

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
December 29, 2011 - January 5, 2012

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1. State's Campbell Visits China, South Korea, Japan (01-04-2012)

Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell is visiting China, South Korea and Japan for five days of talks with leaders on a broad range of issues, including the recent political changes in North Korea and Burma.

[Speaking January 4 in Beijing](#), the first stop on his trip, Campbell told reporters he met with Chinese leaders for "very fruitful, broad discussions" covering a series of topics. He said the United States and China "share strong determination to maintain peace and stability" as North Korea undergoes political transition, adding that both Chinese and U.S. leaders will continue to monitor the situation there.

Washington's relations with Burma have been warming since the country began to implement certain democratic reforms, including the release of some political prisoners and the easing of restrictions on the media, in late 2011.

Political change has also been under way in North Korea since the death of longtime leader Kim Jong Il on December 17. Kim's son, Kim Jong Un, was named his father's successor as supreme commander of the communist country's powerful National Defense Commission by the government shortly after his father's death.

Campbell is the most senior U.S. diplomat to visit Northeast Asia since Kim Jong Il's death. He urged all parties in the region to "cautiously deal with the situation and to refrain from any provocations."

The assistant secretary left Beijing January 4 to travel to Seoul, where he is scheduled to stay until January 6. He is then set to visit Tokyo before departing for Washington January 7, according to the State Department.

The department said in a statement that Campbell's trip presents an "important opportunity to continue to build a cooperative partnership with China on shared global challenges," "to continue our close consultation and coordination on the broad range of issues important" to the U.S.-South Korea alliance and to "reinforce our close cooperation with the government of Japan."

2. Syria's Assad Fails to Halt Violence Against Civilians (01-03-2012)

The Syrian government has fallen far short of honoring its commitments to the Arab League, including ending violent attacks against peaceful demonstrators and releasing its political prisoners, State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland told reporters.

Nuland said January 3 that there are now approximately 100 monitors from the Arab League inside Syria as part of a deal that Bashar al-Assad's regime made with the organization after months of political protests that have now killed at least 5,000 Syrian civilians.

Despite the presence of the monitors since late December, "the violence hasn't stopped — far from it," Nuland said. "We've had reports from independent observers of some 49 new deaths in Syria since the 31st of December," the vast majority of which have been at the hands of Syrian security forces, snipers and others loyal to the Assad regime. Nuland added that in some places, "the military is donning police uniforms in order to hide what they're up to."

The Syrian government had promised the full release of political prisoners, "including a release of the most high-level political prisoners," she said, but it has only released a limited number thus far and has denied Arab League monitors access to some prisons and to other parts of the country.

"The Assad regime is far from meeting the standards that it agreed to," Nuland said. "The violence continues and ... most of the violence is at the hands of the regime."

According to press reports, Arab League foreign ministers will meet in Cairo January 7 to discuss a preliminary report from the monitoring team, and will decide whether to continue the mission. Nuland said the Obama administration is sending Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman to meet with Arab diplomats in advance of the Arab League discussions.

"We support their efforts to ensure that this mission is credible, is effective if it's going to continue to go forward. And ... we are in close touch with them," she said.

Nuland said some Syrians have been able to take advantage of their relative safety in the presence of Arab League monitors to come out into the streets to express their views and to demonstrate to the Assad regime "that they want change."

But she also expressed serious concerns that in some cases "the regime is actually putting out its own false reports that monitors are on the way, demonstrators come into the streets, and then they fire on them."

3. Statement on Contribution to U.N. Agency for Palestinian Refugees (01-03-2012)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
January 3, 2012

MEDIA NOTE

United States Contributes \$55 Million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

The United States is pleased to announce an initial 2012 contribution of \$55 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The \$55 million contribution will provide critical health, education, and humanitarian services to five million Palestinian refugees in the region. Of this contribution, \$29 million will support UNRWA's core services in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza; \$24 million will support UNRWA's emergency programs in the West Bank and Gaza; and two million will support UNRWA's ongoing relief assistance in Lebanon for those displaced during the 2007 conflict in Nahr al Bared refugee camp.

As UNRWA's largest bilateral donor, the United States recognizes the critical role the Agency plays in assisting Palestinian refugees and maintaining regional stability and calls upon other donors to enhance their support for UNRWA. The United States encourages UNRWA to maintain the neutrality of its operations, expand its donor base, enhance its strategic communications, and maximize programmatic efficiencies in order to better serve refugees.

