

**INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE**  
**July 23 - 30, 2014**

1. [Obama on Further Sanctions on Russia Regarding Ukraine \(07-29-2014\)](#)
2. [State's Sherman on Status of Negotiations with Iran \(07-29-2014\)](#)
3. [Kerry on Release of 2013 Religious Freedom Report \(07-28-2014\)](#)
4. [Ambassador Power at U.N. Debate on Peacekeeping Efforts in Africa \(07-28-2014\)](#)
5. [Dempsey: Russian Attacks Change Europe's Security Landscape \(07-25-2014\)](#)
6. [Cape Ray Crew Continues Neutralizing Syrian Chemical Materials \(07-25-2014\)](#)
7. [Ambassador Baer on Extension of OSCE Ukraine Mission \(07-24-2014\)](#)
8. [Regional Approach to ISIL is Needed, Official Tells Senate \(07-24-2014\)](#)
9. [Iraq Must Do Its Heavy Lifting, Pentagon Official Says \(07-23-2014\)](#)

-----

**1. [Obama on Further Sanctions on Russia Regarding Ukraine \(07-29-2014\)](#)**

*Statement by the President on Ukraine*

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, everybody.

In the Netherlands, Malaysia, Australia, and countries around the world, families are still in shock over the sudden and tragic loss of nearly 300 loved ones senselessly killed when their civilian airliner was shot down over territory controlled by Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine. These grieving families and their nations are our friends and our allies. And amid our prayers and our outrage, the United States continues to do everything in our power to help bring home their loved ones, support the international investigation, and make sure justice is done.

Since the shoot-down, however, Russia and its proxies in Ukraine have failed to cooperate with the investigation and to take the opportunity to pursue a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Ukraine. These Russian-backed separatists have continued to interfere in the crash investigation and to tamper with the evidence. They have continued to shoot down Ukrainian aircraft in the region. And because of their actions, scores of Ukrainian civilians continue to die needlessly every day.

Meanwhile, Russia continues to support the separatists and encourage them, and train them, and arm them. Satellite images, along with information we've declassified in recent days, show that forces inside Russia have launched artillery strikes into Ukraine -- another major violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. And we have information that Russia continues to build up its own forces near the Ukrainian border and that more Russian military equipment, including artillery, armored vehicles, and air defense equipment, has been transferred across the border to these separatists.

Since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine, the United States has worked to build a strong international coalition to support Ukraine, its sovereignty, its territorial integrity, its right to determine its own destiny, and to increase the pressure on Russia for actions that have undermined Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and ability to make its own decisions. The core of that coalition is the United States and our European allies.

In recent days, I've continued to coordinate closely with our allies and our partners to ensure a unified response to the shoot-down of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17, and Russia's continued arming of the separatists. And I've spoken several times with Prime Minister Rutte of the Netherlands and Prime Minister Abbott of Australia.

Yesterday, I had a chance to speak with Prime Minister Cameron of the United Kingdom, President Hollande of France, Chancellor Merkel of Germany, and Prime Minister Renzi of Italy. We are united in our view that the situation in Ukraine ought to be resolved diplomatically and that a sovereign, independent Ukraine is no threat to Russian interests. But we've also made it clear, as I have many times, that if Russia continues on its current path, the cost on Russia will continue to grow. And today is a reminder that the United States means what it says. And we will rally the international community in standing up for the rights and freedom of people around the world.

Today, and building on the measures we announced two weeks ago, the United States is imposing new sanctions in key sectors of the Russian economy: energy, arms, and finance. We're blocking the exports of specific goods and technologies to the Russian energy sector. We're expanding our sanctions to more Russian banks and defense companies. And we're formally suspending credit that encourages exports to Russia and financing for economic development projects in Russia.

At the same time, the European Union is joining us in imposing major sanctions on Russia -- its most significant and wide-ranging sanctions to date. In the financial sector, the EU is cutting off certain financing to state-owned banks in Russia. In the energy sector, the EU will stop exporting specific goods and technologies to Russia, which will make it more difficult for Russia to develop its oil resources over the long term. In the defense sector, the EU is prohibiting new arms imports and exports and is halting the export of sensitive technology to Russia's military users.

