



NATO Moves towards a 'Cold War stand-off lite': Defence Ministers Meetings in Brussels 3-4 June 2014

By Nigel Chamberlain and Ian Davis, NATO Watch

"The outcome [of NATO bases in eastern Europe] would be a Cold War stand-off lite", [Dmitri Trenin](#), Carnegie Moscow Center



Defence Ministers
Ministres de la défense
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Key decisions taken:

- A package of long-term measures to strengthen Ukraine's armed forces and enhance the defence reform process;
- A Readiness Action Plan to be developed to improve the NATO Response Force;
- US announce a European Reassurance Initiative of up to 1 billion dollars to further reinforce collective defence;
- A new and enhanced cyber-defence policy;
- Approval of Germany's initiative on 'Framework Nations';
- UK to lead seven allies on creation of a Joint Expeditionary Force;
- NATO's counter-piracy mission, Ocean Shield, extended until 2016;
- Georgia moves closer to NATO, but Membership Action Plan (MAP) unlikely at Wales Summit; and.
- Transition plans in Afghanistan reviewed, but decision deferred on numbers for proposed post-2014 NATO Training Mission, 'Resolute Support'.

Day 1: Plans agreed to make NATO fitter, faster, more flexible - and deployed closer to the borders with Russia

Summary of the Day

After an initial door step statement by the NATO Secretary General (see below) the first meeting of the day was a bilateral session between Anders Fogh Rasmussen and the US Secretary of Defence Chuck Hagel (see picture below). No details of the discussion were made public.

At mid-day, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) met in a Defence Ministers session for just over two-and-a half hours. The Ukraine-Russia crisis was the main topic under discussion. The NATO Secretary General and other NATO officials reiterated their position that Moscow's annexation of Crimea in March presents the most



serious security threat to the Euro-Atlantic community since the end of the Cold War. In response the NATO Defence Ministers agreed to continue and further reinforce NATO's reassurance measures, according to a [NATO press release](#).

These measures include increasing the capability, training and readiness of Allied forces and the development of a Readiness Action Plan for the Wales Summit in September. The plan is intended to provide eastern European member states with strengthened long-term support, as well as introducing new emergency exercises - without breaking the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, which forbids both sides from making threatening deployments in former Warsaw Pact countries, something they both already accuse each other of doing.

Russia's ambassador to NATO, Alexander Grush has said that NATO'S temporary deployment of additional alliance planes and troops in member states such as Poland and the Baltic countries amounted to a breach of the treaty, while NATO has expressed concern at Russia's mobilisation of 40,000 troops on the border with Ukraine.

The Secretary General responding to a question by the press (see below) said that NATO would continue to adhere to the treaty because it wants "a rules-based security system" and "believe all the measures we are prepared to take can be taken within the existing rules".

While taking a hard line on Moscow, Rasmussen also rejected suggestions that the Ukraine crisis had sparked a new Cold War, saying that the deep ideological and global divide created by the conflict, which lasted nearly 50 years, had dissolved.

NAC Meeting, 3 June - left to right: Ursula von der Leyen (Minister of Defence, Germany) with General Philip Breedlove (Supreme Allied Commander Europe) and Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert (Minister of Defence, The Netherlands) - photo credit: NATO)



The NATO Readiness Action Plan is expected to include measures to enhance the NATO Response

Force and NATO's intelligence and awareness; to pre-position equipment and supplies in member states (probably Eastern Europe); and to focus NATO exercises on specific defence challenges. Whether permanent troops will be deployed to NATO's eastern-most allies remains an open question. The possibility of such deployments is certainly [under discussion](#).

Also approved by the NAC were: Germany's initiative on 'Framework Nations' (expected to help boost multinational cooperation in developing enhanced forces and capabilities); a new cyber-defence policy (which recognises cyber as part of NATO's collective defence and is expected to enhance information sharing and mutual assistance between Allies, and boost cooperation with industry); and an [extension of NATO's counter-piracy mission](#), Ocean Shield, until 2016.

