

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
April 18 - 25, 2012

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1. [Ambassador Rice at U.N. Debate on Global Security Threats \(04-25-2012\)](#)

Remarks by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, At a Security Council Open Debate on Threats to International Security: Securing Borders against Illicit Flows, April 25, 2012

I want to begin by thanking the Secretary General for his important statement and for his participation in today's open event. I wish to thank Council colleagues as well for their thoughtful contributions to today's event and the preparations for it.

In our interconnected world, our system of collective security is only as strong as the weakest links in the chain. One of those weak links today is the poorly secured borders that are exploited for the illicit transfer of arms and drugs; of materials for nuclear, chemical and biological weapons; of terrorists and their funds; of conflict minerals; and even of human beings – a modern day form of slavery. Such illicit transfers across borders increasingly undermine the sovereignty and internal stability of member states and can threaten international peace and security. The dangers posed by these transfers are not limited to fragile or particularly vulnerable states. They affect us all.

The Security Council has often addressed these transfers individually, in specific regional contexts. For example, we have examined how illicit arms transfers have exacerbated instability in the Sahel and fueled longstanding conflict in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. We have seen how arms smuggling from Iran – in violation of UN sanctions – exacerbates conflict in the Middle East and supports terrorist groups worldwide. We have also discussed how drug trafficking has directly contributed to internal disorder in Guinea-Bissau.

These are just a few examples. The Security Council has been involved in the question of illicit trafficking and movement for a long time. But we have tended to look at each item trafficked in isolation of the common feature they share: the vulnerabilities at poorly secured borders that are too easily exploited by nefarious networks.

States already understand very well how important it is to control their borders and often ask for international assistance in doing so. States recognize their self interest in protecting their territory and people from these interrelated phenomena that threaten their sovereignty, corrode governing institutions and undermine internal security. States additionally have international obligations – including those derived from Chapter VII of the UN Charter, including UN sanctions – that require them to intercept or control contraband. There are already significant bilateral, multilateral and regional efforts underway to help states defend their borders, and these efforts should be supported and encouraged. But today we focus on the UN's operational capacity.

We believe that the United Nations system could improve its help to states to secure their borders and to put in place related intelligence and law enforcement cooperation, customs standards, and administrative and legal frameworks. This is why we have convened this debate today.

Many elements of the UN system – as well as national, regional and other multilateral organizations – are already doing excellent work to assist states to protect their borders and implement their relevant international obligations. In response to requests from member states, organizations as diverse as Interpol, UNODC, the World Customs Organization, UN peacekeeping missions, and the IAEA provide such assistance. Also doing this work are a number of Council-created bodies such as the 1540 Committee, the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and our Sanctions Committees and their expert panels. The United States fully supports all these efforts. We are also committed to helping fund efforts by the UN's Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force Working Group on Border Management to enhance international, regional and national policy and practice relating to border management in the context of countering terrorism.

These bodies are all doing important work, but because they are so narrowly focused on specific threats, they may be unaware of overlapping efforts or miss opportunities to pool knowledge and expertise. After all, these different bodies are often evaluating the same state institutions and legislative frameworks, providing similar technical advice, and appealing to the same pool of donors for assistance. Put simply, they are all working on different aspects of the same problem: how to help states that want it and need it to better secure and control the flow of illicit goods across their borders. Surely, there is scope to streamline and strengthen the UN's capacity to help states secure their borders, while realizing efficiencies in the process. The Security Council can make an important contribution to this effort, but it is vital that the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other UN bodies continue to remain fully engaged as well. This complex, cross-cutting challenge cannot be tackled effectively by any single body alone. Many UN actors play a role in these capacity-building efforts, and it is logical that they work better together – as one UN system – to assist member states.

We therefore welcome the Security Council's request to the Secretary-General to provide a diagnostic assessment of these efforts. The Security Council needs a birds-eye view of them across the UN system. The U.S. hopes the Secretary-General's report will also offer any proposals as appropriate for improvement. By helping member states to secure their borders, this Council can respond to and, we hope help, prevent these evolving threats to international peace and security. With this goal in mind, we look forward to revisiting this issue in six months and to taking effective action.

