

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE
January 22 - 29, 2015

1. [U.S., China Announce Defense Talks \(01-29-2015\)](#)
2. [Special Ops Assuming Greater NATO Responsibilities \(01-29-2015\)](#)
3. [Hagel 'Quintessentially American,' Obama Says at Farewell Tribute \(01-28-2015\)](#)
4. [A New Base Leads to Deeper U.S. Ties in Romania \(01-28-2015\)](#)
5. [Competent, Willing Partnerships Result in Gains Against ISIL \(01-27-2015\)](#)
6. [Unity in Challenging Times: Building on Transatlantic Resolve \(01-27-2015\)](#)
7. [Dempsey: Sequestration is 'Absolutely Crazy' \(01-26-2015\)](#)
8. [Hagel Praises New Defense Cooperation Agreements With India \(01-25-2015\)](#)
9. [NATO Focuses on Russian Violations of Ukraine's Sovereignty \(01-22-2015\)](#)

1. [U.S., China Announce Defense Talks \(01-29-2015\)](#)

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Jan. 29, 2015 – U.S. and Chinese defense officials will meet at the Pentagon Feb. 5 for the Defense Policy Coordination Talks, according to a Pentagon official.

David Helvey, deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia, will host the talks with Rear Admiral Li Ji, deputy director of the Chinese ministry of national defense foreign affairs office, according to Pentagon spokesman Marine Corps Lt. Col. Jeff Pool.

The U.S. delegation will include representatives from the Joint Staff, U.S. Pacific Command, the State Department, and the National Security Council staff, Pool said, while the Chinese delegation will include representatives of the Ministry of National Defense and relevant military bodies.

The meeting, the spokesman said, is an important component of the broader program of engagements between the two nations' militaries, which seeks to foster sustained and substantive dialogue, deepen practical cooperation in areas of mutual interest, and focus on enhancing risk reduction.

This year's talks, he added, will emphasize the positive momentum sustained in the U.S.-China military-to-military relationship over the past year, which included historic agreements to establish new confidence building measures between the two militaries, and endorse the robust program of engagements planned for the rest of the year.

2. Special Ops Assuming Greater NATO Responsibilities (01-29-2015)

By Jim Garamone
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Jan. 29, 2015 – NATO is incorporating special operations into all aspects of its operations and training, the commander of NATO Special Operations Headquarters said here yesterday.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Marshall B. Webb told the National Defense Industries Association's Special Operations/Low-intensity Conflict Symposium that the organization is perfectly placed to capitalize on the multinational, multi-network response to threats.

"It's all about information sharing, it's about comprehensive collaboration and it's about partner and allied trust," the general said.

NATO Special Operations

NATO Special Operations Headquarters, formed in 2009, is the primary point of development, coordination and direction for all NATO Special Operations-related activities, in order to optimize employment of special operations forces, according to Webb's Air Force biography. Webb, the biography continued, is responsible for providing an operational command capability when directed by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

The special operations experience in Afghanistan drove the headquarters, and NATO special operators are still working to capture the lessons learned from that "under fire" experience, Webb said.

Troubling Developments

NATO is concerned about several developments, including Russia's annexation of Crimea and its continuing actions in eastern Ukraine, he said.

At the same time "the south is on fire," Webb said. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant poses serious problems for all NATO allies, but especially for Turkey, which shares a border with Syria. Foreign fighters have flocked to ISIL's standards in Iraq and Syria and many come from Europe. The attacks in Paris and arrests in Belgium and other European countries point to the serious nature of the threat, Webb said.

"SOF is uniquely placed to address this," Webb said. "As SOF, we tend to take an indirect approach. We can engage without being escalatory or aggressive. We tend to view things from an oblique angle, and we absolutely acknowledge that trust, information-sharing and interagency collaboration is crucial."

The headquarters trains special operators from around the alliance to work together, Webb said. Alliance personnel understand how each nation conducts operations and the idea is that all special operators can fall in on an understood framework. Webb said this is already paying dividends with special operations forces working not only in Europe, but Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.

Improving Responsiveness

Going forward the organization must demonstrate improved responsiveness and readiness for NATO forces to be able to respond to any threat, he said.

NATO special operators are active in reassuring NATO allies that border Russia, Webb said. "It needs to be preventative and it needs to be persistent," he added.

The headquarters also is involved in increasing NATO responsiveness, Webb said. The alliance, he said, must respond in days or weeks, not weeks and months.