NATO ships have patrolled the waters off the Horn of Africa since 2009, as part of a broad international effort to combat Somali-based pirates. The international missions have significantly reduced attacks, with not a single ship captured off Somalia since May 2012.

The US separately announced [a 1 billion dollar European Reassurance Initiative](#), which the NATO Secretary General welcomed as "a clear sign of America's commitment to Europe, and the strength of the transatlantic bond". The US funding is expected to contribute to a [stronger presence of US ships in the Black Sea](#).

The Secretary General also commended Poland's intention to raise its defence spending to 2% of GDP and welcomed the decision by Denmark, Germany and Poland to raise the readiness of their joint NATO corps in the North East Polish city of Stettin. "This will strengthen our ability to address future threats and challenges in the region. And it is a significant contribution to our collective defence", he said.

Following the official portrait of NATO defence ministers a bilateral meeting took place between the NATO Secretary General and the Acting Minister of Defence of Ukraine, Col. General Mykhaylo Koval. This was followed by a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission. According to the NATO press release, a comprehensive package of measures aimed to increase the capacity and strength of the Ukrainian armed forces was agreed and the details are expected to be finalised at a NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting later this month.



Rasmussen - photo credit: NATO

meet with Ukraine to demonstrate our support and discuss priorities for our cooperation in light of the crisis and with Georgia to assess the development of our partnership and the impact of Russia's actions in the wider region.

Doorstep statement by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh

The NATO Secretary General declined to give details about the measures under consideration, but said he was encouraged that in addition to NATO assistance, individual member states were also volunteering advisory and technical assistance to Ukraine.

The North Atlantic Council then met again later in the afternoon and was punctuated by separate press conferences by the Acting Ukrainian Defence Minister and the NATO Secretary General (see below). The day concluded with a working dinner for the Defence Ministers.

[Doorstep statement by Secretary General Rasmussen](#) (edited)

At the Summit in Wales, preparations are well under way to strengthen our collective defence, improve our ability to manage crises, deepen our partnerships and demonstrate the strength of the bond between North America and Europe. But we are facing a new security landscape because of Russia's illegal aggression against Ukraine. We will review contributes to bolstering our collective defence and consider what more we need to do.

We need to make NATO fitter, faster and more flexible. We will do that through a Readiness Action Plan. To make sure our forces are even more responsive, with the right capabilities, the right training and the right resources. We will also

We are just months away from completing our longest combat mission in Afghanistan and we are finalising our plan for a new mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan forces from next year. We can only launch that mission if we have the legal framework in place.

Q1. Adrian Croft, Reuters: Your reaction to the announcement that has just come from the White House that President Obama is going to ask Congress for a billion dollars to increase US military rotations in Europe, please? And could you tell us whether the issue of permanent basing in Eastern Europe is on the table for ministers today, despite Russians saying this would violate the 1997 agreement?

A1. Secretary General: I look forward to continued American leadership in that regard (*otherwise the question was not answered - NC*).

Q2: ARZU, Afghanistan: Can we expect an important decision on Afghanistan in the ministerial meeting? And any update on SOFA? We heard that one government approved the SOFA the agreement.

A2. Secretary General: I would expect the ISAF meeting tomorrow to decide to continue planning for Resolute Support. I'm increasingly confident that the legal framework will be put in place in due time.

Q3. Al Jazeera: Most of the measures that you're talking seem to be aimed at deterring future Russian action. Is Crimea now permanently lost? Syrians are voting as you speak. What's your view of that election?

A3. Secretary General: We call on Russia to return Crimea to Ukraine. The Syrian presidential election is a farce. I'm sure that no ally would recognize the outcome of these so-called elections.

Q4. Monder Emri Al Rabin (?): What are the next steps on the situation in Ukraine, especially when the stakes are both military and economic? And how far can NATO and its allies resist Russian pressure?

