

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
December 4 - 11, 2013

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1. [Nuclear Deal Will Protect U.S. Security, Contain Iran](#) (12-11-2013)

Washington — Secretary of State John Kerry is urging congressional leaders to allow diplomacy to work and let an international agreement on Iran's nuclear development move forward as negotiated by the six participating nations.

"We're at one of those, really, hinge points in history," Kerry said in testimony before the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee on December 10. "One path could lead to an enduring resolution in the international community's concerns about Iran's nuclear program. The other path could lead to continued hostility and, potentially, to conflict."

The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, Germany and the European Union have been involved in discussions with Iran to contain its nuclear program since 2006. A turning point came in late November, when negotiators emerged from a Geneva meeting with what the White House described as some initial understandings to halt the progress of Iran's nuclear program. The agreement will reverse the program in several respects that are important to the nations that oppose the expansion of nuclear capabilities by Iran.

In return, the United States, Russia, China, France, Germany and the United Kingdom agreed to ease U.N.-imposed sanctions against Iranian oil sales, offering the opportunity for economic relief.

That concession has been met with skepticism from some U.S. lawmakers, who called Kerry to Capitol Hill for further discussion about the deal.

Preventing the development of a nuclear weapon by Iran is a key element of Obama administration foreign policy, Kerry emphasized. This agreement serves that end and protects the security interests of the United States.

The agreement “provides unprecedented monitoring and inspections” of Iran’s nuclear program, Kerry said. “We will have increased transparency of Iran’s nuclear program, giving us a window into their activities that we don’t have today,” he added.

International weapons inspectors will have access to Iranian nuclear facilities to which they have had very limited or no access in the past. The deal calls for inspection opportunities at the Fordow, Natanz and Arak facilities, Kerry noted, which will give the international community “extraordinary ability” to monitor whether Iran is freezing and reversing some aspects of its nuclear program as agreed.

The parties to the agreement are unified in the position that “we will not undo the sanctions and that we will stay focused on their enforcement,” Kerry said.

Critics of the deal have put forth what Kerry described as “outlandish numbers” regarding the sanction relief that the agreement offers Iran. Estimates by the U.S. intelligence community and the Treasury Department indicate that the sanction relief will be approximately \$7 billion, Kerry said, if Iran complies with the agreement.

“We are structuring this relief in a way that it is tied to concrete, International Atomic Energy Agency-verified steps that they’ve agreed to take on the nuclear program,” Kerry said.

The secretary of state recalled his earlier service as a U.S. senator, when he supported the imposition of tough sanction on Iranian oil sales. The fact that negotiators have reached this agreement proves the sanctions have worked, Kerry said. Now the United States must uphold its end of the deal to ease those economic constraints.

Some critics of the deal have proposed even further sanctions since it was unveiled in November. As Kerry urged the House Foreign Affairs Committee against such action, the Obama administration gained ground on the issue in the U.S. Senate.

The chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, Tim Johnson of South Dakota, backed away from proposals for further sanctions, according to news reports. Johnson was quoted as saying that the Obama administration has “made a case for a pause in congressional action on new Iran sanctions.”

The agreement is an initial understanding with a six-month expiration. Since re-evaluation will occur at that time, “general parameters of a comprehensive solution that would constrain Iran’s nuclear program over the long term” are being discussed, according to a White House statement.

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[Secretary Kerry on Middle East Peace Negotiations](#)

[Kerry on First-Step Agreement with Iran on Its Nuclear Program](#)

2. Obama Reflects on Life and Legacy of Nelson Mandela (12-10-2013)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama praised the life and legacy of Nelson Mandela, who struggled to bring social justice and democracy to his beloved nation and influenced the world in ways few other leaders achieve.

“Born during World War I, far from the corridors of power, a boy raised herding cattle and tutored by the elders of his Thembu tribe, Madiba would emerge as the last great liberator of the 20th century,” Obama said of Mandela at a memorial service in Johannesburg on December 10.

Obama compared Mandela, who was imprisoned for 27 years by the former apartheid government, to some of the greatest social justice advocates of the 19th and 20th centuries.

