The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Stoltenberg: Russia Doesn't Pose Immediate Threat to NATO States

By The Moscow Times

June 04, 2015



NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg listens as U.S. President Barack Obama speaks during their meeting in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington.

OSLO — Russia poses no immediate threat to NATO countries and the military alliance still hopes bilateral relations will improve, its Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday.

Russia had been willing to use force to change borders in Europe, he said during a visit to his native Norway, pointing to Crimea, east Ukraine and Georgia as examples.

"What we see is more unpredictability, more insecurity, more unrest ... [But] I believe we don't see any immediate threat against any NATO country from the east," he told NRK public radio.

NATO has repeatedly criticized Moscow's involvement in the Ukraine conflict and demanded it fully endorse a cease-fire agreement there. Russia denies providing troops or arms to

support separatists rebels in eastern Ukraine.

The Ukraine conflict has in particular unnerved Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, the only parts of the former Soviet Union that have joined NATO.

The Baltic states are small and isolated from the rest of the European Union, and have Russian-speaking minorities which President Vladimir Putin said last year gives Moscow the right to intervene with military force.

Stoltenberg, a former Norwegian prime minister, said he hoped relations between the alliance and Russia could improve.

"Our goal is still cooperation with Russia ... That serves NATO and it serves Russia," he said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/06/04/stoltenberg-russia-doesnt-pose-immediate-threat-to-nato-states-a47125