"Viewing the aggressive actions we see along the Eastern front," he said, "you need a force that is in place that can receive and marshal forces ... going forward."

NATO special operations forces need to be in front "to be able to look at this asymmetric, hybrid challenge that we're up against, and be in place in case we're ever called for to provide situational awareness that would be used for any NATO response," Webb said.

Biographies:

[Air Force Lt. Gen. Marshall B. Webb](#)

Related Sites:

[NATO](#)

[3. Hagel 'Quintessentially American,' Obama Says at Farewell Tribute \(01-28-2015\)](#)

By Claudette Roulo

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28, 2015 – President Barack Obama hosted an armed forces farewell tribute to retiring Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel today at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia.

"Today is a celebration of a quintessentially American life; a man from the heartland who devoted his life to America," Obama said.

From his time as a boy in Nebraska, to volunteering for a war that would see him pull his own brother from a burning vehicle, to leading the charge to ensure veterans exposed to Agent Orange were treated fairly, to the Senate -- where he led the fight to establish the Post-9/11 GI Bill -- and then on to head the Defense Department through a difficult transition, Hagel's career has been characterized by service to others, the president said.

"Thanks to Secretary Hagel's guiding hand, this institution is better positioned for the future," he said. "...But Chuck, I want to suggest that perhaps your greatest impact -- a legacy that will be felt for years to come -- has been your own example.

"It's not simply that you've been the first enlisted combat veteran, and the first Vietnam veteran, to serve as secretary of defense, it's how your life experience -- being down in the muck, feeling the bullets fly overhead -- has allowed you to connect with our troops like no other secretary before."

'We Are All Americans'

One day last year, Obama said, Hagel arrived with a guest for their regular weekly meeting at the Oval Office. The man, Jerome "Skip" Johnson, had been Hagel's platoon leader in Vietnam, and the two men had only just reconnected after nearly 50 years, the president said.

"Chuck told me about how in 1968, with protests and race riots back home causing tensions among our troops in Vietnam, and Chuck's unit was mostly white, but Skip is African-American," Obama said.

"As the platoon commander, he was not going to tolerate division or distrust, and he went to his men and made himself clear: 'We are all Americans. We're going to live together, we're going to take care of each other, we're fighting together, we're going to get each other's backs. Let's get it done.'"

"And at that moment in the Oval Office, as these two soldiers stood before me, with Skip's grandsons looking on, it wasn't lost on any of us how far our nation has come. And I want to thank Chuck for that moment," the president said, "because part of the reason we've traveled that distance is we've had men like Chuck Hagel serving and representing what's best in America."

"In moments when we are tested as a military, as a nation, sometimes we get distracted by what divides us and lose sight of what unites us," Obama said. "And at those moments, we can draw strength from the example of a sergeant from Nebraska and a lieutenant from Chicago. We are all Americans. We live together, we sacrifice together, we take care of each other. Sometimes we have to fight together."

Courage and Dignity

During his own remarks, Hagel said, "Over the past two years, I've witnessed the courage and dignity of America's servicemen and women all over the world. I've seen young enlisted and young officers do their jobs realizing that how they do their jobs is just as important as the job itself."

"... As I will soon leave this job that I have cherished for the last two years, I want you all to know that the things that I have most respected and most admired are your dignity, your courage, and your dedication," the defense secretary said of service members.

No high office with responsibility is easy, Hagel said, but with each challenge comes the satisfaction of doing what you believe in and knowing you are working hard to build a better world.

"We've made mistakes. We will make more mistakes," he said. "But we hold tightly to one of America's greatest strengths: the capacity and the constitutional structure that allows us to self-correct. We can change systems, right wrongs, solve problems, and start over. But we must get the big things right.

"We must recognize that there is not an immediate answer to every problem. Some problems require evolving solutions that give us the time and the space to adjust and the patience to seek higher ground and lasting results."

In this dynamic environment, the nation must focus on building up its partners and addressing problems through coalitions that help build opportunities and create hope for all people, Hagel said.

"These are difficult and complicated tasks, but we have no choice. It will require steady, wise, and judicious use of American power, prestige, and influence," the secretary said. "We must never fail to always ask the most important question when making decisions in policy: what happens next.

"With all the world's travails and problems, it is still a hopeful world. This, I believe."