“Like Gandhi, he would lead a resistance movement — a movement that at its start had little prospect for success. Like Dr. King, he would give potent voice to the claims of the oppressed and the moral necessity of racial justice,” Obama said.

“He would endure a brutal imprisonment that began in the time of Kennedy and Khrushchev and reached the final days of the Cold War. Emerging from prison, without the force of arms, he would, like Abraham Lincoln, hold his country together when it threatened to break apart,” Obama said.

Mandela, Obama said, like the men who founded the United States, would build a constitutional order to preserve freedom for future South African generations and embrace democracy and the rule of law. Mandela became the first elected black president of South Africa in 1994 as the apartheid era ended.

Mandela taught the world the power of action, the power of ideas, the importance of reason and arguments, the need to study those you agree with and those you don't, Obama said. And Mandela understood that ideas cannot be constrained by a prison's walls nor be extinguished by a sniper's bullet. Mandela also fully understood the power of the human spirit.

“There is a word in South Africa — Ubuntu — a word that captures Mandela's greatest gift: his recognition that we are all bound together in ways that are invisible to the eye, that there is oneness to humanity, that we achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others and caring for those around us,” Obama said.

First lady Michelle Obama, former President George W. Bush and his wife Laura, former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, and former President Jimmy Carter also attended the memorial service.

Mandela died December 5 at his Johannesburg home surrounded by his family. He was 95. A state funeral will be held December 15 in Mandela's ancestral village of Qunu in the Eastern Cape province.

Related Articles:

[President Obama at Memorial Service for Nelson Mandela](#)

3. Hagel Concludes Six-day Troop, Partner Nation Visits (12-10-2013)

By Karen Parrish
American Forces Press Service

DOHA, Qatar, Dec. 10, 2013 – Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel wrapped up a dual-purpose six-day trip to the Middle East and Southwest Asia here today.

As the secretary told troops at his last stop here, “The first priority and the real reason I was out here and spent time was to thank our troops, thank our men and women who do so much for all of us.”

Hagel also spent time engaging with allies and partners to assure them of the United States’ commitment to the region. He delivered a speech on the U.S. regional force posture in Manama, Bahrain. Hagel also spent two days in Afghanistan talking with Afghan military leaders and U.S. troops and ground commanders. And, he attended high-level meetings in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and here.

The secretary’s day in Qatar started at a palace and concluded at a semi-secret military facility. In the interim, Hagel and Qatari Defense Minister Maj. Gen. Hamad bin Ali Al Attiyah formally renewed the U.S.-Qatar Defense Cooperation Agreement. The agreement governs training, exercises and other cooperative interactions between U.S. and Qatari forces.

“This agreement promotes cooperation and is a testament to the longstanding security partnership enjoyed by the United States and Qatar,” Assistant Pentagon Press Secretary Carl Woog said in a written statement.

Woog added that the accord “underscores the close partnership between the United States and its Gulf Cooperation Council partners, which Secretary Hagel highlighted in his remarks at the Manama Dialogue this past weekend.”

The secretary’s first stop today was the Sea Palace, where he met with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad, Qatar’s emir. He then moved on to the signing ceremony at Qatar’s government headquarters, and then paid a visit to U.S. and coalition forces at the Combined Air and Space Operations Center, located at Al Udeid Airbase, a Qatari base that hosts the U.S. command-and-control facility.

Addressing service members there -- his fourth troop talk this week -- Hagel thanked them and their families, offering his and President Barack Obama’s best wishes for the holiday season.

“I know occasionally you’re stuck in remote places and you wonder if anybody even knows where you are or who you are or what you’re doing,” the secretary said. “Let me assure you, we do.”

The center where they work coordinates military air operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility by integrating nearly 30 nations’ capabilities into a complete, real-time overview of mission execution. Hagel told troops that multinational approach is “where the world’s going.”

A senior defense official traveling with the secretary told reporters on background that the center might be unique in the degree of talent it brings together.

“There’s probably no other facility where you can go and see so many partners operating together at once,” the official said. “So that’s a story that is important, to reassure our allies and our partners.”

The official added that the center, which military leaders have in the past been reluctant to publicize because of regional sensitivities, makes it “visible to the world that we’re working together on common defense.”

