

**INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE**  
**January 15 - 22, 2015**

1. [Obama Seeks Authorization for Use of Force Against ISIL](#) (01-21-2015)
2. [NATO Defense Chiefs Meet, Ukraine a 'Significant Concern'](#) (01-21-2015)
3. [Iran Nuclear Negotiations: Status of Talks and the Role of Congress](#) (01-21-2015)
4. [Terrorism, Russian Aggression Threaten European Security](#) (01-19-2015)
5. [President Announces Expanded Cooperation with U.K. on Cyber Threats](#) (01-16-2015)
6. [Voice of Freedom Won't be Muzzled, Say Obama, Cameron](#) (01-15-2015)
7. [Hagel: U.S. Military Must Prepare for Challenges](#) (01-15-2015)
8. [NATO Chief: Military Strength Aids Diplomatic Dialogue](#) (01-15-2015)

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**1. [Obama Seeks Authorization for Use of Force Against ISIL](#) (01-21-2015)**

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21, 2015 – In his State of the Union address last night, President Barack Obama called on Congress to authorize the use of military force against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

In a speech largely focused on his domestic and economic agenda, Obama also touched on a myriad of topics related to the Defense Department, noting the start of the century “dawned with terror touching our shores.”

“We are 15 years into this new century -- 15 years that dawned with terror touching our shores -- that unfolded with a new generation fighting two long and costly wars. Tonight, for the first time since 9/11, our combat mission in Afghanistan is over.”

Six years ago, the president noted, nearly 180,000 American troops served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, he added, fewer than 15,000 remain.

“We salute the courage and sacrifice of every man and woman in this 9/11 generation who has served to keep us safe,” Obama said. “We are humbled and grateful for your service.”

## **Costly Lessons Learned**

Nation has learned some “costly” lessons over the last 13 years of combat, Obama said, and he detailed efforts to have Afghan forces take charge of their own country’s security.

“Instead of Americans patrolling the valleys of Afghanistan,” Obama said, “we’ve trained their security forces who’ve now taken the lead, and we’ve honored our troops’ sacrifice by supporting that country’s first democratic transition.”

Partnerships have taken the place of unilateral action, Obama said, noting that instead of sending large numbers of ground forces overseas, he said, the United States now works in concert with nations from South Asia to North Africa to deny safe haven to terrorists who threaten America.

In Iraq and Syria, Obama said, American leadership, including military power, is stopping the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant’s advance.

“Instead of getting dragged into another ground war in the Middle East,” he said, “we are leading a broad coalition, including Arab nations, to degrade and ultimately destroy this terrorist group.” The United States has a role in that effort, the president added, and he called on Congress to provide the authority to use force against ISIL.

“Tonight,” Obama said, “I call on this Congress to show the world that we are united in this mission by passing a resolution to authorize the use of force against ISIL,” he said. “We need that authority.”

Additionally, Obama noted, U.S. support to a moderate opposition in Syria not only can help in the effort there, but also can assist people everywhere who stand up to the “bankrupt” ideology of violent extremism. This effort will take time and require focus, he added, but we he pledged success.

## **Smarter American Leadership**

Obama praised U.S. military power for its role in what he called “smarter American leadership.”

“My first duty as commander in chief is to defend the United States of America,” he said. “In doing so, the question is not whether America leads in the world, but how.

“When we make rash decisions, reacting to the headlines instead of using our heads -- when the first response to a challenge is to send in our military -- then we risk getting drawn into unnecessary conflicts, and neglect the broader strategy we need for a safer, more prosperous world,” he continued. “That’s what our enemies want us to do. I believe in a smarter kind of American leadership. We lead best when we combine military power with strong diplomacy, leverage our power with coalition building and don’t let our fears blind us to the opportunities that this new century presents.”

The president said the United States must stand united with people around the world who have been targeted by terrorists -- from a school in Pakistan to the streets of Paris.

“We will continue to hunt down terrorists and dismantle their networks,” he said. “We reserve the right to act unilaterally, as we have done relentlessly since I took office, to take out terrorists who pose a direct threat to us and our allies.”

The United States is demonstrating the power of American strength and diplomacy, Obama said, and is upholding the principle that bigger nations can't bully the small. The nation is opposing Russian aggression and supporting Ukraine's democracy while reassuring NATO allies, he added.

### **Cyber Defense**

Turning to cybersecurity, the president said no foreign nation or hacker "should be able to shut down our networks, steal our trade secrets, or invade the privacy of American families, especially our kids."

"We are making sure our government integrates intelligence to combat cyber threats, just as we have done to combat terrorism," he said. The president urged Congress to pass legislation to increase cooperation between the government and the private sector "to better meet the evolving threat of cyberattacks, combat identity theft, and protect our children's information."

"If we don't act," Obama added, "we'll leave our nation and our economy vulnerable. If we do, we can continue to protect the technologies that have unleashed untold opportunities for people around the globe."