One Last Point

"One last point -- of all the opportunities my life has given me, and I have been blessed with so many, I am most proud of having once been a soldier," the defense secretary said. "The lessons from my time in uniform about trust, responsibility, duty, judgment and loyalty to your fellow soldier, these I have carried with me throughout my life."

Obama and Hagel were joined at the ceremony by Vice President Joe Biden, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work and numerous other current and former senior military and government leaders.

Tested by Combat

Hagel has been an incredible advocate within government and with the American people for the Defense Department, Dempsey said.

"He's led by example and he made tough decisions in trying times," the general said. "He's a devoted family man and an exemplary person. He's a man of character, the type of character that was forged by a working-class upbringing that valued hard work and perseverance. He's been tested in the crucible of combat, and honed his career during a life of service to the nation.

"His resolve is simply as solid as steel," Dempsey said. "But his love of his country is even stronger: a truism embodied in the shrapnel that still resides in his chest, a permanent reminder of his sacrifice for America."

In 1967, at a draft board in Columbus, Nebraska, a 20-year old Hagel made the decision to volunteer because there was a war going on, and he felt a responsibility to serve and wanted to set a good example for his three younger brothers, Dempsey said.

"Reflecting on that decision, Secretary Hagel said, 'My father had suddenly passed away. And I just wasn't coming together the way that I should.'"

"Well, today we can say without question that he came together all right. And I'm certain that the old World War II B-25 tailgunner, Charlie Dean Hagel, would agree," the general said.

One Sacred Obligation

Hagel understands that America's power and prestige ultimately rest upon men and women in uniform, Biden said.

"We have a lot of obligations as a country," the vice president said. "We only have one truly sacred obligation, literally one. We have obligations to the needy, to the elderly, to those who educate our children, but only one truly sacred obligation, and that is to equip those who we sent to war and care for them and their families while and when they come home from war. And no one has been more committed to fulfilling that obligation than you," he said of Hagel.

Biographies:

[Chuck Hagel](#)

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

Related Articles:

[Hagel Thanks U.S. Military, Lauds American Leadership](#)

Related Sites:

[Special Report: Chuck Hagel, 24th Secretary of Defense](#)

[4. A New Base Leads to Deeper U.S. Ties in Romania \(01-28-2015\)](#)

By Lt. j.g. Alexander Perrien, Commander, Navy Region Europe, Africa, Southwest

Asia Public Affairs DEVESELU, Romania (NNS) -- Since the ground breaking of Naval Support Facility (NSF) Deveselu, the daily interaction between Romanian and U.S. contractors, and military personnel has provided a platform for multi-cultural exchange and understanding.

NSF Deveselu is part of NATO's ballistic missile defense (BMD) system. With the Forward Deployed Naval Forces ships in Rota, NSF Deveselu will increase the level of protection for Europe and U.S. allies. The support from the Romanian government, military and locals, during the early construction phase, has left an impression on the installation's leadership.

"Since arriving in August, I've been thrilled with the level of support from the Romanian government," said Cmdr. Rod Tribble, NSF Deveselu executive officer. "Our Romanian allies have done everything in their power to make us feel welcomed. They have been great partners in every aspect of construction and support for this base."

Many Romanians who work on the installation come from the nearby towns of Craiova or Caracal. The installation has provided a significant number of employment opportunities to local citizens allowing the formation of new bonds between the two countries.

"I worked for Hotel Plaza in Craiova before coming to work at NSF Deveselu in May of 2014," said NSF Deveselu Housing Manager Sorina Obrcea. "I have learned a lot about American culture and feel respected by the people I work with."

The only struggle in the workplace is the language barrier which is overcome through the use of translators and by team members committed to excellence.

"I have an excellent staff," said NSF Deveselu Galley Manager, Donald Douglas. "They are very dependable, hard workers, who enjoy coming to work every day."

Sailors temporarily assigned to NSF Deveselu, have the unique opportunity to travel a part of the world that has been seen by relatively few Americans.

"I've been stationed overseas before, but just on deployments. I have been to Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Bujara, and Jebel Ali," said Master-at-Arms 1st Class (EXW) Billy Young. "In those places they see a lot of Americans. Here, there were virtually no Americans before this base opened."

As NATO Allies, Romania and the U.S. have served together in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan and routinely participate in military exercises and engagements. With the eventual completion of NSF Deveselu, Americans and Romanian's will have ample opportunity to interact and multiply the strong bonds of partnership and goodwill already being created.

"When you really like what you are doing," said Obrcea. "You never work."