A4. Secretary General: Let me emphasize that we are not discussing military options. A first, very important step in that direction would be for Russia to de-escalate the situation, first and foremost by a full withdrawal of Russian troops from the Ukrainian borders. Furthermore, it would contribute to a political and peaceful solution to the problems if Russia stops the support for armed gangs in Eastern Ukraine. It's of utmost importance that the international community assists Ukraine in improving the economic situation.

[Opening remarks by the Secretary General at the North Atlantic Council Meeting](#) (edited)

We will discuss the broader implications of Russia's aggression against Ukraine for our Alliance. We face a new security situation in Europe and we will focus on a) Strengthening collective defence; b) Readiness; c) Resources. We must focus more clearly on delivering the key priorities to fulfil all three of our core tasks: Collective Defence, Crisis Management and Cooperative Security. We must give further impetus to our Smart Defence and Connected Forces initiatives, which ensure that are all stronger within a strong Alliance.

[Opening remarks by the Secretary General at the NATO-Ukraine Commission Meeting](#) (edited)

Our meeting is a timely opportunity to demonstrate our support to Ukraine and to discuss priorities for cooperation in a new

context. We look forward to working closely with the new President of Ukraine. Ukraine is a long-standing, active NATO partner. Today we will discuss how we can best provide longer-term advice and assistance for the reform of Ukraine's security and defence sector, and the development of its defence capacities.

[Press conference by the acting Minister of Defence of Ukraine Mykhailo Koval](#)

Today we informed Defence Ministers about the military and political situation in Ukraine and the ways out of the crisis in the east of our State. Those who spoke at the meeting unanimously supported Ukrainian authorities, Ukrainian Armed Forces and security forces engaged into antiterrorist operation in the east of Ukraine.

Q1. What specific assistance will NATO provide beyond words of support? Can you comment on the Deputy Chief of the Administration of the President blaming your deputy for some abuse of his office?



Press Conference Col. General Mykhaylo Koval (Acting Minister of Defence, Ukraine) - photo credit: NATO

A1. Mykhailo Koval:

Ukrainian military participates in many activities and many operations of the Alliance, including stabilization forces, that's why Ukrainian military are well-known at the NATO Headquarters as well as well-known to the Allies. In particular we received assistance from France, Poland, United States, as well United Kingdom, and also assistance is coming from other Allies. Any blame must be proven by the investigation, by the court, but so far there is no information available.

Q2: (Ukrainian): No translation

A2. Mykhailo Koval: At the moment, we are talking only about non-lethal weapons and the assistance which we receive is like non-lethal weapons. I know that the operation is in progress but I don't have such information. Probably it's about the next group of NATO experts who have arrived to Kiev.

Q3. News agency UNIAN, Ukrainian News

Agency: I would like to come back to the commission, NATO-Ukrainian commission. I'm interested what kind... (Ukrainian)...

A3. Mykhailo Koval: In fact I made a brief presentation on the current situation in the east of Ukraine. I described the situation, made conclusions on the basis of assessment and informed colleagues about practical steps taken by the antiterrorist operation command aimed at extermination of criminal groups in the east of Ukraine. We have enough information and enough capabilities to get objective intelligence information in order to successfully fulfilled antiterrorist operations. We didn't receive such information from NATO.

Q4. What would be a vision, when antiterrorist operation may be completed in order to think about introduction of martial law?

A4. Mykhailo Koval: You should understand that this is quite a complicated operation which is conducted at the area populated by five million civilians. It is extremely difficult to conduct all these operations, and I should tell you the commanders of the antiterrorist operation give commands to liquidate some groups if they are absolutely sure that there are no hostages or civilians at the place which is subject to the operation. The operation is going according to the plan and we have all the grounds to say that antiterrorist operation will be successful. Martial law is not a prerogative of military forces; this should be the political will of the authorities; if they decide this, we will do this.