### **Other Global Challenges**

Obama noted that U.S. troops, scientists, doctors, nurses and health care workers in West Africa are helping to fight the Ebola virus while, "saving countless lives and stopping the spread of disease."

"I could not be prouder of them," he said, thanking Congress for supporting their efforts.

"But the job is not yet done," Obama added. "The world needs to use this lesson to build a more effective global effort to prevent the spread of future pandemics, invest in smart development and eradicate extreme poverty."

In the Asia-Pacific region, the president said, the United States is modernizing alliances while making sure that other nations play by the rules in how they trade, resolve maritime disputes and participate in meeting common international challenges such as nonproliferation and disaster relief.

And no challenge, Obama said, poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change.

"2014 was the planet's warmest year on record," he said. "Now, one year doesn't make a trend, but this does -- 14 of the 15 warmest years on record have all fallen in the first 15 years of this century."

Obama said while some people "dodge the evidence," scientists at NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and others, are all "telling us that our activities are changing the climate."

Top Pentagon officials say that climate change poses immediate risks to national security, Obama said. "We should act like it," he added. "Over the past six years, we've done more than ever to combat climate change, from the way we produce energy to the way we use it."

### **A Brighter Future**

The country has made it through some hard times, Obama said, and in this new century, has again begun the work of remaking America.

"We have laid a new foundation," he said. "A brighter future is ours to write. Let's begin this new chapter together, and let's start the work right now."

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## **2. NATO Defense Chiefs Meet, Ukraine a 'Significant Concern' (01-21-2015)**

By Lisa Ferdinando

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

BRUSSELS, Jan. 21, 2015 – The U.S. military says Russia has "funneled hundreds of pieces of Russian military equipment" to Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine. The comments from the spokesman of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff came today, on the first day of a two-day defense chiefs meeting at NATO headquarters here.

Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, who is attending the NATO meeting, is "closely following" reports of Russian activity inside Ukraine, said spokesman Air Force Col. Ed Thomas.

"Among the most pressing issues for the group is NATO's planning and readiness to secure its eastern flank. It's been a dominant factor for the alliance since Russian forces entered Crimea," Thomas said.

He declined to discuss specifics about the reports of Russian activity, but did acknowledge a Russian role in the ongoing conflict.

"Since the September 5th Minsk ceasefire, Russia has funneled hundreds of pieces of Russian military equipment and materiel to Russia-backed separatists, including tanks, armored personnel carriers, and heavy artillery pieces," Thomas said.

"Russian military forces still operate in eastern Ukraine, where they play a coordinating role and provide command and control support to pro-Russian separatists," he said.

### **NATO Focus on Russia**

In the opening session today, the chairman of the NATO Military Committee, Danish Gen. Knud Bartels, said Russia's "illegal military intervention" in Ukraine remains a "significant cause for concern."

The events in Ukraine are "shaping our thinking on NATO's security challenges," he said.

"We have seen in Ukraine the use of hybrid warfare which combines traditional, conventional and paramilitary operations, as well as sophisticated disinformation campaigns," the Danish general said.

Because of the developments in Ukraine, the Ukrainian chief of defense was "forced at very short notice to cancel his attendance" at the meeting, Bartels said.

The centerpiece for NATO's response to the recent Russian aggression is cooperation on what the alliance has dubbed the Readiness Action Plan.

NATO heads of state agreed to the plan at the Wales summit in September. Alliance officials say the plan will "significantly enhance NATO's readiness and responsiveness" and ensure that NATO forces remain ready.

In the interim, NATO has established a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force coordinated by Air Force Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

NATO has already increased maritime, land and air presence in Eastern Europe as member nations hammer out a final plan. The U.S. has stepped up its presence in Eastern Europe through a variety of reassurance measures to include airborne exercises in Poland and the Baltic nations.

But NATO leaders from countries like Greece and Italy are equally focused on the security of the alliance's southern flank, where U.S. and European officials warn about the flow of extremists and the danger it poses to the region.

"The threat to Europe and the West posed by smuggling and foreign fighters returning from the Middle East requires collaborative solutions," Thomas said. "As the attack on Paris underscored, this is a threat that is real and immediate."

NATO must continue to have the capability and capacity to counter threats to its border, Bartels said.

"The growing instability in the south compounds the challenges facing the alliance," Bartels said.

### **Afghanistan a topic for alliance members**

Coalition commitments to Afghanistan's long-term success are on the agenda, according to Thomas. "We have a willing partner in the government of Afghanistan and U.S. and coalition commitment will remain key," he said.

The alliance has opened a "new chapter" in its relationship with Afghanistan, Bartels said, noting that one year ago the alliance was focused on the International Stabilization Force in Afghanistan.

"This mandate was carried out at significant cost and with substantial success," he said. "We will always remember the sacrifice of the international and Afghan forces, who deserve our respect and our gratitude."

As of January 2015, the alliance is conducting a train, assist, and advise mission in support of the Afghan National Security Forces, Bartels said.