NSF Deveselu sits on about 430 acres. The site will consist of a fire-control radar deckhouse with an associated Aegis command, control and communications suite. Separately, it will house several launch modules containing SM-3 missiles and be manned by about 200 U.S. military personnel, government civilians and support contractors. Construction is expected to be complete on NSF Deveselu late 2015.

For more news from Commander, Navy Region Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia, visit www.navy.mil/local/cnre/.

5. Competent, Willing Partnerships Result in Gains Against ISIL (01-27-2015)

By Claudette Roulo
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27, 2015 – The success of Kurdish forces battling Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists in the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani is an example of what can be done with a reliable, willing and capable partner, the Pentagon press secretary said today.

A number of factors led up to yesterday's announcement by U.S. Central Command that anti-ISIL forces now control about 90 percent of the embattled town, Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby told reporters.

"I think the airstrikes helped a lot. It helped when we had ... a reliable partner on the ground in there who could help us fine-tune those strikes. That was certainly an important moment," the press secretary said.

"It was an important moment when the Turkish government allowed resupply through Turkey to Kurdish forces inside -- resupply and actually additional resources in terms of manpower into Kobani. I think that was an important moment," he said.

That said, the fight to retake Kobani isn't over, the admiral said, and terrorist forces are still intent on taking the town.

The battle for Kobani shouldn't be considered a template for future fights against ISIL, Kirby said. When Iraqi security forces move to retake Mosul, it may or may not result in a protracted battle, he said.

“I don't think there's any underestimation of how hard this is going to be. How fast it's going to go is going to depend on a whole range of factors. And oh, by the way, the enemy gets a vote here,” the admiral said.

“Every situation is going to be different, and Kobani's not Mosul, by any stretch, in terms of the scale, the size and the complexity of what that mission's going to be like,” the press secretary said.

Mosul is key terrain, Kirby noted, adding, “Eventually there's going to have to be a fight for Mosul.”

“Obviously we're working closely with the Iraqi security forces on helping them better understand the challenges with respect to any kind of campaign in Mosul and making sure this is part of the train-advise-and-assist mission, to making sure that they are as battlefield competent as possible,” he said.

Related Sites:

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

6. Unity in Challenging Times: Building on Transatlantic Resolve (01-27-2015)

*Remarks by Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
Brookings Institution, Washington, DC*

Thanks, Fiona, for that introduction and thanks to Brookings for the warm welcome. My congratulations to all of you for being ranked number one think tank for the eighth year in a row. I am not at all surprised that the Brookings streak corresponds almost directly with the tenure of Strobe Talbott as President. It has been one of the great joys and honors of my life to call one of America's best foreign policy minds my mentor and dear friend. Thank you, Strobe, for your intellectual courage, for your huge heart, and for showing three generations of us how to anchor our ideas and our life's work in the best of America's values – freedom, civil and global responsibility, truth, justice, and opportunity for all.

The rest of Brookings isn't bad either. Uncle Sam has been enriched by poaching and borrowing some of your best over the years – you, Fiona. Susan Rice. Martin Indyk. Derek Chollet, and my predecessor, Phil Gordon, to name just a few.

A little over a year ago, I got in a bit of hot water myself with Brookings for giving my first speech as Assistant Secretary at another of my favorite tanks in town, the Atlantic Council. Some found those remarks wildly ambitious because I called for a Transatlantic Renaissance – “a new burst of energy, confidence, innovation and generosity, rooted in our democratic values and ideals.”

Of course, none of us could have predicted how the Transatlantic bond and our twenty-five years of work together for a Europe, Whole, Free and at Peace would be tested by Russian aggression in Ukraine. Or that ISIL and its affiliates would bring unspeakable violence, carnage and terror to Europe's periphery and even to its cities. And with those challenges, everything we stand for – democratic choice, individual liberty, collective security, peace, tolerance, and prosperity from Vancouver to Vladivostok – would be put at risk.

Today, however, I want to make the case that far from shredding our Transatlantic unity, the trials we've been through over the past year have left us stronger, more resolved, and better equipped to defend and expand the community of values that defines us.

Here are just a few examples:

Today, NATO nations are better defended, and the Alliance is faster on its feet than a year ago. Allied forces are deployed on land, sea, and air in the three Baltic states, Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania. And we're increasing defense budgets and upgrading our rapid reinforcement capability all along NATO's eastern edge.

