the ceasefires also respected by the separatists; because the ceasefire is important. And it's a reason for a great concern that we see so many violations of the ceasefire.

Q: (SPEAKS IN POLISH)

GRZEGORZ SCHETYNA (MFA of Poland): (SPEAKS IN POLISH)

JENS STOLTENBERG: I have great expectations to Poland. And the great thing is that Poland is delivering on those expectations. Poland is really, really delivering a great contribution to the collective security of our Alliance, by investing in new capabilities; by investing in new equipment; and by increasing its defence spending.

And Poland is now very close to reach the NATO goal of spending 2% of GDP on defence. So yes, we can... we are expecting Poland to contribute. And Poland is contributing. And that's the great thing by being here in Poland.

And it just underlines that NATO is about solidarity. NATO is built on the very simple idea of "one for all" and "all for one". So Poland is important for NATO. And NATO is important for Poland. We're in this together. And that's the reason I'm so glad to start my work as Secretary General of NATO with my first visit to Poland, underlining the NATO solidarity, showing the strength of our Alliance together with Poland here in Warsaw.

When it comes to Syria, we are, of course, very concerned about the violence which takes place in Syria. We are shocked by the horrific atrocities which are committed by the terrorist organization ISIL. And I would also like to welcome the actions taken by the United States, of the NATO Alliance and regional partners to fight ISIL.

I think what we see now in Syria is a very, very serious situation. And we have said that it also has to spill over to Iraq; that ISIS is operating both in Syria and Iraq.

The main responsibility for NATO is to protect all Allied countries. Turkey is a NATO Ally. And our main responsibility is to protect the integrity, the borders of Turkey.

And that's the reason why we have deployed Patriot missiles in Turkey to enhance; to strengthen the air defence of Turkey. And Turkey should know that NATO will be there if there's any spillover and any attacks Turkey as a consequence of the violence we see in Syria.

The operations that are taking place in Syria are not NATO operations. They are conducted by the United States and some Allies... some partners. But what we stated in Wales is that NATO stands ready to support the government of Iraq; to enhance... to improve its capabilities; to strengthen its own defence, security forces; to be able to protect itself against terrorist organizations as ISIL.

Q: (IN POLISH)

UNIDENTIFIED (IN POLISH)

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