

Beat: Politics

Secretary Blinken strengthens US-EU collaboration against Russia

Meeting with EU authorities

Brussels, Belgium, 04.03.2022, 19:53 Time

USPA NEWS - Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken met on Friday in Brussels with NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, in Brussels on the margins of the NATO Foreign Ministerial. Secretary Blinken and Secretary General Stoltenberg reiterated their strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of President Putin's premeditated invasion of a peaceful democratic neighbor.

They encouraged NATO Allies and partners to continue to respond to Ukraine's requests for supplies and equipment to defend against Russia's unprovoked aggression. They welcomed Ukrainian President Zelenskyy's diplomatic initiatives, while condemning President Putin's continued belligerence, escalation, and refusal to negotiate in good faith. "We condemn the attacks on civilians, and over the night we have also seen reports about the attack against a nuclear power plant," said Secretary General Stoltenberg. "This just demonstrates the recklessness of this war and the importance of ending it and the importance of Russia withdrawing all its troops and engage in good faith in diplomatic efforts," he added.

"NATO Allies have implemented unprecedented sanctions," remembered Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. "We provide support to Ukraine. At the same time, NATO is not part to the conflict. NATO is a defensive alliance. We don't seek war, conflict with Russia. At the same time," he added, "we need to make sure that there is no misunderstanding about our commitment to defend and protect our Allies, and therefore we have increased the presence of NATO forces in the eastern part of the Alliance. This is a defensive presence, and I welcome the strong commitment by – from the United States with more troops. I met many of them, and it's always great to meet U.S. troops in Europe and to see their commitment and their professionalism being part of the transatlantic bond."

Secretary Blinken said: "In the wake of Russia's unprovoked, premeditated aggression against Ukraine, this Alliance came together with speed, with unity, with determination, immediately launching the rapid response task force, putting in place the graduated plans to continue to bolster NATO's security. Every Ally in one way or another is coming to Ukraine's assistance. Every Ally in one way or another is helping to strengthen NATO itself. And as the Secretary General said, ours is a defensive alliance. We seek no conflict. But if conflict comes to us, we are ready for it, and we will defend every inch of NATO territory."

After this, Secretary Blinken met with the EU High Representative Josep Borrell, who said: "This is a barbarian way of doing war. And the Human Rights Council will soon launch a mission in order to assess the violations of human rights which is happening in Ukrainian territory." And explained that "this is Putin's war, and Putin has to stop this war. We remain united. We know that to ask for this war – stop – to stop and avoid killing of innocent people. We are providing arms to Ukraine in order to let them defend their soil, their rights, their nation. We are providing help to the refugees. Already 1 million people have been crossing our borders, and happily, more will come. We are putting sanctions that going to really affect the Russian economy, the value of its currency. It's going to be having massive effects, as we have already said before."

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken also met with the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen. "The scale of the humanitarian catastrophe that – in Ukraine that is unfolding really worries us," she said. "Europe is seeing destruction and displacement on a scale not seen since the darkest days of the last century. The European Union, as Ukraine's neighbor, is sparing no effort. We're providing 500 million euros of humanitarian aid immediately, and more will come. We're working fast to establish civil protection hubs in Poland, in Slovakia, and in Romania. And we are also doing everything we can with international organizations and NGOs to set up humanitarian corridors that stretch inside Ukraine. Desperately needed humanitarian aid must be able to reach all parts of Ukraine and civilians must be allowed to escape cities under siege," concluded President Von der Leyen.

"If we allow those principles to be violated with impunity, then we're opening a Pandora's box in every corner of the world for this to happen again and again and again, and the peace and security – with all of the deficiencies that we've known over the last 80 years, but nonetheless peace and security that we've been able to establish – that will be gone. So the stakes here are very real. They're about real lives, real people, real human beings, and they are about large principles that we have to defend," remarked Secretary Blinken.

Secretary of State met with European Council President Charles Michel. Secretary Blinken and President Michel emphasized the need for continued, close U.S.-EU coordination to respond to President Putin's premeditated, unjustified, and unprovoked war on Ukraine. Secretary Blinken thanked President Michel for the EU's commitment to supply much-needed humanitarian, economic, and military assistance to Ukraine. They also reiterated the United States' and the EU's shared resolve to continue to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to hold Russia accountable for its unlawful war of choice and Belarus for its complicity in Russian aggression.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-20125/secretary-blinken-strengthens-us-eu-collaboration-against-russia.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jose A. Martin

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com