

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
October 9 - 17, 2013

1. [Congress Passes Bill Reopening Federal Government](#) (10-17-2013)
2. [State Dept. Briefing on Geneva Talks on Iran's Nuclear Program](#) (10-16-2013)
3. [Kerry, U.N. Special Representative Brahimi on Syria](#) (10-14-2013)
4. [Kerry, Afghan President Karzai after Their Meeting in Kabul](#) (10-13-2013)
5. [United States Reduces Some Military Assistance to Egypt](#) (10-10-2013)
6. [State Dept. on Chemical Weapon Inspections in Syria](#) (10-10-2013)
7. [U.S. Envoy at OSCE on Afghanistan Issues After 2014](#) (10-09-2013)
8. [State's Gottemoeller at U.N. Session on Nuclear Disarmament](#) (10-09-2013)

1. [Congress Passes Bill Reopening Federal Government](#) (10-17-2013)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Oct. 17, 2013 – President Barack Obama signed legislation late yesterday night bringing federal employees back to work after Congress finally resolved the budget logjam that led to a 16-day shutdown.

Senate leaders championed bipartisan legislation to reopen the government and remove the threat of government default on its debts. All federal government employees – including some 4,000 Defense Department employees – will report to work today.

The legislation is a continuing resolution that will provide federal government spending at fiscal year 2013 levels. This keeps the sequester-level budget in effect.

The act will keep the government open through Jan. 15 and raises the debt limit through Feb. 7. The act contains a provision for a joint Senate-House committee to work on a budget recommendation for fiscal year 2014. Those recommendations are due Dec. 13.

The legislation includes the provision to pay all furloughed employees for the period of the lapse in appropriations. The act calls for those employees to be paid “as soon as practicable.”

Even before the House of Representatives voted, President Obama signaled his intent to sign the bill. “We’ll begin reopening our government immediately,” he said in a White House appearance. “And we can begin to lift this cloud of uncertainty and unease from our businesses and from the American people.”

Obama asked that all political officials take the lesson of the gridlock to heart and work together to solve the nation’s problems.

“My hope and expectation is,” Obama said, “everybody has learned that there is no reason why we can’t work on the issues at hand, why we can’t disagree between the parties while still being agreeable, and make sure that we’re not inflicting harm on the American people when we do have disagreements.”

“So hopefully that’s a lesson that will be internalized, and not just by me, but also by Democrats and Republicans, not only the leaders, but also the rank-and-file,” he said.

As he was leaving the Brady Press Room at the White House, a reporter asked the president if the shutdown might not be duplicated in January. “No,” the president said and left.

Sylvia Matthews Burwell, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, said in a release federal employees “should expect to return to work in the morning.”

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[Special Report: Government Shutdown: What You Need to Know](#)

2. State Dept. Briefing on Geneva Talks on Iran’s Nuclear Program (10-16-2013)

*Senior Administration Official on P5+1 Negotiations
Geneva, Switzerland*

MODERATOR: Thank you, everyone, for joining us tonight. The official speaking tonight is title withheld. From here on out, the official will be referred to only as a Senior Administration Official. Everything is entirely on background. And with that, I will turn it over to Senior Administration Official.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you. This says good afternoon, but that must have been written at an earlier time of day. (Laughter.) Good evening.

Thank you all for coming today. I’m sure you saw High Representative Ashton’s press conference just a short while ago, as well as Foreign Minister Zarif’s. I’d like to make some very brief remarks about what we feel we did here in Geneva, where we go from here, and I’d be happy to answer your questions as best I can.

Over the past two days, we’ve had serious and substantive discussions with our P5 counterparts and with Iran. We had detailed technical discussions at a level we have not had before. And we discussed concrete steps and actions that are necessary for Iran to address the international community’s concerns about its nuclear program.

Iran addressed what they saw as the objective, what should be in a final step, and what they might do as a first step. This is a framework that the P5+1 has used for some time. Although there remain many differences in each area and in what sanctions relief might be appropriate, specific and candid discussions took place.

Throughout this process, the P5+1 has remained united, as we always have.

We also had our first bilateral meeting at the political director level with the Iranians during the P5+1 since 2009, when then Political Director, Under Secretary Bill Burns sat down with Saeed Jalili right here in Geneva. Our discussion bilaterally yesterday was a useful one.

There is more work – much more work – to do, as we knew there would be. We have always said that there would be no agreement overnight, and we've been clear that this process is going to take some time. The issues are complex, very technical, and require sound verification. Any agreement has to give the United States and the world every confidence that Iran will not acquire a nuclear weapon.

As you heard High Representative Ashton say, we will be meeting again here in Geneva on November 7th and 8th. There will also be an experts meeting with the P5 and with the Iranians in advance of that round. And as was said in the statement, that will include nuclear, scientific, and sanctions experts for that meeting.

We have said that there is time for diplomacy, but as Iran's program continues, we must move both cautiously and quickly.

We came to Geneva looking to have a substantive discussion, to hear Iran's proposed approach, to begin to work through some of the technical details that have proven so elusive in the past, and to underscore for Iran all of our continued concerns and our approach to this problem. All of that occurred.

With the advent of the new government in Iran, we have begun anew at the P5+1. Conscious of all that has come before, all at this meeting understood and understand that the stakes are high and that diplomacy offers the best answer. The work is hard, and a positive outcome is not guaranteed. But as the President and the Secretary have directed me – and I believe every delegation has been directed – we must make every effort to achieve such an outcome.

With that, I'd be happy to take your questions.

MODERATOR: Yes. Michael Gordon, go ahead.

QUESTION: The other day, just before the talks began, Senior Administration Officials made clear that it would – the issues were difficult, it would take some time to work through them, and that it was imperative that concrete steps be taken to pause or even roll back to some extent, the official said, the Iranian program so their nuclear effort was not marching along while the talks proceeded. Have you – by that criteria, have you succeeded in pausing or freezing or doing anything that would arrest the Iranian nuclear efforts pending these talks, or have you not?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I believe that same Senior Official also said there would not be an agreement, in all likelihood, coming out of these two days; that the issues were indeed complex, technical and difficult; and that although we might put all of the issues on the table

and begin to have those technical discussions that have so evaded us in the past, it would be highly unlikely for an agreement to come out of these two days. That is indeed the case.

