

Transatlantic Focus

A USNATO Public Affairs Newsletter



Ambassador Holbrooke Briefs NATO After Afghanistan, Pakistan Visit



Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, [Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan](#) (SRAP), briefed NATO Ambassadors in Brussels just hours after leaving Afghanistan. His visit provided NATO delegations an up-to-date look at the situation on the ground.

Speaking afterward to journalists, Ambassador Holbrooke emphasized the importance of military and civilian contributions from Allies and partners to the [effort in Afghanistan](#): "We appreciate every soldier that every one of the 41 countries, including every NATO member, has sent there, under very difficult circumstances." Ambassador Holbrooke also spoke about key programs in Afghanistan, such as army and police training, and the crucial role such forces play in securing the country particularly leading up to the August 20 election. Ambassador Holbrooke's visit was part of the regular consultations between the United States and its Allies.

- Ambassador Holbrooke briefs Washington press after his trip to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Brussels, July 29, 2009: [Transcript](#) | [Video](#)
- [Securing Afghanistan for the Election](#)
- [United States' long-term commitment in Afghanistan](#)

New Secretary General Underscores Priorities by Visiting Afghanistan During His First Week



NATO's new Secretary General, [Anders Fogh Rasmussen](#), formally took up his duties on August 1. At his [first NATO press conference](#), Mr. Rasmussen outlined his priorities, including success in Afghanistan through a comprehensive military and civilian approach, NATO-Russia relations, cooperation with Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative countries, the situation in Kosovo, and the process towards a new Strategic Concept for the Alliance. In his comments, the Secretary General noted that "NATO is doing more, in more places, than it ever has before. Because it is a family of nations that can trust and rely on each other, at any time, against any threat and in any weather. It is a community of democracies defending common values: freedom, peace, security. And NATO remains the ultimate insurance policy for almost 1 billion (actually 900 million) people in 28 countries."

Days after taking up his new role, Secretary General Rasmussen visited Afghanistan to meet with Afghan [President Hamid Karzai and other Afghan officials](#), ISAF Commander [General Stanley McChrystal](#) and [UN Special Representative Kai Eide](#). During his visit, Mr. Rasmussen stressed the importance of close cooperation among the international community, as well as with the Afghan authorities, particularly in the lead up to the [August 20 elections](#). The Secretary General also traveled to Kandahar and to Helmand Province where U.S. and UK forces recently mounted a major offensive to push back Taliban insurgents.

- [Week One: NATO's New Secretary General Press Conference](#) | [Transcript](#)
- [The Secretary General in Afghanistan: Video](#) | [Photos](#)
- [What Afghans want – Presidential election in Afghanistan: NATO TV](#)
- [Secretary General's Corner](#)

New Strategic Concept for NATO

In his first public address, Secretary General Rasmussen outlined his plans for the drafting of a new [Strategic Concept](#), the document that lays the foundation for Alliance unity and purpose. A group of 12 experts chaired by former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will consult with NATO Allies and partners, NGOs, think tanks and international organizations, then submit conclusions to the Secretary General. Public consultations, via an online forum and town hall meetings across the Alliance, will also weigh into this process. Mr. Rasmussen will then lead final negotiations among the Alliance, and a draft will be agreed upon at NATO's next Summit in Lisbon in late 2010.

Ten Countries Share the Heavy Load with New Strategic Airlift Capability



In order to ensure that all countries in the NATO Alliance and our partners have the necessary strategic airlift to effectively support NATO operations from Kosovo to Afghanistan, ten NATO nations and two partners formed the [Strategic Airlift Capability](#) (SAC) Initiative to purchase three Boeing C-17 transport aircraft. The first of these C-17s was welcomed to the Initiative's home base, Pápa Airbase in Hungary, recently in a celebration attended by representatives from [all participating countries](#) including Finland and Sweden, and NATO members Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and the United States. NATO's Deputy Secretary General Claudio Bisogniero noted that the SAC Initiative "exemplifies what can be accomplished when nations come together for a common purpose – to acquire, collectively, a capability that would be beyond the means of nations, acting individually. This is the true testimony of Allied solidarity."

NATO Training Mission-Iraq Celebrates 5th Anniversary



The [NATO Training Mission-Iraq](#) (NTM-I), a mission which assists Iraq in building its own armed forces, celebrated its fifth anniversary on August 5. Created in 2004, NTM-I trains, mentors, and advises Iraqi Security Forces officers that will ultimately provide for Iraq's security unassisted. Not a combat mission, NTM-I's operational emphasis is on training and coordination. NTM-I was established at the request of the Iraqi Interim Government and mentors and supports the national defense college and institute, trains the national police, and mentors the Prime Minister's National Operations Centre, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior Command Centre and the Iraqi Ministry of Defence Joint Operations Centre.

New Supreme Allied Commander Transformation Named



French General [Stéphane Abrial](#) will replace U.S. General [James N. Mattis](#) as Supreme Allied Commander

Since the last Strategic Concept was adopted at the Washington Summit in 1999, Mr. Rasmussen told the press, "this Alliance has almost doubled in size and taken on missions and threats no one could have imagined at the time. The moment has come for the theory to catch up with the practice, and for all the members of the Alliance, old and new, to chart a common way forward."

- [Keynote Address by Madeleine Albright at the NATO New Strategic Concept Conference](#)

AFGHANISTAN ELECTIONS - AUGUST 20

Track elections at these links:

- [U.S. Embassy - Kabul](#)
- [United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan](#)
- [Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe](#)
- [Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan](#)



Transformation
(SACT) on
September 9 at a
change of

command ceremony at Headquarters Supreme Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia, United States. General Abrial is currently Chief of Staff of the French Air Force.

The position of Supreme Allied Commander Transformation was created in 2002 in an overall process to reform NATO's chains of command. The SACT is one of NATO's two strategic commanders and the commanding officer of Allied Command Transformation.

The SACT is responsible to NATO's Military Committee, the highest military authority in NATO, for promoting and overseeing the continuing transformation of Alliance forces and capabilities.

From 2002 to 2009, SACT has been a United States Flag or General officer, and dual-hatted as Commander of the U.S. Joint Forces Command, which is responsible for maximizing future and present military capabilities of the United States. His command is exercised from the Headquarters of Alliance Command Transformation in Norfolk.

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