

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE
November 26 - December 3, 2014

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1. Kerry Recaps Brussels Meeting of Anti-ISIL Coalition (12-03-2014)

By Bridget Hunter
Staff Writer

Washington — An international coalition is already taking important steps to degrade and defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Secretary of State John Kerry told reporters at NATO headquarters in Brussels December 3.

Representatives from about 60 members of the anti-ISIL coalition met in Brussels to share information, discuss current strategy and identify what must be done to eliminate ISIL.

Comments from meeting participants made it clear that the coalition has made significant progress in two and a half months, Kerry said. “But we also acknowledge there is a lot more work yet to be done.”

The secretary said ISIL’s momentum has been halted, its territorial hold challenged, its finances strained, and its message denounced.

“Their message of hate is being challenged in public meeting places, in mosques across the globe,” Kerry said.

He recounted how meeting participants reviewed progress in key lines of effort — defeating ISIL militarily, restricting its finances, enacting laws to restrict the flow of foreign fighters, and

countering its toxic ideology — and then issued a joint statement that underscores the coalition’s unity and its “absolute determination to succeed.”

Saying that “the long-term success of the effort in Iraq is key to the success of the coalition,” Kerry praised Iraq’s long-awaited hydrocarbon agreement and progress on Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi’s reform agenda.

“I think it’s fair to say that all of the foreign ministers, ambassadors, representatives who were there today came away impressed by Prime Minister Abadi and by what he has accomplished today, which is the down payment on the road map that he laid out for the future,” Kerry said.

Winning back Iraq “is not just the task of the military campaign; it’s the campaign that goes on every day thereafter in providing a government that is responsive, that is inclusive, that is pluralistic, that is freeing itself from any clutches of corruption that may or may not exist,” the secretary said in answer to a reporter’s question. “That’s what we want to see, and that effort is very much part of the planning stage at this early moment.”

Regarding Syria, Kerry said that “it is no secret that the United States continues to believe that President Assad has lost all legitimacy, that the regime will not be able to find peace ... in Syria as long as Assad remains in power. There needs to be some kind of transition. We know it’s not going to happen through a military, direct process, so there has to be a political solution. And we’re looking still for the way to engage all of the countries in the region in an effort to achieve what was originally laid out in Geneva.”

At the press conference, the secretary recapped other parts of his visit to Brussels:

- A meeting on the complex situation in Libya.
- A luncheon discussion with EU High Representative Federica Mogherini on key issues in the trans-Atlantic agenda, including trade, energy security and support for Ukraine.
- A meeting of the EU-U.S. Energy Council to discuss energy security, environmental issues, climate change, new economic opportunities and increased security challenges.

“We reviewed progress in facilitating the reverse gas flows and the EU effort to reach an accord on natural gas supplies with Ukraine and Russia,” Kerry said. “And, second, we talked about the overall challenge of European energy security, which requires regulatory cooperation, investments in infrastructure and an intensive commitment to sustainable technology.”

The Energy Council also discussed “the urgency of further breakthroughs on climate change itself,” according to the secretary, who said the United States is continuing its work with China on climate change.

“We intend to continue to try to build momentum on climate change moving into next year,” Kerry said. “We believe that not only is there obviously the practical advantage of responding to the events, to the transformation taking place in the climate that is contributing to very severe weather events, to major flooding, major fires, major drought, to shifts in agriculture and other impacts that have huge cost, but we believe it is becoming more and more evident that it is cheaper to invest in the new technologies and move to the clean energy economy.”

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2. NATO Foreign Ministers announce interim Spearhead Force (12-03-2014)

NATO Foreign Ministers on Tuesday (2 December 2014) announced that an interim Spearhead Force would be operational early next year to improve the Alliance's readiness, and agreed to maintain a continuous NATO presence in the eastern part of the Alliance through next year. "We are going to implement the Readiness Action Plan on time and in full," said NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

The ministers discussed progress in implementing the plan at their meeting. The plan is a response to the changed security environment in Europe including Russia's aggressive actions in and around Ukraine, as well as violent extremism the Alliance faces to the south. This is "the biggest increase in our collective defence since the end of the Cold War," Mr. Stoltenberg said. He added that the plan would enable NATO "to meet any threats from wherever they come." The Secretary General said that implementation has already begun, through an increased presence "in the air, at sea and on the ground in the eastern part of our Alliance". He stressed that "all 28 Allies will contribute to this effort into the next year."

"So we will be 28 for 28 through 2015, to assure Allies and to deter threats," the Secretary General said.

