

**INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE**  
**June 18 - 25, 2014**

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**1. [NATO Foreign Ministers Agree Alliance Is Open to New Members](#) (06-25-2014)**

Washington — NATO foreign ministers have agreed that the Alliance's door remains open to new members, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said June 25 at the start of the second day of ministerial talks.

The secretary-general said that September's Wales Summit "will mark the success" of NATO's Open Door Policy and maintain its momentum. "Let me be clear: NATO's door remains open and no third country has a veto over NATO enlargement," he said.

"We had a chance to take stock of the strong measures that have been taken in order to provide reassurance to our eastern allies on the land, on sea and air, and we've taken measures that demonstrate that our Article 5 commitment is absolutely rock solid," said U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in a June 25 press availability. "We also affirmed NATO's open door policy as well as the vital importance of having strong, capable partners."

Over dinner on June 24, the ministers reviewed the progress made by the four aspirant countries; Georgia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Each country will continue to be judged on its merits, the secretary-general said: "Each one has work to do, in different areas, and we will give aspirants the support they need to get them through the door."

Rasmussen said there was an agreement in principle by Allies to develop a substantive package for Georgia that will help it come closer to NATO. Elements of the package will be worked out in the coming weeks.

On Montenegro, the Alliance will open intensified and focused talks and assess at the latest by the end of 2015 whether to invite Montenegro to join the Alliance.

On June 25, the ministers will focus on preparations for the Wales Summit, according to a June 25 NATO press release. At that summit, they will assess measures the Alliance has taken to strengthen collective defense in view of the changed security situation in Europe due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and also will review relations with Russia.

## UKRAINE DISCUSSIONS

Kerry said the foreign ministers "spent a significant amount of time in our discussions focused on Ukraine and our allies' sustained support for Ukraine's sovereignty and the right of its people to determine their own future." He congratulated Ukrainians for their recently completed free and fair elections.

The foreign ministers are expected to agree on a package of long-term support measures for Ukraine, including the creation of new trust funds.

"The United States commends the Ukrainian government for reaching out to separatists and to the Russian government," Kerry said. "And now we believe it is critical for President Putin to prove by his actions, not just his words, that he is indeed fully committed to peace."

The foreign ministers also agreed the group will look to strengthen cooperation with partners around the world and strengthen the Alliance's ability to assist partners that need help in defense and security-sector reforms.

On Afghanistan, the ministers agreed to take an important next step in planning NATO's new mission to train, advise and assist Afghan forces and discuss the Alliance's future relationship with Afghanistan.

"One of the first tests of NATO's ability to forge stronger, more capable partners will be resolute support — NATO's post-2014 train, advise and assist mission with the people of Afghanistan," Kerry confirmed, saying NATO remains committed to "combating terrorism and preserving the gains made by the people of Afghanistan."

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## **2. U.S. Advisors Arrive in Iraq to Begin Assessment (06-24-2014)**

By Nick Simeone  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, June 24, 2014 – The first U.S. service members ordered to Iraq to help the Iraqi military counter a terrorist threat have arrived in the country, Pentagon Press Secretary Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby said today.

About 90 troops have arrived in Baghdad, where they will join some 40 others attached to the U.S. Embassy to establish assessment teams and a joint operations center with Iraqi forces.

They are the first of what could be up to 300 U.S. military advisors President Barack Obama has ordered to the country to assess an insurgency led by a Syrian-based extremist group that has routed the Iraqi military and taken over much of the country's north and west while continuing to move closer to Baghdad, threatening to push Iraq to the brink of full-blown sectarian war. The group is known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL, and also as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS.

Kirby told reporters four additional teams totaling about 50 people will arrive in Iraq in the coming days. U.S. special operators will assess the cohesiveness of Iraqi security forces and the threat posed by advancing ISIL insurgents, and then will provide recommendations on how to best help the Iraqi military.

“We expect that they’ll start to flow their assessments up through the chain of command in about two to three weeks,” the admiral said.

