

Beat: Politics

NATO is launched against the coronavirus

Orders the coordination of military aid

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USPA NEWS - NATO Foreign Ministers directed NATO's top commander, General Wolters, to coordinate the necessary military support to combat the coronavirus crisis and to start using fast-track paths through Europe's airspace for military flights carrying medical supplies, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said on Thursday April 2, 2020.

"NATO was created to deal with crises. So we can help and our Alliance is playing its part," the Secretary General said. Jens Stoltenberg's remarks came after a meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers, held by secure videoconference for the first time in NATO's history. Ministers also agreed to hold an extra-ordinary meeting of Defence Ministers in April to review the support provided to Allies and take decisions on any further steps.

The Alliance is already coordinating and supporting national efforts against the pandemic with logistical, transport and medical help. "I am grateful for the further offers of assistance, which NATO Allies made today and for the substantial support that Allies have already provided," the Secretary General added, citing the airlift of medical supplies, provision of medical personnel and the use of innovative technologies. Stoltenberg stressed that NATO's main task remained the protection of NATO's almost one billion people, and that NATO's ability to conduct operations had not been undermined.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of NATO they got together "in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic which is affecting all Allies and partners, imposing a huge cost in lives lost, as well as a sudden and severe shock to our economies. We express our deepest sympathies with all the victims of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and with all those affected by its consequences," ministers said in a official statement. "We pay tribute to the health care workers, as well as all the others who are on the front line in our battle against this disease. These include the men and women in uniform who continue to work daily for our collective security. And we thank our citizens who understand that, working together, we will defeat this challenge more quickly and save lives," they added.

"NATO is doing its part," said the ministers. Allies are supporting each other "including with medical professionals, hospital beds, vital medical equipment, and best practices and ideas on how to fight this deadly disease. "We are airlifting critical medical supplies from across the globe, providing medical personnel, essential materials and vital equipment from military and civilian sources, and harnessing our medical, scientific, and technological knowledge and resources to help deliver innovative responses," they added. Allies are also working "together to ensure public access to transparent, timely, and accurate information, which is critical to overcoming this pandemic and to combating disinformation. Because we need a coordinated and comprehensive approach, NATO is working closely with other international organizations, including the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the European Union."

And they say: "Even as we do the absolute maximum to contain and then overcome this challenge, NATO remains active, focused and ready to perform its core tasks: collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. Our ability to conduct our operations and assure deterrence and defence against all the threats we face is unimpaired. And we have today taken further decisions to enhance NATO's role in facing current and future security challenges."

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