

Transatlantic Focus

A USNATO Public Affairs Newsletter



UNITED STATES MISSION TO
NATO



NATO Defense Ministers to Meet in Brussels, June 12-13

For the first time since April's NATO Summit in Bucharest, Defense Ministers from all 26 NATO Allies will meet at NATO HQ in Brussels. The Ministers are expected to build on the key decisions made in Bucharest, particularly capabilities necessary to implement the ISAF Strategic Vision for Afghanistan agreed upon by Heads of State in Bucharest. Secretary of Defense Gates will join his counterparts at meetings of the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the Nuclear Proliferation Group, and the Defense Planning Committee. Defense Ministers from NATO partner countries will join for meetings of the NATO-Russia Council and the NATO-Ukraine Commission, as well as non-NATO KFOR troop contributors.

- [NATO Press Release on Defense Ministers Meetings](#)



Secretary of Defense Gates on Evolving Threats and Capabilities

The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown that much about war fighting has changed since what was envisioned during the Cold War. In a recent speech at the Heritage Foundation in Colorado Springs, Secretary Gates spoke of today's security challenges and growing asymmetrical threats. Secretary Gates said that it's hard to conceive of any country confronting the U.S. directly with conventional arms but that irregular forces, such as terrorists and insurgents, will seek ways to exploit our perceived vulnerabilities in an asymmetric way. With that in mind, Secretary Gates spoke of the need for balancing our efforts and resources appropriately between meeting current demands and the preparation for future contingencies. [more](#)

Transatlantic Relations



The Bucharest Summit and the Way Forward for NATO NATO's Summit in Bucharest was the Alliance's largest ever and saw Allies take a number of historic decisions, such as inviting Albania and Croatia to join NATO and issuing a new Strategic Vision

for Afghanistan. After the Summit, Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel Fried went before Congress to discuss the outcomes of the Summit, the Alliance's transformation to meet global security challenges, and its relationships with other countries and organizations. "NATO is not just a military alliance; it is an alliance of values that provided the foundation for freedom's victory in the Cold War. While its core mission remains the same - the defense of its members - NATO is achieving this in new ways", Assistant Secretary Fried testified. [more](#)

U.S. and Macedonia Sign Joint Declaration of Strategic Partnership and Cooperation In a strong sign of the enduring cooperation and friendship between Macedonia and the United States, Macedonian Foreign Minister Milososki and Secretary Rice signed a Joint Declaration of Strategic Partnership and Cooperation. The agreement includes elements on economic and trade ties as well as security and counterterrorism. Macedonia is an aspirant to NATO membership and Secretary Rice highlighted that the U.S. "strongly supports Macedonia's accession to NATO." [more](#)

U.S.-Russian Relations Reflect Differences, Concerns and Promise In April, President Bush and Russian President Putin agreed to an important framework for strategic cooperation between the two countries. Assistant Secretary Daniel Fried discussed that agreement and other aspects of the U.S.-Russia relationship before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In his testimony, Assistant Secretary Fried said, "relations between the United States and Russia involve notable concerns, but also a degree of promise." [more](#)

Cyber Defense



NATO Opens New Center of Excellence on Cyber Defense Seven NATO nations and NATO's capabilities transformation command agreed to the formal establishment of a Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (COE) in

Tallin, Estonia. The agreement comes a year after a major cyber attack on Estonian public and private institutions prompted NATO to conduct a thorough assessment of its approach to cyber defense. The U.S. fully supports this initiative and is an observer at the COE. Additionally, the U.S. continues to work closely with Estonia and other NATO allies on cyber security issues. [more](#)

Afghanistan



U.S. and Afghanistan Sign Declaration Reaffirming Mutual Goals On May 13, the U.S. and Afghanistan signed a declaration reaffirming the mutual goals of the people of Afghanistan and the people of the United States and their governments. During the ceremony with Afghan Foreign Minister Spanta, Secretary Rice emphasized that, while there has been progress in Afghanistan, there is still much to do and "this declaration, more than anything, is yet another sign to the people of Afghanistan that they will have a friend in the United States for many, many years to come." [more](#)



U.S. Will Increase Assistance to Pakistan Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte said during a recent congressional hearing that the terrorist and extremist problems in Pakistan and in Afghanistan are inextricably intertwined.

"What happens on the Afghan side of the border has a direct impact on Pakistan, just as what happens on the Pakistani side affects Afghanistan," he said. "We, therefore, must find ways to more effectively coordinate and synchronize operations by both nations, and thereby reduce the operating space where our common enemies function." [more](#)



U.S. General Underlines Increasing Capacity of Afghan National Security Forces Recently in Brussels, Major General Robert W. Cone, Commander of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A),

briefed journalists on progress being made by CSTC-A and the Government of Afghanistan to train the Afghan National Army and Police. MG Cone praised the Afghan forces, saying their greatest strength was their desire to take responsibility for the security of their own people. As the capacity of the national security forces continues to increase, MG Cone stressed, U.S. and international forces in Afghanistan can move away from leading operations to providing support and training.

- [MG Cone Briefing at the Pentagon \(4/18/08\)](#)



Afghan National Police Gain More Than 1,600 New NCOs On May 19, at the Afghan National Police (ANP) Academy in Kabul, Afghanistan, nearly 1,700 noncommissioned officers (NCOs) graduated from a five-month course at the

academy. The ANP is now a force of more than 79,000 and has grown to 97 percent of its authorized end strength, despite daily reports of deadly clashes with

USOSCE Issues a Response to Cyber Attack on RFE/RL
On April 26, the website of the Belarus Service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) was the subject of a cyber attack. Cyber attacks are a new form of aggression with broad implications for security in the OSCE region. [more](#)

Iraq



101 Cadets Commissioned at Iraqi Military Academy

On May 17, the Iraqi Military Academy at Ar Rustamiyah, which is supported by the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I), commissioned 101 new cadets. The cadets completed a demanding course and, at graduation, were reminded to work with responsibility and honor as soldiers to secure a more democratic future for Iraq. NTM-I was established in 2004, at the request of the interim Iraqi government, to provide distinct training and technical assistance to the Iraq Security Forces. [more](#)

enemy forces. [more](#)

NATO Commander Says Afghan Illegal Drug Trade

Aids Taliban The illegal narcotics business so prevalent in southern Afghanistan poses a greater threat to security in some parts of the country than do Taliban insurgents, says the former commander of the NATO security force, Army General Dan McNeill. In addition, profits from the sale of the illegal drugs are being used to fund the Taliban insurgency elsewhere in the country. [more](#)

Kosovo

Operation "Mitrocourt" In the shadow of the mid-March disturbances at the Mitrovica Courthouse, the Portuguese Kosovo Force Tactical Reserve Manoeuvre Battalion (KTM), a part of KFOR, was deployed in North Mitrovica. From March 28 to April 28, KTM was responsible for peacekeeping operations in an area within the city that included the courthouse. During that tense time, the unit had to gain the respect and trust of the local population in order to ensure a secure and safe environment. [more](#)

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