U.S. military aircraft already are flying up to three dozen surveillance missions over Iraq every day and, Kirby said, are “sharing what we can with the Iraqi security forces.”

At his regular Pentagon briefing, Kirby said the United States does not yet have a full picture of the situation on the ground, but that ISIL fighters continue to solidify their gains as they advance and have no trouble crossing the Iraq-Syria border at will.

“They continue to press into central and southern Iraq, ... and they are still a legitimate threat to Baghdad,” he added.

The U.S. troops arrived in Iraq a day after defense officials said the Baghdad government had provided “acceptable assurances” that the Americans would receive the necessary legal protections to operate in the country, the same level of immunity Kirby said, that diplomats and U.S. forces based at the U.S. Embassy already receive.

While the United States and Iraq do not have a status of forces agreement in place to provide U.S. troops in the country with blanket immunity, Kirby said, Iraq has committed to protections that are “adequate to the short-term assessment and advisory mission our troops will be performing.”

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## **3. Aid from Afghan National Army Bolsters Residents’ Confidence (06-23-2014)**

By Whitney Houston  
ISAF Regional Command South 2014

Kandahar province, Afghanistan — Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) worked to build networks and lasting relationships with the people they serve through humanitarian aid efforts June 11 in the village of Mirogul Kalay, Kandahar province, Afghanistan.

The Afghan National Army's 4th Kandak, 2nd Mobile Strike Force, 205th Corps, put a good foot forward by handing out work boots, volleyballs, toys and clothing.

“These humanitarian aid missions serve as a partnership between the ANA and the population, and that partnership will assist them in the future to keep Afghanistan a safe place,” said Staff Sergeant Matthew Roshell of the U.S. Army’s 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT).

The IBCT assisted the ANA in carrying out the mission and coordinating with the villagers and their leaders.

“We met with the village elders beforehand so as to not show up with humanitarian aid and just hand it out for the sake of handing it out,” said First Lieutenant Jeffrey Lee. “Humanitarian aid is more of a gesture to say we’re here to help and we want to establish some sort of network. So if there ever is an issue in the town, they know who to call.”

Lee said that “your gestures mean a lot more than what you can say, so humanitarian aid was the vehicle to establish that rapport.”

An equally important focus for the mission was showing villagers the ANSF is in the lead when it comes to security in an area where neither Coalition Forces nor the ANSF have had much of a presence.

“This mission was pretty effective because it put a small footprint of presence in Mirogul Kalay,” Roshell said. “All of the kids saw the ANA passing out all of the gifts so it put their face on it.”

After talking to the elders and establishing security established, village elders alongside the ANA handed out gifts to the children of Mirogul Kalay.

“The villagers overall were pretty pleased with the ANA coming down here and setting this up to lend a hand, and it gave an image to the ANA as servants of the nation,” Lee said.

Lee said his platoon’s assistance to the ANA is an important focus to leave a good legacy to Afghanistan and to his brothers-in-arms who have preceded them.

“When you hear of all the sacrifices that people have made over the last 13 years and to be able to see the ANSF succeed in their capacity, your efforts safeguard that effort. It feels good to help strengthen that image they have with the people.”

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#### **4. U.S. Issues New Plan to Combat Piracy, Enhance Maritime Security (06-23-2014)**

Washington — A new plan released by the Obama administration June 20 lays out “scalable, flexible frameworks on specific maritime issues” that will guide U.S. actions against piracy and in support of maritime security.

The U.S. Counter Piracy and Maritime Security Action Plan “affirms the vital national interest of the United States in maritime security and recognizes that nations have a common interest in achieving two complementary objectives: facilitating the vibrant maritime commerce that underpins economic security; and protecting against piracy, robbery at sea, and related maritime crime,” according to the “Background” section of the report.

The United States has long been a leader in maritime security, including in countering the threat of piracy, the White House Office said in a press release announcing the report, adding that since 2009, the United States has organized and led the international effort that has seen successful pirate attacks decline off the coast of Somalia dramatically.