Thank you.

[U.S. Envoy Rice at U.N. on Sudan, South Sudan, Syria](#) (04-24-2012)

[U.S. Envoy Rice at Security Council Debate on Middle East](#) (04-23-2012)

[U.S. Envoy Rice on U.N. Supervisory Mission in Syria](#) (04-22-2012)

[Ambassador Rice on U.N. Designation of Iranian Arms Smugglers](#) (04-20-2012)

[Amb. Rice at U.N. on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Security](#) (04-19-2012)

2. Panetta Visit to Expand South American Defense Ties (04-24-2012)

By Cheryl Pellerin
American Forces Press Service

Washington — During his first visit to South America as defense secretary, which starts today, Leon E. Panetta will meet over the next week with military officials in Colombia, Brazil and Chile, Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said.

The secretary “is looking to expand defense and security cooperation with three important countries in the region and, increasingly, in the world,” Little added.

Panetta will travel to Bogota in Colombia, Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, and Santiago in Chile.

This trip follows a late-March visit by Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the U.S. Southern Command in Miami, Fla., and then to Brazil and Colombia.

In Brazil Dempsey met with Defense Minister Antonio Celoso Amorim and top-ranking military official Gen. Jose Carlos de Nardi in Brasilia, and in Bogota with Colombian Defense Minister Juan Carlos Pinzon Bueno and Gen. Alejandro Navas, commander of the Colombian Armed Forces.

For Panetta, one set of discussions in South America will focus on partnering with Brazil, Chile and Colombia to help build capacity for the military to assist civil authorities in such Central American nations as Guatemala, El Salvador and Belize, a senior defense official told reporters in a background briefing on Friday.

“The challenges these countries face are towering compared to their own capacity to deal with them,” he said, adding that Brazil, Chile and Colombia already are significant contributors to building partner capacity.

Colombia, for example, offers capacity-building assistance in 16 countries inside and outside the region, including Africa.

Colombian service members have trained more than two dozen Mexican helicopter pilots and now train police in Honduras and Guatemala. The nation also provides assistance in nondefense areas like justice reform, the official said.

Also in the region, in the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake and tsunami in Haiti, thousands of U.S. and Brazilian military personnel worked together to provide life-saving relief to the Haitian people. It was the largest combined operation of U.S. and Brazilian military forces since they fought together as allies in World War II.

“We could have done better in Haiti if we had glued together the system in advance to provide for more effective defense support to civil authorities,” the official said.

“By collaborating with all three countries,” he added, “the United States can get down to specifics about which country will be conducting specific initiatives and what kinds of initiatives, so together we can ensure the investment we’re making ... is as efficient and effective as possible.”

During an April 9 meeting in Washington, President Barack Obama and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff established the U.S.-Brazil Defense Cooperation Dialogue and announced that Panetta and Amorim would hold the first meeting this week in Brazil.

The DCD will help bolster cooperation between DOD and Brazil’s Ministry of National Defense, and between the nations’ militaries, the White House said in a statement.

Beyond the Western Hemisphere, the Defense Department is looking to Colombia and Brazil, both of which already have deep ties to Africa and now provide assistance there, to help U.S. Africa Command with peacekeeping and other efforts there.

“Africa typifies the situation we’re in, where the United States has limited capacity to help build partner capabilities,” the defense official said.

“Brazil and Colombia ... are stepping up to the plate. Let’s collaborate with them, establish a dialogue between their militaries and Africom so we’re working in mutual support in an informed, cooperative way,” he added.

Panetta will also seek to expand the range of defense collaborations, including traditional military efforts such as training, exchanges and joint exercises.

“Clearly we still have plenty to talk about in continuing to support the Colombians in their efforts against the narcoterrorist group FARC, for Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarios de Colombia or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombiato talk about counternarcotics,” the official said.

Panetta also will discuss new challenges like cyber security and defense support to civil authorities that offer opportunities for collaboration.

In 2014 Brazil will host the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, or FIFA, World Cup tournament in Rio de Janeiro, and two years later that city will host the 2016 Olympic Games.

