

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
February 21 - 26, 2014

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1. [Deputy Secretary Burns at U.S. Embassy Kiev, Ukraine \(02-26-2014\)](#)

*Remarks by William J. Burns, Deputy Secretary of State
Statement and Q&A at U.S. Embassy Kiev, Ukraine*

DEPUTY SECRETARY BURNS: Good morning. I am delighted to be back in Kyiv at this historic moment. President Obama and Secretary Kerry asked me to convey a simple message—a message of deep admiration for the courage and determination of Ukrainians in the face of last week's tragic violence, and a message of strong American support for a stable, democratic, inclusive, and prosperous Ukraine.

I was profoundly moved by my conversations last evening at St. Michael's Cathedral with the medics, religious leaders, civil society activists and protesters who demonstrated for the whole world such bravery and selflessness on the Maidan. Let me repeat my sincerest condolences to the family members and loved ones of all who were injured or lost their lives in pursuit of a more just and democratic Ukraine. Their sacrifices inspire us all, and their selflessness should be a source of strength as Ukrainians seek to heal their society's wounds, renew their democracy, and revive their economy.

I have had extensive meetings over the past two days with a wide range of Ukrainian leaders, including Speaker Turchynov, Mr. Yatsenuk, Mr. Klychko, Mr. Tyahanybok, Mr. Poroshenko, Mr. Tihipko, and former Prime Minister Tymoshenko. I also met with Lady Ashton, the EU High Representative, and UN Special Envoy Robert Serry, with whom we share a strong interest in supporting Ukraine on its democratic path.

In all my meetings, I emphasized the urgent importance of the Rada's efforts to form a multi-party, technical government that represents all regions of Ukraine. Once that government is formed, we

and our international partners can begin to take immediate steps to help support Ukraine economically and implement the reforms necessary to restore Ukraine's political and economic health. A team of economic specialists from the Department of Treasury and White House accompanied me to Kyiv, and will stay on after my departure today to continue our consultations.

We also look forward to working with the new government and civil society to support free and fair Presidential elections in May. We will continue to firmly support Ukraine's unity and territorial integrity, and healthy relations with all of its neighbors, including Russia.

Again, I am glad to be in Ukraine as it enters a crucial period in its history, a period of considerable challenges, but also great promise. The United States stands with the Ukrainian people at this remarkable moment, and we will do all we can to help them build the strong, sovereign and democratic country they so richly deserve.

QUESTION: So you are talking about the immediate steps for the government in Ukraine. What exactly are you talking about? Is this just the matter of time for the expats to know the situation here? Or is it that you have something planned in mind, to help, to support? Is it just not involving in the political situation? Just economics or is it politics as well?

DEPUTY SECRETARY BURNS: We will provide strong support not only for the revival of the Ukrainian economy, but also support for the political process, which has to begin with the formation of a new multi-party technocratic government. That will help prepare the way for free and fair elections in May, which as you know better than I do, will be very important for the future of this country. We also have an interest in working with our international partners to support the efforts of the new government to try and improve the security situation in this country as well.

On the economic side, the reality is that the new government that will be formed will inherit an economic mess. It's a reality that Ukraine has always had a great deal of economic potential, but it's also a reality that its business climate has never matched that potential. That can change. It is possible to realize that potential. It is possible to fight corruption and all the other impediments to realizing that potential. We recognize that that effort will require and deserves support from the friends of Ukraine like the United States, like the European Union, like the IMF. And we're working quite practically and quite intensively to be ready to provide that support.

The first step, again, is the formation of a new government and an opportunity to sit down with that new government and identify the plans of the new Ukrainian government, their diagnosis of the problem, and then identify specifically what we can do to help. And we'll be ready to do that along with the EU and the IMF because we recognize the urgency of the situation, we recognize what's at stake for Ukraine and for the Ukrainian people.

QUESTION: I'd like to hear more about the groups that are staying behind. What exactly are they doing? Their tasking, their mission and how far you have moved in what you described as an intensive study of Ukraine's problems. I would like to hear more detail about that.