It is why, however, we are meeting in the scheme of the P5+1 rather quickly again, November 7th and 8th, with an experts meeting in between, to try to ensure that the pace of our work proceeds, as I said, quickly but cautiously. And the cautiously is because, as Secretary Kerry has said, no deal is better than a bad deal. So we are going to be thoughtful, hopeful, cautious -- make sure our national security interests are protected --but make sure, if we can, that we reach an agreement so that Iran cannot acquire a nuclear weapon.

QUESTION: But just to be totally clear, there are no steps that Iran is taking at this time to pause its program --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not --

QUESTION: -- but you intend to meet again very soon, and so that it's --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not going to detail what Iran may or may not be doing. I'm not going to detail the specifics of what we are discussing. I know that it will be very frustrating for all of you. I can understand it's totally irritating. But indeed, one of the marks of a serious negotiation is when that negotiation does not happen through the press.

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[State Dept. Briefing on P5+1 Negotiations with Iran](#) (10-14-2013)

[3. Kerry, U.N. Special Representative Brahimi on Syria \(10-14-2013\)](#)

Remarks by Secretary of State John Kerry and UN Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi Following their Meeting, Winfield House, London, UK

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you. Well, it's my pleasure this morning to welcome Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi here to Winfield House in London -- it's the home of our American ambassador -- and to have a conversation, an important conversation, about the urgency of the convening of the Geneva conference, to try to achieve peace for a new Syria. And we talked about all aspects of this current crisis.

Special Representative Brahimi and I agree, as do many others, that there is no military solution in Syria, and we believe it is urgent to set a date, convene the conference, and work towards a new Syria.

We also, expressing my own point of view -- because he's the negotiator and it's not his point of view to say this -- but we believe that President Assad has lost the legitimacy necessary to be able to be a cohesive force, that could bring people together, and that it is clear that in implementing Geneva 1, which is the only purpose for having the Geneva conference now, there has to be a transition government. There has to be a new governing entity in Syria in order to permit the possibility of peace.

This will require all the parties to come together in good faith. The Special Representative will be traveling shortly to the region, meeting with all of the relevant countries, as well as the relevant parties. And he will be working on the question of the process for a Geneva 2 conference.

But for our part, the United States of America, together with the Russians, as we talked about it in the Far East a few days ago, are deeply committed to trying to set a date very soon, to moving towards an inclusive conference that will offer the best opportunity to end the violence, to provide for a new Syria, to deal with the humanitarian catastrophe that is only getting worse by the day, and ultimately to try to find a way to have peace and stability, not just in Syria but in the region.

And we are very, very appreciative to the Special Representative, for his commitment to this, for his hard work, for his team and their efforts. We believe that we're in a position to try to get started. It will require good faith by everybody, but that's exactly what we're going to continue to work towards.

Mr. Representative, thank you.

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE BRAHIMI: Thank you very much, indeed.

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you, my friend.

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE BRAHIMI: And I am extremely grateful to you, Secretary of State, for the opportunity you have given me, of heading for a new after your time in the Far East and your discussions with the Russians, who are your partners. You started this on the 7th of May in Moscow together. And we have joined with you in these trilateral discussions that we are having in Geneva several times. And we agree 100 percent that there is no military solution in Syria. There can be, there will be a political solution if everybody gets together and works for it.

I think that when we met in New York – with the P-5 and the Secretary General and myself – we have said that this conference, Geneva 2, to implement Geneva 1, has to meet in November. And I think that very soon we've got now to set it. The (inaudible) for the conference to start and we look forward to everybody who can help the Syrians solve their problems must be there. And of course the Syrians themselves have to have private place in that conference, because the negotiations will be depend on them.

As you said, Secretary, I'm going to the region immediately after (inaudible) to see as many people as I can to discuss with them, hear from them, what are their preoccupations, what are their ideas, how they can contribute to make this Geneva conference that is coming success, for the Syria people, for our region, and for everybody. Thank you very much.

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you, my friend. We are very appreciative of your work. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you all very much.

4. Kerry, Afghan President Karzai after Their Meeting in Kabul (10-13-2013)

Remarks by Secretary of State John Kerry at a Joint Press Availability with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, Kabul, Afghanistan

PRESIDENT KARZAI: (Via interpreter) (Inaudible) Afghan and international media, the United States media, welcome to our today's press conference. And we apologize for making you waiting

from morning up to now. Thanks for being so patient. And I'm very happy that today, His Excellency John Kerry, U.S. Secretary of State, is here with us in Kabul. He arrived here yesterday so that we can discuss our relationship with the United States, especially with regards to the security pact between Afghanistan and the United States. He has been kind enough to spend enough time with us, and we – he delayed his visit to Middle East so that we could discuss these issues in details, and both sides, so that we can both reach a result considering other national interests, both countries.

Are you all right?

SECRETARY KERRY: I'm all right, but I don't hear anything.

PRESIDENT KARZAI: (Via interpreter) Can you hear? Sir, can you hear us now?

SECRETARY KERRY: Yes.

PRESIDENT KARZAI: Can everyone hear us?

Brothers and sisters, as you are all aware, that after we signed the Strategic Partnership Agreement between Afghanistan and United States, we started to discuss security. Let's wait until we get the system fixed. Okay.

As you are aware, after we signed the Strategic Partnership Agreement, the United States and Afghanistan started discussing the security agreement between our two countries. It was a very difficult discussion. Afghanistan considered its own interest, United States considering its own interest. Afghanistan's interest is Afghanistan. Our main priority is Afghan sovereignty. Respecting Afghanistan's sovereignty was considered our highest priority. Unfortunately, our past experiences were not happy experiences. Afghanistan suffered a lot in the fight against international terrorism. Afghan houses suffered a lot. And Afghanistan's sovereignty has been violated, and the Afghan Government and the Afghan people were disappointed about all this.

The discussion of the security agreement has been an important issue, and our demand is our – defending our Afghan sovereignty. Afghanistan's national sovereignty was our most important issue for all of us. It has been. And one of the other important thing for all of us was the safety of the Afghan people as well as their assets and property from terror and terrorism, as well as from the fight against terrorism that's been conducted by international forces. And the Afghan people suffered a lot so far.

