

NATO SEC GENERAL PRAISES FRANCE'S CONTRIBUTIONS EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY

DURING HIS VISIT IN PARIS

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USPA NEWS - During his visit to Paris today (10 December 2021), the Secretary General met with France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian, and with the Minister of the Armed Forces, Florence Parly, to address developments in the Euro-Atlantic area and continuing to adapt NATO for the future. "France is a strong Ally. An Ally that contributes to our shared security in many different ways, with high-end capabilities, and you invest more than two percent of GDP on defence. Your strategic nuclear forces contribute significantly to the overall security of the Alliance. And you are strongly committed to the fight against terrorism," said the Secretary General. He thanked both Ministers for France's contributions to NATO deployments, including troops in the Alliance's defensive multinational battlegroup in Estonia, and jets as part of NATO's Baltic Air Policing.

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They addressed Russia's renewed military build-up in and around Ukraine. The Secretary General stressed that the crisis requires a political and diplomatic solution, adding that "we welcome the dialogue between President Biden and President Putin, as well as the efforts to convene a new meeting in the Normandy format, because dialogue is even more important when tensions are high." He noted that NATO's offer of a meaningful dialogue in the NATO-Russia Council stands.

The Secretary General also exchanged views with his French hosts on ways to further strength NATO-EU cooperation, which has already reached unprecedented levels. "We discussed France's priorities for its Presidency of the European Council next year and I count on France's support as we develop a new joint NATO-EU declaration," said the Secretary General. He reiterated his long-standing support for EU efforts on defence, "I welcome that all European Allies have increased their defence budgets. But it is important that we keep up the momentum," Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg made a plea for more resources, "rather than new structures which risk duplicating what we already have." Source: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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