Q5. There was an internet report yesterday of a big fight nearby Luhansk. Ukrainian bodyguards fought with some hundreds of terrorists. And yesterday Seleznev declare that antiterrorist operation provided a lot of assistance but the fights finished. But this morning there was information that in reality there was no assistance. And the bodyguards were left alone against those terrorists and now the situation is developing in a way that there is another hit on this bodyguard point is quite possible. The question is when this mess will come to an end when your speakers don't tell the truth, or they tell the truth and we don't get enough information?

A5. Mykhailo Koval: Yes, yesterday the Luhansk bodyguard director at personnel was repelling, not even stunned, they didn't stun the territory, they were fighting against... just shooting...There was definitely assistance. As professional military I can tell you that everything is done correctly and it will lead to a success.

Q6. There is information that Russians might use aircraft which they captured in Crimea for provocations. Do you have any idea of what provocations those could be?

A6. Mykhailo Koval: Yes, I verified this. At Belbek airbase, there are Su-29, no MiG-29 aircraft which are combat-ready. These aircrafts are marked with Ukrainian national signs, and this night we got information that these aircrafts are being actually prepared for provocative sorties.

Q7. Ukraine together with NATO plans for 2014 a number of large scale exercises like Rapid Trident and Sea Breeze. What is the destiny of these exercises? What tasks will be given to the joint battalion, Ukrainian-Polish-Lithuanian? Ukrainian Parliament approved multinational exercises including two exercises with the United States also which you have just mentioned.

A7. Mykhailo Koval: We are going to conduct these exercises the second half of this year in Ukraine. Ukraine has not refused any activity of our troops in terms of peacekeeping operations. There is a resolution by the cabinet, our ministers, and I'm to sign an agreement between Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania on setting up Ukrainian-Polish-Lithuanian brigade.

Q8. During today's meeting were you asked about the possibility of a referendum in Ukraine initiated by Tymoshenko on accession to NATO?

A8. Mykhailo Koval: No, there was no such question was asked of me.

Q9. Do you have any information about the number of peaceful residents who were killed during the operation and about the losses on both sides?

A9. Mykhailo Koval: I don't have any information on the number of peaceful citizens who died.

Unfortunately, from our side, beginning with Crimea, went to military service mandate, in total we lost 42 persons in the armed forces.

Q10. (Ukrainian)...

A10. Mykhailo Koval: I respect the Republic of Georgia very much and I respect the armed forces of this country, but we have enough our own reformers to fulfil all the tasks.

[Opening remarks by the Secretary General at the press conference held on the first day of meetings of Defence Ministers](#) (edited)

We have taken a number of decisions to make NATO fitter, faster and more flexible. In the weeks to come we will finalise a comprehensive package of long-term measures to make Ukraine's reforms more effective, and its armed forces stronger.

Press Conference NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen - photo credit: NATO



We agreed that we will continue to reinforce NATO's collective defence, with more air and sea patrols, and more exercises and training - from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

I strongly welcome President Obama's announcement today of a European Reassurance Initiative of up to 1 billion dollars to further reinforce our collective defence and support our partners with capacity building. I also welcome President Komorowski's announcement that Poland will increase defence spending to 2% of Gross Domestic Product. We agreed to continue planning to 'step up' our reassurance measures if and when required. I welcome the decision by Denmark, Germany and Poland to start work in order to raise the readiness of Multinational Corps North East, based in Szczecin, Poland.

We agreed to develop a Readiness Action Plan. We will look at how to make the NATO Response Force able to react even more rapidly in a crisis; to enhance our intelligence and awareness; to

pre-position equipment and supplies; and to focus our exercises even more on specific defence challenges. We have also agreed to step up our work to fill key capability gaps and to increase the training and readiness of our forces across the board.