In the area of energy security, we're not just talking the talk; now we're walking the walk. Last year, the U.S. and EU helped Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia provide reverse flow gas to Ukraine. Moldova got a new gas interconnector with Romania, and LNG terminals were opened or contracted throughout the Baltics, greatly reducing those countries' dependence on a single source.

Today, the U.S. economy is growing at more than five percent, and European governments have embraced pro-growth policies, capital investment, and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, T-TIP, as paths to shared prosperity. Both sides of the Atlantic will benefit in 2015 from the unexpected stimulus of lower oil prices.

Together, our nations form the core of the global coalition against ISIL, and we are working against its efforts to pervert a great religion, and terrorize and divide our multicultural societies. As a Transatlantic community, we've been creative and generous in our support for Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, and deft in the sanctions we have levied on Russia to impose a cost for its aggression, even as we have worked tirelessly for de-escalation through diplomacy and implementation of the Minsk peace agreements.

And together we are working to neutralize two other poisons that, if left unchecked, will corrode our resolve from the inside: the scourge of corruption in our societies and our economies, and a new and vile foreign-financed propaganda campaign on our airwaves and in our public spaces.

So today, I would argue that what we have forged together over the past year is the start of a Transatlantic Renaissance – ad hoc and of necessity at first, fragile, and under-invested in many ways – but nonetheless, a renewal of our vows to each other to defend our security, our prosperity, and our values together, drawing on our unique strengths: our belief in indivisible and collective security; an open trading system that rewards innovation, entrepreneurship, and clean, transparent governance; and our commitment to tolerance, free speech, and the choice of each individual and each nation to chart its own path. And in the process, all efforts to split us, to scare us, or to bankrupt us have failed.

While this is an important start, I'm also here to say that an ad-hoc, shallow Transatlantic Renaissance is not good enough. In 2015, we must forge forward with more focus, more investment, and a more conscious understanding of how the security, economic, and values-based elements of our strategy reinforce each other, and are mutually dependent.

So as Lenin said: Shto delat'. What is to be done?

First, we have to keep our security commitments to each other. All NATO Allies must continue to contribute to the land, sea, and air reassurance mission all along NATO's eastern front line. All

must contribute to NATO's new Spearhead Force which will allow us to speed forces to trouble spots, and we must install command and control centers in all six frontline states as soon as possible. NATO is a defensive alliance: our goal is deterrence of aggression; but if that fails, we must be ready. The United States has committed more than \$1 billion to this effort, and to security support for our eastern partners. All Allies must contribute as much as they can, and all must keep their Wales defense spending pledge – some governments are already slinking backward.

Our fight against ISIL and its affiliates also requires military power, and generous security assistance to our partners. Forty European Allies and partners are contributing now. We must also put national laws in place that harden the Transatlantic space against foreign fighter recruitment and financing. Just as important is the fight to close the space for recruitment in our schools and our jails, and to dry up the terrorist breeding ground of intolerance, economic hopelessness, and exclusion in our societies. Each of our nations must tackle these challenges individually, but we must support each other and share best practices, which is the goal of the President's summit on February 18.

Second, we have to accelerate the investments we are making in our shared prosperity. That includes accelerating and deepening T-TIP negotiations this year, being transparent with our publics about those talks, and fighting myths and fear-mongering with true stories of the barriers to trade that T-TIP will break down – especially for small and medium business.

We must also protect clean business and honest politicians by busting those who seek to pervert the system with dirty money and monopolistic intent. Note how quickly Marine LePen renounced foreign funding when it was exposed, and how fast South Stream collapsed when the EU stood firm in demanding honest, non-monopolistic contracting.

Corruption is not only a democracy killer. It opens space for malign foreign influence over our politics and our economies. So all across Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, you will see us redouble efforts with our Allies and partners this year to strengthen independent judiciaries, and to fight corruption, and promote open government through e-governance and transparent public procurement systems and other best practices.

And we must also double down with the EU to bring investment and focus to the next tranche of energy security projects that will do the most to liberate dependent states. These include building a Bulgaria-Greece interconnector, strengthening the Southern Corridor, and working with Croatia, Hungary, and other states to unlock the potential of the Krk Island gas terminal to create more energy options for Central Europe and the Balkans.

Finally, we must keep faith with our partners in the east, whose only desire is to live as we do. In 2015, we must work together to deepen democracy, good governance, and rule of law in Moldova and Georgia, and to strengthen opportunities for growth and investment as those countries implement their Association Agreements with Europe.