DEPUTY SECRETARY BURNS: Sure. I have one colleague from the Treasury Department and one colleague from the White House staff who have accompanied me here to Kyiv. They have met with the Central Bank Governor, the acting Finance Minister, a range of other bankers and economic specialists here. They are also meeting with colleagues from the EU and IMF to try to coordinate in anticipation of the formation of a new government, so that we can be ready to move ahead once that new government has begun to lay out its plans and its needs. We don't want to waste any time in trying to be prepared. We recognize the magnitude of the challenge and there are a lot of resources the international community can bring to bear in support of the IMF.

QUESTION: As you know Russia has not yet recognized the current government and what do you think the West should do to convince Russia to recognize us and even to give us some help, some aid to clear this mess? And what do you think about Mr. Brzezinski's proposition/suggestion that there should be some kind of federalization of Ukraine?

DEPUTY SECRETARY BURNS: I'll just say a couple of things. First, let me reinforce the American position that we strongly support the choices that Ukrainians make to renew their democracy and revive their economy. We strongly support Ukraine's territorial integrity and its unity. That is deeply in the interest not just of Ukrainians, but in our view, of the entire international community, including Russia. And so we hope over time to build on a common interest in a stable, prosperous Ukraine. I recognize all the challenges that lie ahead. But I do have considerable faith in the capacity of Ukrainians to make the right choices. And certainly, as they do they can count on the strong and continued support of the United States.

QUESTION: There is evidence in the Ukrainian media and from observers of Russian military equipment in Crimea what do you think about those reports and evidence And how far is the United States prepared to go to prevent any military intervention or any military "game" in this context?

DEPUTY SECRETARY BURNS: All that I would stress is what I said before, and that is that the United States strongly supports the unity and the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Separatism of the sort that you've seen some speculation about in recent days is not in Ukraine's interest and it's not in anybody's interest; and the United States will continue to reinforce that very firm position.

QUESTION: In what way, do you think Ukraine establishes this good, healthy relationship with Russia? You know it is quite hard for us to have relations with Russia on an every-day basis. What other dangerous situations do you see for Ukraine?

DEPUTY SECRETARY BURNS: On the first part of your question, I don't underestimate the challenges ahead. But objectively, it seems to me to be very much in the interests of both Ukraine and Russia to have a healthy economic relationship, and also over time to build a stable and healthy political relationship. That's never easy. On the broader question on what kinds of challenges Ukraine faces right now, you all know them far better than I do, you live them. There are obviously economic challenges. And there are bigger political and social challenges. There's going to be a challenge to good leadership in Ukraine, to be able to reach out to people across this country, whether East or West, North and South, and help heal the wounds of recent weeks and months. That's also never easy, especially after the emotion and the loss that people have suffered. But that's what I meant by drawing inspiration from the selflessness of the people on the Maidan, to try to put the interests of the country above personal rivalries or political ambitions.

QUESTION: My first question, did you discuss with any of the Ukrainian high-ranking officials who you met, the issue of the possible NATO membership perspective for Ukraine in the future. Was this issue raised in the discussions and talks that you had? And my second question, you mentioned that now the United States and the EU are standing hand in hand in unity with respect to Ukraine. Don't you think that now it's a time to do everything possible to promote the idea of EU membership for Ukraine, because like now it's a bigger opportunity to do that, and we don't have much time? What do you think about it?

DEPUTY SECRETARY BURNS: We did not discuss the first issue, at least in the meetings that I've had over the last day and a half. And on the second issue, we've been strongly in favor of the choices that Ukrainians have made in the past and will continue to make in the future, the interests

that Ukrainians have in a European future. The pace of that and the mechanics of that are obviously up to Ukrainians and to the European Union. But the United States certainly continues to be strongly supportive of that choice.

INFORMATION OFFICER: That's all the time we have.

QUESTION: Do you know where our President is?

DEPUTY SECRETARY BURNS: I don't, I don't have any more light to shed on that this morning.

QUESTION: Did this (inaudible) ever come up in the conversations with the leaders?

DEPUTY SECRETARY BURNS: A general conversation about it, but I as I said I don't have any more light to shed on it this morning.

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2. Dempsey, U.S. Leaders Discuss Obama's Afghanistan Decision (02-26-2014)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan, Feb. 26, 2014 – The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff met with U.S. leaders here today to ensure they understood what President Barack Obama's decision on Afghanistan is and what it is not.