We also agreed a new and enhanced cyber-defence policy. Under the new policy, we will enhance information sharing and mutual assistance between Allies. We will improve NATO's cyber defence training and exercises. And we will boost our cooperation with industry. Finally, we have approved Germany's initiative on 'Framework Nations'. Groups of Allies will come together to provide the coherent forces and capabilities the Alliance needs. In that respect, I warmly welcome the initiative of seven allies, led by the UK, to develop a Joint Expeditionary Force. This initiative will bring together allies with extensive operational experience in a flexible and ready force. This is Smart Defence in action, because it allows us to get more out of what we invest.

[edited Q. & A. session](#)

Q1. Associated Press: What are the most critical areas that the US Reassurance Initiative dollars should be spent on? What do you think other Alliance members now should do, when it comes to reinforcing European defence?

A1. Secretary General: I think the US Reassurance Initiative will reinforce the Readiness Action Plan we have decided to prepare for the summit. As I understand the American money can be used to finance the prepositioning of equipment and supplies and enhanced exercises. Regarding Alliance members support for European defence, I could point to eight Allies and 6,000 troops participation in exercises such as Steadfast Javelin which took place in Estonia. I foresee that we will step up the number of exercises.

Q2. Brooks Tigner, Jane's Defence: What kind of prepositioning assets and supplies are we talking

about? And did you and the Allies discuss the notion of 'prepositioning' along NATO's eastern frontier with Russia during the NRC meeting on Monday? And did both sides agree that such complements would contravene the spirit of the 1997 Founding Act?

A2. Secretary General: In general, this is about preparing possible reinforcements. And to prepare for reinforcements, we need a prepositioning of equipment and supplies. We need to prepare infrastructure and we need designation of bases. And let me emphasize that all the steps we are going to take will be possible to realize within the framework of the NATO-Russia Founding Act from 1997.

Q3. Wall Street Journal: Could you tell us a little bit more about exactly what this comprehensive package that's been offered to Ukraine with training security forces and so forth is going to entail and when it might begin?

A3. Secretary General: I would expect foreign ministers to take decisions when they meet by the end of this month. But in general terms, it is about assisting Ukraine in defence reforms and modernization of their armed forces, including building a better military capacity. I'm also encouraged bilateral contributions: advisory assistance, technical assistance and material support.

Q4. Japanese Newspaper Daily News Mainichi: You said you'll realise all measures into the framework of the NATO-Russia Founding Act. But Russia clearly broke this promise with the annexation of Crimea. So what is the reason why you respect this founding act? What is the logic? Could you tell me?

A4. Secretary General: We stick to the NATO-Russia Founding Act because NATO Allies want a rules-based international security system. And we do believe that the fundamental principles in the NATO-Russia

Founding Act serve the overall security of the Euro-Atlantic area.

Q5. Andrei Mach(?), Slovak Pravda: Do you have also signals from the other countries that are willing to increase their defence budgets? You just visited Slovakia and our prime minister told you that we are not going to do it. So do you really want to push some more reluctant Allies to increase defence budgets?

A5. Secretary General: I sense there is a bit more flexibility in his statement. Overall, yes, I have heard other signals of willingness to increase defence spending. Latvia, Lithuania and Romania have taken actually political decisions to gradually move towards the 2% benchmark. I would expect other nations to follow as their economies recover. During the last five years Russia has increased its defence spending by 50% while NATO countries have decreased their defence spending by 20%. It's unsustainable.

Q6. Spanish newspaper Alerta: You say that NATO is preparing for a long-term implication. How long do you mean? Is this a decade-long new Cold War? Is the whole idea of anti-missile defence system included in the discussions about the present crisis of Ukraine?

A6. Secretary General: Let me stress that our missile defence plans should not be seen in the context of Ukraine which it has nothing to do with. The aim of building a NATO missile defence system is to protect our populations against missile attacks originating from outside the Euro-Atlantic area. No, I wouldn't consider this a new Cold War. That was an ideological struggle. And that's not what we are witnessing right now. We

are prepared to take measures that are necessary to ensure effective defence and protection of all Allies for as long as necessary.



