

NATO Summit: “Enduring Presence In Afghanistan” Beyond 2014

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NATO summit to define presence in Afghanistan beyond 2014

WASHINGTON: The upcoming NATO summit in Chicago will determine its long-term presence in Afghanistan beyond 2014, the top commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) told audience in the United States via video teleconference on Wednesday .

One of the major topics in the NATO summit is to “establish a vision for our enduring presence in Afghanistan, ” said General John R. Allen, commander of U.S. and NATO force in Afghanistan, as American Forces Press Service reported.

The May 20-21 summit will feature a series of bilateral agreements “that will create a network of strategic partnerships, bilaterally, around the world with Afghanistan, ” the general told attendees at the 2012 Joint Warfighting Conference held in Virginia Beach.

“The United States, and our key partner nations, including France, the United Kingdom and Italy, have already signed strategic partnerships with Afghanistan, making a long-term commitment to that country’s security, development and governance,” Allen said. “And soon, other countries will sign agreements as well.”

Foreign forces were originally scheduled to be pulled out of Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

However, U.S. President Barack Obama inked with his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai the Strategic Partnership Agreement earlier in May during his unannounced visit to Kabul amid the first anniversary of the killing of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

The White House said the agreement provides the possibility of U.S. forces in Afghanistan beyond 2014.

A series of U.S. military scandals in the war-torn country this year were widely criticized, including the massacre of 17 Afghan civilians, the burning of Korans, a video of Marines urinating on dead insurgents and photos of soldiers posing with corpses and body parts of failed Afghan suicide bombers.

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