And because we're closely coordinating our actions with Europe, the sanctions we're announcing today will have an even bigger bite.

Now, Russia's actions in Ukraine and the sanctions that we've already imposed have made a weak Russian economy even weaker. Foreign investors already are increasingly staying away. Even before our actions today, nearly \$100 billion in capital was expected to flee Russia. Russia's energy, financial, and defense sectors are feeling the pain. Projections for Russian economic growth are down to near zero. The major sanctions we're announcing today will continue to ratchet up the pressure on Russia, including the cronies and companies that are supporting Russia's illegal actions in Ukraine.

In other words, today, Russia is once again isolating itself from the international community, setting back decades of genuine progress. And it doesn't have to come to this -- it didn't have to come to this. It does not have to be this way. This is a choice that Russia, and President Putin in particular, has made. There continues to be a better choice -- the choice of de-escalation, the choice of joining the world in a diplomatic solution to this situation, a choice in which Russia recognizes that it can be a good neighbor and trading partner with Ukraine even as Ukraine is also developing ties with Europe and other parts of the world.

I'm going to continue to engage President Putin as well as President Poroshenko and our European partners in pursuit of such a diplomatic solution. But it is important for Russia to understand that, meanwhile, we will continue to support the people of Ukraine, who have elected a new President, who have deepened their ties with Europe and the United States, and that the path for a peaceful resolution to this crisis involves recognizing the sovereignty, the territorial integrity, and the independence of the Ukrainian people.

Today, the people of Ukraine I hope are seeing once again that the United States keeps its word. We're going to continue to lead the international community in our support for the Ukrainian people, and for the peace, the security, and the freedom that they very richly deserve.

Thanks very much.

Q Is this a new Cold War, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it's not a new Cold War. What it is, is a very specific issue related to Russia's unwillingness to recognize that Ukraine can chart its own path.

And I think that if you listen to President Poroshenko, if you listen to the Ukrainian people, they've consistently said they seek good relations with Russia. What they can't accept is Russia arming separatists who are carrying out terribly destructive activities inside of Ukraine, thereby undermining the ability of Ukraine to govern itself peacefully. That's something that no country should have to accept.

And the sooner the Russians recognize that the best chance for them to have influence inside of Ukraine is by being good neighbors and maintaining trade and commerce, rather than trying to dictate what the Ukrainian people can aspire to, rendering Ukraine a vassal state to Russia -- the sooner that President Putin and Russia recognizes that, the sooner we can resolve this crisis in ways that doesn't result in the tragic loss of life that we've seen in eastern Ukraine.

Q So far sanctions haven't stopped Vladimir Putin. Are sanctions going to be enough? And are you considering lethal aid for Ukraine?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, keep in mind, the issue at this point is not the Ukrainian capacity to outfight separatists. They are better armed than the separatists. The issue is how do we prevent bloodshed in eastern Ukraine. We're trying to avoid that. And the main tool that we have to influence Russian behavior at this point is the impact that it's having on its economy.

The fact that we've seen Europeans who have real, legitimate economic concerns in severing certain ties with Russia stepping up the way they have today I think is an indication of both the waning patience that Europe has with nice words from President Putin that are not matched by actions, but also a recognition as a consequence of what happened with the Malaysian Airlines

flight that it is hard to avoid the spillover of what's happening in Ukraine impacting Europeans across the board.

And so we think that the combination of stronger U.S. and European sanctions is going to have a greater impact on the Russian economy than we've seen so far. Obviously, we can't in the end make President Putin see more clearly. Ultimately that's something that President Putin has to do by -- on his own. But what we can do is make sure that we've increased the costs for actions that I think are not only destructive to Ukraine but ultimately are going to be destructive to Russia, as well.

All right. Guys, I've got to get going.