In the spirit of this leadership and commitment to ensuring safety at sea, the United States developed the Counter Piracy and Maritime Security Action Plan. The plan implements the National Strategy for Maritime Security, and the Policy for the Repression of Piracy and other Criminal Acts of Violence at Sea.

The United States will continue to seek to strengthen regional governance and rule of law to maintain the safety and security of mariners, preserve freedom of the seas and promote free flow of commerce through lawful economic activity.

The plan aims to provide clear strategic guidance for counterpiracy efforts and affirms that the United States will use all appropriate instruments of national power to repress piracy and related maritime crimes.

The Counter Piracy and Maritime Security Action Plan focuses on three core areas:

- Prevention of attacks.
- Response to acts of maritime crime.
- Enhancing maritime security and governance.

It also provides specific frameworks for the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Guinea regions that establish tailored, specific methodology for these regions and provide guidance on how the United States will respond to the regional threats associated with the varying geographic, political and legal environments.

The new Counter Piracy and Maritime Security Action Plan supersedes the Countering Piracy off the Horn of Africa: Partnership & Action Plan of 2008, according to the White House.

The full report (PDF, 343KB) is available on the White House website.

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## **5. Treasury Sanctions Target Seven Separatists in Ukraine (06-20-2014)**

Washington — The U.S. Department of the Treasury June 20 sanctioned seven separatists in Ukraine responsible for or complicit in actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty or territorial integrity of Ukraine, and/or asserting governmental authority over a part or region of Ukraine without the authorization of the government of Ukraine.

“The United States will continue to take action to hold accountable those persons engaged in efforts to destabilize Crimea and eastern Ukraine,” said Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen. “These individuals have all contributed to attempts to illegally undermine the legitimate government in Kyiv, notably by falsely proclaiming leadership positions and fomenting violent unrest.”

**Vyacheslav Ponomaryov**, a separatist leader, has declared that the rebels have adopted a “take-no-prisoners” approach with future clashes with the Ukrainian security forces, claiming his men will “kill them all, according to a June 20 Treasury Department press release.

He also publicly claimed his men would take all necessary measures to disrupt the recent Ukrainian elections in May.

Ponomaryov is the former self-proclaimed “people’s mayor” of Slovyansk who declared himself mayor after leading a group of armed separatists in an assault on the Slovyansk mayor’s office in April. The town of Slovyansk has since become one of the centers of the separatist movement, and has been taken over by armed pro-Russia rebels.

**Denis Pushilin** is a leader of a group calling itself the “Donetsk People’s Republic,” which has seized government buildings across eastern Ukraine, declared itself to be a sovereign state, and requested that it be allowed to join the Russian Federation. Pushilin has overseen an uprising that has seized town halls, police stations, and other buildings in towns across Ukraine’s Donetsk region.

Pushilin stated that he and his followers would not release the buildings they seized until the Ukrainian government vacated its government buildings and the Donetsk region got an referendum on independence.

At a May press conference, Pushilin also stated that civilian and military authorities independent of Kyiv would be formed in the Donetsk region following the results of the illegitimate referendum on the region’s status in May. He further stated that the presence of any Ukrainian military remaining in the Donetsk region after the announcement of the referendum’s results would be considered illegal.

**Andrey Purgin** describes himself as the co-head of a council running the separatist government in Donetsk. He advocated for the illegitimate May referendum and the federalization of Ukraine and took part in the storming of the Donetsk regional administration building earlier this year. Purgin founded the pro-Russian “Republic of Donetsk” organization in December 2005. The group’s activities were forbidden by a Ukrainian court, which considered them to be directed at the territorial disintegration of Ukraine.

**Igor Girkin**, also known as Igor Strelkov, is the self-described “commander-in-chief of the Donetsk People’s Republic” who controls a group of armed separatists in Slovyansk. Girkin is responsible for the abduction of military observers in Ukraine, and an attack on the Slovyansk Internal Affairs Administration and the 25th Air Mobile Brigade from whom he stole a large cache of weapons.