Only 15 days ago, I met a very young girl from Kunar province of Afghanistan in a hospital. She lost her both eyes. She was 14 and a half years old. Her – she lost her face as well as her hand – one of these. And she also lost her whole family. It happened during foreign forces operation. The Afghan nation, whatever cost they paid, want a guarantee that such violation will not take place in terms of the lives of the people, children, and citizens. And under no circumstance or excuse, foreign forces will not search the homes of the Afghan people, the people of Afghanistan; will not attack – will not conduct any sort of ground attack or air attack on the Afghan homes.

The third issue is invasion or attack on Afghanistan. In our Strategic Partnership Agreement, it states United States committed itself to support Afghanistan in case of attack on Afghanistan. But we realized that we, once we signed the Strategic Partnership, some of our neighboring countries shot rockets and missiles on Afghan territory, but the United States did not even accept that such violation did take place in Afghanistan. At this point, the definition of invasion or attack was very

important for all of us, so that we can have a clear definition of attack on our country or invasion of our country. Invasion means bringing mortars and tanks to Afghanistan. Invasion also means sending terrorism and suicide bombers to Afghanistan.

Four, and stopping foreign forces from whatever they do in Afghanistan so that international forces cannot conduct operations by themselves without permission. The Government of Afghanistan and I myself, during the past few years, have been in touch with security forces of other countries who are here to fight terror and defend their interest, and we had some sort of disappointments as well. In these cases, Afghanistan's sovereignty and definition of invasion, civilian casualties in Afghanistan, and prevention of foreign forces operation – we have been discussing this for a long now.

After a long discussion and exchanging thoughts and ideas, tonight we reached some sort of agreements. In our agreements, the United States will no longer conduct operations by themselves. We have been provided written guarantee for the safety of Afghan people about invasion. A clear definition has been provided and we accepted it. Our national sovereignty is being also clear, and they have committed themselves that they will respect and no violation will take place.

The security agreement we discussed today, many issues are related to this agreement. One element is foreign forces immunity. We don't have a common understanding on this, and such an issue is beyond Afghan Government authority. We therefore did not discuss this issue. And the decision about this particular subject will – is up to the Afghan people and especially the Loya Jirga. They will be the one to make the decision on this particular issue. The Afghan – this will go to the Afghan people, the Jirga itself, and it will be then sent to Afghan parliament, and such issue is beyond our authority, and it will be presented to Afghan people at Loya Jirga.

There are other things. There are other issues. We had a common understanding and a common agreement, but I have been – I stated the most important issues during the past three nights, and I just mentioned these issues. But I did not study the details, the technical details of this particular agreement, and I will have time tomorrow to study the details, to study the agreement in details, and I will then send it to the Afghan Security Council and I will then also consult with the (inaudible) jirga, and then it will be presented to Afghan people's Loya Jirga, and they will be the one to make a decision, the final decision. If they approve it, it will be sent to Afghan parliament, and so that they can approve it too.

I just would like to be short on this. In this agreement, we considered national sovereignty and prevention of casualties, civilian casualty, and the clear definition of invasion. We reached some agreements. We reached agreements. Foreign troops and forces, foreign forces immunity, we were not able to discuss this because it is clear, because the Afghan people's Jirga will make their decision about this.

The whole document will be presented to the Loya Jirga. They will discuss it, especially this particular issue. United States Government and people, we are grateful of the American assistance to Afghanistan in order to bring changes in the area of education and the life of the Afghan people, and they did provide help in other areas too, and we are grateful of that. But we are hopeful beside we – while we appreciate this, we hope that the security agreement between Afghanistan and the United States, once the Jirga approve it, they will provide us with the things that we did not have during the past 10 years in Afghanistan, which is the safety of the Afghan people as well as the national sovereignty.

We hope to reach these goals, and we will present the document to the American people too. And I am grateful to His Excellency John Kerry and as well as the American people. We hope that once we finalize this agreement, the Afghan – Afghanistan and Americans will become real friends, friends in reality. Thank you so much.

SECRETARY KERRY: Well, Mr. President, thank you very, very much. Thank you first of all for your generous hospitality, as always. We appreciate it enormously. And I don't know who could produce a setting like this, which is really very, very beautiful. As we walked over here, the President informed me that some of these trees are probably more than 300 years old, maybe more.

PRESIDENT KARZAI: Maybe more.

SECRETARY KERRY: Maybe more. So it's a privilege to stand in a place that reminds us all about the history of Afghanistan, the durability, and really the importance of what we are trying to achieve here.

I thank the President for his serious effort over these last hours. Late last night, all last night, all today we have been discussing and we have been negotiating. And as the President said, these are not easy negotiations because they involve issues of life and death, issues of the future of a country, issues of emotions, and the history. Particularly, the kinds of things the President talked about, about a young woman without a face. And indeed, there have been horrible things that have happened to people in the course of war. Too many Afghans have lost their lives. Too many Afghans have been subject to terrible violence. And the United States hopes and prays and looks forward to the day that Afghanistan can be free from that violence and that the people of Afghanistan will be free to move around and live their lives with full respect for their sovereignty and for their nationhood, for who they are as a people. The people of Afghanistan are a brave people, a capable people. And the United States has only respect for what the people of Afghanistan have been through and how difficult these years have been.

We also know that there are young men in hospitals in America, and women, who are still recovering from their wounds. And there are too many who have been buried in cemeteries in America because they came over here to help make a difference for this country and for the world – to fight terrorism, and to fight to give an opportunity for Afghanistan's future to blossom in its full sovereignty and with the full opportunities that people need and deserve.

We are proud of the fact that in the years that we have been here, in cooperation with President Karzai and the government, much has changed for the better. When we came here, there were maybe a million children in school, most of them boys. Today, there are 8 million, and perhaps 40 percent of them are young girls. When we came here, only 9 percent of the people in Afghanistan had access to health care. Today, 60 percent of the people in this country have access to health care. And when we came here, the life expectancy of Afghans was 20 years less than what it is today. It has grown by 20 years. There are many things that are positive, even as there have been great difficulties.

We want a different relationship. President Obama wants the United States to work in partnership with Afghanistan. And nothing would please us more or serve American interests more than to see an Afghanistan free and independent, and without the need for support from America or any other country. I know that's what President Karzai wants. That's what we want.