Related Sites:

[Obama's Teleconference with European Leaders on Ukraine, Middle East](#) (07-28-2014)

[President Obama's Call with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel](#)

[Supporting Our Ukrainian Partners](#) (07-29-2014)

[Treasury Announces More Sanctions on Russian Entities](#) (07-29-2014)

[Russian Troops, Equipment Mass along Ukraine Border](#) (07-28-2014)

---

## **2. State's Sherman on Status of Negotiations with Iran (07-29-2014)**

*Written Statement by Wendy Sherman, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, U.S. Department of State*

### **Status of Negotiations with Iran**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and Senators. I am pleased to be here and appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you the status of negotiations related to Iran's nuclear program.

Although there are many aspects of these deliberations that I will discuss today, the participants have agreed that, to give this process the best chance of success, we will refrain from speaking in public about the specific details of the negotiation. With that caveat, I will be as frank as possible. President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and the entire administration understand how vital a role Congress and this Committee play in shaping U.S. policy towards Iran. We remain committed to regular consultations, to hearing from you, and to sharing ideas. We all have the same goal, which is to make the world a safer place both in the near future and for generations to come.

To that end, we seek to negotiate a comprehensive plan of action that, when implemented, will ensure that Iran cannot acquire a nuclear weapon and that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively peaceful. A good deal will be one that cuts off the various pathways Iran could take to obtain a nuclear weapon: a uranium pathway, through its activities at Natanz and Fordow; a plutonium pathway, through the Arak heavy water reactor; and a covert pathway. It will therefore need to include tight constraints and strict curbs on Iran's program, and enhanced monitoring and transparency measures to ensure that any attempt to break out will be detected as quickly as possible.

In Vienna, two weeks ago, we decided to continue our work towards our goal by extending the terms of the previously-negotiated Joint Plan of Action for four more months -- until November 24. I will have more to say about that decision in a minute, but first let me review how we arrived at this juncture.

### **Rallying the International Community**

In 1968, Iran signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which required it to allow International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections and to develop nuclear power only for peaceful

purposes. However, over the past 20 years, it became apparent that Iran's government had engaged in a variety of undeclared nuclear activities. As detailed in numerous IAEA reports, these activities covered the full spectrum of the nuclear fuel cycle and suggested an intent that was far from peaceful. Iran also built a secret enrichment facility at Fordow and, in Arak, a heavy water reactor ideal for producing weapons-grade plutonium. Meanwhile, Iran was conducting research of a type that could facilitate the eventual construction of a bomb. These actions placed Iran in clear violation of its international nonproliferation obligations.

In 2009, when President Obama took office, he indicated America's willingness to engage directly with Iran to find a diplomatic solution, but Iran failed to respond positively, thus demonstrating clearly that the obstacle to a comprehensive resolution was in Tehran, not in Washington. Working together, the administration and Congress then constructed a much tougher bilateral and multilateral sanctions regime, even as we continued to offer Iran a diplomatic pathway to resolve our concerns about its nuclear program. The international community, having witnessed our decision to give diplomacy a chance, was increasingly supportive, and their efforts to comply with – and amplify – our sanctions have proved crucial in ramping up the pressure on Iran.

In June 2010, the Security Council approved stricter curbs on Iran's nuclear and shipping activities and barred Tehran from purchasing heavy weapons such as attack helicopters and missiles. In July of that year, the European Union (EU) prohibited joint ventures with Iran's petroleum sector and banned the sale of equipment used in natural gas production. In subsequent months, the EU tightened sanctions on banking, energy, and trade; outlawed transactions involving Iran's financial institutions; and embargoed the purchase of Iranian oil.

These stiffer multilateral sanctions were complemented by additional bilateral measures – imposed by the United States and a number of other countries – that targeted Iran's economy in general and its financial and energy industries in particular. The cumulative weight of these restrictions contributed in Iran to more than halving oil exports, rising inflation, a sharp decline in the value of the local currency, and higher unemployment.

Sanctions, however, are a means, not an end. The key question was what impact they would have on Iran's decision makers and whether they would choose to engage.

### **The Joint Plan of Action**

In June 2013, Hassan Rouhani was elected president of the Islamic Republic with a popular mandate to fix the economy, a goal that will only be fully achievable if nuclear-related sanctions are lifted. Last September, a telephone conversation between Presidents Obama and Rouhani – spurred in part by earlier and direct diplomatic contacts at a lower level – set the stage for a restart of formal negotiations between Iran and the P5+1.