We must keep our doors open to Armenia, support reformers in Belarus, and keep working for an Azerbaijan that is as strong in defense of universal rights as it is in promoting economic growth and regional security.

Twenty-fifteen can and should also be a year for progress in the Cyprus talks, and in our twenty-year effort to bring peace, reconciliation, reform, and good governance in the Balkans.

But, ultimately, we all know that today, a Europe, Whole Free and at Peace rises or falls with Ukraine. Ukraine's frontline for freedom is ours as well. Over the past year we have all rejoiced in Ukraine's democratic successes – the hundreds of thousands of citizens who stood on the frigid Maidan and across the country for change; two rounds of free, fair elections, parliamentary passage of a strong budget and reform plan; and the prospect of peace signed at Minsk in September.

And with our Ukrainian friends, we have mourned their losses: Crimea; 5,200 dead senselessly in the Donbas; and just this weekend 30 innocents killed and nearly 100 wounded in Mariupol when separatists fired Grad rockets 25 kilometers over the ceasefire lines, as their leader, Zakharchenko, bragged to the world about the carnage.

And yet, Ukrainians remain resolute and courageous in demanding a better future, and so must we. Our first task is to give them the economic breathing space to implement the reforms they have promised. The United States will commit a \$1 billion new loan guarantee to help stabilize Ukraine along with a new IMF program and we'll consider \$1 billion more later this year if Ukraine stays on the reform path. Europe has committed over \$2.1 billion, and we encourage discussion of more. And we're working with the IMF and World Bank on new financing, tied to reform.

We must also help Ukraine staunch the bleeding. That means continuing to support Ukraine with defensive security support. The United States committed \$118 million in 2014 in security assistance for Ukraine, with \$120 million more in additional training and equipment on the way in 2015.

It also means holding the Minsk agreement signatories – the separatists and Russia – to account when they refuse Ukraine control of its own border, when deadly Russian weapons and fighters continue to flow across it by the hundreds, and when state-owned Russian media spews lies about who is responsible for the violence.

Just a few weeks ago, around tables in Washington and across Europe, we were talking about how sanctions could be rolled back if and when the Minsk agreement was fully implemented. Now, after the past week of flagrant violations of Minsk, on both sides of the Atlantic we are talking about the need to increase the costs to Russia.

The costs on Russia are already rising, including on average Russians. They can be measured in the sons from Pskov to Kazan who mysteriously never return from their military service. Their mothers and wives are told not to ask questions if they want to receive full death benefits.

They can be measured in the 10-15 percent inflation felt at cash registers and kitchen tables across Russia, in the \$150 billion in capital flight from the country just last year, and in the \$130 billion that has disappeared from Russia's foreign currency reserves in the past year – money spent propping up the ruble. Just yesterday, S&P downgraded Russia's credit rating to junk status. And lay-offs have begun in the state sector, including a 20 percent reported cut in the TASS news agency. As oil prices drop, the vulnerability in the current leadership's economic model is exposed. And at those same kitchen tables across Russia, citizens are once again asking why their government prioritizes foreign adventures over the well-being and quality of life of its own citizens, just as they have at other sad moments in Russia's long history.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Most of the Russia specialists in this room, myself included, spent much of our adult lives opening doors to Russia's greater integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. We reject the narrative of grievance that is popular in Moscow today that we wanted a weak Russia – nothing could be further from the truth. What we wanted, what we still want, is a strong, democratic Russia that respects the rule of law at home and abroad, and its neighbors'

sovereignty; a Russia that works with us and with Europe to build peace and security in the region and globally.

The United States alone has spent more than \$20 billion dollars since 1992 to help Russia strengthen and open its economy; prepare for the WTO; and promote good health in Russia, clean and more open governance and elections, non-proliferation, and closer ties between Russia and NATO, including joint operations and exercises. But that kind of cooperation can't continue when Russia tramples on the rules of the international system from which it seeks to benefit – when it bites off pieces of its neighbors' territory and tries to bully them into economic and political submission.

But the off ramp for Russia – the route back to better ties with all of us – is very simple: the minute Russia allows Ukraine to control its side of the international border and stops fueling the conflict, the situation will improve. The weapons and fighters will stop flowing. Hostages will come home. Sanctions can start to roll back. And the fight that Moscow calls an intra-Ukrainian problem will become just that. Ukrainians, with our support, will have the opportunity to work through the legitimate grievances of those in the east; to rebuild the political, economic, and cultural structures and ties that should bind a democratic Ukraine; and to give the children, mothers, families, workers, and pensioners of the Donbas a chance to decide their own future peacefully, lawfully, and constitutionally – the very thing Moscow always says it wants.