"We are well aware that although this is a non-combat mission, it is conducted in a combat environment," he said.

### **Threats in North Africa, Middle East**

The chiefs of defense were also examining the "dynamic and evolving situation" in regards to regional security challenges in North Africa and the Middle East, Bartels said.

The alliance members had a session Wednesday with the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue partner nations. The group is comprised of seven non-NATO countries of the Mediterranean region: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

Bartels said the Thursday session will provide an opportunity to develop the military advice to NATO's Political Guidance 2015, which will be agreed in June by NATO's defense ministers.

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### **3. Iran Nuclear Negotiations: Status of Talks and the Role of Congress (01-21-2015)**

*Testimony by Antony J. Blinken, Deputy Secretary of State*  
*Written Statement Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*

Good morning, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez and Senators. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you the status of negotiations related to Iran's nuclear program.

It is appropriate that we are gathered here today for what will be this committee's first hearing this year and its first hearing under the new 114th Congress to discuss Iran's nuclear program. The challenge posed by Iran's nuclear program has long been one of our country's foremost national security priorities, and it has been a primary focus of both the Congress and the Administration. The international community shares our serious concerns about Iran's nuclear program. Together with our partners in the P5+1 and the EU we have been unified in pursuing a comprehensive solution that lays these concerns to rest – consistent with the President's firm commitment to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

It was with that challenge in mind that Secretary Kerry and our lead negotiator Under Secretary Sherman traveled to Geneva last week as part of our latest efforts to reach a long-term comprehensive plan of action with Iran that would verifiably ensure Iran's nuclear program will be exclusively peaceful going forward.

Today I plan to update you on our goals for and the status of the negotiations. There are, of course, some details that I will not be able to discuss in an setting – the negotiations are ongoing and cannot be conducted in public. But I will give you as much detail as I can in this setting because we all understand the vital role Congress and this Committee play in shaping U.S. policy towards Iran. We remain committed to continue – and when necessary, to expand – regular consultations. We all have the same goal – to make the world a safer place by resolving the international community's concerns with Iran's nuclear program.

We continue to believe that the best way to do that is to negotiate a comprehensive plan of action that, when implemented, will ensure that, as a practical matter, Iran cannot acquire a nuclear weapon and that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively peaceful.

Any comprehensive deal must effectively cut off the four pathways Iran could take to obtain enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon: two uranium pathways, through its activities at Natanz and Fordow; a plutonium pathway, through the Arak heavy water reactor; and a potential covert pathway. It must include tight constraints and strict curbs on Iran's nuclear program. And finally, it must require robust monitoring and transparency measures to maximize the international community's ability to detect quickly any attempt by Iran to break out overtly or covertly.

In exchange, the international community would provide Iran with phased sanctions relief tied to verifiable actions on its part. Such relief would be structured to be easily reversed so that sanctions could be quickly re-imposed if Iran were to violate its commitments.

We never expected this to be an easy process, and so far those expectations have proved correct. It is also a process that cannot be rushed. After thirty-five years without diplomatic relations, and after more than ten years of attempts to put a halt to Iran's proliferation of sensitive nuclear activities, we are now trying to see if we can work through a multitude of complicated issues in order for us and the international community to be assured of the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program.

Our goal is to conclude the major elements of the deal by the end of March and then to complete the technical details by June.

Last week's discussions were serious, useful, and businesslike. We have made progress on some issues but gaps remain on others. I, or our lead negotiator, Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, would be happy to provide further information in a classified setting.

Overall, however, we assess that we still have a credible chance of reaching a deal that is in the best interest of America's security, as well as the security of our allies. If Iran's leaders choose not to move forward, we will work with Congress to increase pressure. But while we remain engaged in these negotiations, it is important to demonstrate to our partners as well as to Iran that Washington is united in support of a comprehensive solution that would ensure that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon, and that its nuclear program is exclusively peaceful. I know this is a goal we all share.

The U.S. Congress has played a vital role in getting us to where we are today and will undoubtedly play an important role going forward. Sanctions were instrumental in bringing Iran to the table. But Iran's program continued until negotiations made the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) possible. Sanctions did not stop the advance of Iran's nuclear program. Negotiations did, and it is in our interest not to deny ourselves the chance to achieve a long-term, comprehensive solution that would prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Let me talk about that progress we have achieved so far.

Before the JPOA, despite an unprecedented sanctions regime, Iran's nuclear program was rushing toward larger enriched uranium stockpiles, greater enrichment capacity, the production of plutonium that could be used in a nuclear weapon, and ever shorter breakout time. Today, as the result of the constraints in the JPOA, Iran has halted progress on its nuclear program and it has rolled it back in key areas for the first time in a decade, and it has allowed us to have greater insight and visibility through more intrusive and more frequent inspections.

