

# *NATO Approves Military Build-up in Eastern Flank*

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Brussels, February 11 (RHC)-- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, has approved a plan to strengthen its military presence in Eastern Europe, where its activities continue to threaten Russia.

NATO defense chiefs agreed during a summit in Brussels Wednesday to beef up military presence in the so-called eastern flank, citing perceived threats from Moscow. The plan envisions a multinational force stationed in Eastern European members states of NATO on a rotational basis.

A larger rapid-response contingent would also be made available and deployed on short notice from among other NATO members. The approval of the plan, whose details are to be discussed at a July summit, comes at a particularly sensitive time in relations between NATO and Russia.

Tensions have been building up between the two ever since March 2014, when the crisis in Ukraine flared up. Relations are now at their lowest ebb since the Cold War.

NATO -- largely made up of Western

European nations -- accuses Russia of having a hand in the crisis in Ukraine, which is a former Soviet Union state in Eastern Europe. Moscow denies any such involvement.

Last Monday, Russia put its military on combat alert across its southwest region amid massive military exercises. In January, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a document declaring NATO a threat to Russia's national security.

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