I first took my children to Russia when they were seven and nine. Like me, they fell in love with the art, the culture, the great deep Russian soul, even some of the food. Today, as teenagers, they watch the news and ask me what happened. I tell them, let's hope it is temporary. Let's work for a wiser, safer time when Russia will work with us for a Europe, Whole Free and at Peace, when it will see its strength again in its people, its ideas, its ability to innovate rather than in its weapons and its ability to intimidate.

In the meantime, all of us must keep working on that Transatlantic Renaissance and broadening the pool of countries that benefit. We do that for ourselves and our children, but we also do it for the wider world that depends on us to live our values, and to set the global gold standard for defense of international law, peace and security, free commerce, and universal human rights. I thank Brookings and all those gathered here for being our partners in that.

Thank you.

7. Dempsey: Sequestration is 'Absolutely Crazy' (01-26-2015)

By Lisa Ferdinando
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26, 2015 – Sequestration is "absolutely crazy," will hurt national security and make it "impossible" for the United States to meet its global commitments, according to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The world has changed dramatically since sequestration was passed into law in the Budget Control Act of 2011, Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey said.

Dempsey spoke Thursday, in an interview aboard his plane as he returned to Washington following a European trip focusing on threats to the continent.

"The combination of the Budget Control Act and the sequestration mechanism will make it impossible for us to meet our global responsibilities," he said.

The sequestration mechanism forces across-the-board government spending cuts, a "mechanical withdrawal" that "doesn't allow you to balance your books," Dempsey said.

"The readiness hole is still the readiness hole. The global security environment is more dangerous and sequestration is still on the books as the law. It's absolutely crazy for this country," the top general said.

A More Dangerous World

The changes in the global environment since 2011 include the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Russia's fueling of instability in Ukraine, and a "host of security issues," he said.

"ISIL hadn't manifested itself as a trans-regional threat," the chairman said. "Russia had not annexed Crimea and violated the sovereignty of Ukraine, and in so doing, by the way, stirred up nationalism and ethnicity in Europe in a very unhelpful way."

In addition, the United States is now engaged in trying to reduce sources of instability in Africa, including the mission supporting the fight against Ebola.

In those years since the law was passed, the world has also seen provocations by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, Dempsey said.

"All those things require consideration of forward presence, readiness, resourcing, countering technological advances by some of our potential adversaries, and that's changed a great deal," the chairman said. "We're trying to encourage everyone to understand that change."

Sequestration Hurts National Defense

Military leaders in 2010 were predicting that even if the United States withdrew from Iraq and Afghanistan, he said, the military would need three or four years to recover its readiness.

"Because for 10 years we've been focused very narrowly on the counter-insurgency, counter-terror threat and we've lost some of our training edge," Dempsey said.

The United States deferred maintenance on some of its high-end capabilities because of sequestration, he said, including ships, submarines and airplanes.

In a separate interview with DoD News while in Europe last week, the chairman said he would like to have a "conversation with Congress" about reversing the effects of sequestration.

"If they're not reversed, they're going to be imposed in 2016, and they will negatively affect our national security interests," he said.

The chairman added, "Collaboratively we shouldn't allow that to happen."

Biographies:

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

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[Department of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary Hagel in the Pentagon Briefing Room](#)

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8. Hagel Praises New Defense Cooperation Agreements With India (01-25-2015)

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25, 2015 – Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel issued a statement today applauding agreements on defense cooperation between the United States and India, announced by President Barack Obama and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Hagel's statement reads as follows:

"Today, on his historic visit to India, President Obama and Prime Minister Modi announced new, ground-breaking agreements on defense cooperation between India and the United States that promise to open a new chapter in our defense relationship and mark an important milestone in the U.S.-India strategic partnership.

"By finalizing the renewal of our 10-year framework for the U.S.-India Defense Relationship, we will continue to build on the growing momentum in our defense cooperation over the last decade. This renewed framework will support stronger military-to-military engagement, including deeper maritime cooperation and increased opportunities in technology and trade.

"By establishing a new military education partnership, we will help shape the next generation of military leaders in both our nations, fostering relationships that will draw our defense establishments closer together for years to come.