And I believe that in the last 24 hours, as we have worked hard at these issues that really have been negotiated over now for more than 11 months, that we have resolved, in these last 24 hours, the

major issues that the President went through. We have resolved those issues. And we have put ourselves in a position for an enduring partnership going forward in the years ahead, providing that the political process of Afghanistan accepts that. We respect completely the President's need, the President's right, the Afghan people's need to approve of whatever agreement might come forward. We are pleased that the agreement that we have put together now is in a place where it can be submitted to a Loya Jirga, where it will now go through the appropriate political process of the President reviewing it and submitting it with his security cabinet, with his various – with the parliament and others, as is necessary.

But I need to make very clear that the one issue that is outstanding, which is an issue that we call an issue of jurisdiction – in our judgment, there is no immunity in this agreement. Anybody who were to do anything will be subject to the law. But the question of jurisdiction is an appropriate one for the President to submit to the Loya Jirga, and we have high confidence that the people of Afghanistan will see the benefits that exist in this agreement. But we need to say that if the issue of jurisdiction cannot be resolved, then, unfortunately, there cannot be a bilateral security agreement. So we hope that that will be resolved. And it's up to the Afghan people, as it should be.

What we have achieved in this agreement addresses the fundamental questions the President has raised about aggression, about support, about – most importantly – the protection of Afghan people in their homes, in their lives. We respect completely, and President Obama supports and is committed to the principles that the President of Afghanistan has laid out in order to protect the people of Afghanistan. The people deserve to know that in their homes and in their lives they can be free from interference and free from violence. And we believe in that.

What has happened in this moment is important. It is a moment where the United States willingly and happily is able to work in partnership with our Afghan friends and transfer to the Afghan forces the full responsibility for the defense of Afghanistan as we near the end of 2014, and we will be in a very different position here – happily for the President, the government, and the people of Afghanistan. We will not be conducting combat operations; we will be engaged in training, assisting, and equipping the Afghan forces who will defend their country. And I think the President and the people of Afghanistan welcome that.

So in the agreements that we have reached here, we have in fact arrived at a point where we know with certainty how we can proceed down the road, to fully – fully guaranteeing the opportunities that the Afghan people want for their future.

We will have a respect that the President wants in a definitive way for the sovereignty of Afghanistan and for the people of Afghanistan. And over the coming year, the Afghan people will be assuming greater and greater responsibility. We welcome that. And we say very simply that this agreement, if it finally approved, will cement a relationship of cooperation, a relationship where the Government of Afghanistan is fully independent and sovereign and making its decisions, and the United States and those other friends who join in this effort will be helping and working in cooperation.

In addition, we will be following along the lines of what was agreed in Tokyo and in Chicago in terms of assistance, which will be important in order to sustain the development and the growth that has so characterized what has happened, even in the midst of war.

The Bilateral Security Agreement also provides the foundation for us to be able to work together against terrorism, against those who wish to harm us or our partners, our interests, and the region. And that is vital to both Americans and to Afghans. But let me underscore that nothing – neither

this agreement when completed, nor the assistance that we provide – nothing can replace the commitment and energy of the Afghan people to be defining their own future.

So it is clear, through this agreement in addressing each of the concerns President Karzai has raised, that President Obama and the American people believe in the people of Afghanistan. We are excited about the way the President and his government have put in place the workings of a new election. The election law, the registration of candidates, are all a great success. And we look forward to not picking any candidates, not being involved in the election, not in any way affecting it, but only to helping in any way that Afghanistan wants us to for this election to work effectively, free, fair, accessible, transparent, and accountable. This is an enormous transition. It's an historic moment for this country. And we are proud and pleased to be able to work at being part of it.

The United States believes firmly that lasting security and prosperity in a unified Afghanistan and an independent Afghanistan, whose people and sovereignty are respected, will take root when the people's voice is heard in the course of this election. And this will be a great legacy for President Karzai, who has led his country during these very, very difficult times.

So Mr. President, I'm very, very grateful to you as always. Your friendship, your warm welcome, the serious way which you and your team have really come at the difficult issues that we had to work on in the last few days. And we look forward to the technical review process that you will undergo, we will likewise undergo, and I am confident that in this agreement, we have laid the foundation for all of the issues that you listed to be addressed, and for the future success of your country and our friendship. Thank you, my friend.

MODERATOR: (Via interpreter) It is very late. We will just take two questions. The first question can be addressed to – the Secretary of State will choose the first question, and I will ask – pick up the second question.

SECRETARY KERRY: If I'm picking first, Lesley Wroughton.

QUESTION: Lesley Wroughton from Reuters. Mr. Secretary, you said that there's no deal without addressing the issue of immunity. How does one proceed with this, and what kinds of concessions do you need from each other to close this deal?

The same for you, President Karzai. What do you need for this – if the U.S. doesn't seal this deal, if this immunity issue is still outstanding, how do you see this relationship going forward?

The other question I have for the Secretary –

SECRETARY KERRY: That's all right – as I cough away. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: I'm sorry.

SECRETARY KERRY: It's all right.

QUESTION: And the other question I have – so I'm (inaudible) with the immunity. The second question is: What faith – this is for the Secretary. What faith does it show in Afghan sovereignty when the U.S. snatches a Taliban commander from Afghan hands when you're so close – when you were so close to a deal?

To the President – how can Afghanistan stand for this kind of operation, and does it undermine you just when you're trying to agree on issues of counterterrorism and security?

SECRETARY KERRY: Yes. Well, let me – Lesley, let me begin by, first of all politely correcting you, the premise of your question about something called immunity. There is no immunity. There is no question of immunity. If an American who is part of any expeditionary force under agreement from the Afghan Government were to violate any law, as we have in the past, we will continue to prosecute to the full measure of that law, and any perpetrator of any incident, crime, anything will be punished. There is no immunity. Let me make that clear: No immunity.

And we have proven in many cases, unfortunately too many instances, that when somebody has violated the law, they have paid the price. There are people in prison today in the United States of America who have paid that price.

Secondly, with respect to the jurisdiction issue, we have great respect for Afghan sovereignty. And we will respect it, completely. And that is laid out in this agreement. But where we have forces in any part of the world, and we unfortunately have them in a number of places in the world – in Japan, in Korea, in Europe, in other parts of the world, Africa. Wherever our forces are found, they operate under the same standard. We are not singling out Afghanistan for any separate standard. We are defending exactly what the constitutional laws of the United States require.