In 2011, the United States provided just under \$250 million to UNRWA, including \$146 million to its General Fund, \$75 million to its West Bank/Gaza emergency programs, \$15 million to emergency programs in Lebanon, and \$10 million for the construction of five new schools in Gaza, which will serve an estimated 10,000 schoolchildren.

4. Secretary Clinton on Jordan Hosting Middle East Envoy Meetings (01-01-2012)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson
January 1, 2012

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

Jordan Hosts Israeli, Palestinian, and Quartet Envoys Meetings

The Jordanian government announced today that Foreign Minister Judeh will host two meetings on January 3, one with Israeli and Palestinian negotiators and the Quartet envoys, and a second meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian representatives. We welcome and support this positive development. I applaud the efforts of the King and Foreign Minister Judeh to bring the parties together and encourage them to approach these meetings constructively. I have been in close contact with Foreign Minister Judeh and with Special Envoy David Hale.

When I met with the other Quartet principals on September 23rd we put forward a framework for resuming direct negotiations between the parties. We knew that progress toward this goal would not be easy so it is essential that both sides take advantage of this opportunity.

We are hopeful that this direct exchange can help move us forward on the pathway proposed by the Quartet. As the President and I have said before, the need for a lasting peace is more urgent than ever. The status quo is not sustainable and the parties must act boldly to advance the cause of peace.

5. Special Joint Press Briefing On U.S. Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia (12-30-2011)

Special Briefing
Andrew J. Shapiro, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs
Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Dr. James N. Miller

Washington, DC

ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHAPIRO: Well, thank you everyone for coming this afternoon. And as Toria mentioned, I'm joined by Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Dr. Jim Miller.

As you may recall, in October 2010, I officially announced the Administration's plan to sell to Saudi Arabia a significant defense package that would include advanced F-15 fighter aircraft and helicopters. We are pleased to announce that over this past weekend, the United States and Saudi Arabia signed a letter of offer and acceptance for the sale of up to 84 advanced F-15SA fighter aircraft. It also includes upgrades to its current fleet of 70 F-15 aircraft, as well as munitions, spare parts, training, maintenance, and logistics.

This sale is worth \$29.4 billion. These F-15SA aircraft, manufactured by the Boeing company, will be among the most sophisticated and capable aircraft in the world. This agreement serves to reinforce the strong and enduring relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia. It demonstrates the U.S. commitment to a strong Saudi defense capability as a key component to regional security.

Since announcing in June – in 2010 our intent to conclude this sale, the Departments of State and Defense have worked closely with the Saudi Government and industry to finalize the particulars of the deal. Jim and I both recently made separate trips to Saudi Arabia, in part to discuss the sale.

Let me outline a few of the reasons why this defense package is so important and historic, and how it will advance U.S. national interests. This sale will send a strong message to countries in the region that the United States is committed to stability in the Gulf and broader Middle East. It will enhance Saudi Arabia's ability to deter and defend against external threats to its sovereignty. It will advance interoperability between the air forces of our two countries through joint training and exercises. And lastly, this agreement will positively impact the U.S. economy and further advance the President's commitment to create jobs by increasing exports. According to industry experts, this agreement will support more than 50,000 American jobs. It will engage 600 suppliers in 44 states and provide \$3.5 billion in annual economic impact to the U.S. economy. This will support jobs not only in the aerospace sector but also in our manufacturing base and support chain, which are all crucial for sustaining our national defense.

I also wanted to note that this sale was carefully assessed under the U.S. Government's Conventional Arms Transfer Policy. This policy requires such sales be deemed in the national security interests of the United States, are consistent with the country's legitimate security needs, and support U.S. regional security objectives. With this agreement, the United States and Saudi Arabia have accomplished a historic achievement in our longstanding security partnership, a partnership that furthers security and stability in the Gulf region. Our longstanding security relationship with Saudi Arabia and other partners in the region has been a primary pillar of regional security for decades. And this sale further illustrates the firm commitment of the United States to the security and stability of the Gulf region.

I'll now turn it over to Jim Miller, who has more to say on the details of the sales package and how it advances U.S.-Saudi military-to-military interests. After that, Jim and I will be happy to take your questions.