White House officials said yesterday that Obama has directed the Defense Department to begin contingency planning for the possibility of a full withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan by the end of the year if no signed bilateral security agreement is in place for a post-2014 U.S. military presence there.

Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey told military leaders here that yesterday's announcement was direction from the commander in chief for the military to plan for other options in Afghanistan.

The president's decision was driven by Afghan President Hamid Karzai's refusal to sign the bilateral security agreement his government negotiated with the United States. The agreement would give U.S. and ultimately NATO nations the legal basis for remaining in Afghanistan after the current mandate expires at the end of this year.

NATO is planning a regional approach for Operation Resolute Support in Afghanistan that would have between 8,000 and 12,000 service members in the country after this year.

"What we were directed to do yesterday was to look at other options, to include completely retrograding, if we get to a point where we don't have a bilateral security agreement," Dempsey said during an interview with reporters traveling with him.

That's what it is, the chairman said. "What it is not is a fait accompli that we are going to zero," he added.

"The second thing I wanted everybody to know is we've got a lot of work to do in 2014, and we can't let 2015 distract us from 2014," Dempsey said.

American military leaders in Afghanistan were not surprised by the president's direction, the general said, and they understand the "physics" behind the decision.

Dempsey said the leaders talked about "campaign simultaneity," meaning they have to keep pressure on al-Qaida, the Haqqani network and the Taliban. They also must continue to build Afghan national security forces and continue to retrograde personnel and equipment.

Dempsey said he has spoken to Afghan officials since President Obama's announcement yesterday. "They all expressed a certain level of anxiety about the possibility that there would be no BSA," the chairman said. "They all encouraged me to remain committed to a BSA and to an enduring presence, and they all assured me they are doing everything they can to ensure a BSA."

Dempsey said the most important announcement in the past 12 years was the announcement by the loya jirga, a national council of tribal and community leaders, in November that they overwhelmingly supported U.S. presence and partnership beyond 2014.

"That's the message that I continue to reinforce," the chairman said. "Diplomatic engagement among leaders is diplomatic engagement among leaders. It's the loya jirga we ought to listen to."

Military leaders need to do as much as possible to preserve decision space for elected leaders, Dempsey said, and this includes those leaders of coalition nations.

"As we look at our retrograde plans, we have a pretty good understanding at what pace they must progress if it became necessary to empty the theater by the end of the year," the general said. "We are not anywhere near the point where we could not empty the theater. The decision point on going below Resolute Support levels is well into the summer."

This would be difficult, he said, "but from the U.S. military perspective, the decision can wait until after the elections." Afghanistan's elections are scheduled in April.

Karzai's refusal to sign the agreement is having the effect of encouraging the enemy, and has a detrimental effect on Afghan security force partners, Dempsey said. Afghan forces "want to have a bit of certainty in their future, as you would expect them to," he added. "They are anxious about the fact that we haven't achieved the BSA yet."

The delay will affect coalition forces in different ways. "The United States can react even if this is a very late decision," the chairman said. "That's not true of all 44 nations in the coalition. Each has a different political calendar, each has a different budget calendar, and each will have a different challenge the longer this issue is delayed."

U.S. leaders are focused like a laser beam on helping the Afghans secure the upcoming elections, the chairman said. Of the 7,765 polling sites in Afghanistan, more than 90 percent are rated green, meaning the security provisions are in place, polling materials are available, the logistics are planned, and movement is coordinated. "All the things that will make this a successful election are in place," Dempsey said.

With the elections just over a month away, the Afghans are making progress across the spectrum of things that need to happen, the chairman said. For example, the Afghans needed 13,000 women to search voters entering polling places. Many felt the government would not meet this number, but today 12,000 have been lined up.

“The conditions are set for this to be a far more credible, safe election than was the election in 2009,” Dempsey said. “In 2009, the Afghan security forces numbered approximately 85,000, and today they are about 355,000.”