Now, we completely respect that the President should decide appropriately that this issue ought to be decided in his Loya Jirga. We absolutely – that's the best of democracy. We embrace that. But there are realities that if it isn't resolved, we can't send our forces in places because we don't subject United States citizens to that kind of uncertainty with respect to their rights and lives. It is no comment on any other country. It's nothing negative. It's an historical tradition and something that exists everywhere in the world. So that is a very important principle.

Now, the President has expressed his concerns. He's been honest with us and upfront about it. But he understands that the other issues that we have resolved in this important agreement are important and that we have worked hard in good faith to resolve it. And so his consultative process will go to work, and the United States will respect that process, as we should.

With respect to counterterrorism activities and the apprehension of an individual, we followed the normal procedures that the United States follows in our agreement. We regret that this circumstance took place in some ways that some folks apparently the chain of communication didn't go as far. But we did what we are supposed to do under the agreement.

Now, I'm not going to discuss the details except to tell you that this individual is responsible for the loss of lives not just here in Afghanistan, but has plotted against the United States, has association with other major plots to injure many people, and is a serious terrorist. And so we will work with the government, as we have said. We will absolutely work with the Government of Afghanistan to cooperate so that the appropriate process flows out of this, to respect their interests and respect their sovereignty. But this was a normal counterterrorism procedure, according to the standards that we have been operating by for a long period of time.

PRESIDENT KARZAI: Ma'am, as I said in my introductory remarks, the whole document will go before the Afghan Loya Jirga for their consideration and consultation. And if it is approved, it will go to the Afghan parliament for the formal approval of state – relevant state institutions.

The issue of jurisdiction is one such issue that is beyond the authority of the Afghan Government, and it is only and entirely up to the Afghan people to decide upon through two mechanisms: One is the traditional Loya Jirga of Afghanistan; the second is the constitutional mechanism, which is the Afghan parliament.

On the issue of seizing a Taliban commander by the U.S. Forces Afghanistan, this is an issue that we have raised in earnest with the United States in the past few days, as we have on other previous occasions of such arrests in which the Afghan laws were disregarded, which we do consider a violation of Afghan sovereignty. And therefore, our discussion today in particular has been focused on making sure that through the Bilateral Security Agreement we make sure that such violations are not repeated. This is an issue of extreme importance to the Afghan people, and it is an issue that the Afghan people will demand in very clear, vivid manifestation from their government to make sure is ours – meaning sovereignty.

QUESTION: (Via interpreter) Thank you, Mr. President. We welcome Secretary of State Mr. John Kerry to Afghanistan. And my question is specifically for Your Excellency. As you had serious discussion during the past two days with your U.S. counterpart, can you assure the Afghan people that after this agreement is signed, the United States will not conduct operations by themselves and they will consider Afghan people's sovereignty?

And how – what – how you came up with the definition of sovereignty? And also, that there is insurgency that (inaudible) Afghanistan, how do you define that? The third issue is, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey (inaudible) stated that some specific terrorist group received training in Afghanistan, in terms of using chemical weapon. What do you think? What's your position on this?

PRESIDENT KARZAI: (Via interpreter) With regards to the security and safety of the Afghan people and the security of the Afghan people, as well as the honor of the Afghan people and their families, and as well as full sovereignty, both the Afghan people as well as their homes, we are aware that it's been years that we have been discussing this with our NATO and ISAF counterpart on this particular issue, the life of the Afghan people and the security of the Afghan people, and making sure that the house of the Afghan people are not searched under the name of fight against terror or not attacked under the name of the fighting against terror.

Civilian casualty in Afghanistan is one of the top priority of the Afghan Government, and it's been our top priority and we try to address this so that the Afghan people can no longer suffer, not yesterday, not today, since the start of negotiation about Strategic Partnership Agreement with the U.S. Government, and after we signed the Strategic Partnership Agreement with the United States, I stated discussing security agreement with the United States. We have been raising our concerns with our counterparts.

Afghan sovereignty, the security of the Afghan people, and the safety of the Afghan homes, as well as respecting Afghan people's honor and culture, and the clear definition of terror, are the issues we have been discussing during the past two days with His Excellency the Secretary of State. And we had long and deep discussions about these issues. And I am very happy, and I can tell you that we received some guarantees and we have written guarantees especially about the definition of invasion or attack. And we will, later on, share this with our media. I don't know whether we can share this with you before Jirga or not, but we will definitely share it with you.

With regards to whether these guarantees will be implemented in practical or not, it is natural that the Afghan people (inaudible) and will move forward. Because we have a past, and we learn from

our past. For the Afghan Government is going to seriously go forward, and will carefully go forward, and there is going to be no room for violation, including United States.

If they want to be partner with us, this partnership must completely guarantee sovereignty and security of Afghanistan. And we receive this through our document, but the rest will be up to the Afghan Government and our friends, and in order to build on this, based on mutual respect and friendship. And it's for their interests, too.

Mr. Lavrov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian – he had some statements that Syrian extremist groups – or in part of Afghanistan that are out of control of the Afghan Government, and they received training chemical – how to use chemical weapon. And this is against Afghanistan, and this is against our well-being. The Afghan Government will take action against this, and our ally – we will also have some questions for our allies who are here with us so that we can find answers for these concerns.

They have to leave, and we are also leaving. We will have more discussions tomorrow. His Excellency the Secretary has to leave because he has been for the past two days. You have important questions, but we will meet next time.

SECRETARY KERRY: I have to get on the plane. And I apologize because we would like to stay longer. I just want to say that I agree with what the President said with respect to sovereignty. We will work at that because we believe we have defined in this agreement. And we're feeling very positive and excited about the possibilities from this agreement.

Final comment, Mr. President: Tonight, the Boston Red Sox – do you know who they are?

PRESIDENT KARZAI: Yes.

SECRETARY KERRY: It's a baseball team.

PRESIDENT KARZAI: It's a baseball team.

SECRETARY KERRY: They're going to play for the American League Championship in Boston, and we want some of your cricket and soccer team luck to go with me, okay?

PRESIDENT KARZAI: Wish you all the best of luck there.

SECRETARY KERRY: No, wish them, the Boston Red Sox.

PRESIDENT KARZAI: Well, they're your team, I believe. (Laughter.)