Hagel told the airmen, sailors, soldiers and Marines at Al Udeid that the experience and training Gulf nation representatives receive there, along with integrated allied participation from the United Kingdom and Canada, furthers U.S. aims to build partner capacity.

“Our partners are going to be as important, and probably more so, than they’ve ever been, for our own national security and for their national security,” the secretary said, emphasizing a message he has delivered throughout his time in office.

“The more we can understand each other and work with each other, the better the world is going to be,” Hagel told the troops. “I’m particularly impressed with that part of what you’re doing here.”

The secretary began his trip telling delegates to the Manama Dialogue in Bahrain that the United States will maintain its troop posture in the region and that it seeks to strengthen coalitions there. He repeated that message today.

“We’re not going to get disconnected from our allies in this region,” he told reporters traveling with him before boarding the plane for Washington. “Our common interests are very clear here.”

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[Chuck Hagel](#)

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4. Secretary Kerry’s Travel to Middle East, Southeast Asia (12-09-2013)

Statement by Jen Psaki, spokesperson

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry will travel to Jerusalem, Ramallah, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Tacloban, and Manila from Dec. 11-18, 2013.

In Jerusalem, Secretary Kerry will meet with Prime Minister Netanyahu to discuss a range of issues including Iran and the ongoing final status negotiations with the Palestinians. In Ramallah, Secretary Kerry will meet with President Abbas, where he will also discuss the ongoing final status negotiations, among other issues.

This trip to Asia will be his fourth to the region since becoming Secretary of State (he also traveled to Sunnylands, Calif., in June with the President to meet Chinese Premier Xi). Within the Asia-Pacific rebalance, Southeast Asia holds special importance, and the Secretary’s travel to Vietnam and the Philippines demonstrates the enduring U.S. commitment and his personal connections to the region. The Secretary’s visit to Vietnam will highlight the dramatic transformation in the bilateral relationship over the years and our growing partnership in many areas.

In Ho Chi Minh City, Secretary Kerry’s meetings will underscore the growth of our bilateral trade relationship and the empowering role of education. His visit to the Mekong Delta will emphasize

how Americans and Vietnamese can work together on critical issues such as climate change and renewable energy.

In Hanoi, the Secretary will meet with senior Vietnamese leaders to advance the Comprehensive Partnership announced by President Obama and President Sang in July and to discuss a wide range of bilateral and regional issues.

Secretary Kerry will then travel to the Philippines, our longtime U.S. friend and ally. In Manila, the Secretary will meet with senior Philippine officials to discuss ways to build on our already-strong economic, security, and people-to-people relations. Then, the Secretary will visit the storm-hit city of Tacloban to witness first-hand the recovery efforts that are taking place there and discuss how the United States can continue to contribute to the relief and reconstruction work.

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5. Hagel Outlines U.S. Posture, Way Ahead in Middle East (12-07-2013)

By Karen Parrish
American Forces Press Service

MANAMA, Bahrain, Dec. 7, 2013 – In a speech before the Manama Dialogue security conference here today, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel emphasized the strength of America’s presence in the Middle East and called for closer cooperation with the Gulf states.

The six-month interim agreement aimed at preventing Iran from producing nuclear weapons reached in November between Iran and the five permanent member of the United Nations Security Council -- the United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom and France -- plus Germany, Hagel said, will not alter U.S. presence or determination in the region.

“It is only a first step,” he said. “But it could be an important step. It halts any further expansion of Iran’s nuclear program, begins to roll it back in important ways, and provides sweeping access to verify ... Iran’s intentions.”

The Defense Department will not adjust its forces in the region or its military planning as a result of the interim agreement with Iran, the secretary said.

“We have bought time for meaningful negotiation, not for deception,” Hagel said. “All of us are clear-eyed ... about the challenges that remain to achieving a comprehensive nuclear solution with Iran.”

He noted that in Syria, international pressure and the threat of U.S. military action created an opening for diplomacy with Russia. That led to a U.N. Security Council resolution and the involvement of the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons, which put inspectors on the ground in Syria to oversee the removal and destruction of the Assad regime’s chemical weapons.

“We remain on track to destroy Syria’s arsenal of chemical weapons,” the secretary said. “The United States is working closely with our key allies and the international community in this process and has offered its unique technical capabilities and technology to help dispose of these weapons.

... Once the destruction is complete, a major chemical weapons threat will be eliminated. This will benefit the entire region and the world.”

Issues remain in Syria, Hagel said, but he vowed to work with regional partners to find a political settlement to the conflict.

“We must also confront the rise of violent extremist groups in Syria, and we must work together to ensure that our assistance to the opposition does not fall into the wrong hands,” he cautioned. The secretary noted that humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people remains a serious concern.

“The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian aid for displaced Syrians, and we will continue to support Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey as they provide refuge for victims of the conflict,” the secretary said. “The Syrian regime must also allow humanitarian assistance to reach the Syrian people.”

Hagel pointed out that the potent threat of U.S. military intervention helped to spur progress in resolving the nuclear and chemical weapons threats posed by Iran and Syria respectively, though each country continues to pose regional challenges.

The secretary set out the U.S. presence here: ground, air and sea forces number more than 35,000 U.S. troops in the Gulf area, he said, including “more than 10,000 forward-deployed soldiers in the region, along with heavy armor, artillery, and attack helicopters, to serve as a theater reserve and a bulwark against aggression.”

The secretary said the United States has deployed its most advanced aircraft, including F-22 fighters, throughout the region “to ensure that we can quickly respond to contingencies. Coupled with our unique munitions, no target is beyond our reach.”

The United States also employs its most advanced intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets here to provide a continuous picture of activities in and around the Gulf, Hagel said.

“And we have fielded an array of missile defense capabilities — including ballistic missile defense ships, Patriot surface-to-air missile batteries, and sophisticated radar,” he added.

To ensure freedom of navigation throughout the Gulf, the secretary said, the Navy routinely maintains a presence of more than 40 ships in the broader region, including a carrier strike group, and conducts a range of freedom-of-navigation operations.

“These operations include approximately 50 transits of the Strait of Hormuz over the past six months,” he noted.

The Navy has added five coastal patrol ships to U.S. 5th Fleet here this year, the secretary said, and has ramped up its minesweeping capabilities. DOD also will invest \$580 million in a construction program to support expanding 5th Fleet capabilities, Hagel said.

“Yesterday, I visited the Navy’s new afloat forward staging base, the USS Ponce,” he said, calling the ship “a unique platform for special operations, as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, in areas where we do not have a permanent, fixed presence.”

Hagel said during this trip, he also will meet with U.S. service members stationed at the Combined Air Operations Center in Qatar, “where we have representatives from our Gulf Cooperation Council partners training and working together.”

Hagel called for closer multilateral coordination among council members, the Persian Gulf states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

He offered three avenues the United States would like to pursue toward that end:

- A unified focus on missile defense through the regional Air and Air Defense Chiefs' Conference, which meets several times a year;
- Making the Gulf Cooperation Council as an entity eligible for the U.S. Foreign Military Sales program; and
- Convening a regular forum, beginning within six months, where U.S. and Gulf defense leaders come together annually to assess progress and threats in regional security.

These measures constitute "a natural next step in improving U.S.-GCC collaboration," Hagel said, adding that foreign military sales "will enable the GCC to acquire critical military capabilities, including items for ballistic missile defense, maritime security and counter-terrorism."

The secretary noted that during his last trip to the region, in April, "we finalized agreements worth nearly \$11 billion that will provide access to high-end capabilities including F-15s, F-16s and advanced munitions such as standoff weapons." These capabilities are the most advanced the United States has ever provided to the region, he said.

"We will continue to ensure that all of our allies and partners in the region – including both Israel and the Gulf States – have these advanced weapons," the secretary pledged.

In the future, Hagel said, the Defense Department will place even more emphasis on building the capacity of regional partners to complement the strong, proven and enduring U.S. military presence in the region.

"Nations are stronger, not weaker, when they work together against common threats," the secretary said. "Closer cooperation between the GCC and the United States is in all of our countries' interests."

This year's Manama Dialogue, the ninth of its kind, drew hundreds of delegates from more than 20 countries. Other speakers at the gathering included representatives from Bahrain, the United Kingdom, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Egypt, Iraq, India, Qatar, Canada and Norway.

