

# Transatlantic Focus

## A USNATO Public Affairs Newsletter



UNITED STATES MISSION TO  
**NATO**



### NATO Defense Ministers Meet in Krakow

On February 19-20 in Krakow, Poland, NATO Defense Ministers discussed Alliance capabilities, headquarters reform and reviewed progress in Afghanistan to prepare for the April NATO Summit.

The mission in Afghanistan is NATO's most urgent issue. At a meeting of NATO and non-NATO countries that contribute troops to the effort in Afghanistan, Ministers agreed on the need to intensify efforts to bring sustainable security and stability to Afghanistan. This includes ensuring peaceful and credible elections in August, strengthening the Afghan National Army and Police, a long-term commitment to civilian contributions and improving civilian-military cooperation.

Allies welcomed President Obama's announcement that the U.S. would deploy an additional 17,000 troops to Afghanistan. Defense Secretary Robert Gates explained: "What we are doing with this troop increase ... is to have a more or less continuing presence with our Afghan partners ... to bring security to the population. Without that kind of security, economic development is very difficult."

Maritime piracy continues to be a major security concern and Defense Ministers discussed the future role of the Alliance. Ministers welcomed the fact that another Standing NATO Maritime Group will contribute to the overall international effort off the coast of Somalia in the coming months.

Prior to the NATO meeting, Secretary Gates met with Polish Defense Minister Bogdan Klich to sign a bi-lateral agreement that will increase cooperation between the two countries' special operations forces. U.S. and Polish special operations forces already have a close working relationship and Secretary Gates said the memorandum "underscores the growing cooperation between U.S. and Polish special operations forces." [more](#)



- [Secretary Gates in Krakow](#)
- [Defense Ministerial in Krakow](#)

### Afghanistan



#### President Obama sends 17,000 new troops to Afghanistan

On February 17, President Obama approved a request for an additional 17,000 U.S. troops for Afghanistan to "contribute to the security of the Afghan people and to stability in Afghanistan." The troop reinforcement, which comes as a policy review is taking place, will "further enable our team to put together a comprehensive strategy that will employ all elements of our national power to fulfill achievable goals in Afghanistan." [more](#)

- [President Obama Statement on Afghanistan](#)
- [Pentagon Announcement of Afghanistan Force Deployment](#)



#### Special Representative Holbrooke Consults with Afghan and Pakistani Leaders

Recently, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, Special Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan, traveled to South Asia for consultations with senior government officials, U.S. military leaders, and international officials.

Ambassador Holbrooke arrived in Pakistan for meetings with leaders on ways to more effectively strengthen security and promote economic opportunities. "I am here to listen and learn the ground realities in this critically important country," he said. "The United States looks forward to reviewing our policies and renewing our commitment and friendship with the people of Pakistan." [more](#)

In Afghanistan, Ambassador Holbrooke met with President Karzai and other Afghan and international officials. In a [joint statement](#) with Afghan President Karzai, Ambassador Holbrooke said he made the trip to Afghanistan "on behalf of President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton and the new administration, to reaffirm America's commitment to the effort in Afghanistan against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda."



After Afghanistan, Ambassador Holbrooke traveled to India to meet with senior Indian officials and discuss a variety of issues including Afghanistan and regional security.

### NATO



#### NATO 60th Anniversary Summit

On April 3-4, NATO will celebrate its 60th anniversary at a [Summit Meeting of NATO Heads of State](#) in Strasbourg, France and Kehl, Germany. NATO was founded on April 4, 1949, when the [North Atlantic Treaty](#), also known as the Washington Treaty, was signed in Washington, DC by Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the UK, and the U.S. Over the past 60 years, NATO has been the cornerstone for common security in the transatlantic region and has grown to include 26 members.

- [60 Years of NATO](#)

### U.S. Foreign Policy



#### U.S. Lays Out Foreign Policy Goals

On February 6-8, Vice President Joseph Biden, National Security Advisor James Jones and other senior leaders in the Obama administration laid out U.S. foreign policy goals at the Munich Conference on Security Policy. In his major foreign policy speech, Vice President Biden said the U.S. will be guided in its foreign relations by the principle that there is no conflict between its security and its ideals—each reinforces the other. It is the obligation of the international community "to listen to and learn from one another, and to work together for a common prosperity and security of all," he said. National Security Advisor Jones, in his address to the conference, discussed the need for a comprehensive understanding and approach to the new security challenges of the 21st century and remarked that, "NATO is as relevant to our common security in the first half of the 21st century as it was to our common defense in the second half of the 20th century." [more](#)

- [Vice President Biden Remarks](#)
- [National Security Advisor Jones Remarks](#)
- [NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer Remarks](#)

### Kosovo



**Development Teams to Afghanistan**  
Agriculture makes up 80% percent of the Afghan economy and involves approximately 85% of the Afghan population. The U.S. is

sending U.S. Army National Guard teams to bolster security and enhance the country's farming economy. Army Secretary Green explained that National Guard Agricultural Development Teams include National Guard volunteers with extensive agricultural experience who work with local experts and farmers in farm disciplines such as seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, electricity and soil analysis. The teams put a special emphasis on project sustainability, particularly since water and power supplies are not always reliable. [more](#)



**U.S. Weapons Destruction Program Helps Protect Afghan Civilians**

The widespread and indiscriminate use of mines, small arms, and munitions since the Soviet invasion of 1979 has left Afghanistan

heavily contaminated with explosive remnants of war. The U.S. conventional weapons destruction program in Afghanistan aims to protect victims of conflict, provide humanitarian assistance and help provide security for the Afghan people. Since 1993, the U.S. has provided more than \$95 million in conventional weapons destruction and humanitarian mine action assistance to Afghanistan.

- [Fact Sheet: U.S. Conventional Weapons Destruction Program in Afghanistan](#)

### Video Message



**Ambassador Volker on Afghanistan, Russia and a renewed sense of solidarity in the Transatlantic Alliance**

[Video](#)



**U.S.-European Partnership: Securing Kosovo's Future**

As Kosovo celebrates the first anniversary of its independence, the U.S. and our European allies remain firmly committed to

the new Balkan nation's success, said Kyle Scott, Chargé d'Affaires of the [U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe \(OSCE\)](#). "The development of a multi-ethnic democracy in Kosovo which protects minority rights and religious freedom, and which has government institutions that can deliver stability and prosperity for its people, is a goal that we should all support," Chargé Scott said. [more](#)

Kosovo declared independence February 17, 2008, after nearly a decade of UN administration that followed the 1999 NATO-led intervention to stop ethnic cleansing. Today, 54 nations—including a majority of EU, NATO and OSCE member states—have recognized Kosovo's independence. Kosovo is coordinating effectively with the EU-led EULEX rule of law mission, NATO, the EU-led International Civilian Office and other representatives of the international community, to build a sound and sustainable economy, a single and transparent rule of law system, and other institutions of a modern, multi-ethnic, European democracy.

- [U.S. Congratulates Kosovo on One Year of Independence](#)

### Missile Defense



**U.S. Wants to Consult with Russia on Missile Defense**

In a February 12 interview with the Interfax News Agency in Moscow, Under Secretary for Political Affairs William Burns said the United States wants to

consult with its NATO partners and with Russia to determine if a cooperative approach to missile defense in Europe can be developed. Under Secretary Burns added that the U.S. will continue to consult with the Czech Republic and Poland on plans for a limited missile defense system in the two NATO-partner countries. The system would help protect U.S. allies from rogue nations that may develop intercontinental missile systems. [more](#)

- [Under Secretary Burns Interview](#)

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