SECRETARY KERRY: My team. (Laughter.) Thank you.

5. United States Reduces Some Military Assistance to Egypt (10-10-2013)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States will reduce delivery of some military and cash assistance to Egypt pending “credible progress” toward an inclusive, democratically elected civilian government with free and fair elections, U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki says.

“As a result of the review directed by President Obama, we have decided to maintain our relationship with the Egyptian government, while recalibrating our assistance to Egypt to best advance our interests,” Psaki said in a prepared statement.

Secretary of State John Kerry addressed the change in military assistance while traveling in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 10. Kerry told journalists that the United States has been having constant conversations regarding the way forward in Egypt and that the interim government fully understands the U.S. commitment to the success of the Egyptian government. “And by no means is this a withdrawal from our relationship or severing of our serious commitment to helping the government meet those goals,” Kerry added.

“In addition, we’re going to continue to support areas that directly benefit the Egyptian people — education, private sector development,” he added.

“We want to make sure that the road map results in a constitution that recognizes universal human rights, that respects minorities, that brings people to the table in an inclusive way, and ultimately results in free and fair elections,” Kerry said.

In his discussions with the interim government, Kerry said, the Egyptian leaders have insisted that is exactly the road map they are on and intend to achieve. He added that the United States is holding back a certain amount of assistance that is not relevant to the immediate needs of the government or for security.

The reduction in some assistance follows the ouster of President Mohamed Morsy in July and a crackdown on several political groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood.

The United States is withholding delivery of four F-16 fighter jet aircraft, tank kits for the M1A1 main battle tank, Harpoon anti-ship missiles and 10 Apache attack helicopters, a senior U.S. administration official said at an October 9 background briefing in Washington. The United States also is postponing the joint U.S.-Egyptian military exercise Bright Star. A senior U.S. official said the amount of the cash transfer, which is direct budget support to the Egyptian government, that is being withheld is \$260 million.

“With respect to security, with respect to the Sinai Peninsula, with respect to the Arab-Israeli peace process, and with respect to the security needs of the region, we are continuing to provide assistance because it’s in our interest as well as theirs and our friends in the region to do so,” Kerry said.

Kerry also said the United States will continue to provide the Egyptian armed forces with spare and replacement parts and related services for some programs important to continuing military education and training.

Psaki said that the United States continues to support a democratic transition in Egypt and opposes violence as a means of resolving differences.

U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel spoke by telephone with Egypt’s defense minister, General Abdel Fattah Said el-Sisi, a career military officer who is a U.S.-trained infantry officer and a graduate of the U.S. Army War College, for 40 minutes October 9 to discuss the U.S. decision, a senior U.S. official said at the briefing. He added that Hagel and el-Sisi have spoken more than 20 times in the last several months, which underscores the importance the United States places on the relationship with Egypt.

“Secretary Hagel emphasized how important the U.S.-Egypt relationship was to the stability and security for Egypt, but for the United States as well and the broader Middle East,” the senior official said. Hagel also made the point that the United States is continuing to provide assistance on the

issues that advance both nations' vital security objectives, which include countering terrorism and nuclear proliferation, border security, ensuring security in the Sinai, working for peace with Israel and continuing U.S. military assistance, the senior official said.

Hagel and el-Sisi agreed to continue talking often, working together to strengthen the U.S.-Egyptian relationship and taking steps needed to resume the military assistance that has been withheld, the official added.

“They also discussed the importance of Egypt continuing to take steps on the political road map, with the goal of an inclusive, representative democracy,” the senior official said. “And Minister el-Sisi reaffirmed that commitment, both the commitment to the security of the American facilities in Egypt, Americans, as well as taking steps along the political road map.”

6. State Dept. on Chemical Weapon Inspections in Syria (10-10-2013)

U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, October 9, 2013

QUESTION TAKEN AT THE OCTOBER 9, 2013 DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Director General's Briefing to the Press

Question: The DG of the OPCW said inspectors are to visit 20 sites that the Syrians declared, but the U.S. has said that there are at least 45 sites – have Syrians not declared all of their sites, or are we counting differently? If we are only visiting fewer than half of the sites, how can we characterize this as an “encouraging” start?

Answer: According to the September 27 OPCW Executive Council Decision, the OPCW will visit all declared sites within 30 days of adoption of the Executive Council Decision (October 27). The same decision and UN Security Council Resolution 2118 require that Syria permit the OPCW unfettered, immediate access to all other sites of interest. Syria's initial declaration of its chemical weapons holdings and facilities required under Article III of the Chemical Weapons Convention is due to the OPCW on October 27, pursuant to the OPCW Executive Council Decision.

We will continue to assess the completeness and accuracy of Syria's disclosures to the OPCW. As the Syrian disclosure to the OPCW has not been released to the public by the OPCW, we will not at this time discuss its details or our assessment of it.

The fact that just a month ago the Syrian regime did not even acknowledge it had chemical weapons, and now inspectors are not only on the ground but they are overseeing the initial stages of destruction, is a step forward. However, there is more work to be done, and the international community will be paying close attention to whether the Syrian regime is abiding by all of its obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 2118 and the OPCW Executive Council Decision. It's critical that Syria's declaration of its chemical weapons holdings and facilities be complete.

7. U.S. Envoy at OSCE on Afghanistan Issues After 2014 (10-09-2013)

52nd Joint Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-Operation and the Permanent Council

By Deputy Chief of Mission Gary Robbins to the Permanent Council, Vienna

Challenges Linked to Afghanistan after 2014

The United States warmly welcomes Under Secretary General of the United Nations Fedotov, Ambassador Kubiš, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Afghanistan, and Ambassador Pesko, Director of the Office of the Secretary General to this special joint meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation and the Permanent Council. We thank you for your thoughtful and comprehensive presentations today on the challenges and opportunities facing Afghanistan and the OSCE region after 2014.

A core OSCE tenet is that shared challenges require a collaborative, comprehensive response. Achieving a stable and prosperous future for Afghanistan is no exception to this principle. In Afghanistan, three defining transitions are currently underway: a political transition, including presidential elections next April, a major security transition with the drawdown of ISAF forces, and an economic transition that could see Afghanistan serve as the bridge between the markets of South and Central Asia. 2014 will be a critical year in all three transitions. An Afghanistan that successfully navigates these transitions has the potential to end the decades-long conflict among its people and to contribute significantly to the entire OSCE region. The OSCE's support for Afghanistan should, likewise, encompass the entire spectrum of comprehensive security.

