

NATO to JOIN US BUT WILL NOT PLAY COMBAT ROLE AGAINST ISIS

TOP OF THE AGENDA

NATO to Join U.S.-Led Coalition Against Islamic State

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will join the [U.S.-led coalition \(Middle East Eye\)](#) against the self-proclaimed Islamic State, but will not play a combat role, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said on Thursday. Stoltenberg's announcement came hours before a summit in Brussels with U.S. President Donald J. Trump. While NATO member states have joined the coalition, NATO had not previously joined as an institution. At the summit, Trump is expected to make his [first public commitment to NATO \(EUobserver\)](#) as president; Trump had previously called the bloc "obsolete." Trump also met with European Council President Donald Tusk, who said the United States and Europe seem to be "on the same line" [regarding Ukraine \(NYT\)](#) but have differences over Russia.

ANALYSIS

"Mixed with the worry [in Europe] is a thread of relief: Many of [Trump's most radical foreign policy promises](#) during the campaign have been toned down now that he is in the White House. He has reversed himself on NATO, which he called 'obsolete' shortly before his inauguration. His defense secretary, Jim Mattis, and national security advisor, H.R. McMaster, are both respected here," Michael Birnbaum writes for the *Washington Post*.

"Trump's talk of befriending Putin doesn't just rattle the [twenty-eight-member NATO military alliance](#), which has spent the past few years bolstering its eastern frontier. It also unnerves senior officials of the European Union, whose leaders believe Putin is assisting their enemies," Michael Crowley and Tara Palmeri write for *Politico*.

"U.S. military leadership believes we need more forces, U.S. and European, in Afghanistan. That is a tall order even on a good day, given how long this conflict has lasted with no end in sight. But [will allies double down in Afghanistan](#) under these conditions, especially given that the ask is coming from a U.S. president mired in crises?" Julie Smith and Jim Townsend write for *Foreign Policy*.