

NATO Set to Boost Troops in Afghanistan



Brussels, November 8 (RHC)-- NATO will increase the number of its troops in war-ravaged Afghanistan, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg says. The NATO secretary general made the announcement during a news conference in Brussels on Tuesday, ahead of a meeting of NATO defense ministers later this week.

According to Stoltenberg, NATO allies will agree on Thursday to increase by some 3,000 personnel the troop levels for the Afghanistan training mission. Stoltenberg said that about half of the additional troops will come from the United States and the other half from other countries allied with NATO.

The NATO contribution would take Resolute Support, which is NATO's train, advise and assist mission, to around 16,000 troops, up from around 13,000 today, Stoltenberg said. Elsewhere in his remarks, the NATO chief said the troops would not have combat roles but would be part of the Resolute Support.

In February, U.S. Army General John Nicholson, the commander of US forces in Afghanistan, called for more troops, saying that a few thousand more troops would make a difference in weakening the Taliban and other militants. Under a new strategy announced by U.S. President Donald Trump, thousands of additional U.S. troops will be deployed to the war-ravaged country.

The new deployment is the latest sign that NATO is increasingly being drawn back into fighting in

Afghanistan. U.S.-led forces formally ended the combat mission in Afghanistan in 2014. The United States has about 8,400 troops in the country alongside another 5,000 from NATO forces.

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