

Turkey blocking NATO-EU effort in Kosovo

by UPI

ANKARA, Turkey -- Turkey has blocked the European Union from using NATO assets to bolster its mission in Kosovo. The major issue for Turkish leaders is whether Cyprus would be allowed to participate in the mission, the Turkish Daily News reported. Turkey, which is a member of NATO but not of the European Union, does not recognize Cyprus. NATO already has troops in Kosovo, assisting the U.N. mission. A 2,000-person EU mission is expected to replace the United Nations within three months. When Turkey vetoed the European Union use of NATO facilities in Kosovo, its officials invoked the 2003 Treaty of Nice, which bars Malta and Cyprus from participating in joint efforts. EU officials say the treaty only applies to military missions, not peacekeeping ones. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, the NATO secretary general, attempted what Turkey saw as a bypass attempt by scheduling an unofficial meeting between NATO and the European Union. "NATO functions on a consensus basis," one Turkish official said. "We have not given our consent to such a meeting. Had it taken place it would have been a first in NATO's history."

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