MR. MILLER: Let me start by reiterating that the United States is firmly committed to the security of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as we have been for nearly seven decades, and that more broadly, the United States and Saudi Arabia have a strong mutual interest in the security and stability of the Gulf. Close cooperation between our militaries is central to that security and stability, and we are really announcing today the most recent example of that cooperation.

On December 24th in Riyadh, the United States and Saudi Arabia finalized the letter of offer and acceptance, or LOA, for the purchase of 84 F-15SA aircraft and, as Andrew said, for the upgrade of an additional 70 F-15SA aircraft to this SA configuration. And this government-to-government or foreign military sale is valued at \$29.4 billion.

I'd like to say just a few words about the capabilities that are under consideration. This aircraft, the F-15SA, will be the most capable and versatile aircraft in the Royal Saudi fighter inventory. And indeed, it will be one of the most capable aircraft in the world. The F-15SA will have the latest generation of computing power, radar technology, infrared sensors, and electronic warfare systems. As one example, the F-15SA will be equipped with an active electronically-scanned array radar, or AESA. This radar includes the latest technology and will ensure that Saudi Arabia has the capability to operate against regional air threats. This sale also includes AMRAAM and AIM-9X air-to-air missiles, which provide both radar and infrared guided capability. The F-15SA will be able to strike targets day or night in all weather with a variety of precision-guided munitions. The air-to-ground weapon capability includes laser-guided and GPS-guided weapons, along with missiles that can attack ground-based radars and missiles – the Harpoon in particular specialized for maritime attack capabilities.

The communications systems of the F-15SA will allow the U.S. Air Force and Royal Saudi Air Force to operate effectively together in the same airspace. And the system's interoperability will also allow both countries to – excuse me – to participate in coalition training, which is a priority for both of our countries. And in fact, this F-15SA package includes not just aircraft and munitions but the training and logistics support that Andrew talked about, and it's a very robust package. Much of the Saudi training in the F-15SA will occur alongside U.S. forces. This will enhance our already strong defense relationship. And approximately 5,500 Saudi personnel will be trained through 2019 – 5,500 through 2019, further strengthening the bonds between our forces and between our countries.

I've provided just a very high-level overview of the F-15SA's impressive capabilities, and I know that the Air Force and the Boeing company will be glad to offer a lot more details. As Andrew said, the U.S.-Saudi security relationship has been a pillar of regional security for decades. And this F-15SA sale demonstrates the firm commitment of the United States to the kingdom, and reinforces our mutual commitment to security and stability in the Gulf.

[Full text incl. Q&A](#)

6. U.S. Calls for Stop to Harassment of NGOs in Egypt (12-29-2011)

The U.S. says the NGOs are in Egypt to help the country build stronger democratic institutions, and do not support individual candidates or political parties.

Washington — The Obama administration called on Egypt's ruling military council to immediately halt its harassment of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and their staffs, and to return property it confiscated during raids on at least 17 groups on December 29.

The raids have occurred between the rounds of Egypt's first parliamentary election since the end of Hosni Mubarak's 30-year regime, and State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said they are "not appropriate in the current environment." The NGOs, including the U.S.-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI), are operating in Egypt to support the country's democratic process, she said.

"Their primary purpose around the world is to support the development of democratic institutions. They work most actively, both NDI and IRI, in countries that are in democratic transition. They do things like train poll monitors, train poll workers, train political parties in how to mount their

campaigns. But they don't support any individual candidate, any individual party," Nuland told reporters in Washington December 29.

Nuland acknowledged that both NDI and IRI receive U.S. government support, but said, "All of their work is open to public scrutiny and to government scrutiny," and they have been "extremely transparent about the programs that they have in Egypt."

According to press reports, Egyptian soldiers and police seized documents and computers and prevented staffs from leaving in what Egyptian authorities have said is an investigation into the role of foreign governments in recent protests.

Nuland said U.S. officials have "made strong representations and asked for immediate action" in their discussions with the military government. The action against the NGOs "is inconsistent with the bilateral cooperation we have had over many years."

"We don't think that this action is justified, and we want to see the harassment end, and we want to see the property returned and the staff allowed to proceed as normal," she said.

Egypt has held several rounds of its parliamentary vote, and Nuland said they were "generally judged to be free, fair, with open, broad participation," but the country is still in the middle of an "intense electoral season," and the NGOs want to resume their normal activities in support of the democratic process in Egypt.