Ministers also discussed progress on setting up the Spearhead Force. NATO Defence Ministers will decide on the force's size and design in February with the aim to stand it up in 2016, Mr. Stoltenberg said. The force will be able to deploy within a few days. In the meantime an interim Spearhead Force will be created and will be available early next year. That force will be based mainly on troops from Germany, the Netherlands and Norway and will "provide the quick reaction capability we need, straight away," Mr Stoltenberg said.

Ministers also discussed the importance of working with partner countries to make their security sectors more efficient and transparent. The Secretary General noted that "we have been working closely on this issue with Georgia, Jordan and the Republic of Moldova." NATO will embed experts in these countries to provide advice on training and defence reform. The Alliance's contributions will include a new NATO-Georgia training centre, military exercises and border security in Jordan, and continued support to Moldova. "Our aim is to prevent crises before they arise," Mr Stoltenberg said, "because we all agree that prevention is better than cure."

3. State's Talwar at Institute for Defence and Strategic Analyses (12-03-2014)

Remarks by Puneet Talwar, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs at the Institute for Defence and Strategic Analyses, New Delhi, India

Thank you very much, Ambassador Shankar, for that very kind introduction ... and even more importantly, thank you for everything you have done to deepen the ties between the United States and India ... during your tenure in Washington and afterwards.

Let me also thank General Dahiya, the Deputy Director General of the Institute, for inviting me here today, and Dr. Balachandran for organizing today's event.

For nearly fifty years now, IDSA has provided excellent insight into critically important international trends. Your work is not only respected in India, but it's also widely read and valued around the world.

It's really a great pleasure, on a personal level, to be back in India. I've been privileged to visit many times over the course of my career and my life. My own family traces its roots to this country, and India's vibrant culture and rich history certainly helped shape my own upbringing.

Indeed, I remember my grandmothers sharing with me the extraordinary events they witnessed during India's independence struggle in the first half of the 20th century.

And if my grandparents could see the India of today... an India with strong democratic institutions... an India that charts its own course... and an India that works to uphold the dignity of all human beings... I know they would be proud of all it's achieved, and of its promising future.

Just as India has grown and made tremendous progress, so, too, has the relationship between this great country and another great country... my country... the United States of America.

Over the course of my lifetime – and yours – we'd be hard-pressed to find a more exciting time in our bilateral relations.

The historic elections last spring, which brought a record 530 million Indians to the polls... about 8 percent of the world's population... conferred an unprecedented mandate on Prime Minister Modi... and created an historic opportunity for the United States and India to re-energize our relationship.

And today, we are engaged on more issues, more frequently, at more levels of government than ever before. Just in the past six months, India has been one of the top destinations for senior U.S. government officials, demonstrating the importance of the United States' relationship with India.

Secretary Kerry led the Strategic Dialogue here in July, and was joined by Secretary of Commerce Pritzker. Secretary Hagel visited India in August. My colleagues Mike Froman, Charlie Rivkin, and Rick Stengel, all senior officials, were here just a few weeks ago to discuss our economic ties, and the just-concluded India-U.S. Technology Summit was by far the largest ever held in India. Rose Gottemoeller was here last month to co-chair the U.S.-India Strategic Security Dialogue, and tomorrow I will lead the U.S. delegation to the Political-Military Dialogue, where we will meet with senior officials from the External Affairs and Defense Ministries. I am joined by a team that includes Deputy Assistant Secretaries Ken Handelman and Atul Keshap, from the State

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Department, Keith Webster from the Defense Department, and Matt Matthews from the US Pacific Command.

Sometimes I think it would be easier to name the US officials that haven't recently visited India.

Above and beyond the continued expansion of our strategic partnership, Prime Minister Modi has taken the unprecedented step of inviting a U.S. president to be the chief guest at the first Republic Day of his administration. President Obama is deeply honored to accept the invitation and to return to India in January. Not only will this mark the first time an American president will attend Republic Day, but it also marks the first time an American president will have visited India twice during his presidency.

Many Indian officials have also traveled recently to the United States, including, of course, Prime Minister Modi, who had a very successful trip just a few months ago.

When Prime Minister Modi visited Washington, President Obama hosted him at the White House, and following their meetings, they paid a visit to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial.

It was fitting for these two leaders to go to that moving memorial, because of course Dr. King drew deep inspiration from India's own Mahatma Gandhi.

Those of you who have been to Washington will know that as you walk along the Martin Luther King Memorial, you can read some of Dr. King's most poignant messages, etched in stone along the wall for future generations to see.

One of these quotes that President Obama and Prime Minister Modi were able to see, I think captures why the growing partnership between the United States and India is so important in the 21st century.