**Valery Bolotov** has proclaimed himself governor of the separatist-controlled Luhansk region and has publicly declared war on the government in Kyiv. Bolotov took direction from Girkin to hold a sham referendum in Luhansk in May.

**Sergei Menyailo** is the de facto “acting governor” of Sevastopol. He assisted in the formation of Sevastopol’s self-defense squads, which played a key role in facilitating Russia’s occupation of the Crimea region of Ukraine and were later entered into the ranks of the Russian military. Menyailo is part of a commission established to ensure the effectiveness of Russian federal executive bodies in Crimea.

**Valery Kaurov** is the self-described “president of Novorossiya” and has called on Russian President Vladimir Putin to deploy troops to the territory described as Novorossiya. He has supported separatist activities in Ukraine’s Donetsk and Lugansk territories.

As a result of the June 20 action by the Treasury Department, any assets of the designated individuals that are within U.S. jurisdiction must be frozen. Additionally, transactions by U.S. persons or within the United States involving the designated individuals are generally prohibited.

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## **6. Obama Announces Military Advisers Heading to Iraq (06-19-2014)**

By Nick Simeone  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, June 19, 2014 – President Barack Obama today announced plans to send up to 300 military advisers to Iraq to help the government in Baghdad combat a rapid advance by Sunni-led insurgents who have taken over towns and cities and routed Iraqi troops in the north and west of the country, a situation which the president said threatens to plunge Iraq into civil war.

“American forces will not be returning to combat in Iraq, but we will help Iraqis as they take the fight to terrorists who threaten the Iraqi people in the region and American interests as well,” Obama said during an appearance in the White House press room, saying the U.S. forces will help train, advise and support Iraqi security forces.

The president spoke after another in what have been a series of meetings with his national security team to review options on how to respond to Iraq’s request for military assistance in putting down rapid gains made by insurgents led by Syrian-based fighters known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria or ISIS, whose advance on Baghdad has threatened reprisals from Iraq’s Shiite majority and a return of full blown sectarian conflict.

“We will be prepared to take targeted and precise military action if and when we determine that the situation on the ground requires it,” Obama said.

Yesterday, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and Army Gen. Martin E. Denspey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Congress further intelligence would be needed about the situation on the ground along with clear objectives in order for possible airstrikes or other military intervention to be effective.

Obama said joint operation centers in Baghdad and northern Iraq will be stood up to better share intelligence and coordinate planning with the Iraqis as they confront the terrorist threat posed by ISIS. These steps are in addition to surveillance flights the United States is already conducting along with the positioning of increased U.S. military assets in the region.

Obama again called on Iraq’s political leaders including Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to rise above sectarian differences and develop a broad-based political plan for ending a crisis that he said cannot be resolved through military means.

“It’s not the place for the United States to choose Iraq’s leaders,” Obama said. “It is clear, though, that only leaders that can govern with an inclusive agenda are going to be able to truly bring the Iraqi people together and help them through this crisis.”

To that end, Obama said the United States will launch a diplomatic initiative to work with Iraq's leaders and countries in the region and dispatched Secretary of State John Kerry to Europe and the Middle East for talks with allies and partners.

During an exchange with reporters, Obama said his administration has told Maliki there "has to be an agenda in which Sunni, Shia, and Kurds all feel that they have the opportunity to advance their interest through the political process," and that "as long as those deep divisions continue or worsen, it's going to be very hard for an Iraqi central government to direct an Iraqi military to deal with these threats."

Obama said the rapid collapse of two divisions of the Iraqi military and the threat of sectarian conflict "have reminded us of the deep scars left by America's war in Iraq" and the sacrifice made by nearly 4,500 Americans, as well as "the need for the United States to ask hard questions before we take action abroad, particularly military action."

But in announcing his decision to send military advisers to Iraq, the president said it is in the U.S. national security interests not to see "an all-out civil war inside Iraq."