“We know in the United States how to provide defense support to civil authorities, to law enforcement or to help prepare for the kinds of challenges these world-class sporting events can attract,” he said, “so we’re going to share expertise and talk about the kind of dialogue that will help nations get prepared.”

He added, “In the context of limited resources of the United States for defense ... we have an opportunity to partner together with other nations so they become security exporters.”

Panetta, Little said, sees Brazil, Chile and Colombia “as increasingly important players on the regional stage and also in terms of their leadership roles internationally.”

All have made progress in terms of their economies, their militaries and their political situations over the last several years, he added.

“These three countries are on the upswing in many areas and it’s time for us to enhance our already strong cooperation with all three,” Little said.

Biographies:

[Leon E. Panetta](#)

Related Sites:

[Special Report: Travels With Panetta](#)

[Latin America, U.S. Face Common Challenges, Panetta Says](#)

[Panetta Promises Continued Support to Colombia](#)

[3. Lyman: Major Diplomatic Effort Under Way on Sudan, South Sudan \(04-20-2012\)](#)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.

Staff Writer | 20 April 2012

Washington — U.S. Special Envoy Princeton Lyman says Sudan and South Sudan are seeking a diplomatic resolution to disputed borders and other issues related to oil production in disputed areas, and a number of major international diplomatic activities are underway to defuse the tense situation.

“We are, of course, dealing with a very, very serious crisis between Sudan and South Sudan, one in which armed clashes are taking place, and a major event took place a few days ago with South Sudan’s occupation of the Heglig area” that is in a disputed region between the two African nations, [Lyman said during a teleconference briefing](#) with Washington journalists April 20. Both sides are mindful of international pressure to avoid an escalation of violence.

South Sudan has withdrawn its forces from Heglig within the past day, according to published news reports and statements by diplomats at the United Nations.

In July 2011, South Sudan became independent of Sudan in the culmination of a peace initiative that ended a 22-year civil war. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which ended the conflict in 2005, did not address internal matters in Sudan’s border states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. Lyman said the Sudanese government must address those concerns with the people of those two border states to end the conflict there.

Lyman, U.S. special envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, said from Khartoum that after meeting with government and political party leaders there and in Juba he is convinced both nations are looking for a way out of the crisis, though each has different approaches. The international community has reacted swiftly and is unified in trying to thwart further violence. Lyman said the U.N. Security Council met in a crucial session April 19 in New York, and the African Union Peace and Security Council will meet in the coming week. In addition, the Arab League, at the request of Sudan, will hold an emergency meeting in Cairo in the coming week to discuss ways to resolve the conflict.

Susan Rice, the U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations, told reporters during a [brief press conference](#) April 19 at U.N. headquarters that the Security Council has said plainly that “the violence needs to stop without preconditions; both sides need to return to the negotiating table.”

“We strongly condemned the violence that has erupted, the resumption of hostilities on the border, in particular the occupation of Heglig,” Rice said. She is the current president of the U.N. Security

Council, which rotates among the 15 council members each month. Rice said the U.N. Security Council has called for South Sudan to remove its military forces from Heglig, and for Sudan to stop aerial bombardment and incursions into South Sudan as well as many other instances of border violence.

Lyman said that while there is ample international activity to seek a peaceful resolution, “that doesn’t mean this is going to be easy. Emotions are running very, very high.”

4. U.S. Wants Transition that Fulfills Syria’s “Greatest Aspirations” (04-19-2012)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Like its response to political unrest in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, the Obama administration’s reaction to the violence in Syria has been based on opposition to regime violence, support for universal human rights and for reforms that will meet “the legitimate aspirations of ordinary people throughout the region,” Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told U.S. lawmakers.

Speaking before the House Armed Services Committee April 19 with Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Martin Dempsey, Panetta said, “Our policy in Syria is very clear: We support a political and democratic transition that fulfills the Syrian people's greatest aspirations.”

Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad’s regime “has lost its legitimacy,” and “this crisis has no effective solution without Assad's departure,” he said.

At the same time, he said, the situation in the country is “enormously complex,” and there is “no silver bullet” for ending the crisis.