"And by agreeing under the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) to focus on four 'pathfinder' projects; form a working group to explore aircraft carrier technology sharing and design; and explore possible cooperation on development of jet engine technology, we will begin to realize the enormous potential of the U.S.-India defense industrial partnership. We have further strengthened this partnership with an agreement that will allow us to continue science and technology collaboration for the next 15 years.

"Taken together, the president's announcements signal a new depth and sophistication in our defense and security cooperation, ensuring that it continues to be one of the strongest pillars of our nations' broad strategic partnership - a partnership that will help forge security and stability in Asia and across the globe."

Related Sites:

[Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of India \(01-27-2015\)](#)

9. NATO Focuses on Russian Violations of Ukraine's Sovereignty (01-22-2015)

By Lisa Ferdinando
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

ABOARD A U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT, Jan. 22, 2015 – NATO is focused on strategies to deal with its two biggest threats -- Russian aggression to its east, and the threat of terrorism from its south, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said today.

Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey and other alliance defense chiefs today concluded two days of talks at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

Russian aggression, Dempsey said, has "changed sovereign borders with the use of coercion." And the recent terrorist attacks in Paris underscore the "very real threat of terrorism that comes up into NATO's southern flank."

There was consensus among the military chiefs that NATO must confront these threats, he said.

NATO Needs to Address Both Threats

"I thought this would be the most important meeting of its kind that I've had with NATO since I've been chairman, and in my judgment it proved to be just that," the chairman said in an interview on his plane back to Washington.

"We came to an agreement that NATO really does have to address both threats, and that NATO has the capability and the resources to address them both," Dempsey said. "We don't have to pick which threat is more serious."

While Dempsey declined to discuss details of the most recent allegations of Russia violating September's Minsk ceasefire agreement, he did underscore the seriousness in which NATO views the Russian aggression.

"It is indicative of efforts on the part of Russia to support separatists in, frankly, violation of Ukrainian sovereignty," Dempsey said. "We're very concerned about it."

Eastern Europeans are very unsettled about the threats to the east, and the southern Europeans are very unsettled about the threats to the south, Dempsey said.

U.S. and European officials have expressed concern about the return of foreign fighters through NATO's southern flank, and the threat that those extremists pose to Europe.

NATO to Evolve Strategy to Address Threats

The defense chiefs also discussed the strategic concept, crafted in 2010, that informs NATO's defense planning. Global security has changed "pretty dramatically" in those four years, Dempsey said.

NATO will evolve its strategies to deal with the threats to its east and south, and the military chiefs will make recommendations on the way the NATO military arm is organized and resourced, he said.

Dempsey said it is important to demonstrate "our resolve and our reassurance" to NATO's Baltic and Eastern European allies through the Readiness Action Plan, NATO's response to the Russian aggression.

Alliance officials say the Readiness Action 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, NATO's supreme allied commander for Europe.

NATO has bolstered its presence in Eastern Europe, while the United States has conducted a variety of reassurance measures to include airborne exercises in Poland and the Baltic nations.

"We have the very real requirement to reassure our allies, to increase the readiness of NATO's forces, and to adapt some of the organizations that provide NATO rapid response and the NATO command structures," Dempsey said.

The defense chiefs did "really big lifting" to address the near-term requirements on readiness and assurance, he added, and on the longer-term approach to the threats to east and south.

Pleased With Transition in Afghanistan

Dempsey said the defense chiefs were pleased with the successful transition from the combat International Security Assistance Force mission to the Resolute Support mission that trains, advises, assists and builds capacity.

Flexibility is needed in the strategy for Afghanistan, Dempsey said, encouraging the allies to "stay committed at the regional level through the fighting season of 2015." It is prudent to stay at the regional level militarily through the year, he added.

Dempsey, who said the alliance has a great ally in Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, said the strategy must consider both conditions on the ground and a timetable for progress.

"Milestones based on time are an important goal, so that you have something to reach for and to plan for and to resource for," he said. "It just seems to me that in these kinds of missions, it is useful to have both a timetable but then be willing to assess and reassess and assess again the conditions."

The United States has demonstrated flexibility, he said.

"Initially we were supposed to be at 9,800 troops in Afghanistan by the end of 2014, but our NATO allies had some challenges in resourcing, and so we've left an additional 1,000 there into the spring, to allow NATO to catch up with its resourcing challenges."

Biographies:

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