NATO's counter-piracy flagship, Juan de Borbon, in the Indian Ocean - photo credit: NATO

Day 2: Georgia will join NATO (eventually), Resolute Support will work (in due course) and Europe must spend more on defence (sooner or later)

Summary of the Day

The second day started with a bilateral meeting between Anders Fogh Rasmussen and the Minister of Defence of Georgia, Irakli Alasania (see picture below). This was followed by a two-hour meeting of the NATO-Georgia Commission in Defence Ministers session.

According to a NATO [news release](#), the Commission discussed the Ukraine crisis and Georgia's progress on defence reforms. Regarding the latter, the Secretary General welcomed the "good progress" made on reforms, saying that these have made Georgia's defence and security sectors more transparent and accountable.

"Let me make clear that we stand by the decision we made at our Bucharest Summit in 2008," Rasmussen said. "Georgia will be a member of NATO, provided that it fulfils the requirements of membership. Alliance Foreign Ministers will discuss Georgia's aspirations at our meeting later this month. And I am confident that our Wales Summit in September will recognize Georgia's progress".

In a non-binding [declaration](#) on 30 May, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly had called on the Alliance member states "to consider" moving Georgia closer to NATO at its summit in Wales by granting the country a Membership Action Plan (MAP). This seems unlikely, however. The process of assessing each of the four aspirant countries—Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Montenegro and Macedonia—is ongoing and will be reviewed again by NATO Foreign Ministers later this month, but consensus on a MAP for Georgia appears improbable. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, for example, is [reported to have ruled out](#) Georgia being granted early NATO membership.

Next, was a meeting of the North Atlantic Council with non-NATO ISAF Contributing Nations. Afghan Defence Minister Bismullah Khan Mohammadi was among the participants. According to a NATO [news release](#), the session reviewed progress in the ISAF mission and preparations for the second round of Afghan presidential elections, which will take place on 14 June. The NATO Secretary General emphasised the successful delivery of the pledges made at the NATO summits in Lisbon (2010) and Chicago (2012). "As we promised, we have built up a capable Afghan force of 350,000 soldiers and



police, who are ready to take full responsibility for their country's security. As we promised, we are also planning a follow-on mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan forces beyond the end of this year", he said.

The Secretary General also welcomed US [President Obama's recent announcement](#) of keeping 9,800 troops in Afghanistan from the start of next year, split between those who will form part of the NATO training mission and others who will be part of a US counter-terrorism mission. However, he stressed that for NATO to establish the post 2014 follow-on training mission in Afghanistan, the necessary security arrangements have to be signed. President Hamid Karzai has refused to sign the agreement, but the leading candidates in Afghanistan's presidential race, Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani, have both pledged to do so.

"We have not yet taken positions on the exact figures, but of course the United States announcement gives you an indication of the size of the future . . . mission," to be called Resolute Support, said the NATO Secretary General.

According to a senior US military official cited by [Reuters](#), the NATO training mission is likely to total about 12,000 soldiers, including about 8,000 Americans, while some 1,800 Americans will conduct counter-terrorism missions. Germany, Italy and Turkey have each indicated that they will leave 600 to 800 troops in Afghanistan next year, and these are likely to be supplemented by contributions from NATO and non-NATO countries that currently have troops in ISAF.

The penultimate act of the day involved two early afternoon press conferences: by the NATO Secretary General and the US Secretary of Defense (see below). Both emphasised the need for European allies to commit to raising defence spending at the Wales Summit. The Ukraine crisis was cited as a key reason for European member states to reverse a slide in defence spending since the 2008 financial crisis.

[A confidential report to the meeting](#) on the state of alliance military capabilities was "a sobering dose of reality", according to the US Defense Secretary. Similarly, the NATO Secretary General said that while Russia had increased its military spending by 50% in the last five years, NATO had cut funding by 20% in the same period. In 2013, only the United States, Britain, Greece and Estonia met the NATO target of spending the equivalent of 2% of GDP.