Over fifty years ago, at a dark time for civil rights in the United States, Dr. King delivered an uplifting message of hope. "Darkness cannot drive out darkness," he said. "Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

In so many areas around the world, India has a vital, positive, uplifting role to play – in South Asia, in the Indo-Pacific, and increasingly, on the world stage. India's rise as a regional and global leader, and its economic and strategic growth, are deeply in the U.S. interest.

Prime Minister Modi has pointed out that he does not only see our relations in terms of the benefits it brings to the Indian people or the American people. That is self-evident. The true power and potential of this partnership, he said, is that when our two countries come together, the world will benefit.

At this time of great promise and possibility in this relationship, I'd like to speak today about our defense ties, and why a closer U.S.-India defense relationship is in both our nations' – and the world's – interest. We believe there is especially strong potential in the U.S.-India defense relationship, which we want to translate into action.

Since the signing of our bilateral defense framework in 2005, our defense relationship has become a central pillar of our strategic partnership. And when Prime Minister Modi visited Washington, he

and President Obama welcomed the decision to renew the 2005 Framework, and they agreed to reinvigorate the Political-Military Dialogue that we will convene tomorrow.

Together with India, we are proud to hold more than 50 annual military exercises among all the services to train our troops and to encourage them to work together.

In the most recent MALABAR exercise in July... our largest bilateral naval exercise... Japan's navy joined India and the United States to conduct exercises in the Northwest Pacific. Previously, MALABAR has featured the Australian and Singaporean navies, and we continue to look for opportunities to train and conduct exercises with our many partners in the region.

India has also been a leader in global counter-piracy efforts. Let's not forget that in 2011, piracy was wreaking havoc on international trade off the Horn of Africa. The number of attacks peaked at 237, with 28 of those attacks resulting in vessel hijackings and sailors held hostage for ransom.

But today, thanks to a concerted international effort, including leadership from India in the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, there has been no successful raid against a commercial ship in that region in over two years.

India has also taken great strides to secure waterways and trade routes on the other side of the sub-continent, in the Bay of Bengal.

And going forward, we will continue to remain vigilant against the threat of piracy.

India has shouldered a global responsibility not only on maritime security, but also in peacekeeping. In fact, over the past six decades, India has been one of the top troop contributors for global peacekeeping operations. I know Indian peacekeepers have courageously made sacrifices for their missions... and some have made the ultimate sacrifice. India's contributions to international peacekeeping efforts can serve as an example for many other nations around the world.

As we look to deepen our peacekeeping cooperation, we are also building the ties between our professional military personnel through educational exchange. We are proud that many of the senior leaders in all services of the Indian military have studied in the United States, including 2 out of 3 of the current service chiefs.

Already, more than 100,000 Indians study at American universities each year. And through our International Military Education and Training program, we look forward to broadening our military-to-military interactions... not only at the leader-to-leader level, but also at the student-to-student level.

Because even while India is one of the world's oldest civilizations, it has the world's most young people, with a median age of 27 and 600 million people under the age of 25... making education of this group a top Indian priority and these people-to-people ties all the more important to our shared future. That's why, going forward, as India establishes its National Defense University, we look forward to building bridges between that institution and the U.S. National Defense University.

Another area where we have made tremendous progress is in defense trade. Since 2008, our bilateral defense trade has grown from near-zero to nearly \$10 billion.

The benefits of our defense trade have extended far beyond each of our borders. For example, India used C-130Js and C-17 transport aircraft to respond to floods and landslides in India and Nepal.

You've used U.S.-made equipment to provide typhoon relief in the Philippines, to search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight, and to resupply your peacekeeping mission in South Sudan.

Going forward, President Obama and Prime Minister Modi have reaffirmed our strategic commitment to pursue opportunities for defense co-development and co-production that take our defense relationship to the next level.

To us, our defense relationship with India is not transactional; it is an investment in our future together. We want to move beyond a buyer-seller relationship, towards one of co-development and co-production, where both our nations will benefit.

One of the ways we're doing that is by modernizing our defense exports licensing system. Over the past seven years, the average time to process a license for India has dropped almost 40 percent. And it's important to emphasize that less than 1 percent of licenses destined for India are denied, a figure that is on par or better than many of our closest partners.

We remain committed to maintaining a transparent and predictable process, even as we find creative ways for our systems to work more harmoniously. That's why we continue to support the Defense Trade and Technology Initiative, or DTTI, which will reduce bureaucratic burdens and expedite technology-sharing and research. We also believe that DTTI, through its emphasis on co-production and co-development, only complements Prime Minister Modi's "Make in India" initiative. Yesterday I was in Hyderabad, where I was able to see firsthand the remarkable potential in this area. We hope to see more partnerships take hold, like those between Lockheed Martin and TATA to build C-130 components, and Sikorsky and TATA to build cabins for S-92 helicopters.

