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**TURKEY, NATO ALLIANCE SHOULD NOT BE UNDERMINED: CHIEF OF STAFF AKAR**

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Turkey's alliance with NATO should not be undermined, Turkish Chief of General Staff Gen. Hulusi Akar has said.

Speaking at the Halifax International Security Forum in Nova Scotia in Canada on Nov. 18, Gen. Akar said NATO is the most successful and most effective military organization that has existed throughout history.

Recently, in one of the NATO exercises we had an unpleasant and unacceptable event, reportedly committed by an individual who may be backed by [Fethullahist Terrorist Organization] FETÖ members, Akar was quoted as saying by the Anadolu Agency.

NATO administrators responded timely and appropriately. We should not allow anyone to undermine our alliance and our solidarity.

Turkey withdrew its troops from a NATO military drill in Norway after President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on Nov. 17 that his name and the picture of Turkish Republic's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk were used in an "enemy chart.

Following the incident, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg apologized to Turkey in a written statement as well as to Akar during a face-to-face meeting in Canada.

Akar said Turkey is one of the countries with the highest number of troops in NATO and the country has supported 14 missions of the alliance in 11 different countries.

The general also criticized Turkey's allies who were providing weapons the Syrian Kurdish

Democratic Union Party (PYD), and its armed wing, Peoples Protection Units (YPG).

Turkey considers both groups as offshoots of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), hence terrorist groups.

PKK, PYD and YPG are equals of each other. The PKK is listed as a terrorist organization by numerous countries. They may have different names but they all have the same goal, said Akar.

It was unfortunate to witness the utilization of terrorist organizations as proxies during this conflict. This has further complicated the situation.

Some of our allies have been cooperating with the PKK-affiliated YPG in a similar fashion. They have been supporting PKK and YPG in almost all demands despite news of such acts amounting to war crimes.

He said it was disappointing to see that some allies provided weapons and ammunition to the YPG.

I would like to underline that PKK/YPG uses these weapons against Turkish citizens and soldiers.

"Additionally, we are having a hard time to understand the ethics in fight against terrorist organization with another one. It seems a simple name change has been enough for some states," he added.

Referring to reports about the U.S. backing the deal allowing Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants to leave their Syrian stronghold of Raqqa that paved the way for YPG to then takeover the town, Akar said: "Some of our allies disregarded the dirty deal that YPG brokered with Daesh in Raqqa, using an Arabic acronym for ISIL.

"Evacuation of Daesh terrorists from Raqqa even with their weapons, it's unbelievable."

The general also said that ISIL had nothing to do with Islam.

Please do not forget that Daesh is also attacking Islamic countries and killing innocent Muslims without hesitation, he said.

Do not confuse Muslims with terrorists. The key must be zero tolerance for terrorists.

For instance, we have witnessed tragic attacks in Myanmar against Rohingya Muslims recently. The attackers were Buddhists; however, no one referred to them as Buddhist terrorists."

At the end of his speech, Akar quoted Erdoğan's famous words about the world being bigger than a few countries.

As our President Erdoğan has said while referring to the U.N. Security Council, we should remember that the world is bigger than five. The UN's priority must be global safety and security, he said.

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Kaynak/Source: