

**INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE**  
**April 16 - 23, 2014**

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**1. [Obama to Begin Fifth Trip to Asia-Pacific Region](#) (04-23-2014)**

By Cheryl Pellerin  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 21, 2014 – President Barack Obama will begin his fifth visit to the Asia-Pacific region April 23 -- a six-day trip that includes stops in Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and the Philippines -- to underscore his administration's continued focus on the world's largest emerging region.

Ben Rhodes, deputy national security advisor for strategic communications, announced the trip April 18, noting that the president had to postpone planned visits to Malaysia and the Philippines last year during the Oct. 1-16 government shutdown.

National Security Advisor Susan Rice joined Rhodes for the announcement.

“Over the next five years, nearly half of all growth outside the United States is expected to come from Asia,” Rice said.

The region includes several important U.S. allies, developing democracies and emerging powers, she added, “so we increasingly see our top priorities as tied to Asia, whether it's accessing new markets or promoting exports, or protecting our security interests and promoting our core values.”

Japan, Korea, Malaysia and the Philippines intersect with the administration's priorities, Rice said, which include modernizing alliances, supporting democratic development, advancing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP, and commercial ties, investing in regional institutions such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, and deepening cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

The TPP is a proposed trade agreement under negotiation by Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States and Vietnam. The agreement seeks to enhance trade and investment among TPP partner countries; promote innovation, economic growth and development; and support job creation and retention.

"Expanding American trade and investment links with Asia is also fundamental to our efforts to access new markets, create American jobs and export more goods from here in the United States to that very important region," Rice said. "Throughout the trip, the president will ... meet with business leaders and promote initiatives like SelectUSA that support investment in the United States."

SelectUSA seeks to highlight advantages the United States offers as a location for business and investment.

"The TPP is a focal point of our effort to establish high standards for trade across the Asia Pacific and ensure a level playing field for U.S. businesses and workers," Rice added.

In visiting Japan and Malaysia, two of the 12 key TPP partners, she said, the president will have a chance to continue to make progress on the agreement.

The trip also will give the United States a chance to affirm its commitment to a rules-based order in the region, the national security adviser said, at a time of ongoing regional tensions, particularly with regard to North Korea and territorial disputes.

"There's a significant demand for U.S. leadership in the region, and our strategy of rebalancing to Asia includes economic, political, security and cultural interests in Northeast and Southeast Asia," Rice noted.

"No other nation ... has a network of alliances and partnerships in Asia that match ours," she said, "and our alliances remain the foundation of our strategy."

The United States is focused on modernizing these alliances to make them more relevant to the 21st century and to security challenges, while building them into platforms for cooperation on regional and global challenges, the national security advisor added.

Modernizing alliances also was a focus of Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's April 1-10 visit to the Asia-Pacific region, his fourth in less than 12 months.

Hagel began the trip with in Hawaii for a meeting that he initiated and hosted with defense ministers of the 10 member countries of ASEAN -- Burma, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Hagel had invited them to Hawaii during the previous year's Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, and it was the first ASEAN defense ministers meeting held on American soil.

During the meeting, the ministers met Rajiv Shah, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, and Kathryn Sullivan, administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. NOAA, part of the Commerce Department, has a new building in Honolulu, and its Pacific Tsunami Warning Center's 24/7 operational team and other experts there deliver tsunami warnings for every country in the Pacific and the Caribbean.

As Hagel's military aircraft had flown over the Pacific Ocean toward Hawaii the previous afternoon, in fact, an 8.2 magnitude earthquake had struck the coast of northern Chile, killing five people and prompting tsunami advisories by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center as far away as Hawaii.

By the time Hagel and the ministers were briefed at the NOAA center about typhoons, tsunamis and sea-level rise, the advisories had been cancelled.

Charles McCreery, the center's director, showed Hagel and the ministers a simulation of the March 2011 magnitude 9.0 earthquake near the east coast of Honshu, Japan, and the resulting tsunami that killed nearly 16,000 people and injured more than 6,000, according to Japan's National Police Agency.

Afterward, Hagel, Shah, Sullivan, the ministers, Navy Adm. Samuel J. Locklear III, commander of U.S. Pacific Command, and others participated in a roundtable discussion on disaster preparedness and relief.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Asia-Pacific region is hit by more than 70 percent of the world's natural disasters. In his remarks before the roundtable, Shah praised Hagel's vision of using the ASEAN Defense Forum to build greater cooperation across the range of issues that bring the region together as a community.

Broadly, the ministers also focused on military-to-military relationships and joint exercises that secure and stabilize the region, Hagel said at the meeting, assuring that all nations have commercial options, and on regional security issues.

As the forum ended, Hagel said success during the first U.S.-ASEAN Defense Forum held in the United States had strengthened friendships among nations and increased partnership opportunities that will help everyone in the region deal with new and enduring Asia-Pacific security challenges.

After his stop in Hawaii, Hagel also visited defense and government leaders in Japan, China and Mongolia.

In the White House briefing on Obama's upcoming trip, Rice said that given its rapid economic growth and political clout, Southeast Asia has been another cornerstone of the administration's strategy.

"And the president's historic visit to Malaysia, the first since Lyndon Baines Johnson visited in 1966, as well as to the Philippines, will advance our engagement with this critical region," Rice added.

During the trip, she said, the president will reaffirm the United States' steadfast commitment to allies and partners who allow the nation to deter threats and respond to disasters, and "he will build

on the progress of his recent trilateral meeting with Japan and Korea in The Hague as we seek to advance trilateral defense cooperation more broadly.”

The president also will reaffirm the U.S. commitment to peaceful resolution of maritime and territorial disputes consistent with international law, and underscore the U.S. commitment to help in responses to humanitarian and other disasters, Rice added.

“Our Asian partners frequently look to the United States as a partner of first choice, given our significant and unique capabilities, and our technical expertise,” she said. “And indeed, in each of the countries we will be visiting, we have seen in the last few years tragedies of the sort that have been exceedingly taxing and traumatic for the people of those countries.”

In each instance, she added, the United States has been able to lend prompt and effective support to its friends and partners in support of their response.

“We have demonstrated throughout -- whether from the Japan earthquake in 2011, the 2013 typhoon in the Philippines, the Malaysian Air flight 370 tragedy, and now the ferry disaster in South Korea -- that we are there for our friends and partners when they need us most.”

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## **[2. U.S. Increases Financial Support for Ukraine \(04-22-2014\)](#)**

By Jane Morse  
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration announced a new package of assistance totaling \$50 million to help Ukraine pursue political and economic reform and strengthen the partnership between the United States and Ukraine.

A fact sheet released by the White House April 22 said that U.S. support for Ukraine is “an urgent priority as the Ukrainian government works to establish security and stability, pursue democratic elections and constitutional reform, revive its economy, and ensure government institutions are transparent and accountable to the Ukrainian people.”

Acknowledging Ukraine’s “severe challenges to its sovereignty and territorial integrity,” the White House fact sheet continued: “The United States is committed to ensuring that Ukrainians alone are able to determine their country’s future without intimidation or coercion from outside forces.”

Vice President Biden visited Ukraine April 21–22, in what is the highest-level visit of a U.S. official since the crisis erupted. During his visit, Biden met with Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Rada Speaker and acting President Oleksander Turchynov and key legislators representing different political parties and regions within the Rada. Discussions focused on the international community’s

efforts to help stabilize and strengthen Ukraine's economy and to assist Ukraine in moving forward on constitutional reform, decentralization, anti-corruption efforts, and free and fair presidential elections on May 25.

"The United States supports the rights, the freedoms and the fundamental dignity of the people of Ukraine, all the people of Ukraine," Biden told Ukrainian legislators April 22.

The United States, Biden said, supports a "united, prosperous and coherent Ukraine." He added: "To the extent that we can help in stabilizing and strengthening Ukraine's economy by helping you withstand the unfair economic pressure being thrust upon you, we stand ready to do that, and I say the American people stand ready — not just Barack Obama and Joe Biden — but the American people."

Biden encouraged the legislators to grasp "the opportunity to generate a united Ukraine." He added the observation that "there is a much greater desire to call oneself a Ukrainian than to call oneself anything else. And that's a major, major, major unifying power, no matter how different the traditions are."

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[Biden at Meeting with Ukrainian Legislators](#)  
[White House Background Briefing on Biden's Trip to Ukraine](#)

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### **3. U.S. Troops to Arrive in Baltic Region for Exercises (04-22-2014)**

By Claudette Roulo  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 22, 2014 – A company-sized element of the U.S. Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team -- about 150 soldiers -- will arrive in Poland tomorrow to begin a bilateral infantry exercise with Polish troops, the Pentagon press secretary said today.

In the coming days, about 450 additional soldiers from the Vicenza, Italy-based 173rd ABCT will arrive for similar exercises in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby said.

The exercises are the first in a series of expanded U.S. land force training activities in the Baltic region scheduled to take place this year and possibly into next year, he said.

"Russia's aggression in Ukraine has renewed our resolve to strengthening NATO's defense plans and capabilities, and to demonstrate our continued commitment to collective defense in reinforcing our NATO allies in Central and Eastern Europe," Kirby said.

The troops will be in place in all four countries by April 28, he said, noting that the exercises will last about a month. "But then we will rotate fresh troops in for more exercises," the admiral added.

The intent is to develop a persistent rotational presence through the exercises, Kirby explained.

Discussions are ongoing about expanding the bilateral exercises into other countries in the region, he said. Discussions regarding the establishment of combined exercises involving other NATO member and partner countries also are taking place, Kirby said.

“It doesn't have to be either/or,” he said. “I think we're looking for a broad swath of ways that we can help reassure our allies and partners, and it doesn't all have to be through the alliance.”

Since Russia's aggression in Ukraine began, the admiral said, the United States has been constantly looking for ways to reassure its allies and partners of the nation's commitment to the collective defense principles in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

These bilateral exercises were conceived in part to do just that, Kirby said.

The message to the people of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, is that “the United States takes seriously our obligations under Article 5 of the NATO alliance, even though these aren't NATO exercises,” he said.

“It's a very tangible representation of our commitment to our security obligations in Europe, ... and we encourage our NATO partners to likewise look for opportunities of their own to do this same kind of thing for one another,” the admiral continued.

If there's any message to Moscow, Kirby said, it's the same as that being sent to the people of the Baltic region: “We take our obligations very, very seriously on the continent of Europe.”

The exercises are more than symbolic, the admiral said. The commitment to putting troops on the ground for an extended period and conducting exercises is “not insignificant,” he noted.

“These are countries that we routinely operate with,” Kirby said. “These are units that the 173rd have worked with before, in all four countries. So they know each other. This isn't the first time that the 173rd has done exercises with these countries. So there's a relationship there.”

The situation remains tense along Ukraine's eastern border, he said. “Nothing we've seen out of Moscow, nothing we've seen out of Russia or their armed forces is de-escalating the tension or is making things any more stable in Ukraine or on the continent of Europe,” the admiral said.

“What would be very helpful is if they removed their forces off that border and took concrete actions to respect the sovereignty of Ukraine,” he said.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has said that the events in Ukraine have had the effect of consolidating the alliance and giving it a sharper view of itself and its future, Kirby said.

“NATO is a very strong alliance, more relevant now than it's ever been. ... Secretary Hagel was pretty clear with the military leadership that he wanted to look for a wide range of opportunities through which we could continue to reassure our partners in Europe,” the admiral said.

Elsewhere in the region, the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Donald Cook is wrapping up its rotation in the Black Sea, Kirby said.

The Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate USS Taylor returned to the Black Sea today after completing repairs in Naval Support Activity Souda Bay, Greece, and will assume the reassurance mission from the Donald Cook, Navy officials said.

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#### **4. Facts on U.S. Support Package for Ukraine (04-22-2014)**

President Obama and Vice President Biden have made U.S. support for Ukraine an urgent priority as the Ukrainian government works to establish security and stability, pursue democratic elections and constitutional reform, revive its economy, and ensure government institutions are transparent and accountable to the Ukrainian people. Ukraine embarks on this reform path in the face of severe challenges to its sovereignty and territorial integrity, which we are working to address together with Ukraine and our partners in the international community. The United States is committed to ensuring that Ukrainians alone are able to determine their country's future without intimidation or coercion from outside forces. To support Ukraine, we are today announcing a new package of assistance totaling \$50 million to help Ukraine pursue political and economic reform and strengthen the partnership between the United States and Ukraine.

**Elections and Constitutional Reform:** Constitutional reform and free and fair elections are keys to Ukraine's democratic development. Assistance in this area is a down payment on the country's democratic development. We stand ready to provide further assistance to the new government after elections.

- The United States is contributing an \$11.4 million package to support the integrity of the May 25 elections. These funds are being used to advance democratic processes – not to support a particular candidate or electoral outcome. These efforts include voter education programs, transparent election administration, effective oversight of the election process, election security and a redress of infractions, and a diverse, balanced and policy-focused media environment.
- The United States is contributing support and monitors to the OSCE's election observation mission and other monitoring groups. U.S. funded programs will provide at least 250 long-term observers and over 1,700 short-term observers.
- We are also sending additional experts to provide advice on issues such as constitutional checks and balances, local governance, public participation, and the establishment of an independent, transparent judicial system.

**Economic Assistance:** The United States has already signed a \$1 billion loan guarantee to help Ukraine meet its financial obligations and protect vulnerable citizens from the impact of economic adjustments. We have also supported Ukraine's work with the IMF to secure a loan program worth \$14-\$18 billion. As these U.S., IMF, and European funds begin to flow, we will have technical experts from the U.S. Treasury Department on the ground to help the Ukrainian government allocate them effectively to stabilize the economy and ensure all the regions benefit. Currently, there are three banking advisors in Kyiv and we will be deploying public debt management and macroeconomic advisors in the coming week. We are also committed to providing additional technical assistance in the areas of budget and tax administration.

**Energy Security:** Over the coming weeks, expert teams from several U.S. government agencies will travel to the region to help Ukraine meet immediate and longer term energy needs.

- Today, a U.S. interagency expert team arrived in Kyiv to help Ukraine secure reverse flows of natural gas from its European neighbors. The team will continue on to Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia in the coming days to work on the details of these arrangements. Reverse flows of natural gas will provide Ukraine with additional immediate sources of energy.

- U.S. technical experts will join with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and others in May to help Ukraine develop a public-private investment initiative to increase conventional gas production from existing fields to boost domestic energy supply. A technical team will also engage the government on measures that will help the Ukrainian government ensure swift and environmentally sustainable implementation of contracts signed in 2013 for shale gas development.
- Department of Energy and USAID specialists will travel to Ukraine next month to provide advice on how to maximize energy efficiency, which could deliver potentially huge cost savings to Ukraine and rationalize energy consumption.

**Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption:** The United States is committed to helping Ukraine break the cycle of corruption that acts as a tax on business, an impediment to economic growth, and a drain on public trust in government. Technical advisors from the Departments of State and Justice have already been advising the government on anti-corruption measures. Today we are expanding this assistance program with additional commitments.

- Attorney General Holder will co-host an international conference in London April 29-30 to help identify, trace, and recover proceeds of corruption stolen by the former regime. This is part of an ongoing effort, including work by an FBI investigative team on the ground in Kyiv to help the government of Ukraine recover assets stolen from the Ukrainian people.
- The United States will provide advice and assistance to help modernize Ukraine's government procurement in accordance with international standards, including the creation of a vetted anti-corruption unit. We will offer technical assistance to that vetted unit to help build a sustainable anti-corruption regime within Ukraine, as we have done with substantial results in other parts of the world.
- Specialized teams of prosecutors and investigators will help the Ukrainian government with other forms of technical assistance to put in place the proper legal and regulatory framework to fight corruption. The teams will also serve as a resource to ensure follow-through and effective implementation.

**People-to-People Ties:** To further strengthen ties between the people of Ukraine and the United States, we are announcing our intent to establish a new bilateral visa regime that will extend the standard validity of visas for businesspeople and tourists from 5 years to 10 years on a negotiated reciprocal basis.

**Security Assistance:** In addition to the \$50 million package, today we are announcing the provision of \$8 million of non-lethal military assistance to allow the Ukrainian armed forces and State Border Guard Service to fulfill their core security missions. The additional supplies include:

- Explosive Ordinance Disposal equipment and handheld radios for Ukraine's Armed Forces.
- Engineering equipment, communications equipment, vehicles, and non-lethal individual tactical gear for Ukraine's Border Guard Service.

This is in addition to the \$3 million of Meals Ready to Eat and nearly \$7 million of health and welfare assistance the United States is already providing to Ukraine. The United States will continue to actively review requests for additional support as Ukraine's government further modernizes its armed forces and deals with evolving threats.

## **5. Discussions Continue on Post-2014 Troop Strength in Afghanistan (04-22-2014)**

By Nick Simeone  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 22, 2014 – Discussions are continuing within the Obama administration on how many U.S. troops could remain as a residual force in Afghanistan next year after the current U.S.-led NATO mission ends, Pentagon Press Secretary Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby said today.

In a briefing for reporters, Kirby was asked about a report that the administration might be considering reducing the U.S. presence in Afghanistan next year to fewer than 5,000 troops on the assumption that Afghan security forces are now capable of repelling threats by the Taliban and other insurgent groups.

“There’s an ongoing discussion now about what the force posture in Afghanistan would or could look like post-2014, and I’m not going to get ahead of that discussion,” he said.

Last month, Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., the top commander in Afghanistan, said the United States and its allies were planning a post-2014 force of 8,000 to 12,000 troops, most of them American, to continue training and advising Afghan security forces, with several thousand more deployed to conduct counterterrorism operations.

Those deployments would be possible only if the Afghan government first agrees to sign a bilateral security agreement negotiated with the United States, something President Hamid Karzai is refusing to do. However, the two leading candidates emerging from the country’s elections earlier this month have said they will sign the accord once the winner takes office later this year.

At today’s briefing, Kirby praised the Afghans for conducting a well-run first round of voting April 5.

“That’s not insignificant, all by itself,” he said. “Democracy is hard stuff. And they’re proving their mettle at it.”

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## **6. Strengthening Nuclear Security Sustainability (04-21-2014)**

*This blog post by Bonnie Jenkins was originally published on the State Department website and appeared on the Harvard University Belfer Center’s Nuclear Security Matters blog on April 21. Jenkins serves as the coordinator for threat reduction programs in the State Department’s Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation.*

### **Strengthening Nuclear Security Sustainability** *By Bonnie Jenkins*

Since the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit, Centers of Excellence have been recognized as an important part of the global nuclear security architecture. Centers of Excellence serve as a mechanism for ensuring individuals, whether facility managers, regulatory staff, scientists,

engineers, or technicians, are trained on a wide number of important nuclear security issues. These centers focus on the important “human factor” of the global effort to secure nuclear material.

The importance of these centers is highlighted in the Nuclear Security Summit (Summit) communiqués and work plan. Several country participants at past Summits have highlighted their intention to establish a center of excellence or training center. A few have done so since that time, while other centers are still in progress. As a result of the increased attention to training and the human factor in nuclear security, the number of centers of excellence and training centers around the globe has increased, as has the global cadre of trained individuals in nuclear security. These centers can promote a regional, not just national, approach to nuclear security training.

The promotion of centers of excellence and training centers has also been strongly supported through “gift baskets,” or joint commitments by a subset of Summit participants, at the last two Summits. At the 2014 Summit, Italy took the lead in a gift basket titled, “Nuclear Security Training and Support Centers/Centers of Excellence.” The COE Gift Basket, endorsed by over 30 Summit participants, describes progress achieved since the 2012 Summit, and promotes the development of additional centers and deepening cooperation through the NSSC Network. This number of supporters of the gift basket was an increase from the 24 Summit participants that supported the gift basket in 2012.