In the wake of the Ukraine crisis, several NATO allies - including Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania - have announced plans to increase defence spending and pressure is now being applied to others to follow suit.

The day ended with a bilateral meeting between Anders Fogh Rasmussen and the Minister of Defence of Afghanistan, Bismillah Mohammadi (see picture below). No details of the discussion were made public and there is no transcript or



recording of the subsequent press conference by Mr. Mohammadi.

[Opening remarks by Secretary General Rasmussen at the NATO-Georgia Commission](#) (edited)

The crisis caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine has repercussions for Georgia, its region, and Euro-Atlantic security. NATO Allies do not accept Russia's recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia as independent states. There has been good progress, especially in making the defence and security sectors more transparent and accountable. Georgia will be a member of NATO, provided that it fulfils the requirements of membership. I am confident that our next Summit will recognize Georgia's progress.

[Opening remarks by Secretary General Rasmussen at the meeting of the North Atlantic Council with non-NATO ISAF Contributing Nations](#) (edited)

In securing the elections, the Afghan security forces did an outstanding job. They deserve great credit for their effectiveness and professionalism. The security transition to full Afghan security responsibility is on track and we will complete our combat mission at the end of the year. We continue to plan for a new mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan forces after 2014.

[Press conference by Secretary General Rasmussen following the second day of meetings](#) (edited)

Minister Mohammadi has assured us that the preparations for the second round of elections are well on track, and that the Afghans are determined to build on their achievements. I welcome President Obama's recent announcement, and the significant contribution the United States intends to make to Resolute Support. Together with the contributions offered by other Allies and partners, it shows NATO's continued commitment to Afghanistan. But as we have made clear, the Resolute Support Mission can only be launched if the required security

arrangements are signed and the necessary legal framework is in place.

Today, we also met in the NATO-Georgia Commission. Georgia is one of the largest non-NATO contributors to our mission in Afghanistan and an important partner. The people of Georgia have chosen the path that leads towards European Union and NATO membership. Georgia has decided to participate in the NATO Response Force, our rapid-reaction force, for the next four years. And it is strongly committed to our Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan.

Edited Q. & A. session

Q1. Nusat (ph) from Noorin (ph) TV, Afghanistan: How many NATO troops will take part in Resolute Support after 2014? And does NATO intention to extend its training mission post-2016, when the United States mission ends? Would NATO consider any strategic alliance with Afghanistan to defend any external threat to this country post-2016?

A1. Secretary General: We have not yet taken decisions on the exact figures of troops for Resolute Support. I'm confident that we will get the necessary resources to carry out what I would call a fully fledged train-advise-assist mission. We haven't yet taken a decision on the duration of a future Resolute Support mission. In a more long-term perspective, our relationship will be determined by the content of our enduring partnership with Afghanistan. As you can see from President Obama's announcement, the United States will, based on the bilateral agreement with Afghanistan, probably conduct counter-terrorism activities in collaboration with the Afghan government. And I think that will be the most robust answer to external threats.

Q2. Nawab Khan from the Kuwait News Agency: How do you think the recent improvement in India/Pakistan relations will reflect on developments in Afghanistan?

A2. Secretary General: It's my assessment that any improvement in the relationship between Pakistan and India will benefit the whole region, including Afghanistan.

Q3. Japanese Daily, Mainichi (ph). My name's Saito (ph): I'm afraid two years is too short to train completely Afghan Security Forces. Are you afraid such situation? Some member states were surprised to hear President Obama's announcement. Was there enough consultation among the member state to such a number and the duration of mission?

A3. Secretary General: Actually, at this very headquarters we consult each and every day. No decision has been made yet on the duration of the Resolute Support mission. We have seen the Afghan Security Forces develop very professional skills. So I'm confident that they will be able to take full responsibility all over Afghanistan.