The United States has been active in the United Nations Security Council in calling for “the urgent, comprehensive and immediate implementation” of Special U.N. Envoy Kofi Annan’s peace plan, which includes a cease-fire, the withdrawal of Syrian troops and heavy weaponry from populated areas, free access for humanitarian organizations, the release of political detainees and for all sides in the conflict to hold talks on a political solution.

In addition, the Obama administration has been encouraging other countries to join it in implementing strong sanctions to undermine “the financial lifeline of the regime,” such as targeting senior Syrian leaders, their commercial interests and the Central Bank of Syria, Panetta said.

As a result of these U.S. measures and actions by other nations, the regime has lost 30 percent of its revenues, Panetta said.

The Obama administration is also providing \$25 billion in emergency humanitarian assistance for Syrians inside the country and those who have fled to neighboring countries, and it is in the process of providing “direct, nonlethal support, including communications and medical equipment, to the civilian-led opposition,” he said.

Panetta said Syria’s Arab neighbors are struggling with the same questions the rest of the international community is facing: what additional action to end the Assad regime’s attacks against its people would make sense, who is the Syrian opposition and how can it best be assisted, and how to “best provide the kind of help that the Syrian people need in order to overcome the situation.”

Asked about the possibility of a U.S. military intervention in the crisis, Panetta said, “The only way that the United States would get involved militarily is if there's a consensus in the international community to try to do something along those lines. And then, obviously, ensure that the international community is able to get the authorities required in order to make that happen.”

In his testimony, General Dempsey said the Assad regime should have responded to protests, which broke out in March 2011, with “real democratic reform” instead of brutality. Syrian military leaders, he said, should be recognizing that “the kind of violence they're using against their own citizens is a fool's errand and that, at some point, that will, in fact, jeopardize them as a institution.”

He added, “That could be one of the reasons they're beginning to hold on tighter now is that they have used this violence.”

But he said change in Syria is “inevitable,” and that the model of a powerful leader who suppresses his population is no longer viable in the Middle East and North Africa.

The United States is eager to support “these populations that have long not been reaping the benefits of the resources in their country, have been suppressed politically and in some cases have been suppressed even in terms of their religious freedoms — and certainly women's rights,” Dempsey said. But he also warned that “getting from here to there is going to be a wild ride,” and predicted there will be “10 or 15 years of instability in a region that has already been characterized by instability.”

[Secretaries Clinton, Panetta on Afghanistan, Syria, North Korea](#) (04-19-2012)

[Ambassador Rice at U.N. on Syria, North Korea, Sudan](#) (04-19-2012)

5. Clinton, Panetta: NATO Partners Committed to Afghanistan (04-18-2012)

By Karen Parrish
American Forces Press Service

BRUSSELS, April 18, 2012 – Meetings today provided a clear sense of NATO’s ongoing commitment to the security mission in Afghanistan up to and beyond 2014, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said at NATO headquarters here today.

The two leaders are attending a gathering of the alliance’s defense and foreign ministers. Clinton will remain for more meetings tomorrow; Panetta will return to the United States after defense-focused meetings end today.

“We had a very good series of meetings today,” Panetta said during a news conference with Clinton. “Much of our discussion focused on our shared effort in Afghanistan. What came out of these meetings was a strong commitment to sticking to the plan and the strategy that’s been rolled out by General John R. Allen,” International Security Assistance Force commander.

“Allies and partners have a very clear vision and a very clear message: Our strategy is right, our strategy is working, and if we stick to it, we can achieve the mission of establishing an Afghanistan that can secure and govern itself, and never again become a safe haven for terrorists,” Panetta said.

NATO is committed to that goal, he said, and the alliance's determination can withstand the challenges of war in Afghanistan. "We saw some of those challenges over this last weekend. ... There will be losses, there will be casualties, there will be incidents of the kind we have seen in the last few days," he said, referring to coordinated attacks April 15 in and around the Afghan capital of Kabul.

Afghan forces' response to the attacks in Kabul demonstrates that they have learned to do what NATO forces have trained them to do, Panetta said. "They responded quickly, professionally and with great courage, rendering ineffective those largely symbolic attacks," he added.