On November 24, 2013, after several rounds of intensive negotiations with Iran, we reached consensus on a Joint Plan of Action (JPOA), a mutual set of commitments that halted the advance and even rolled back parts of Iran's nuclear program. The implementation of the JPOA started in January and was originally scheduled to last six months. In that time, Tehran pledged to cap its stockpile of low-enriched uranium. It agreed to stop enriching uranium to 20 percent and to convert or dilute its stockpile of uranium that had already been enriched to that level. It promised not to fuel or install remaining components at the research reactor in Arak. It consented to increase its transparency by providing additional information and managed access to key sites by the IAEA. And it allowed inspectors to have daily access at the Natanz enrichment facility and the underground plant at Fordow. In these past six months, the IAEA has verified that Iran has

complied with its commitments; it has done what it promised to do. In addition, the JPOA has provided time and space to negotiate a more comprehensive, long-term solution by keeping Iran's program from making more progress during that period.

## **Vienna**

Meanwhile, from January to July, the negotiating teams were hard at work in search of a durable and comprehensive settlement. Based primarily in Vienna, our discussions on all issues were serious and exhaustive. Our experts spent hundreds of hours engaged in dialogue about the technical details. We made tangible progress in key areas, including Fordow, Arak, and IAEA access. However, critical gaps still exist on these and a number of other important elements – including the pivotal issue of uranium enrichment capacity – that must be part of a comprehensive plan.

Under the current four month extension, the commitments under the JPOA will remain in effect. And, in fact, Iran has agreed in the time ahead to substantially increase the pace at which it is turning its stockpile of 20 percent enriched uranium oxide into fuel plates, including 25 kilograms over the next four months. That will make it much harder for that material ever to be used for a weapon. Iran will also mix depleted uranium with its inventory of up to two percent enriched uranium. The result is essentially a dilution of approximately three metric tons of material to its natural state and a step further away from the kind of highly enriched uranium that could be employed in a nuclear weapon.

In return, the P5+1 and EU will continue to suspend the narrow group of sanctions that we committed to suspend when the JPOA was negotiated and will allow Iran access to \$2.8 billion dollars of its restricted assets, the four-month prorated amount of the JPOA.

To sum up, under the JPOA, instead of becoming more dangerous over time, Iran's nuclear activities have been more constrained, more closely inspected, and more transparent. This is the first true freeze in Iran's nuclear program in nearly a decade.

Meanwhile, sanctions relief for Iran will continue to be targeted and limited to amounts that will do little, if anything, to heal Iran's deep-seated economic ills. From the perspective of international investors, Iran will remain closed for business. The overall sanctions regime will still be in place. Iran will continue to be cut off from the global financial system. Iran's oil sector will still be negatively affected by sanctions, as will Iran's currency. All told, we have sanctioned nearly 680 Iranian individuals and entities under our Iran sanctions authorities. And as we have demonstrated in the past few months, and throughout the past half dozen years, the Obama Administration will continue to enforce sanctions rigorously and thoroughly.

We will also not hesitate to put pressure on Iran when that is warranted -- whether in relation to the government's abysmal human rights record, its support for terrorism, its hostility towards Israel, or its detention of political prisoners. Engagement on one issue does not require – and will not lead to – silence on others. As I have noted repeatedly, we continue to press Iran to allow U.S. citizens Amir Hekmati and Saeed Abedini to return to their families as soon as possible, and to help us locate Robert Levinson, who went missing in Iran in 2007. We are also concerned about reports of Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian's detention in Iran, along with two other U.S. citizens and the non-U.S. citizen spouse of one of the three. We call on the Iranian government to immediately release Mr. Rezaian and the other three individuals as soon as possible.

Let me emphasize that the decision to extend the nuclear negotiations was taken only after careful thought. Each of the countries represented in Vienna, when weighing both sides of the issue,

believed that it continues to be in our interest to identify a mutually acceptable framework. We did not want to allow impatience to prevent us from doing all we could to contribute to the future security and safety of the Middle East.