Before the JPOA, Iran had about 200 kilograms of 20 percent enriched uranium in a form that could be quickly enriched into a weapons-grade level. It produced much of that material at the Fordow facility, buried deep underground. Today, Iran has no such 20 percent enriched uranium – zero, none. It has diluted or converted every ounce, suspended all uranium enrichment above 5 percent and removed the connections among centrifuges at Fordow that allowed them to produce 20 percent enriched uranium.

Before the JPOA, Iran was making progress on the Arak reactor, which, if it had become operational, and together with a reprocessing facility, would have provided Iran with a plutonium path to a nuclear weapon. Once fueled, the Arak facility would be challenging to deal with militarily. Today, Arak is frozen in place.

Before the JPOA, Iran was enriching uranium with roughly 10,000 centrifuges and had another roughly 9,000 installed centrifuges ready to bring into operation. The JPOA froze Iran's enrichment capacity and those 9,000 additional centrifuges are still not operating.

Before the JPOA, inspectors had less frequent access to Iran's nuclear facilities. Today, the JPOA has enabled IAEA inspectors to have daily access to Iran's enrichment facilities and a far deeper understanding of Iran's nuclear program. They have been able to learn things about Iran's centrifuge production, uranium mines, and other facilities that are important to monitoring Iran's program going forward and to detecting any attempts to break out. And the IAEA has consistently reported that Iran has lived up to its commitments under the JPOA.

Just as we have asked Iran to uphold its commitments under the JPOA, we have lived up to our commitment of providing Iran with limited relief – about \$14 to \$15 billion from the start of the JPOA through this June. But that relief is dwarfed by the vast amounts denied to Iran under the existing sanctions regime. For example, in 2014 alone, oil sanctions deprived Iran of more than \$40 billion in oil revenue – well over twice the estimated value of the relief under the JPOA. And what oil revenues Iran is allowed to generate go into heavily restricted accounts that now encumber more than \$100 billion dollars. Virtually the entire sanctions architecture remains in place. Indeed, throughout the existence of the JPOA, sanctions pressure on Iran has not decreased – it has increased.

Congress is now considering legislation to impose additional sanctions on Iran, to be triggered by the failure of negotiations. I know that the intent of this legislation is to further increase pressure on Iran and, in so doing, to strengthen the hand of our negotiators to reach a comprehensive settlement. While the administration appreciates that intent, it is our considered judgment and strongly held view that new sanctions, at this time, are unnecessary and, far from enhancing the prospects for successful negotiations, risk fatally undermining our diplomacy and unraveling the sanctions regime so many in this body have worked so hard to establish.

New sanctions are unnecessary because, as I noted a moment ago, Iran already is under acute pressure from the application of the existing sanctions regime. In recent months, that pressure has only grown stronger with the dramatic drop in oil prices.

Should Iran refuse a reasonable deal or cheat on its current commitments under the JPOA, the Senate and House could impose additional measures in a matter of hours. The Administration would strongly support such action. Iran is well aware that an even sharper sword of Damocles hangs over its head. It needs no further motivation.

So new sanctions are not necessary. And their passage now would put at risk the possibility of getting a final deal over the next several months. Let me explain why.

As part of the JPOA we also committed, within the bounds of our system, not to impose new nuclear-related sanctions while the JPOA is in effect. Absent a breach by Iran, any new sanctions enacted by Congress would be viewed by Iran and the international community as the U.S. breaking out of the understandings of the JPOA. This includes “trigger” legislation that would tie the actual implementation of new sanctions to the failure to reach a final arrangement. Even if such sanctions are not, arguably, a technical violation of the JPOA, we believe they would be perceived as such by Iran and many of our partners around the world. This could produce one of several serious unintended consequences that, far from enhancing America's security, would undermine it.

First, the passage of new sanctions could provoke Iran to walk away from the negotiating table, violate the JPOA and start moving its nuclear program forward again. Instead of keeping its

uranium enrichment at under 5 percent, as it has since the JPOA was signed, Iran could start enriching again at 20 percent, or even higher. Instead of capping its stockpile of roughly 4 percent low enriched uranium at pre-JPOA levels, Iran could grow it rapidly. Instead of suspending substantive work on the Arak heavy water reactor, Iran could restart its efforts to bring this reactor on line. Instead of providing unprecedented access to international inspectors at its nuclear facilities, it could curtail/reduce IAEA access, inhibiting our ability to detect a breakout attempt. Instead of limiting work on advanced centrifuges, it could resume its efforts to increase and significantly improve its nuclear capabilities in a relatively short timeframe.

Second, even if Iran does not walk away or promptly returns to the table, its negotiators are likely to adopt more extreme positions in response, making a final deal even more difficult if not impossible to achieve.