In an effort to strengthen the coordination of the increasing number of centers of excellence and training centers, in 2012 the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) established a Nuclear Security Training and Support Center (NSSC) Network. This network, currently consisting of 108 members from 43 countries, promotes coordination, collaboration, and best practices among existing centers and centers under construction. The network is complemented by the IAEA Nuclear Security Education Network (INSEN), which is focused on the promotion of education in nuclear security at universities. INSEN has over 90 members from 38 countries. Both the NSSC and INSEN work towards the sustained development of educated and trained nuclear security personnel.

Gathering on the sidelines at the NSSC meetings, China, the Republic of Korea, and Japan have recently established an Asia Regional Network to promote coordination and collaboration among their training centers. Their goals are to share information about trainings, share good practices, and share resources. Through the NSSC Network, more such regional sub-groups can be established. As noted by participants in the Asia Network, these regional sub-groups can serve to help develop expertise across a broader range of topics, collaborate efficiently, identify gaps, better understand the needs of other centers in the region, and optimize the use of resources by avoiding duplication of effort.

As we move forward, strengthening the global nuclear security architecture to sustain the important efforts of the Summits is vital. Strengthening nuclear security sustainability and fostering an enduring nuclear security culture requires all individuals involved with nuclear matters on a daily basis be cognizant and appreciative of nuclear security, including by promoting its importance to peers and colleagues. Centers of excellence and training centers, which promote expertise in nuclear security, will remain an essential part of that effort.

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## **7. Kerry, Foreign Ministers Reach Accord on Ukraine (04-17-2014)**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — Noting that diplomacy requires willing partners, Secretary of State John Kerry said the four-nation talks in Geneva April 17 reached an accord to end the spiraling tensions and escalating violence in Ukraine.

“We worked hard and we worked in good faith in order to try to narrow what are real differences — some of them significant — and to find a way forward for the people of Ukraine that helps them in achieving their aspiration to live in a stable, peaceful and unified democracy,” Kerry told journalists at a press conference with European Union High Representative Catherine Ashton.

Kerry met for seven hours with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Deshchytzia, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and the EU’s Ashton before announcing the four-party agreement.

It calls for all sides in the Ukrainian conflict to refrain from any violence, intimidation or provocative actions. Additionally, the brief agreement requires all illegally armed groups to be disarmed and for pro-Russian separatists to return control of all seized buildings to Ukrainian authorities.

The agreement also grants amnesty to protesters and to those who have left buildings and other public places and surrendered weapons. But it places an exception on those found guilty of capital crimes.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) will provide a special monitoring mission, already in place, to assist Ukrainian authorities and local communities in immediately implementing the de-escalation measures. Kerry said the United States, the EU and Russia committed to support this mission, to include providing monitors directly.

“What is important is that these words are translated immediately into actions,” Kerry told reporters. “None of us leaves here with a sense that the job is done because of words on paper. The job will not be done until these principles are implemented.”

President Obama said in Washington that the de-escalation in Ukraine will not take effect for several more days, but the United States will work with Europeans as the terms of the Geneva agreement unfold.

“Over the last week we have put in place additional consequences that we can impose on the Russians if we do not see actual improvement of the situation on the ground. And we are coordinating now with our European allies,” Obama said at a White House press briefing.

Kerry said all sides rejected all expressions of extremism, racism and religious intolerance, including anti-Semitism. He added that he spoke with Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and that Yatsenyuk reaffirmed the government’s “strong commitment” to a comprehensive, inclusive and open process by which Ukraine will engage in constitutional reform.

Kerry also said he advised Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov that if the United States does not see efforts to implement the principles of the agreement beginning in the upcoming weekend, then the United States would have no choice but to impose further sanctions on Russia. He added that there was no discussion on removing existing sanctions imposed by the United States.

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## **8. NATO Secretary-General on NATO Actions (04-16-2014)**

*Doorstep statement by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Brussels, Belgium*

Good afternoon.

We have just taken further measures to respond to the crisis in Ukraine.

We agree that a political solution is the only way forward.