It is clearly in the interest of every participating State to help Afghanistan overcome the challenges these transitions represent. The OSCE has much to offer in assisting Afghanistan and the region, including improving border management and business practices, countering corruption, promoting democratic values, transparency, and human rights; reducing illicit trafficking; and promoting legitimate trade and economic development. The OSCE's comprehensive security concept, directly linking political-military security to economics, the environment, and human rights and fundamental freedoms, makes it a unique mechanism for the 57 participating States to advance our shared interests in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

We welcome Afghanistan's formal invitation to the OSCE to provide support for the 2014 presidential election. We expect that, as it has in the past, the OSCE will respond positively to this assistance request. This Organization has deployed Election Support Teams (EST) to every national election in Afghanistan since 2004 and has provided a number of recommendations on electoral reform. The United States encourages Afghanistan to implement these recommendations fully.

Since 2007, the OSCE has supported a number of initiatives designed to support Afghanistan and its neighbors. The United States has consistently supported the OSCE's efforts to share its expertise with Afghanistan and the region to build a more stable and democratic Afghanistan. As a platform for cooperation and facilitator of cross-border private sector collaboration and joint ventures, the OSCE is well-positioned to support and advance regional security and stability.

The OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC) in Dushanbe is a key tool in this ongoing effort. As we saw in last month's independent assessment report, the College is providing excellent specialized training for border security agencies from across Central Asia, the wider OSCE region, and Afghanistan. This training has direct relevance for all of the participating States because the development of professional, robust, and transparent border operations in the region adds to our

common security, aids in the prevention of transnational terrorism, and helps to ensure the growth of regional trade that is essential to Afghanistan's economic development.

However, the assessment report also highlighted the sustainability problems facing the BMSC. As an extra-budgetary project reliant on ad-hoc contributions, the College lacks the fiscal certainty needed to make the sort of medium- and long-term plans that any educational institution needs to maximize its effectiveness. In order to give the College the secure financial footing necessary to continue its vital support for Afghanistan, last year the OSCE Office in Tajikistan requested that the OSCE fully fund the BMSC as part of the Unified Budget. To the great misfortune of this Organization, opposition from a very few participating States blocked that request. We should rectify that mistake this year and fully fund the BMSC under the 2014 Unified Budget.

The OSCE Academy in Bishkek is another important part of the OSCE's existing efforts to support Afghanistan. The Academy's master's degree programs for the next generation of leaders for Central Asia and Afghanistan foster the vital people-to-people contacts that will underpin future regional cooperation. Its newly proposed Afghanistan Security Research Center will provide vital information on the security linkages between Afghanistan and its neighbors in Central Asia.

We encourage the OSCE to align its ongoing efforts on Afghanistan closely with the priorities identified by the region through the "Heart of Asia" process. The OSCE has unique expertise to apply to the action plans of the six confidence building measures working groups and can serve as an important supporting partner organization for the Heart of Asia process as we generate closer ties and enhance our collaborative efforts.

We remain committed to the New Silk Road vision as a strategic framework for the international community's ongoing engagement in the region, because we believe that the development of trade and transport corridors connecting Central and South Asia through Afghanistan has the greatest potential to transform regional relationships and promote regional stability. Regional governments have made notable progress toward establishing a more integrated market, and the United States will continue to support those countries that embrace connectivity and collaboration.

The OSCE operates important programs designed to facilitate legitimate trade between Afghanistan and its neighbors by building capacity and developing relationships between Central Asian and Afghan businesses, notably by empowering and engaging women entrepreneurs. Programs like these show that the OSCE can and should play a role in building the New Silk Road.

We fully support the Chairmanship's proposal to have a Declaration of Support for Afghanistan at the Ministerial Council in Kyiv. This Declaration should emphasize the multi-dimensional nature of the support the OSCE can provide. It should also focus on our shared goal of helping Afghanistan become fully stable and secure.

The United States is clear-eyed about the challenges that exist in Afghanistan and the wider region. But we also see clearly the progress made, as well as the virtually unlimited potential for advancement through greater regional cooperation. We remain committed to supporting stability in Afghanistan and to augmenting the regional relationships that will help make this possible. In this regard, the United States remains prepared to conclude a Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) that supports the shared objectives of both our countries. We believe that the benefits the BSA will deliver to Afghanistan – the partnership that it will cement – are clear and significant.

The United States considers good relations between neighbors a vital indication that our shared objective of cooperative and indivisible security is being realized. In that regard, we call on all

participating States and Partners for Cooperation to redouble their efforts to support the OSCE's response to assistance requests from the Afghan government, and we welcome the opportunity to collaborate more closely with all our partners.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8. State's Gottemoeller at U.N. Session on Nuclear Disarmament (10-09-2013)

United States Mission to the United Nations

Statement by Rose E. Gottemoeller, Acting Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, at the 68th UNGA First Committee General Debate

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Congratulations, Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi, on your election as Chair of the First Committee during its 68th session. We pledge to support your leadership and the work of this committee. We look forward to a productive session.

This is the fourth year in a row that I have spoken to the UNGA First Committee on behalf of the United States. I look back to 2009 and I am proud of all we have accomplished. That said, we have a long path in front of us.

The conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons do not yet exist, but together we are completely capable of creating these conditions. I am sure of this, because of the examples of our predecessors.

As you all may know, tomorrow is the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT). This groundbreaking Treaty went from a seemingly unattainable goal on the horizon to an international law on the books within a year of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Perhaps it was those dark days that helped solidify U.S. President Kennedy's view that it was possible – in fact, imperative – that we work to address nuclear dangers through multilateral diplomacy.

“Peace need not be impracticable,” he said, “and war need not be inevitable. By defining our goal more clearly -- by making it seem more manageable and less remote -- we can help all people to see it, to draw hope from it and to move irresistibly towards it.”

Mr. Chairman, that idea should be our touchstone as we move forward with the Committee's work. If our predecessors could accomplish a Treaty like the LTBT in the midst of the Cold War, surely we can find ways to work on further arms reductions, increased transparency, banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and more.

