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NATO Chief Meets with Egyptian, Israeli Foreign Ministers at Alliance Headquarters

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On June 12 NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg met with Israeli Foreign Minister and Alternate Prime Minister Yair Lapid at the military bloc's headquarters in Brussels.

Stoltenberg praised Israel as "one of NATO's most engaged and capable partners," one of over twenty years' standing, and a member of the bloc's Mediterranean Dialogue military partnership.

He chose the occasion to hold Iran to account over its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and demanded it "refrain from all activities which are inconsistent with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (on endorsing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action).

The Israeli minister in turn "declared Israel's readiness to support the alliance on matters of intelligence, cybersecurity, counter-terrorism, climate change, maritime security, missile defense, and civilian emergency management," and invited the NATO chief to visit Israel. Stoltenberg visted Israel, both Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, in 2019.

In 2006 NATO granted Israel an Individual Partnership Cooperation Programme (the first ever given) under enhanced Mediterranean Dialogue and Operation Active Endeavour auspices.

In 2016 Israel opened a liaison office (effectively an embassy) at NATO headquarters.

NATO's Stoltenberg also met with the foreign minister of Egypt, Sameh Shoukry, on July 12. He thanked the latter's nation for over 25 years of military partnership with NATO, also through the Mediterranean Dialogue. Egypt was given a NATO Individual Partnership Cooperation Programme the year after Israel was.

Both nations have participated in NATO naval exercises in the Mediterranean Sea and both participated in the U.S.- and Ukraine- hosted 32-nation Sea Breeze war games in the Black

Sea which ended on July 10.

Stoltenberg commended the Egyptian foreign minister on the recent renewal of the Individual Partnership Cooperation Programme between the bloc and his country under enhanced Mediterranean Dialogue provisions and pledged to expand military cooperation with the North African nation in new directions.

Of the 22 nations bordering the Mediterranean, including Britain (Gibraltar) but excluding minuscule Monaco and Gaza, all but four are NATO members or partners: Cyprus, Lebanon, Libya and Syria. Libya was being promoted as a Mediterranean Dialogue member after NATO's air war against it a decade ago, and may be considered for a partnership again now that it is effectively under Turkish military control. Similarly, more than a third of Cyprus is occupied by troops from NATO member Turkey.

What Rome once possessed and Napoleon, Mussolini and Hitler attempted to replicate – undisputed control of the Mediterranean – has been accomplished by a U.S.-dominated military alliance.

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