Biographies:

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[3. Syrian Crisis Is Humanitarian, Regional, Economic, U.S. Says \(02-24-2014\)](#)

By Charlene Porter
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is delivering assistance to relieve the Syrian humanitarian crisis with “every means available,” according to a State Department official who outlined U.S. objectives to address the regional dilemma at a Washington forum February 21.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration Kelly Clements described the region as a “highly insecure environment” where aid obstruction has occurred, assistance workers have been targeted and medical facilities attacked.

The U.N. Security Council voted February 22 to increase humanitarian aid access and demanded that Syrian authorities allow “rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access.” The resolution also called for a cessation of attacks on civilians and an end to the use of weapons in populated areas.

An estimated 9.3 million people in the region — 6.5 million still in Syria — are affected by the violence and need assistance, according to estimates compiled by international humanitarian agencies.

U.S. policymakers regard the Syrian civil war and the resulting impact on the region not just as a humanitarian crisis, but as a regional stability crisis in which economic output diminishes, people suffer and development progress regresses in some parts of the region. In Syria, notably, Clements said the nation’s development has lost 35 years of progress in three years of civil war.

“We’re really trying to bring all the spigots of U.S. government support” to the regional crisis, Clements said. Policymakers are also hoping to devise ways to help Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt, the principal regional hosts of 2.4 million Syrians who have fled their homeland.

Clements said they are looking for strategies to help ease impacts on health, education and employment with a focus on particularly affected populations, such as children and vulnerable women.

The U.S. government has invested more than \$1.7 billion in relieving the Syrian humanitarian crisis since it began.

Antoine Chedid, Lebanon's ambassador to the United States, also participated in the discussion at the Brookings Institution where Clements spoke. Hosting more than 900,000 refugees in 1,600 communities, Lebanon has experienced a 30 percent population increase. The situation is becoming an "existential crisis" for a small country with pockets of extreme poverty of its own, he said.

"The impact is deep, dangerous and threatens to unravel the country economically, politically and socially," Chedid said. While acknowledging the assistance Lebanon has already received from the United States, he said his nation must receive further international support to continue to provide haven for Syrian refugees.

Chedid further urged the international community to consider a proposal to house Syria's displaced persons in facilities located in a Syrian safe zone.

Clements said the United States is working with the international community to devise long-term solutions for what is not a traditional humanitarian crisis. "Each host country has a different reality," she said, and solutions must be targeted to their needs.

Clements spoke a day after she returned from discussions in Ankara about Turkey's role as a host nation. More than 600,000 Syrians have found refuge there, welcomed by what Clements called "an exceptional government response."

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4. Hagel Outlines Budget Reducing Troop Strength, Force Structure (02-24-2014)

By Nick Simeone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 24, 2014 – Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has proposed cuts in military spending that include further reductions in troop strength and force structure in every military service in the coming year as part of an effort to prioritize U.S. strategic interests in the face of reduced resources after more than a decade of war.

At a Pentagon news conference today detailing President Barack Obama's proposed Pentagon budget for fiscal year 2015, Hagel called the reductions -- including shrinking the Army to its smallest size since before World War II and eliminating an entire fleet of Air Force fighter planes -- "difficult choices" that will change defense institutions for years to come, but designed to leave the military capable of fulfilling U.S. defense strategy and defending the homeland against strategic threats.

Under a Pentagon budget that will shrink by more than \$75 billion over the next two years -- with deeper cuts expected if sequestration returns in fiscal year 2016 -- Hagel and other senior defense and military officials acknowledged that some of the budget choices will create additional risks in certain areas.

Some of that risk, Hagel said, is associated with a sharp drawdown in the size of the Army, which the proposed budget calls for reducing to as low as 440,000 active duty soldiers from the current size of 520,000, while ensuring the force remains well trained and equipped.

The cuts assume the United States no longer becomes involved in large, prolonged stability operations overseas on the scale of Iraq and Afghanistan. "An Army of this size is larger than required to meet the demands of our defense strategy," Hagel said. "It is also larger than we can afford to modernize and keep ready." But he said the smaller force still would be capable of decisively defeating aggression in one major war "while also defending the homeland and supporting air and naval forces engaged in another theater against an adversary."

The budget request calls for special operations forces to grow by nearly 4,000 personnel, bringing the total to 69,700, a reflection of the asymmetrical threats the nation is likely to face in the future, Hagel said.