In addition, a senior U.S. official said the terrorist group ISIS -- an outgrowth of Al-Qaeda in Iraq -- if not confronted, would attempt to create a caliphate and expand its influence across a huge swath of territory spanning the Iraq-Syria border, creating a safe haven for extremists groups that could eventually target the United States.

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## **7. Alleged Attacker to Be Tried for Deaths at U.S. Mission Benghazi (06-19-2014)**

Washington — A Libyan national has been charged with federal offenses related to the 2012 attack on a U.S. facility in Benghazi, Libya, the Department of Justice announced.

Ahmed Abu Khatallah has been charged for his alleged participation in the September 11, 2012, attack on the U.S. Special Mission and Annex that resulted in the deaths of four Americans, according to a June 17 Justice Department press release.

"Our nation's memory is long, and our reach is far," said U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder. "The arrest of Ahmed Abu Khatallah represents a significant milestone in our efforts to ensure justice is served for the heinous and cowardly attack on the U.S. diplomatic facility in Benghazi. Since that attack — which caused the deaths of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty — we have conducted a thorough, unrelenting investigation, across continents, to find the perpetrators.

"The arrest of Khatallah proves that the U.S. government will expend any effort necessary to pursue terrorists who harm our citizens. Khatallah currently faces criminal charges on three counts, and we retain the option of adding additional charges in the coming days. Even as we begin the process of putting Khatallah on trial and seeking his conviction before a jury, our investigation will remain

ongoing as we work to identify and arrest any co-conspirators. This is our pledge; we owe the victims of the Benghazi attack and their loved ones nothing less.”

On June 17, President Obama praised the courage and professionalism of those involved in the operation that resulted in the capture of Ahmed Abu Khatallah, reminding the world, “The United States has an unwavering commitment to bring to justice those responsible for harming Americans.”

John Carlin, assistant attorney general for the National Security Division, said, “Capturing Ahmed Abu Khatallah was a critical step toward bringing him to justice, and we will not rest in our pursuit of the others who attacked our facilities and killed our citizens.”

“In July 2013, Ahmed Abu Khatallah was charged in a sealed criminal complaint in the District of Columbia for his alleged role in the attacks that resulted in the murders of four American citizens,” said U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Ronald Machen Jr. “Khatallah will now face justice in an American courtroom. We remain committed to holding accountable all of those responsible for the murders of those brave U.S. citizens who were serving our country in Libya.”

The charges were announced upon the unsealing of a three-count criminal complaint. The lead count in the complaint is an offense that could be subject to the death penalty. The complaint, which was filed under seal on July 15, 2013, in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, charges Khatallah with:

- Killing a person in the course of an attack on a federal facility involving the use of a firearm and dangerous weapon and attempting and conspiring to do the same.
- Providing, attempting and conspiring to provide material support to terrorists resulting in death.
- Discharging, brandishing, using, carrying and possessing a firearm during a violent crime.

Khatallah is being transported to the United States in U.S. custody. Upon his arrival, U.S. authorities plan to promptly present him before a federal judge in Washington and have legal counsel appointed to him for the proceedings.

Charges contained in criminal complaints are merely allegations that a defendant has committed a violation of criminal laws. Under U.S. law, every defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The case is being investigated by the FBI’s New York Field Office with substantial assistance from various other government agencies. The case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia and the National Security Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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## **8. Kerry’s Interview with NBC’s Today Show on Situation in Iraq (06-18-2014)**

*Interview with Savannah Guthrie of NBC’s Today Show*

QUESTION: And now to our exclusive interview with Secretary of State John Kerry. We were with him on Wednesday as he shuttled back and forth to the White House helping President Obama weigh U.S. options in Iraq. And I began by asking Secretary Kerry about those reports that the President has taken the option of airstrikes in Iraq off the table.

SECRETARY KERRY: Nothing is off the table. All options are still available to the President.

QUESTION: It seems like the U.S. was totally caught off guard by this.