Panetta noted that Allen has said history proves insurgencies ultimately are defeated not by foreign troops, but by indigenous security forces.

Afghan forces know the ground, the culture and "the neighborhood," he added. "When the Afghans win, we win," he said.

Clinton said the United States is grateful for "the solidarity and steadfastness of our NATO and ISAF partners."

U.S. and NATO officials note the gathering is the final preparation session for the NATO summit set for next month in Chicago. NATO summits are not regularly scheduled meetings, but occur when the alliance has important issues to resolve.

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said today one central item of business for the Chicago summit will be determining NATO's support to Afghan forces after they assume security responsibility for their nation by the end of 2014.

That timeline was agreed at the last NATO summit, which took place in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2010. The other main issue for the Chicago summit, Rasmussen said, involves shaping NATO future capabilities.

Biographies:

[Leon E. Panetta](#)

Related Sites:

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[NATO](#)

[NATO International Security Assistance Force](#)

[6. Afghan Security Transition Timetable "On Track," Clinton Says \(04-18-2012\)](#)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The transition of security control of Afghanistan from international forces to the Afghan government is "on track" for 2014, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said, adding that countries in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization had met and reaffirmed their support for the transition and their "enduring commitment to Afghanistan."

Speaking in Brussels April 18 with Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, Clinton said, "We are on track to meet the December 2014 deadline for completing the security transition. Already 50 percent of the Afghan people are secured primarily by Afghan forces, and by this spring it will be 75 percent."

When NATO members meet in Chicago in May, they will decide on the next phase of the transition, Clinton said, and hope to be ready to "define NATO's enduring relationship with Afghanistan after 2014." Clinton added that NATO will "work with the Afghans to ensure that the Afghan national security force is fully funded."

The security transition is only part of a "larger enterprise" that includes political and economic dimensions for Afghanistan's future, Clinton said, and others in the international community and Afghanistan's neighbors have "a central role to play."

"Beyond NATO, many nations are invested in Afghanistan's future and are providing support for the Afghans to attain self-reliance, stability and further their democratic future," she said.

The secretary responded to reports of an April 17 incident in which water at a girl's school in Afghanistan was poisoned, sickening 150 girls. She said such incidents serve as a reminder that "there are people who would destroy Afghanistan's long-term future in order to restrict the rights of women and girls."

"Human rights protections for religious and ethnic minorities are also still fragile. Universal human rights are critical to Afghanistan's security and prosperity, and we will continue to make them a priority," she said.

Clinton also praised the "fast and effective" response of Afghan security forces to recent attacks in Kabul.

"Not long ago, this kind of response by Afghans themselves would not have been possible. So the Afghans are proving themselves increasingly ready to take control of their own future," she said.

Panetta said that in the incidents, the internationally trained Afghan forces "responded quickly, professionally and with great courage, rendering ineffective those largely symbolic attacks that we saw in and around Kabul."

He said history has shown that insurgencies ultimately are best defeated by local forces who know the terrain, culture and the neighborhood. "When the Afghans do their job, we are doing our job. When the Afghans win, we win," Panetta said.

Under the third phase of the transition this spring, Afghans are increasing their security and governance responsibility from more than 50 percent of Afghanistan's population to 75 percent. "They have been in the lead for counterterrorism night operations since December, and now, thanks to a memorandum of understanding that was recently signed, all of these operations will fall under the authority of Afghan law," Panetta said.

The defense secretary added, "In less than six months' time, Afghan security forces will take full leadership of detention operations, thanks again to another agreement that was signed recognizing Afghan sovereignty."

The defense secretary also cited an increase in the number of former Taliban forces that have put down their arms and reintegrated into Afghan society. In January 2011, some 600 Taliban had

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participated in the program, and as of April 2012, the number has increased to more than 4,000, he said.

“We intend to build on this success. We're committed to an enduring presence in Afghanistan post-2014 and a continuing effort to train, advise and assist the ANSF Afghan National Security Forces in protecting the Afghan people and denying terrorists a safe haven. We cannot and we will not abandon Afghanistan,” Panetta said.

[Secretaries Clinton, Panetta at NATO Headquarters in Brussels](#) (04-18-2012)