### **America's Commitment**

I stress that these negotiations are fully in keeping with the administration's fundamental position. As President Obama has affirmed on numerous occasions, the United States will not allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. That policy was in place prior to this negotiation; it is in place now; and it remains our solemn commitment. Because of the manner in which these negotiations have been structured and the pressure Iran continues to feel, Iran's leaders have a strong and ongoing incentive to reach a comprehensive resolution. If they cannot do that, then we will respond with greater pressure and with greater backing from the international community to do so because of our consistent and good faith efforts to resolve this situation diplomatically.

### **Looking Ahead**

Mr. Chairman, our purpose in entering these negotiations was to test Iran's unambiguously stated and often repeated commitment to an exclusively peaceful nuclear program. Accordingly, we have proposed a number of pathways whose elements would, in fact, give the world confidence that Iran's program is and will continue to be exactly that. As we have said from the beginning, this is a negotiation where every element of a resolution must come together in order for any aspect to work. It would not make sense to foreclose one route to a nuclear weapon and leave a second avenue untouched; nor would it be sensible – given Iran's history of illicit conduct – to equate Iran's promises with actions. We need far-reaching and tangible commitments on all fronts. That is the only way.

### **Final Thoughts**

The next four months will allow us to determine whether a diplomatic solution is possible. As we have said many times, from the perspective of the United States, no deal is better than a bad deal. And yet, let us not forget that a comprehensive resolution, if we are able to arrive at one, will benefit people everywhere. It will ease anxiety and enhance security throughout the Middle East. It will reduce the likelihood of a nuclear arms race in the region. It will eliminate the potential threat of nuclear blackmail. It will contribute to the security of Israel, the Gulf states, and our partners throughout the region. Compared to any alternative, it will provide a more comprehensive, lasting, and peaceful solution to the concerns generated by Iran's nuclear activities.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, after our intense deliberations in Vienna these past six months, we believe strongly that it is worth taking additional time to pursue these very complicated and technical negotiations. We wouldn't have agreed to an extension if we did not have an honest expectation that we have a credible path forward; but we would have finished long ago if the task were simple. We still have work to do. We still have time to determine whether we can close the gap between what Iran has said it intends and what it is willing to do.

From the outset, these negotiations have been about a choice for Iran's leaders. Officials in Tehran can agree to the steps necessary to assure the world that their country's nuclear program will be exclusively peaceful, or they can squander a historic opportunity to end Iran's economic and diplomatic isolation and improve the lives of their people.

Meanwhile, all of our options remain, as does our determination to resolve one of the most pressing national security issues for America, for the region, and for the world.

In closing, I want to say to you on behalf of the entire administration that we welcome your thoughts, thank you for giving diplomacy a chance to succeed, respectfully solicit your support, and will be pleased to respond to any questions you might have.

Related Sites:

[Treasury's Cohen on Status of Negotiations with Iran](#)

---

### **3. Kerry on Release of 2013 Religious Freedom Report (07-28-2014)**

*Remarks by Secretary of State John Kerry at the Rollout of the 2013 Report on International Religious Freedom*

SECRETARY KERRY: Good morning, everybody. How are you?

AUDIENCE: Morning.

SECRETARY KERRY: Is everybody good? So I'm going to make – David, I want you out here with me, if you would. Tom, why don't you come out here on the other side. Thank you, sir. I'm going to make a statement, and then I need to rush out of here because I have a phone call literally in about 10 minutes. And I'll leave Tom Malinowski and David here with you. David is a nominee, and therefore not going to be able to say anything at this point in time, but I wanted to have a chance to introduce him to all of you as we release the International Religious Freedom Report, which we believe is a very important statement that underscores a major challenge around the world. It is also a pleasure for me to introduce President Obama's nominee to serve as our Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. And he, when confirmed and if confirmed by the United States Senate, is going to lead our efforts to make progress on these issues of religious freedom across the globe, and that is Rabbi David Saperstein.