We have been discussing more than a dozen co-production and co-development projects with India, and we hope to move on some of these going forward. Still, let's not forget that our work is unfinished. We need to work together to make defense trade easier. We should do this because of the tremendous security benefits that strengthening our defense ties brings to our people, to this region, and to the world.

But it's not just about security. It's also about the economy, and let me focus on that for a moment.

Growing our defense trade helps our companies' bottom lines... it helps create better jobs on the assembly lines... and most importantly, it gets the best equipment and protection to our troops on the front lines.

But in addition to the clear benefits that defense trade brings to both our countries in terms of good-paying jobs... it's important to remember that it's security that underpins global trade and commerce. As Secretary Kerry has said many times over the past few years, "More than ever, foreign policy is economic policy."

Look, for example, at the Indo-Pacific region. For India, over half of your trade passes through the Strait of Malacca. India, like the United States, has important trade interests all along the Pacific and Indian oceans. And Prime Minister Modi's "Act East" policy – just like President Obama's rebalance to Asia – is rooted in the leading economic role that the Asia-Pacific is already playing in this century and beyond. Our interests in the region, and our policies towards the region, have never been more complementary.

That's why both of our countries have such an important stake in maritime security. It's why we share a deep interest in a peaceful, rules-based order in the Asia-Pacific. It's why, as President Obama and Prime Minister Modi outlined both in Washington and at the East Asia Summit in Burma, we believe in freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea. We share a vision where all parties pursue resolution of their territorial and maritime disputes through peaceful means, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Securing these sea lanes peacefully is crucial to ensuring that international commerce can continue to flow without disruption.

This is a time of great possibility; of great excitement; and of great importance for the United States and India. We're seeing a natural convergence not only of our values... not only of our interests... but also of our vision for the way forward... in the Indo-Pacific and the world at large.

By working together, by translating those common interests into common efforts, we will bring more security and economic prosperity, not only to our citizens, but to people all over the world.

Thank you very much.

4. NATO Stands with Ukraine, Increases Support (12-02-2014)

Brussels — NATO foreign ministers on December 2 stated their political and practical support for Ukraine as its new government embarks on key reforms.

“We remain committed to assisting Ukraine speed up reforms and we are enhancing our support so that Ukraine can better provide for its own security,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said after a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission.

The NATO ministers held talks with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin, who participated in the meeting via video link from Kyiv. The ministers discussed the challenging developments in and around Ukraine and reviewed progress made since the last meeting of the commission at NATO's Wales Summit in September.

The NATO foreign ministers declared that the trust funds and projects on command, control, communications and computers, logistics and standardization, cyberdefense, military career transition and medical rehabilitation are operational. A fifth trust fund to help rehabilitate wounded soldiers has also recently been set up.

Stoltenberg said the trust funds “are a concrete signal” of NATO's support. “They will help make Ukraine's defense forces more modern, more transparent and more effective. And they will help some of those affected by the conflict.”

The secretary-general stressed that “in the face of Russia's continued and deliberate destabilization of Ukraine, NATO will continue to show firm political support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.”

He also reaffirmed NATO's support for a political settlement of the crisis. "The Minsk agreements remain a framework which could pave the way for a peaceful solution," he said. "Ukraine has made genuine efforts to respect its commitments. But Russia and the Russian-backed separatists have not. We call on Russia to honor its obligations. This includes withdrawing its forces and military equipment from Ukrainian territory and along the Ukrainian border and providing for effective international monitoring of the border."

The foreign ministers condemned Russia's military buildup in Crimea and expressed concern over Russia's stated plans for further military buildup on the Black Sea.

Stoltenberg congratulated Ukraine on the success of November's elections, saying "they confirmed Ukraine's choice for democracy, unity and European integration."

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5. White House on Afghanistan's Approval of Security Agreements (11-29-2014)

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Government of Afghanistan's Approval of the Bilateral Security Agreement and the NATO Status of Forces Agreement

On Thursday, the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) and the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) were both approved by an overwhelming majority vote in the Afghan Parliament. We welcome the approval of these two agreements, which represent an invitation from the Afghan people to strengthen the relationship we have built over the past 13 years. The BSA provides our military service members and civilian personnel the necessary legal framework to carry out two critical non-combat missions after 2014: targeting the remnants of al-Qa`ida and training, advising, and assisting Afghan National Security Forces. The NATO SOFA gives forces from Allied and partner countries the legal protections necessary to carry out the NATO Resolute Support mission when the ISAF mission comes to an end later this year.