Press Conference NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen - photo credit: NATO



Q4. What political pressure can be put on Pakistan in light of the (inaudible) coming from their Treasury to Afghanistan?

A4. Secretary General: We call on Pakistan to engage positively and constructively in ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan and in the region. We appreciate that the Pakistani government and the Pakistani military have taken steps to counter terrorist activities in the border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan. We do believe that there is room for intensified efforts in that respect.

Q5. Bettina Ashakos (ph), German Television: You said Georgia is on the right track. Can you foresee when it could become a member of NATO? Don't you expect resistance from other member countries, like for example Germany, against the full membership of Georgia?

A5. Secretary General: I can't answer your question because we haven't discussed any

timetable in today's meeting. We have the Foreign Ministers meeting by the end of this month. They will discuss updated progress reports for each of the aspiring countries, including Georgia.

Q6. Georgian Public Broadcaster: What alternative instrument to a Membership Action Plan is there available to Georgia?

A6. Secretary General: I regret to tell you that I can't answer that question yet because we are in the process now of preparing the summit.

Q7. Ana Pisonero, Spanish News Agency, Europa Press: The force for Resolute Support is expected to be around 12,000 which is at the upper end already suggested by the military. Is it expected that by 2000 the regional footprint will disappear and that the mission would be more concentrated in Kabul and Bagram?

A7. Secretary General: Based on these announcements and indications, I think it's safe to say that we will see a Resolute Support mission at the upper end of the scale of what have been our planning assumptions so far. The longer-term relationship between NATO and Afghanistan will be determined by the content of our enduring partnership.

[Press conference by US Secretary of Defense Hagel following the second day of meetings](#)
(edited)

In a session of the North Atlantic Council, we discussed Russia's recent actions in Ukraine, actions that constitute the most significant and direct challenge to European security since the end of the Cold War. The United States will continue to do our part with that announcement of a \$1 billion European reassurance initiative. This initiative will enable the United States to help maintain the readiness of allied forces and expand our reassurance measures throughout Central and



Press Conference US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel - photo credit: NATO

Eastern Europe.

The United States has already offered \$18 million in non-lethal security assistance to Ukraine, and President Obama announced another \$5 million for the purchase of body armour and other equipment, bringing our total security assistance of non-lethal aid to \$23 million.

The United States will also be reviewing its force presence in Europe. The challenges posed by Europe's declining defence budgets force the United States to carry a more and more disproportionate share of the alliance's burden. This challenge should be met with renewed European resolve to invest in its own defences. The upcoming summit in Wales is an opportunity for allies to issue a definitive clarification that reverses the current trends and rebalance the alliance's burden-sharing. We need to press for new and sustained defence spending. NATO must be prepared for the full spectrum of missions, including those against sophisticated adversaries with advanced technologies and against new asymmetric threats.

Discussions with ISAF Defence Ministers underscored that allies and partners remain committed to Afghan's long-term security. We should now move to finalize the operations plan for Resolute Support and secure firm commitments on troop contributions.

Edited Q. & A. Session

Q1. What do you envision the counterterrorism force in Afghanistan post-2014 doing? And what kind of allied help do you hope for with that mission?

A1. Secretary Hagel: Counterterrorism in Afghanistan post-2014 will be an area that gets considerable focus in the force generation conference later this month.

Q2. Do you plan some sort of lend-lease

programme to support states that are not yet members of the NATO?

A2. Secretary Hagel: In the last few days, our Assistant Secretary of Defense and our Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense have been working with the Ukrainian government on capacity-building and their institutions, their Defence Department reform. We have NATO partners who are also involved in that. We do a lot of training with the Georgians.

Q3. Would the US have military relation with Afghanistan after 2016?

A3. Secretary Hagel: As we get into 2017, President Obama has said clearly then our military role would be to support our Embassy in Kabul.