SECRETARY KERRY: Well, I don't think — look, our people on the ground in Iraq have seen the increased intensity. We've been watching this happening. We have been engaged in efforts over the months. We've been beefing up our assistance, our presence.

QUESTION: But did you act too slowly? I mean, Maliki was asking for help with airstrikes in the last few weeks as this was coming, as ISIS was coming toward this part of Iraq. Why didn't we act then?

SECRETARY KERRY: For a lot of different reasons, not the least of which is we didn't have operational theater capacity at that point in time, partly because Prime Minister Maliki denied the kind of permissions necessary.

QUESTION: That raises the question: Why come to Maliki's rescue now? I mean, isn't he a big part of the problem?

SECRETARY KERRY: This is not about Maliki. Let me stress: What the United States is doing is about Iraq; it is not about Maliki. And nothing that the President decides to do is going to be focused specifically on Prime Minister Maliki. It is focused on the people of Iraq — Shia, Sunni, Kurd.

QUESTION: But it may benefit Maliki.

SECRETARY KERRY: Well, that's up to the people of Iraq to decide. But the United States is deeply concerned about the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant, ISIL, as we know it, that has moved in. They represent a threat to every country in the region. They're more extreme even than al-Qaida, and they are threatening the United States and Western interests.

QUESTION: You've mentioned that the U.S. is open, at least, to possibly working with Iran as you deal with this situation with ISIS in northern Iraq.

SECRETARY KERRY: First of all, I don't know where this comes from that we are — we've suggested working with Iran in that regard. We have heard —

QUESTION: I thought you said it in an interview the other day.

SECRETARY KERRY: What I said is we are interested in communicating with Iran to make clear that the Iranians know what we're thinking and we know what they're thinking, and that there's a sharing of information so people aren't making mistakes.

QUESTION: Just to be clear, the U.S. isn't considering working hand in hand with Iran? Because I think for a lot of Americans, that's a head scratcher.

SECRETARY KERRY: Let me be absolutely clear. Well, it's not. It would be a head scratcher — and no, we're not sitting around contemplating how are we going to do that or if we're going to do that. That's not on the table.

QUESTION: Dick Cheney wrote today, “Rarely has a U.S. president been so wrong about so much at the expense of so many.”

SECRETARY KERRY: This is the man who took us into Iraq saying this? Please.

QUESTION: What’s happening now in Iraq is directly related to the situation in Syria. Did the U.S. — did the President miss the moment, make a huge mistake by not trying to turn the tide in Syria then, and what’s happening in Iraq now is just the chickens coming home to roost?

SECRETARY KERRY: Well, Savannah, let me just say this: There’s plenty of time going down the road here for people to have post-mortems and to make decisions. We are the largest single donor of humanitarian assistance. We are deeply engaged in working with our allies and friends in the region. We are assisting, training, doing work in terms of providing nonlethal aid and assistance to —

QUESTION: Doesn’t the evidence suggest it’s not working? Because instead of things getting better because of our assistance, in fact, a group like ISIS is on the rise and now taking more territory.

SECRETARY KERRY: ISIS is on the rise because Assad is a magnet for terrorists of all ilk and walks who are come there to try to unseat him.

QUESTION: Didn’t you advocate for arming the moderate opposition when you were a senator? I mean, didn’t you think that was the right thing to do?

SECRETARY KERRY: I did.

QUESTION: And doesn’t it kill you now to see what’s happened?

SECRETARY KERRY: I know where you’re trying to — look, let me just make it clear: We are augmenting our assistance in significant ways.

QUESTION: What do you say to Iraq veterans, those who’ve lost so much or families of those who lost everything in Iraq, who are looking now and saying, “What was that for? No sooner have we left than everything goes back to just the way it was”?

SECRETARY KERRY: That remains to be seen. And the test is in really these next few days and weeks. And we are going to do everything in our power to follow through and try to get the job done through diplomacy, if we can, in order to honor their sacrifice.

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