Third, if our international partners believe that the United States has acted prematurely by adding new sanctions now in the absence of a provocation or a violation by Iran – as most countries surely would – their willingness to enforce the existing sanctions regime or to add to it in the event negotiations fail will wane. Their support is crucial. Without it, the sanctions regime would be dramatically diluted. Up until now, we've kept other countries on board – despite it being against their economic interest -- in large part because we've demonstrated we are serious about trying to reach a diplomatic solution. If they lose that conviction, the United States, not Iran, would be isolated, the sanctions regime would collapse and Iran could turn on everything it turned off under the JPOA without fear of effective, international sanctions pressure in response.

We can debate whether any or all of these things would happen. What I can tell you today is that those who are best placed to know – the diplomatic professionals who have been leading these negotiations and dealing directly with the Iranians and our international partners for the past several years – believe that the risks are real, serious and totally unnecessary. That is their best judgment. Why run those risks and jeopardize the prospects for a deal that will either come together – or not – over the next two months? Why not be patient for a few more months to fully test diplomacy? There is nothing to be gained – and everything to be lost – by acting precipitously.

That judgment is shared by our closest allies. Just this past week, Prime Minister Cameron could not have been clearer: "...It is the opinion of the United Kingdom that further sanctions or further threat of sanctions at this point won't actually help to bring the talks to a successful conclusion and they could fracture the international unity... which has been so valuable in presenting a united front to Iran."

So we must continue to work together. We have briefed Congress extensively and frequently on Iran talks over the past year. We have had, and will continue to have, extensive discussions with Congress about the status of the P5+1 negotiations. We will continue to keep Congress fully informed about these negotiations through a combination of open hearings and closed briefings. I look forward to continuing that conversation with all of you and your colleagues today, and in the remaining months.

Before I finish, I want to emphasize that, even as we engage Iran on the nuclear issue and continue to apply pressure under the existing sanctions regime, we also continue to hold it accountable for its actions on other fronts. We continue to insist that Iran release Saeed Abedini, Amir Hekmati, and Jason Rezaian from detention so they can come home to their families. Likewise, we continue to call on Iran to work cooperatively with us so that we can find Robert Levinson and bring him home. This March will unfortunately mark eight years since his disappearance on Iran's Kish Island. Secretary Kerry and Under Secretary Sherman have spoken to Iran about our concerns for the fate

of these U.S. citizens as recently as last week, and will continue to do so until all of them are back home.

We also continue to raise our voice in support of the talented and brave Iranian people, and support their desire for greater respect for universal human rights and the rule of law. We have spoken up clearly and consistently against human rights violations in Iran and have called on the Iranian government to guarantee the rights and freedoms of its citizens. We have done this in reports requested by this legislative body, such as the Human Rights Report, through statements on individual cases where our voice can support those inside Iran, and via international organizations, such as our work to support the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran. We have also used our Virtual Embassy Tehran online platform to promote freedom of expression and respect for human rights, and our programming to support the rights of average citizens in Iran. Regardless of the outcome of ongoing nuclear negotiations with Iran, we will not relax our efforts to hold Iran accountable for its human rights violations.

We will also continue to confront Iran's destabilizing activities, promotion of sectarian divisions, and support for non-state actors and terrorists throughout the Middle East. Our positions on Palestinian terrorist groups, such as Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Lebanese Hezbollah, for example, have in no way changed – and will not change. We have very clearly and consistently spoken out against these designated foreign terrorist organizations, as well as Iran's support for them. And we will continue to find ways to support those in the region who are working to counter the destabilizing actions of these groups – including building partner capacity – as we simultaneously reinforce the robust regional security architecture we've already built. Similarly, we have called out Iran for its support of the brutal regime of Bashar al-Asad in Syria. We hope that Iran soon recognizes that there is much more to be gained through constructive engagement in the region and promotion of inclusivity than through disruptive policies.

The challenges posed by Iran are numerous and complicated. We have confronted them, and will continue to do so. On the challenge of Iran's nuclear program, we face a historic opportunity to resolve this concern through clear eyed, principled and disciplined diplomacy. We do not yet know if diplomacy will be successful – as the President has stated the chances are probably less than 50-50 -- but it is of the utmost importance that we give it every opportunity to succeed.

Thank you.

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#### **4. Terrorism, Russian Aggression Threaten European Security (01-19-2015)**

By Lisa Ferdinando  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

ROME, Jan. 19, 2015 – Terrorism and Russian aggression are two "very distinct threats" to European security, according to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey told Italian counterpart Chief of Defense Adm. Luigi Binelli Mantelli and Minister of Defense Roberta Pinotti each of those threats requires a "different kind of cooperation."

The leaders discussed a variety of topics in meetings here today, including threats to Italy's southern flank. Dempsey praised Italy for its significant contributions to coalition missions, including in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The threat from Islamic terrorists will not get any easier, the chairman said.

"I think this threat is probably a 30-year issue," he said, noting that terrorists easily recruit young fighters via the Internet. Counter-messaging is one of the lines of strategy in defeating extremists, he said.

Italy has made important contributions to the campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL, the chairman said.

### **Extremism and Russian Aggression**

For the first time in a "very long time," the United States and its allies are facing the "very distinct threats" of a conventional state threat from Russia, Dempsey said, and the unconventional threat of terrorism from extremists.

