
NATO EYES DEPLOYMENT OF MORE TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

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NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Thursday hinted a definite deployment of additional troops in the war-riddled Afghanistan.

Speaking at a news conference ahead of NATO Defence Ministers meeting in Brussels, Stoltenberg said 15 nations have already pledged additional contributions to the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan.

NATO has ended our combat operation in Afghanistan [2014]. What we do now is not to conduct combat operations but to help the Afghans fight and to help the Afghans take full responsibility for the security in their own country, he said.

Stoltenberg highlighted three areas of focus for the NATO's RSM in Afghanistan.

The Kabul government anticipates a troops surge, deems it necessary for its nascent armed forces and to send a message across that it has the backing of the U.S. and the NATO.

Mohammad Radmanesh, spokesman for the Ministry of Defence (MOD), has underlined the importance of Kabul-NATO partnership.

We have been working with success on the four-year plan that involves fighting corruption, restructuring the army, recruitment of young and educated cadets and officers and strengthening the intelligence network, Radmanesh told Anadolu Agency.

Earlier this week, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani warned the Taliban that the time window for a peaceful resolution and peace talks would not always remain open.

Ghani brokered a landmark peace deal with the Hezb-e-Islami, a former rebel group led by Mujahedeen leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, last year.

However, there is some resistance to the idea of additional troops' deployment. The Hezb-e-Islami also opposed the deployment of more foreign troops.

Dr. Nadir Afghan, spokesman for Hezb-e-Islami, told Anadolu Agency that the move would only further fuel the internal conflict, foreign meddling and proxy wars in Afghanistan.

The only and best way to resolve this crisis is to support an intra-Afghan dialogue, he said while questioning the achievements of the U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan in the past 15 years.

This is not a conventional war, more troops cannot stop the guerrilla attacks and suicide blasts, but a peaceful resolution can, he stressed.

Meanwhile, the NATO secretary general emphasized that sufficient number of troops are essential to continue to support the Afghans, to break the stalemate and make advances on the battlefield which would then pave the ground for a political solution.

Because it is a very close relationship between what is going on on the battlefield and the possibility of reaching a political negotiated solution. We welcome that President Ghani has taken the initiative to a political process – the Kabul process.

We all agree that in the long run what we need, the only sustainable and lasting solution in Afghanistan is a political and negotiated solution. Of course, we look forward to the final decisions by the US when it comes to the US troop contributions to our mission in Afghanistan, he said.

Two weeks ago, the Wolesi Jirga (lower house) in Afghanistan expressed skepticism over potential surge of U.S. forces in the country.

Mohsin Rehmani, an Afghan MP, questioned as to what the U.S. has achieved with over 100,000 troops on the ground in the past 15 years.

He went on to say that in line with the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), Washington should be held accountable for the surging terrorism in Afghanistan.

Kaynak/Source: