

Beat: Politics

NATO Defence Ministers agree next steps in fight against Coronavirus

All NATO Allies are affected

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USPA NEWS - NATO Defence Ministers have met this Wednesday April 15 by secure video conference to decide the Alliance's next steps in the fight against Covid-19. Also Ministers discussed the importance of countering increasing levels of disinformation and propaganda by state and non-state actors.

Speaking after the meeting, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said: "The crisis has shown that our nations are resilient and united. Our militaries are already playing a key role in support of national civilian effort. And using NATO mechanisms, Allies have been helping each other to save lives." The NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Tod Wolters, is coordinating military support to deal with the virus. This includes matching requests for support with offers from Allies and partners, and coordinating NATO's unique strategic airlift capability, which is delivering hundreds of tons of urgently needed equipment to where it is needed quickly and efficiently.

Ministers discussed the importance of countering increasing levels of disinformation and propaganda by state and non-state actors. Allies are working closely together to identify, monitor and expose these lies.

Ministers also considered the long-term implications of the crisis for NATO, its operations and its core mission to protect its almost one billion citizens. NATO is committed to ensuring this health crisis does not develop into a security crisis by maintaining a strong deterrence and defense. After the meeting, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said: "Covid-19 represents an unprecedented challenge to our nations. It has a profound impact on our people and our economies. And it is imposing historic shocks on the international system, which could have long-term consequences."

NATO's top operational commander, General Wolters, was tasked by foreign ministers two weeks ago to coordinate military support. "And today he updated us on his efforts to ensure NATO uses its military resources most effectively," explained Jens Stoltenberg. And added: "Military forces from across the Alliance have flown more than 100 missions to transport medical personnel, supplies, and treatment capabilities. Facilitated the construction of 25 field hospitals. Added more than 25,000 treatment beds. And over 4,000 military medical personnel have been deployed in support of civilian efforts."

"All NATO Allies are affected by the pandemic. But not in the same way at the same time. So when we effectively coordinate our resources, we make a real difference," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said. And warns about "potential adversaries will look to exploit the situation to further their own interests. Terrorist groups could be emboldened. The security situation in Afghanistan and Iraq remains fragile. And we see a continued pace of Russian military activity."

In this sense, NATO maintains its operational readiness across the board, including through its mission in Afghanistan. The NATO-led Resolute Support mission stands firmly committed to support the Afghan security forces and institutions, as these continue efforts to protect the Afghan population from terrorism and pave the way towards lasting peace in the country.

Also, personnel of the US Army and NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo delivered medical supplies and disinfectants to the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in response to the Covid-19 global pandemic. This delivery followed a request for assistance from Bosnia and Herzegovina, through NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC).

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