

Remarks With Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, Korean Foreign Minister Kim Sung-Hwan and Korean Defense Minister Kim Kwan-Jin After Their Meeting

Remarks

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Secretary of State

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea Kim Sung-Hwan, Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Korea Kim Kwan-Jin

Thomas Jefferson Room

Washington, DC

June 14, 2012

<...>[Remarks on Syria]

MS. NULAND: Scott starts.

QUESTION: Can we do it the reverse? I'm sorry. Scott and I always do this, get it a little confused. But in any case, thank you, Madam Secretary. I'd like to start out with Egypt, please. What is your reaction to dissolving parliament? Is this a step backwards?

And then also on Syria: For the second day in the media and the news, we're talking about the weapons and the helicopters. By making this such a high-profile issue – and by pinning your strategy of shaming the Russians, are you running the risk of allowing Moscow to define what happens or doesn't happen in Syria? In other words, I guess, where is the American strategy?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, first, with regard to Egypt, we are obviously monitoring the situation. We are engaged with Cairo about the implications of today's court decision. So I won't comment on the specifics until we know more.

But that said, throughout this process, the United States has stood in support of the aspirations of the Egyptian people for a peaceful, credible, and permanent democratic transition. Now ultimately, it is up to the Egyptian people to determine their own future. And we expect that this weekend's presidential election will be held in an atmosphere that is conducive to it being peaceful, fair, and free. And in keeping with the commitments that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces made to the Egyptian people, we expect to see a full transfer of power to a democratically elected, civilian government.

There can be no going back on the democratic transition called for by the Egyptian people. The decisions on specific issues, of course, belong to the Egyptian people and their elected leaders. And they've made it clear that they want a president, a parliament, and a constitutional order that will reflect their will and advance their aspirations for political and economic reform. And that is exactly what they deserve to have.

Let me also note that we are concerned about recent decrees issued by the SCAF. Even if they are temporary, they appear to expand the power of the military to detain civilians and to roll back civil liberties.

Now regarding Syria, I spoke extensively about Syria yesterday. Our consultations with the United Nations, our allies and partners, and the Syrian opposition continue on the best way forward. Today, my deputy, Bill Burns, had a constructive meeting in Kabul with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov. We don't see eye to eye on all of the issues, but our discussions continue. And President Obama will see President Putin during the G-20 in Mexico.

We're also intensifying our work with Special Envoy Kofi Annan on a viable post-Assad transition strategy. And I look forward to talking to him in the days ahead about setting parameters for the conference that he and I have discussed and that he is discussing with many international partners. Our work with the Syrian opposition also continues. Ambassador Ford is in Istanbul today for a conference with the opposition that Turkey is hosting.

So we're working on multiple fronts. I think our strategy is very clear. We want to see an end to the violence, and we want to see the full implementation of Kofi Annan's plans, including the political transition so that the people of Syria have the same opportunity that the people of the Republic of Korea or the United States have to choose their own leaders and to build their own future. And the work is urgent, because as you know, the Syrian Government continues to attack its own people, and the bloodshed has not ceased. And we have to do everything we can to end the violence and create a framework for a transition.

<...>

PRN: 2012/988

Full transcript available here:

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2012/06/192400.htm>