Yesterday, Hagel met here with Saudi Arabian Deputy Defense Minister Prince Salman bin Sultan to discuss regional issues, including Iran, Egypt and Syria. Assistant Pentagon Press Secretary Carl Woog said the secretary underscored in that meeting the strength of the bilateral relationship and noted that defense partnership is key in maintaining the long-standing ties between the two countries. Hagel said the United States remains committed to regional security and stability, a shared objective with Saudi Arabia, Woog reported.

The secretary indicated U.S.-Saudi defense cooperation is essential to maintaining the two nations' shared priorities. He highlighted the Saudi purchase of F-15SA aircraft and advanced weapons as an example of future of improved interoperability and coordination between both militaries, Woog said. The defense secretary will visit Saudi Arabia on Dec. 9.

Hagel also met yesterday at the Safria Palace here with King Hamad al Khalifa of Bahrain.

Hagel and the king discussed the long history of the –U.S.-Bahrain bilateral relationship, Woog said. The secretary emphasized U.S. commitment to Gulf security, and the two exchanged views on shared regional security challenges, including Iran and the signed joint plan of action between the P5+1 and Iran.

The meeting included significant discussion of reform in Bahrain and the importance of political inclusiveness for long-term stability. The secretary thanked the king for hosting the U.S. 5th Fleet and for Bahrain’s ongoing security cooperation, Woog said.

(Follow Karen Parrish on Twitter: @ParrishAFPS)

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6. Biden: U.S.-South Korea Alliance Key to Regional Security (12-06-2013)

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6, 2013 – The security alliance between the U.S. and South Korea is key to the Asia-Pacific region’s peace and stability, Vice President Joe Biden said in Seoul, South Korea.

Speaking to Yonsei University students about the U.S. rebalance toward the region, Biden assured his audience of the U.S. commitment.

“President Obama is absolutely committed to rebalance,” Biden said. “No one should underestimate or question our staying power. Just look at the last 60 years in Korea.

“Ask the people of Japan -- the Mutual Defense Treaty since 1960 and still going strong,” Biden continued. “Ask the people of the Philippines -- American helicopters, small ships, medical services, road clearing -- all responding on the backs of U.S. Marines when one of the most fierce tropical storms in history devastated their country.”

The vice president said the course of Asia-Pacific affairs in the 21st century is still being written.

“The rise of economies up and down the Pacific Rim are literally remaking the world,” Biden said. “But with this growth have come new risks and tensions above and beyond the enduring threats that we face.”

He continued, “And the rules and norms that help advance security and prosperity are still evolving to keep pace with the remarkable changes of the 21st century.”

Biden recalled how South Korean President Park Geun-Hye has spoken of a shared journey toward peace on the Korean Peninsula. The United States, he said, could not have any better partner to share that journey with than South Korea.

“President Park's vision of our journey is already taking shape, our alliance as a lynchpin for peace and security in the Asia-Pacific,” Biden said. “We not only stand side-by-side in the Korean Peninsula with all of you -- we stand watch around the world,” Biden said. “Korean sailors are fighting piracy off the shores of Somalia. Korean troops are showing their mettle alongside our own in Afghanistan.”

The vice president said this vision isn't just limited to security, noting the U.S. and South Korea are together fighting disease, illiteracy, hunger, and natural disasters as well as championing the rights of women around the world.

“Witness the response to the crisis in the Philippines,” Biden said. “The Republic of Korea is one of the only countries in the world whose development budget has actually gone up over the past years. You have not forgotten, apparently, what allowed you to rise again.”

Biden said the American people are “all in” for the economic, diplomatic and military rebalancing policy in the Asia-Pacific region.

“We're determined to strengthen our alliances, cultivate new partners in the Pacific Basin, build constructive relations with China, pursue major agreements that further integrate our economies, and join and strengthen the institutions of the Asia-Pacific and of the East Asian Summit,” he said.

Biden said the United States seeks an open, transparent economic order in the Asia-Pacific to deliver growth for all because in growth resides peace.

In addition to security, Biden said the way to sustain and enhance the Asia-Pacific region's “remarkable economic progress” is by eliminating trade barriers to enable all to participate in and benefit from the marketplace.

