

Erdogan Threatens NATO Effort to Block Russian Aggression in the Baltics

(Bloomberg) — Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed to “oppose steps in NATO” unless the bloc supports his fight against Syrian Kurdish militants, threatening an alliance plan to defend Baltic states against Russian aggression.

Ankara has been holding up the Baltic agreement as it presses NATO to recognize the Kurdish forces as terrorists. Turkey views the Kurdish YPG militia as a menace to its territorial integrity and in October launched a cross-border operation against them that’s been widely deplored within NATO.

“If our friends in the NATO do not accept those terrorists that we are fighting as terrorists, then sorry, but we will oppose any step that is to be taken there,” Erdogan said Tuesday before setting off for the London summit. Turkey isn’t against an agreement to defend Baltic states against any possible Russian aggression, but it wants the same solidarity to be shown to its fight against the Syrian Kurdish forces, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said last week.

NATO Baltics Deal Held Up as Turkey Seeks Support on Kurdish YPG

Turkey views the YPG as a terrorist group because of its links to the Kurdish separatist PKK, which the Turkish military has been battling for more than three decades and is branded a terrorist organization by the U.S. and the European Union.

-With assistance from Firat Kozok.

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