Over the last fifty years, we have had many unprecedented successes. We have gone from the brink of nuclear war to successful strategic reduction treaties – the latest of which will bring us by 2018 to the lowest number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons since the 1950s.

We have continued to limit nuclear explosive testing over the years through treaties, including the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT) that prohibited the United States and the Soviet Union from conducting a nuclear explosive test in excess of 150 kilotons. Before the TTBT entered into force, some voiced concerns that the parties had different ways to measure explosive yields. To deal with this problem, the United States and the Soviet Union undertook an unprecedented step in transparency and confidence-building. They invited each other to their respective nuclear test sites to observe a nuclear test and use their preferred methods for measuring explosive yields as they applied to the TTBT. That event, known as the Joint Verification Experiment, happened 25 years

ago and it paved the way for subsequent negotiations of new verification protocols for both the TTBT and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty (PNET). Our joint work would ultimately help the international community negotiate a total ban on nuclear explosive testing, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

This year also marks a significant nonproliferation accomplishment: the 1993 United States-Russian Federation Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) Purchase Agreement will reach a major milestone with the final delivery of low enriched uranium (LEU) derived from downblending 500 metric tons of Russian weapons origin HEU. The LEU that results from this downblending process is delivered to the United States, fabricated into nuclear fuel, and used by nearly all U.S. nuclear power plants to generate approximately half of the nuclear energy in the United States. Approximately 20,000 nuclear warheads have been eliminated under this unique government-industry partnership. Over the past 15 years, nuclear fuel from this source has accounted for approximately 10% of all electricity produced in the United States.

We expect to meet with our Russian partners this November to observe the loading in St. Petersburg of the final containers of LEU downblended under the Agreement, and we will meet again in the United States when that ship delivers this important cargo in December. We look forward to jointly celebrating this historic achievement.

Another success that flies under the radar is the Open Skies Treaty. It just marked its 1000th completed mission in August. It is a great example of a Euro-Atlantic transparency and confidence building measure, and it has proven itself as a valuable arms control monitoring tool, for both strategic and conventional purposes.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, the Obama Administration, working with international partners, has made many of its own significant achievements in nonproliferation and disarmament: entry into force of the New START Treaty, the launching of the Nuclear Security Summit process, an agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation to each verifiably dispose of 34 tons of weapons grade plutonium, and more recently, signature of an agreement between the United States and Russia on threat reduction that reinforces our longstanding partnership on nonproliferation.

But it is not enough: the United States and Russian Federation still possess over ninety percent of the nuclear weapons in the world, and it is time we move beyond Cold War postures.

That is why in June, the President announced in Berlin that we would pursue further reductions of deployed strategic nuclear weapons. This decision flowed from the Administration's extensive analysis of the current strategic environment and deterrence requirements. That analysis confirmed that the United States can ensure its security and that of our allies, and maintain a strong and credible strategic deterrent, while reducing our deployed strategic nuclear weapons by up to one-third below the level established by the New START Treaty. The President said on that occasion, "I intend to seek negotiated cuts with Russia to move beyond Cold War postures." Toward that end, we will pursue a treaty with the Russian Federation.

We are also making sure our lines of communication on strategic issues are solid. On Monday in Bali, U.S. Secretary of State Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov signed a new agreement to strengthen the connection between our Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers (NRRCs). Today's NRRC-to-NRRC relationship and communications link continue to provide vital transparency in strategic and conventional forces, facilitate verification of arms control treaties and agreements, and support strategic stability. Actually, we just passed a significant milestone -- the two Centers have now exchanged over five thousand New START Treaty notifications since its entry into force, which provide us day-to-day updates on the status of each others' nuclear forces. These are joined by the

97 on-site inspections that we have now conducted under New START, which give us even more insights into each others' nuclear forces, thus enhancing predictability for both countries.

We are also working with the other Nuclear Weapons States (P5) on disarmament-related issues to support implementation of the NPT and the 2010 NPT Action Plan. The P5 have now had four official conferences, with China hosting the fifth meeting next year. But we are not just meeting; through dialogue at the political level and concrete work at the expert level, our engagement has moved from concepts to concrete actions.

For example, P5 experts are meeting to address issues related to the CTBT, especially those relating to the On-Site Inspection (OSI) element of the CTBT's verification regime and to the OSI Integrated Field Exercise to be conducted in Jordan in 2014. The objective of this effort is to define and engage in technical collaborative work based on our unique expertise with past nuclear explosive tests.

In the broader multilateral context, the United States continues to hold to its long-standing position calling for the immediate commencement of long delayed negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). This treaty is the obvious next step in multilateral disarmament and it is time to get to the table. We hope that the upcoming UN Group of Governmental Experts on FMCT will provide useful impetus. Another priority for the United States is to continue to build support for the ratification of the CTBT, as affirmed by President Obama this past June. We encourage all Annex 2 nations to join us in this pursuit.

Mr. Chairman, we will have a lot of things to discuss and debate this session, from cyber and space security to conventional arms control, from humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons to a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction. It is critical that we continue our work together. Two weeks ago, the international community reached a landmark with UN Security Council Resolution 2118 and the Executive Council decision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Together, they enable a strong international partnership to eliminate chemical weapons from Syria and end this threat to the Syrian people.

And elsewhere, we should be cautious, but cognizant of potentially historic opportunities. We must continue our push to bring Iran back into line with its international nuclear obligations. We will also continue to make clear to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) that should it meet its own denuclearization commitments, it too can have an opportunity to reintegrate into the international community. The United States is ready to talk, we are ready to listen, we are ready to work hard, and we hope that every country in this room is ready to join us.

It is no secret there are issues on which we disagree. This does not mean that we stop trying to move ahead in a step-by-step fashion. Even in the darkest days of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union found it in our mutual interest to work together on reducing the nuclear threat. Of course, today, this is not just the responsibility of the United States and Russia. All states can and must contribute to the conditions for disarmament, as well as nonproliferation; they are two sides of the same coin.

Mr. Chairman, the road toward the next steps might not be familiar and it will require difficult negotiations and complicated diplomacy. Nevertheless, armed with patience and persistence, we can keep our compasses pointed at the one reason we are here: to pursue disarmament in ways that promote mutual security, because it is in our mutual interest.

The United States asks that we all commit ourselves to the hard work ahead.

This statement will be made available on the website of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.