The timely approval of these agreements is a great credit to the newly formed government of national unity and follows a historic Afghan election that ushered in the first peaceful democratic transfer of power in the nation's history. We applaud President Ghani and CEO Abdullah's tireless efforts to form a representative, inclusive, and smoothly functioning government and look forward to a renewed partnership that will help advance our shared interests and the enduring security of Afghanistan.

The BSA fully implements the Strategic Partnership Agreement that our two governments signed in May 2012 and enables our long-term cooperation to promote the security, stability, and unity of Afghanistan. This also contributes to the security of the United States and our coalition partners, and to the stability of the region.

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[News Release: Readout of Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work's Visit to Afghanistan](#)

6. Hagel Calls Service Members on Thanksgiving to Express Gratitude (11-27-2014)

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Nov. 27, 2014 – Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel today called service members taking part in operations around the world to thank them for their service and sacrifice, and to wish them a Happy Thanksgiving, according to a DoD press release.

“Secretary Hagel expressed his appreciation for their service in defending the United States, and supporting our allies and partners,” the release stated. “In each of the calls, Secretary Hagel noted that he knows how difficult it is to be away from home on this holiday and thanked the Service members and their families for their sacrifice for the nation.”

Hagel spoke with representatives from each military service, including:

Air Force Capt. Derek Van De Wege, 27, of Federal Way, Wash., who is a C-17 aircraft commander at Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait. He has flown airdrop missions in support of [Operation Inherent Resolve](#) over Iraq, delivering food, water and supplies.

Marine Corps Sgt. Matthew S. Ohler, 24, of Rockwood, Penn., who is serving in Monrovia, Liberia, with the Special-Purpose Marine Air–Ground Task Force Crisis Response Africa as an MV-22B Osprey airframes mechanic. Ohler has maintained the hydraulic and composite systems for the four aircraft assigned to the unit as part of [Operation United Assistance](#).

Army First Lt. Darrel J. Guthrie II, 24, of Lubbock, Texas, a light infantry platoon Leader serving in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Guthrie helped neutralize an attack on his patrol while providing security for a key leader engagement. For more on U.S. and allied efforts in Afghanistan, visit the [ISAF](#) home page.

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ruddana P. Skipper, 24, of Riviera Beach, Fla., who is serving aboard the [U.S.S. O’Kane](#) as part of a 9-month deployment in the Arabian Gulf. Skipper leads 15 sailors in the operation of over 500 pieces of communication and network equipment and was selected as her ship’s junior sailor of the year.

Biographies:
[Chuck Hagel](#)

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[President Makes Holiday Calls to Service Members](#)

7. Airstrikes Target ISIL in Syria, Iraq (11-26-2014)

From a U.S. Central Command News Release

TAMPA, Fla., Nov. 26, 2014 – U.S. military forces continued to attack Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists in Syria yesterday and today using bomber and fighter aircraft to conduct 10 airstrikes, U.S. Central Command officials reported.

Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces conducted seven airstrikes in Iraq yesterday and today using attack, fighter and remotely-piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists, officials said.

Airstrikes in Syria

In Syria, 10 airstrikes near Kobani struck an ISIL fighting position, a large ISIL unit, two tactical ISIL units, and destroyed four ISIL staging areas and six ISIL fighting positions.

Airstrikes in Iraq

In Iraq, two airstrikes near Mosul destroyed an ISIL bulldozer, two ISIL vehicles, three ISIL-occupied buildings and an ISIL fighting position, and also struck a large ISIL unit. Near Kirkuk, two airstrikes destroyed an ISIL tank, an ISIL Humvee and another ISIL vehicle, and also struck two ISIL units. North of Sinjar, an airstrike destroyed an ISIL Humvee and an ISIL vehicle. Northwest of Ramadi, an airstrike damaged an ISIL checkpoint.

And, west of Baiji, an airstrike destroyed one ISIL vehicle and damaged another.

All aircraft returned to base safely. Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports.

The strikes were conducted as part of Operation Inherent Resolve, the operation to eliminate the terrorist group ISIL and the threat they pose to Iraq, the region and the wider international community. The destruction of ISIL targets in Syria and Iraq further limits the terrorist group's ability to project power and conduct operations.

Coalition nations conducting airstrikes in Iraq include the U.S., Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Coalition nations conducting airstrikes in Syria include the U.S., Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Related Sites:

[U.S. Central Command](#)

[Special Report: U.S. Central Command](#)

[Special Report: Operation Inherent Resolve - Targeted Operations Against ISIL Terrorists](#)
