

Missile Deployment Points to NATO Military Involvement in Syria Conflict

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Russian diplomat sees sign of NATO involvement in Syrian conflict in missile deploymentMOSCOW: The deployment of Patriot missiles in Turkey near the Syrian border indicates that NATO is getting involved in the conflict in Syria, Russian ambassador to the alliance Alexander Grushko has said.

"It is difficult to assume that Syria would be interested in fanning tension on the border. The deployment of Patriots indicates that NATO is getting involved in the conflict after all," he said during a Friday TV linkup from Brussels.

Grushko said that there is the threat of NATO involvement in the Syrian conflict as a result of possible incidents on the Turkish-Syrian border.

"We see the danger of the further involvement of NATO in the developments in Syria as a result of provocations or some incidents on the border," he said.

"We know that there were incidents in the area of the border, grenade fire. The first question that arises is - what are the Patriots deployed for?" Grushko said.

He said Patriot systems are incapable of neutralizing such threats. "The system is meant to combat warplanes, it also has anti-missile potential," the diplomat stressed.

"For months NATO leaders continued to say that Syria is not Libya and the alliance sees no political role in the Syrian situation," Grushko said.

"Today it is necessary not to demonstrate military muscles or military preparations but intensify efforts aimed at launching the political process on the basis of the Geneva platform," the diplomat said.

Earlier this week NATO foreign ministers backed Turkey's request for the deployment of Patriot air defense systems on its territory. Turkey accounted its request to the threat of shelling of its territory from Syria.

The NATO leadership stressed that the coming deployment of Patriot missiles would be conducted for purely defense purposes. Several hundred NATO servicemen are planned to be stationed in Turkey to service the missile systems.

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