The restructuring and downsizing are in line with a two-year budget agreement that the president and Congress worked out in December, which limits defense spending to \$496 billion. But Hagel warned today that if the budget for fiscal year 2016 returns to the steep, automatic spending cuts imposed by sequestration, "we would be gambling that our military will not be required to respond to multiple major contingencies at the same time."

Asked to define that increased risk, a senior Defense Department official expressed it simply. "If the force is smaller, there's less margin for error," the official said. "Let's face it -- things are pretty uncertain out there."

The proposed budget also envisions a 5-percent reduction in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve. "While it is true that reserve units are less expensive when they are not mobilized, our analysis shows that a reserve unit is roughly the same cost as an active duty unit when mobilized and deployed," Hagel said.

In addition, the Army Guard's Apache attack helicopters would be transferred to the active force, while Black Hawk helicopters would be transferred to the National Guard, part of a broader realignment of Army aviation designed to modernize the fleet and increase capability.

Within the Air Force, the defense budget calls for saving \$3.5 billion by retiring the A-10 fleet and replacing it with the F-35 by the early 2020s.

"The A-10 is a 40-year old, single-purpose airplane originally designed to kill enemy tanks on a Cold War battlefield," Hagel said. "It cannot survive or operate effectively where there are more advanced aircraft or air defenses." In addition, the service also will retire the 50 year-old U-2 surveillance plane in favor of the unmanned Global Hawk.

Hagel warned that much deeper cuts in Air Force structure and modernization will be necessary if sequestration is not avoided in 2016.

Among other proposals in the budget request:

- The Army will cancel the Ground Combat Vehicle program;
- The Navy would be able to maintain 11 carrier strike groups, but any steep future cuts could require mothballing the aircraft carrier USS George Washington;
- Half of the Navy’s cruiser fleet, 11 ships, will be placed in reduced operating status while they are modernized and given a longer lifespan;
- The Navy will continue buying two destroyers and attack submarines per year;
- The Marine Corps will draw down from about 190,000 to 182,000, but would have to shrink further if sequestration returns;
- An additional 900 Marines will be devoted to securing U.S. embassies; and
- The Defense Department is asking Congress for another round of base closings and realignments in 2017.

Hagel said most of the recommendations in the budget were accepted by senior military officers. Addressing reporters alongside him, Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the spending plan reflects a balancing of the military while ensuring it remains the world’s finest.

“It reflects in real terms how we’re reducing our cost and making sure the force is in the right balance,” Dempsey said.

Dempsey and Hagel will testify on the budget before Congress next week. Lawmakers will have the final say on spending decisions.

“This is the first time in 13 years we will be presenting a budget to Congress that is not a war footing budget,” Hagel noted.

Biographies:

[Chuck Hagel](#)

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5. Remarks on Iran (02-22-2014)

*Remarks by Wendy R. Sherman, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Jerusalem*

UNDER SECRETARY SHERMAN: Good evening. It's wonderful to be here in Israel, to be here in Jerusalem. As you know, I've just come from Vienna, from the P5+1 plus the European Union talks with Iran. And I want to say to everyone here in Israel how valuable our consultations are here, both with government officials, with experts, with opinion leaders, discussions even with the press.

There is only one measure of success of a comprehensive agreement with Iran, and that is if an agreement means that Iran will never obtain a nuclear weapon and that the international community will have assurance in the exclusively peaceful nature of a nuclear program in Iran. That is our objective. We have begun very tough negotiations that will go on through July. We hope to get to a successful end and to a comprehensive agreement at that time. We have set a framework and a timetable for the negotiations.

But this is a very complex negotiation, and I very much look forward to the talks that I will have here in Israel, which I always do before and after each negotiation to get input, ideas, points of view. Sometimes we agree, sometimes we don't agree. But what is critical is to have that input as we move forward to ensure the security of Israel, the security of the United States, and the security of the world.

MS. HARF: I think we have time for just two questions. The first is from Tal Shalev of i24. Go ahead.

QUESTION: Under Secretary Sherman, what will be the main message that you'll be conveying to the Israeli Government and giving the Israeli prime minister's evidence (inaudible) belief in this process? Do you think there's any way you can ease his concerns at this point?

