Stoltenberg: NATO is Not Obligated to Defend Israel

Boris Djuric June 04, 2018

Amid increased tension between Israel and Iran, the NATO Secretary General said Israel is a partner but not a member.

(Newswire.net-- June 4, 2018) -- Should a hypothetical war break out between Iran and Israel, NATO is not obligated to interfere, Secretary General of North Atlantic Treaty Organization Jens Stoltenberg told Germany’s Der Spiegel.

Amid increased tension between the bitter Middle East rivals Israel and Iran, Stoltenberg said the right for protection doesn’t apply to non-members no matter if they are close partners.

“Israel is our partner, but not a member of NATO. The security guarantee of Article 5 does not apply to Israel,” Secretary General of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Jens Stoltenberg told Der Spiegel.

According to Article 5 of NATO’s treaty, any member country enjoys the full protection of all NATO members because the attack on one ally is considered an attack to all countries in the treaty. However, that does apply to those countries designated only as “partners” of the alliance.

“This is not our job,” Stoltenberg said dismissing allegations that NATO is involved in Mideast peace efforts. However, it was last year that NATO formally joined the US-led coalition fighting in Iraq and Syria.

Stoltenberg added that the alliance is not involved in Mideast peace efforts, or in conflicts in the region. “This is not our job,” he stressed, somehow overlooking that, just last year, NATO formally joined the US-led coalition against IS (Islamic State, formerly ISIS/ISIL) terrorists in Iraq and Syria.

Despite a new milestone in bilateral relations between the US and Israel being reached when the US moved its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and officially recognized Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, there is a question if the US would interfere with military aid in case of an armed conflict.

“We are all equally concerned about Iran's missile program and its activities leading to instability in the region, for example the support of terrorist groups,” Stoltenberg said. The NATO Secretary General, however, said that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), dubbed the Iran nuclear deal, is going to stay since it is signed by major NATO countries who strongly disapprove the Trump’s decision to leave the JCPOA.

“The question is, can it work without the US? The impact of US sanctions on European companies will be huge in any case,” Jens Stoltenberg said.