"Where Italy sits, strategically, you're faced with the reality of dealing with both of those threats, as we are; I think that draws us closer together," he said.

There is concern, both sides noted, that foreign fighters could be moving through Italy's and NATO's southern flanks. Close to 170,000 refugees have come through Italy's shores in the past year.

Dempsey said the approach in dealing with extremism should consider the swath of countries from the Middle East to Africa, where ISIL and other terrorist groups operate.

"Looking at it one country at a time is not the answer," he said, noting he and other allies will discuss the issue Wednesday and Thursday in NATO meetings in Brussels.

He said Russian aggression will also be a topic in the NATO talks.

### **'Deliberate' Pace in Iraq**

Italy has made tremendous contributions to international missions, he said. Thousands of Italian troops are currently deployed in various operations including in Iraq, Kosovo, the Horn of Africa, and with the United Nations mission in Lebanon.

Italy and the U.S. are the top contributors of on-the-ground trainers and advisors who are enabling the Kurds and Iraqis in the fight against extremists, defense officials noted.

Dempsey thanked Italy for its commitment to Iraq's peace and security, saying, "You contributed and are continuing to contribute meaningful capabilities there."

The chairman described the pace of military efforts in Iraq as "deliberate" and steady.

"Fast is not what we are looking for," he said.

The chairman said it is important to maintain a pace that ensures the Iraqi forces lead the effort as the Iraqi government moves to bridge the sectarian divides that have plagued the nation.

"This must be their fight," he said.

## **Strong Partner to the United States**

Dempsey and the Italian officials praised the strong ties between their countries.

"Our bilateral relationship has probably never been stronger, at least in recent years," Dempsey said, remarking that Italy is a key ally and valuable partner to the United States.

"I think that's a combination of factors; one is our deep history and the fact that our two people are so intertwined both here and back in the United States," he said.

## **'Great Foundation' for New Italian Chief of Defense**

Dempsey thanked Binelli Mantelli, who is retiring next month, for his dedicated service to Italy and its allies, and in keeping Italy safe.

"It's a great compliment to you," Dempsey said. "You've established a great foundation for incoming Chief of Defense Gen. Claudio Graziano to build on."

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[Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey](#)

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## **5. President Announces Expanded Cooperation with U.K. on Cyber Threats (01-16-2015)**

By Claudette Roulo

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Jan. 16, 2015 – President Barack Obama announced his intent to expand cooperation with the United Kingdom in battling cyberthreats during a joint media availability today with U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron at the White House.

The expanded collaboration will be aimed at protecting critical infrastructure, businesses and privacy from cyberattacks, Obama said. While there is heightened attention to terror threats in the wake of the attacks in Paris, the president said, threat streams have remained fairly constant over the past six years.

"So I don't think this is a situation in which because things are so much more dangerous, the pendulum needs to swing," he said. "I think what we have to find is a consistent framework

whereby our publics have confidence that their government can both protect them, but not abuse our capacity to operate in cyberspace."

### **Closing Terrorist 'Safe Havens'**

The collaboration shouldn't be thought of as a new doctrine, Cameron said. "Ever since we've been sending letters to each other or making telephone calls to each other or mobile phone calls to each other or, indeed, contacting each other on the Internet, it has been possible in both our countries in extremis ... to potentially listen to a call between two terrorists, to stop them in their activity," he said.

"We're not asking for back doors ... As technology develops, as the world moves on, we should try to avoid the safe havens that could otherwise be created for terrorists to talk to each other," the prime minister added.

Wiretap laws in both countries need to be updated to reflect the technology of today, Obama said.

"How we do that needs to be debated both here in the United States and in the U.K. I think we're getting better at it, I think we're striking the balance better," the president said. "I think that companies here in the United States at least recognize that they have a responsibility to the public, but also want to make sure that they're meeting their responsibilities to their customers that are using their products."

Discussions between the private sector and the U.S. and U.K. governments center on ensuring that law enforcement and intelligence officers can identify and track actual threats without invading people's privacy, Obama said.

"The technologies are evolving in ways that potentially make this trickier," he said. "If we get into a situation in which the technologies do not allow us at all to track somebody that we're confident is a terrorist ... and, despite knowing that information, despite having a phone number or despite having a social media address or an e-mail address, that we can't penetrate that, that's a problem."

Solving that problem will involve addressing legal and technical issues, the president said, "But overall, I'm actually confident that we can balance these imperatives and we shouldn't feel as if because we've just seen such a horrific attack in Paris that suddenly everything should be thrown by the wayside."