UNDER SECRETARY SHERMAN: What I will say to the officials with whom I meet is that I'm here to listen, to brief, of course, about what happened in some detail in Vienna, but also to listen, to get ideas. And nothing about this comprehensive agreement is about what we believe. It is about what we see, what can be verified, what can be monitored, what are the concrete actions that will give us and the international community confidence in an exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program and that they will not obtain a nuclear weapon. So it is about verify, verify, verify and is about concrete actions and steps that show us that we can meet these objectives.

MS. HARF: And the last question is from Tovah Lazaroff of The Jerusalem Post. Go ahead.

QUESTION: Yes. Hi. Sorry. When you were talking about a peaceful program, one of Israel's concerns, of course, is Iran's ability to continue to enrich uranium. And when you – will Iran be able to continue to enrich uranium as part of a peaceful program? If so, how will you ensure that it won't use that for nuclear weapons? And will you be looking at its civilian – the language for its civilian use to ensure that it can't also turn enriched uranium for civilian purposes into nuclear weapons?

UNDER SECRETARY SHERMAN: As I have said, the objective here is to ensure that Iran cannot obtain a nuclear weapon and that its program is exclusively peaceful. Whether, in fact, Iran will have a domestic enrichment program is part of the negotiations. In the Joint Plan of Action, it was

envisioned that it was possible, that Iran might have a small, discrete enrichment program. But that really depended on what the nature of that was, whether there would be the verification and monitoring that would ensure that it would never have a military dimension to the program, it would be strictly for peaceful purposes.

And indeed, I think what's important for every one to know is that Joint Plan of Action says about a comprehensive agreement that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. So everybody in the room has a veto to make sure that our objectives get met and not just Iran's.

MS. HART: Thank you very much, everyone.

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6. Global Efforts Proving Successful in Suppressing Maritime Piracy (02-21-2014)

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington — Intensive international efforts to suppress maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia are proving to be successful, says Donna Hopkins, the U.S. State Department's coordinator for counterpiracy and maritime security issues.

In the last 20 months, there have been no piracy hijackings off the coast of Somalia, Hopkins told reporters at a February 20 briefing at the Foreign Press Center in Washington.

"This is the lowest rate of attempted hijackings in over six years, and certainly since the peak of the crisis in 2011," Hopkins said. "No ships are currently held hostage by Somali pirates," although there remain at least 49 hostages in captivity whom the international community is working to free.

The remarkable drop in piracy, Hopkins said, is due primarily to proactive counterpiracy operations by many national navies and missions, and better self-protection by commercial ships, including the use of onboard armed security teams.

Also important is better prosecution of this crime, Hopkins said. More than 1,400 pirates and suspected pirates are in courts or in prisons in 21 countries. "Effective prosecution of piracy in the courts of affected states, especially of flag states [states with licensed commercial vessels over which they have jurisdiction], is a very important priority," Hopkins said.

For 2014, the United States has passed the chairmanship of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia to the European Union. Launched in January 2009, the group was established to bring coherence to the many efforts then ongoing to counter the emerging piracy crisis off the coast of Somalia.

Despite recent successes, there is still much work to be done, according to Hopkins.

"The fundamental conditions along the Somali coast have not changed, and if we drop our guard, piracy will return," Hopkins said. "We are all working with the new Somali government in

Mogadishu as they grapple to rebuild their state, but in the meantime, we must not be complacent regarding piracy.”

Hopkins said the United States, along with the international community, is trying to provide alternative forms of employment for people who otherwise would be attracted to the relatively profitable business of piracy. Economic and social development “is part of a much larger strategy for the reconstruction and redevelopment of Somalia,” she said.

Hopkins added that the international community has not forgotten the hostages. “We're tracking them very carefully,” she said. “The United Nations is being very helpful in trying to reach out to deliver medical care when it's possible, to keep track and to help these people to the extent that they can.” In cases where hostages are released, the United Nations helps to repatriate them.

In addition, the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Program, which is funded by the maritime industry and works closely with the United Nations, provides counseling and support to families of hostages as well as long-term care for hostages who are released, Hopkins said.
