

NATO to Deploy Six Patriot Missile Batteries and 600 Troops to Turkey

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ANKARA: Around 600 foreign troops are expected to accompany six Patriot missile systems to be deployed in Turkey to reinforce the NATO member country's air defense and calm its fears of coming under a possible missile attack from neighboring Syria, local newspaper Today's Zaman reported Sunday.

The surface-to-air batteries, able to intercept ballistic missiles, are expected to be transported to Turkey by sea within four or five weeks, and will be sited in Turkish military bases, according to the report.

A team of NATO experts recently visited Turkey to survey the possible sites for the deployment, and have submitted their report to Ankara and NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).

The team reportedly surveyed sites in the provinces of Elazig, Malatya, Diyarbakir, Batman, Sanliurfa, Gaziantep, Adana, Mersin and Kahramanmaras, said the report.

The United States, Germany and the Netherlands, the only three NATO nations with the most modern type of Patriots, have all agreed to send missiles to protect their ally.

Germany and the Netherlands have each said they will send two Patriot batteries with multiple missile launchers.

Although it is still not certain, the United States is also expected to send two Patriot systems to Turkey, increasing the number of batteries to be deployed in Turkey to six.

Each battery to be sent to Turkey reportedly has four to six missile launchers and each launcher has the capacity of launching 16 missiles.

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