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NATO agrees to increase Afghan training mission size to around 16,000 personnel

11/10/2017

The NATO defense ministers on Thursday agreed to increase the size of its personnel as part of the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan to around 16 thousand.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg made the announcement at the end of a two-day meeting of the alliance's Defence Ministers in Brussels.

He welcomed the fact that "Afghan forces are making progress, even though the situation remains very challenging."

According to a statement by the alliance, the Ministers also agreed on the importance of funding for the Afghan security forces, and welcomed Afghanistan's intention to make further progress on reforms and reconciliation.

The latest commitment by the NATO members comes as Washington announced its new policy for Afghanistan and South Asia few months earlier.

Announcing the new US strategy in the month of August, President Trump said the consequences of a rapid exit are both predictable and unacceptable.

Trump further added “9/11, the worst terrorist attack in our history, was planned and directed from Afghanistan because that country was ruled by a government that gave comfort and shelter to terrorists. A hasty withdrawal would create a vacuum that terrorists, including ISIS and al Qaeda, would instantly fill, just as happened before September 11th.”

He also added “I concluded that the security threats we face in Afghanistan and the broader region are immense. Today, 20 U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations are active in Afghanistan and Pakistan — the highest concentration in any region anywhere in the world.”