NATO fully supports the Geneva talks and all the efforts of the international community to find a political solution which fulfils the democratic aspirations of the entire Ukrainian people and respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

We call on Russia to be part of the solution. To stop destabilising Ukraine, pull back its troops from the borders and make clear it doesn't support the violent actions of well armed militias of pro-Russian separatists.

NATO's core task is to protect and defend our Allies. We have already taken a series of steps, including enhancing our Air Policing mission in the Baltic States, and AWACS surveillance flights over Poland and Romania.

Today, we agreed on a package of further military measures to reinforce our collective defence and demonstrate the strength of Allied solidarity.

We will have more planes in the air, more ships on the water, and more readiness on the land.

For example, air policing aircraft will fly more sorties over the Baltic region. Allied ships will deploy to the Baltic Sea, the Eastern Mediterranean and elsewhere, as required. Military staff from Allied nations will deploy to enhance our preparedness, training and exercises. Our defence plans will be reviewed and reinforced.

We will start to implement these measures straight away. More will follow, if needed, in the weeks and months to come.

Our decisions today are about defence, deterrence and de-escalation. They are entirely in line with our international commitments.

They send a clear message: NATO will protect every Ally and defend against any threat against our fundamental security.

That is our firm commitment.

Moderator: NPR, CBS.

Q: Terri Schultz, with NPR and CBS. Mr. Secretary General, when you say that you'll start to implement these measures straight away, what will we literally see in the coming days, especially in terms of military personnel being deployed? Are you literally sending contingents of trainers or other personnel to the Baltic States who have asked for it, to Poland? What can you tell us in material terms is going to happen in the very nearest days?

Thanks.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen: You will see deployments at sea, in the air, on land to take place immediately. That means within days, pending of course practical... a number of practical considerations. But we have decided to implement immediately.

Moderator: Associated Press.

Question: Associated Press. Secretary General, how many soldiers, planes and ships will be involved by these measures that you took today?

Anders Fogh Rasmussen: I won't go into operational details, but I can tell you that we will deploy enough to enhance our preparedness and enough to prepare for more if needed.

Moderator: Latvian Media.

Question: Ina Strazdina, Radio Latvia. Secretary General, did you discuss also idea of creating permanent NATO bases in Baltic States, such as new air base, for example, or ports for NATO ships? Thank you.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen: We haven't today taken decisions on such facilities. What we have done today is to agree on a package of measures that can be implemented immediately. But there will be follow-on work.

When foreign ministers met at the end... at the beginning of this month, they tasked our military authorities to look into how we could possibly further strengthen collective defence and that also includes more medium-term and long-term measures, and at this headquarters as well as our military authorities will continue exploring ways to possibly further enhance our collective defence.

Question: Hello. (Inaudible), Romanian News Agency.

Secretary General, you haven't mentioned Romania between those countries that you will take measures to reinforce your presence. What have you decided about Romania? Do you consider having naval exercises for example at the Black Sea? Thank you.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen: This is not about specific countries. This is about the Alliance as such. I mentioned that we are prepared to update and review our defence plans and develop new defence plans as required.

But as you also know, we don't as a matter of principle, we don't comment on concrete defence plans.

Moderator: Dutch Media.

Question: The Netherlands offered fighter jets and possibly a marine ship. Is that enough? Does NATO have enough material to deploy?

Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Yes, indeed, we do have the necessary capacity to implement these measures that have been recommended by our military authorities. We already know that some Allies will come forward with concrete contributions and I'm sure that more will follow.

Moderator: Bloomberg.

Question: Jim Neuger, from Bloomberg. You opened by mentioning the Geneva talks tomorrow in the pursuit of a diplomatic settlement. Was this the reason why NATO didn't go further in its measures today? Was there any concern about perhaps appearing to provoke Russia on the eve of Geneva?

Anders Fogh Rasmussen: We have... we have now taken steps, military steps that we think at this stage are necessary to ensure effective collective defence and deterrence.. But having said that, we do hope that the Geneva talks will pave the way for a peaceful and political solution to the crisis.

Moderator: Thank you very much indeed.