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## **6. Voice of Freedom Won't be Muzzled, Say Obama, Cameron (01-15-2015)**

*President Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron co-authored this commentary, published January 15 in the British newspaper, [The Times](#).*

**We won't let the voice of freedom be muzzled**  
*by David Cameron and Barack Obama*

Safeguarding our way of life depends on economic strength and standing up to terrorism and international aggression

Two hundred years ago this month, Britain and the United States fought each other at the Battle of New Orleans. It was the last major battle where our nations met as enemies. In modern times, our special relationship as allies and partners has been the firm foundation of our shared security and prosperity.

Together we defeated the Nazis and hunted down the core al-Qaeda leadership. Our scientists collaborate to transform our world, from discovering the double helix blueprint of life to creating the technologies that power our digital age. Our businesses, investors and entrepreneurs fuel the largest foreign direct investment relationship between any two countries in the world.

Over the past few years, our governments have worked closely to restore economic growth, improve our living standards and make sure families get the help they needed.

Yet we know that progress and prosperity are never guaranteed. As we meet today at the White House, we reaffirm our belief that our ability to defend our freedoms is rooted in our economic strength and the values that we cherish — freedom of expression, the rule of law and strong democratic institutions.

We face pressing challenges, from promoting global growth, including growth and job creation in Europe, to combating global climate change. And as we were reminded so tragically again in Paris last week, terrorism, conflict and instability threaten the values that define us as free peoples. Today we recommit ourselves to our enduring mission: protecting our peoples, safeguarding our economies and defending our values. Once more, Britain and America stand together. Once more, we need strong and determined leadership to meet the challenges of our time.

First, we must do all we can to bolster our economies against another global economic downturn. This means continuing our efforts to spur growth and support good jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

To start with, we must promote economic policies and reforms that will create jobs and promote growth that is sustainable and balanced.

We are working to conclude a comprehensive EU-US trade deal that would significantly expand trade between our nations and support new opportunities for millions of workers in both Europe and the United States. We also have to make sure prosperity is shared broadly.

For economic growth to be sustainable and meaningful, it must reach everyone, not just a few at the top. So we are working to help families to stake their claim to a better future and buy their first home. We are supporting small businesses, expanding apprenticeships, improving education for all, and backing increases in the minimum wage. And we are co-operating to promote clean energy, reduce our carbon emissions and build our resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Second, we will continue to stand together against those who threaten our values and our way of life. When the freedoms that we treasure came under a brutal attack in Paris, the world responded with one voice. Along with our French allies, we have made clear to those who think they can muzzle freedom of speech and expression with violence that our voices will only grow louder. Whether we are facing lone fanatics or terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda, Islamic State (ISIL) or Boko Haram we will not be cowed by extremists. We will defeat these barbaric killers and their distorted ideology, which tries to justify the murder of innocents, whether children attending school in Peshawar, or girls forced to become suicide bombers in northern Nigeria.

There are more than one billion Muslims in the world, the vast majority of whom are sickened by the evil these terrorists claim to perpetrate in the name of Islam. The United States and Britain will continue to work closely with all those who believe in peace and tolerance. The terrorists know only how to destroy, but together we can do something infinitely more powerful: build security, strengthen justice and advance peace.

Finally, we will continue to stand up to Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine. If we allow such fundamental breaches of international law to go unchecked, we will all suffer from the instability that would follow. Our strong and united response has sent an unmistakable message that the international community will not stand by as Russia attempts to destabilise Ukraine.

We will continue working in lockstep and putting pressure on Russia to resolve the crisis diplomatically. At the same time we will keep supporting Ukraine as it works to fulfil the economic and democratic aspirations of the Ukrainian people.

Security and prosperity go hand in hand. By confronting the terrorists who threaten us, standing together against Russia's aggressive acts and continuing our efforts to advance our economic growth, we will continue to advance the security and prosperity that our people deserve.

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## **7. Hagel: U.S. Military Must Prepare for Challenges (01-15-2015)**

By Nick Simeone  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Jan. 15, 2015 – Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, in what was expected to be his last major address to the troops before leaving office, told an Army audience today the world is at a defining moment, with events charging ahead with a new immediacy, creating less margin for error for U.S. leaders and he urged the military to “prepare this institution in ways that we’ve never had to.”

In an address at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy on Fort Bliss, Texas, Hagel described the cascade of events that have occurred on his watch -- from threats associated with Russia's annexation of Crimea, the emergence of the Islamic State of the Iraq and the Levant in the Middle East, Ebola's spread in West Africa and other challenges to national security -- as being unprecedented in modern times, a trend that he said will continue to place demands on military leaders.

“We are living at a very defining time in the world,” Hagel said. “We have not seen disruptions in the world order like we are seeing today since World War II.”

While only the people of the affected countries can ultimately solve such problems, Hagel said, the rise of ISIL in Iraq and Syria along with sectarian violence in the Middle East in general will require solid judgment on the part of U.S. leaders, who will have “very little margin of error.”

### **Key Requirements for Leadership**

“The world will be presented more and more with those kinds of issues where responsible leadership will always end up having to rely on responsible judgment,” said Hagel, who added that not every problem will come with immediate answers.

