

Transatlantic Focus

A USNATO Public Affairs Newsletter



Bratislava: Defense Ministers Discuss Afghanistan, Missile Defense



U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and the 27 defense ministers of Allied nations discussed NATO priorities such as the international mission in Afghanistan and missile defense on October 22 and 23 in [Bratislava, Slovakia](#).

Informal meetings take place twice annually for open discussion of issues in advance of formal meetings in Brussels when actual decisions and declarations are made. Though by design the informal meeting is not where commitments are made, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted continued Allied support of the mission in Afghanistan. [Read more](#)

USNATO Ambassador Ivo Daalder and Assistant Secretary for Defense-International Security Affairs, Alexander Vershbow, were among speakers at the Slovak Atlantic Commission to address the transatlantic relationship vis-à-vis disarmament, missile defense, and the new Strategic Concept.

[Ambassador Daalder: "New Nuclear Disarmament Proposals: Implications for NATO and the Transatlantic Relations"](#) (Bratislava, October 22)

[Ambassador Vershbow: Crafting the new Strategic Concept: Ambitions, Resources, and Partnerships for a 21st Century Alliance"](#) (Bratislava, October 22)

Brussels and Luxembourg: Experts Engage on NATO's Future



The Group of Experts on the new [Strategic Concept](#) met at NATO Headquarters for the first time September 4 in Brussels and held their first working meeting October 16 in Luxembourg. The group's work will facilitate the

development of the Alliance's new Strategic Concept, which will guide NATO in its current and future security challenges.

On October 16 in [Luxembourg](#), the Group of Experts discussed the changing security environment, NATO's core tasks, the Alliance's political role and its strategy in the 21st century. Dr Madeleine Albright, who chairs the experts group, presided over the meeting. Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and all 12 experts met with the North Atlantic Council, NATO's highest decision-making body, on September 4 in [Brussels](#).

VIDEO [Interview with Madeleine Albright](#)

NTMA Stands Up



The NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTMA) was activated this month. A priority for the Alliance, NTMA trains and equips the Afghan Security Forces to take the lead for security responsibility

in their country. NTMA performs high-level military training, police training, and supports both police and military in the field with training and equipment. Find out how the Afghan National Army (ANA), which has grown from zero to 90,000 soldiers in the past eight years, is getting trained by NATO forces. Out of 54 ANA combat battalions, 22 are now at the standard capable to conduct independent combat operations.

[Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated](#) he believes one of the key areas of progress in Afghanistan will be handing over district by district, province by province, lead security responsibility. To make that happen, Allies and Partners work to fully support NTMA.

[Watch video](#) NTMA trainers and mentors in Operational Mentor Liaison Teams (OMLTs)

Allies sign declaration of intent for HIP helicopter initiative



In NATO Deputy Secretary General, Claudio Bisogniero, presided over a signing ceremony in the margins of the NATO Defence

Phased Adaptive Approach: More Capable, More Responsive

After consulting with Allies in April and weighing new technology capabilities against updated threat intelligence, President Obama changed the architecture of ballistic missile defense in Europe. The change enhances the ability to respond to the most immediate threats to the continent, as well as future threats.

"[Two] important developments have prompted a reassessment of our approach in Europe. First, a change in our intelligence community's 2006 view of the Iranian threat [and] our technology. Over the last few years, we have made great strides with missile defense, particularly in our ability to counter short-and-medium-range missiles. We now have proven capabilities [that] offer a variety of options to detect, track and shoot down enemy missiles. This allows us to deploy a distributive sensor network rather than a single fixed site, like the kind slated for the Czech Republic, enabling greater survivability and adaptability," Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said. [Read how the new missile defense plan is more responsive and more flexible.](#)

Marine Gen. James E. Cartwright, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at the annual Association of the United States Army heralded recent progress made in tying old and new networks together for a broader missile defense shield, making the system more adaptable. The system can tie into radars that were built in the 1970s, and newer command and control systems are able to tap into these radars, expanding their range and flexibility. [General Cartwright: "Future Weapons Need to be Adaptable, Cost Less"](#)

NATO Secretary General meets U.S. President



President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, State Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton and National Security Advisor General James L. Jones met with Secretary General

Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The leaders discussed the way forward for Afghanistan. [Read more](#)

NATO TV FEATURES





Ministers meeting in Bratislava. The ceremony marked a declaration of intent by nine NATO Allies to

contribute to a multi-national helicopter initiative. HIP will provide NATO operations with additional airlift capability through a multi-national program that the HIP Helicopter Task Force will manage. [Read more](#)



[Recruiting the Afghan National Army](#)

More than 300 recruits apply for positions in the Afghan National Army monthly

RECENT KEY SPEECHES



[NATO in a New Era of Engagement](#)
Returning to Chatham House in London for the first time as Ambassador to the U.S. Mission to NATO, Ambassador Ivo Daalder spoke to representatives from government, academia, and think tanks about the future of NATO engagement

in the world.

[A New Era for Transatlantic Cooperation](#)

What's the context for the Obama administration as it faces global challenges shared by Europe? Assistant Secretary of European and Eurasian Affairs Philip H. Gordon said in Brussels on September 30. See more of what Dr. Gordon said to Allied officials, think tanks, academics, and journalists at the Transatlantic Policy Network

natochannel.tv



[NATO's latest documentary on the Tangi Valley, Afghanistan](#) A mission to combat the significant number of IEDs

Transatlantic Focus: A USNATO Public Affairs Newsletter

is published and distributed by the Public Affairs Section of the United States Mission to NATO - Brussels.