“These are the principles behind the Korean-U.S. Free Trade Agreement,” he noted. “Trade between our countries has already grown 65 percent from \$80 billion a year in the year 2000 to \$130 billion in 2012.”

This means employment, Biden said, which facilitates the ability to live a middle-class life resulting in stability.

“Of course, all that we hope to accomplish economically for our people depends upon our physical security,” the vice president said. “And that starts with our alliances -- South Korea, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, Thailand -- all in the Basin.”

The United States is “modernizing our alliances to meet the demands of the 21st century,” Biden said. “And we're promoting better cooperation among our allies.”

Biden said the Asia-Pacific region will be more stable and secure if democracies such as Japan, South Korea and the U.S. are able to improve their relations and cooperation with one another.

He also noted as the countries work together to build prosperity and security, that it should be accomplished upon shared values such as freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of religion, and democratic principles.

“These are the values that will power success for countries in the 21st century,” he said. “And it's what's allowed my country and yours to succeed.”

Biden said he's confident the U.S. and South Korea will continue to be "allies and kindred spirits for a long time to come."

"It's not merely our economic, our political and our strategic necessity for one another; it is ultimately based on shared common values," he said. "And so I think your future is bright."

(Follow Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone Marshall on Twitter: @MarshallAFPS)

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7. Kerry Cites Goals for 2014 NATO Summit (12-04-2013)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The 27-member NATO alliance is preparing for a 2014 summit in Britain and is focusing on three crucial issues: its future supporting Afghanistan security, future military capabilities and its partnerships with more than 44 nations, Secretary of State John Kerry says.

At a press briefing, Kerry said 2014 will be a pivotal time for the Afghan mission and preparations for the transformation of future NATO engagement.

Kerry attended the annual NATO foreign ministers meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels December 3–4. Kerry met separately with a number of foreign ministers and European Union High Representative Catherine Ashton. She has been leading talks in Geneva between a group of six nations — Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States — and Iran over Iran's nuclear development program.

Speaking with journalists December 3, Kerry said the foreign ministers discussed at length the transition to full Afghan leadership of the country's security after the NATO security assistance mission ends next year and the United States completes its drawdown of combat forces.

"We will also address the importance of maintaining a strong commitment to Afghanistan even after we end the NATO combat mission next year," Kerry said. "The United States is committed to do its part in contributing to the new mission to train, advise and assist Afghan security forces."

The United States is encouraging Afghan President Hamid Karzai to sign "sooner, not later" a security agreement with the United States to allow some American military forces to remain in Afghanistan after the combat mission ends.

The agreement under negotiation — known as a bilateral security agreement — will serve as a template for a similar status-of-forces agreement that would be signed by NATO nations with Afghanistan. Kerry said there are more than 50 nations who are engaged in Afghanistan through the NATO-led security mission and they will need time to adjust forces, make planning requirements, meet deployment and equipment requirements, and conduct budgetary planning in a brief period of time.

Karzai has acknowledged support for the security agreement, and it has also won support from the council of Afghan elders known as the Loya Jirga.

“What we are asking for is the optimum, which is to try to manage this transition in Afghanistan,” Kerry said.

NATO is also examining how to invest in the capabilities, the exercises and the training that will enable the member nations to address the security challenges of the future, Kerry said.

One of the lessons learned from NATO’s history is the value of helping to support local security forces, particularly as a means of stabilizing post-conflict situations, Kerry said. “We now need to institutionalize this ability to be able to train, and we need to do what we can to help countries that need and want our support in that training exercise,” he said.

Kerry said NATO is also examining how to energize existing partnerships like the ones that exist in the countries of the Mediterranean and the Gulf, and how to deepen cooperation with key operational partners. As NATO has conducted operations in other regions, it has drawn support from a considerable number of partners that has enhanced NATO’s ability to deploy whenever and wherever needed, Kerry noted.

The 2014 NATO Summit in South Wales will be hosted by British Prime Minister David Cameron September 4–5, 2014.

“We will take further steps to modernize our alliance so that it remains strong, flexible and ready to face any security challenge,” NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said December 4. “And we will reaffirm the bond between Europe and North America that is the source of our strength, our security and our success.”

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