“These next few years will define a world order,” full of ups and downs and inconsistencies, he said.

“That means we have to prepare this institution in ways we’ve never had to prepare it and much of that will fall on you in your command positions,” Hagel said. He emphasized that he believes qualities such as responsibility and good judgment will continue to be the key requirements for leadership in the Defense Department of the future.

“You can’t teach that. It’s an accumulation of experiences of knowledge, of commitment,” the secretary said.

### **Budget Uncertainty**

Despite the threats, Hagel, in response to a question from the audience, called budget uncertainty the biggest challenge the military faces over the next decade, given the looming return of spending cuts ordered by the budget sequester that are set to take effect next year requiring the department to find billions in additional cuts.

“I don’t think the demands on the Department of Defense will be less over the next few years,” Hagel said. “I think they’ll be more.”

Hagel, the first enlisted combat veteran to lead the Defense Department, fondly recalled his days training in the Army at Fort Bliss nearly 50 years ago.

“I might say enlightening, when you are referenced not by your name, but by other superlatives in those days,” said Hagel, recalling the time he spent enduring the wrath of drill sergeants before he deployed to Vietnam in 1968.

As he looked back on his nearly two years as defense secretary, Hagel described his biggest challenge in leading “the largest enterprise in the world” as deciding how to manage the demands placed on his time and making sure that “every minute of that time counts” in a job that he called all-consuming.

“You’ve got one bottom line – responsibility,” he said. “That’s the security of this country, and you live with that every day.”

Biographies:

[Chuck Hagel](#)

Related Sites:

[Special Report: Travels With Chuck Hagel](#)

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## **8. NATO Chief: Military Strength Aids Diplomatic Dialogue (01-15-2015)**

By Jim Garamone

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Jan. 15, 2015 – Military strength encourages diplomatic dialogue, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in Berlin yesterday.

NATO’s first priority is to remain strong and effective, Stoltenberg said following his meetings with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

“There is no contradiction at all between ... military strength and dialogue,” he said. “Actually, I believe that the only way that we can achieve the dialogue in a cooperative relationship with Russia we are seeking is that we have a ... two-track approach: strong defense and dialogue.”

### **NATO Addresses New Challenges, Threats**

NATO is an alliance of democratic countries defending the same core values that were attacked in Paris last week, the secretary general said. “I think what happened in Paris also underlines that the security environment is changing,” he said. “NATO has to meet and to address new challenges, new threats. We see that they emerge from many different directions.”

On the alliance’s southern flank there is instability stretching from North Africa to the Middle East. “Iraq and Syria are neighbor countries to a NATO ally, Turkey,” Stoltenberg said.

These areas of instability threaten NATO allies Turkey, Greece and Italy, he said. Growing terrorist sentiment in the region, he added, also poses the threat of attacks in the various homelands like those experienced in Paris.

“To the east, we see new challenges emerging,” Stoltenberg said. “We have seen that the independence, the integrity, the sovereignty of Ukraine has been intimidated, not respected. If you add this to a dangerous mix of missile proliferation, cyberattacks and also energy distortion or destructions, then you see that we are living in a world with threats and challenges which we have to face.”

### **Three Priorities**

The alliance is facing these threats by focusing on three priorities, Stoltenberg said. “Priority number-one is to keep NATO strong, to make sure that NATO also in the future is able to protect and defend all allies against any threat,” he said.

NATO has agreed to field more flexible and agile deployment forces, Stoltenberg said. “Today, we have the establishment of an Interim High Readiness Force where Germany is the lead key nation,” he said. The force will bridge to a more permanent solution that will cover both the southern and eastern flanks.

Aiding allies and partner nations is another priority, Stoltenberg said. “We are working with countries like Moldavia, Georgia and Ukraine to enable them to be better able to take care of their own security in their own region, in their own country, and also helping us with fighting terrorism,” he said.

The alliance is also working with other countries in other regions to increase their capabilities, Stoltenberg said.

### **Relationship With Russia**

NATO still wants a cooperative, constructive relationship with Russia, he said. “If we are going to have a constructive and cooperative relationship with Russia, Russia must want it too,” Stoltenberg said. “Russia has to respect the fundamental rules of coexistence between nations. And that is that we have to respect the borders of nations.”

The third priority, he said, is investment in capabilities for the future. “For a long period, NATO countries have reduced their defense spending, partly as a result of the end of the Cold War,”

Stoltenberg said. “It was a peace dividend that almost all countries benefitted from. But they continued to cut defense spending because of the financial crisis.”

In the same period, Russia has increased its defense spending, and showed a willingness to use force, Stoltenberg said.

At the NATO Summit in Wales last year, the allies agreed to increase spending and move to the goal of 2 percent of gross domestic product dedicated to defense.

“The fundamental thing is that by working together, by protecting each other, by adhering to the fundamental principles of ‘one for all; all for one’ we are able to protect our open, free societies which we so highly value,” he said.

Biographies:

[NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg](#)

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