Before we begin, I just want to say a very few words quickly about the events in Gaza and what is happening and what we're trying to do. As you all know, I just returned from the Middle East and from Paris, where I had a series of discussions aimed at de-escalating the conflict, ending the rocket and tunnel attacks against Israeli civilians, and easing the suffering of innocent people everywhere – in Gaza, in Israel, in the West Bank. Today, we are continuing to work toward establishing an unconditional humanitarian ceasefire, one that could honor Eid, which begins now, and that will stop the fighting, allow desperately needed food and medicine and other supplies into Gaza, and enable Israel to address the threat which we fully understand and which is real – the threat posed by tunnel attacks – and to be able to do so without having to resort to combat. That is what could come from a ceasefire.

We believe the momentum generated by a humanitarian ceasefire is the best way to be able to begin to negotiate and find out if you can put in place a sustainable ceasefire, one that addresses all of the concerns – the long-term concerns as well; begin to talk about the underlying causes of the conflict in Gaza, though those obviously will not all be resolved in the context of a ceasefire, sustainable ceasefire discussion. But it is important to try to build, to begin, and to move in a process, and that's what we're trying to achieve. That is the only way, ultimately, this conflict is going to be resolved.

Hopefully, if we can make some progress, the people in this region, who deserve peace, can take one step towards that elusive goal by stopping the violence which catches innocents on all sides in the crossfire, and begin to try to build a sustainable way forward.

We also believe that any process to resolve the crisis in Gaza in a lasting and meaningful way must lead to the disarmament of Hamas and all terrorist groups. And we will work closely with Israel and regional partners and the international community in support of this goal.

So we continue to have these discussions. Our discussions over there succeeded in putting a 12-hour humanitarian ceasefire in place. Then, as the rollover time for that occurred, regrettably there were misunderstandings about 12 hours versus 24, 4 hours versus 24. And so we're trying to work hard to see if these issues can be clarified in a way that allow the party – that allow Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian factions, the other countries involved, working through the Egyptian initiative, to be able to find a way to silence the weapons long enough to be able to begin to negotiate.

Now, the cause of peace and understanding is what brings us here today. Sixteen years ago, I was very proud to join my colleagues in the United States Congress in passing the International Religious Freedom Act, the law that mandates this annual State Department report in order to shine a light on the obstacles that so many people face as they seek nothing more than the ability to be able to worship as they wish. And the release of this report here today is a demonstration of the abiding commitment of the American people and the entire U.S. Government to the advancement of freedom of religion worldwide.

Freedom of religion is at the core of who we are as Americans. It's been at the center of our very identify since the pilgrims fled religious persecution and landed in my home state of Massachusetts. And many settled in the city of Salem, which takes its name from the words "salam," "shalom," meaning peace.

But we're reminded that before long, even there – even there in Salem, newly founded in order to get away from religious strife, unfortunately religious persecution arrived on the scene. Women were accused of witchcraft, and some were burned at the stake. Emerging differences between religious leaders in Massachusetts and some congregations were led, as a result of that, to break away and to found new settlements. Rhode Island was founded by people who wandered through the woods leaving Massachusetts and wandered for an entire winter until they broke out on this expanse of water, and they named it Providence, for obvious reasons.

One hundred years after the pilgrims set sail for religious freedom, a Catholic woman was executed on the Boston Common for the crime of praying her rosary. So we approach this issue – I certainly do – very mindful of our past and of how as Americans we have at times had to push and work and struggle to live up fully to the promise of our own founding.

John Winthrop, born in England, but his passionate faith and his disagreements with the Anglican church inspired him to lead a ship full of religious dissidents to come to America to seek freedom of worship. And on the deck of the *Arabella*, he famously said in a sermon that he delivered before they landed, "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us." And they have been ever since then, and they are today.

And though we are obviously far from perfect and we know that, no place has ever welcomed so many different faiths to worship as freely as here in the United States of America. It's something that we are extraordinarily proud of. But freedom of religion is not an American invention; it's a universal value. And it's enshrined in our Constitution and it's engrained in every human heart. The freedom to profess and practice one's faith is the birthright of every human being, and that's what we believe. These rights are properly recognized under international law. The promotion of

international religious freedom is a priority for President Obama and it is a priority for me as Secretary of State.

I am making certain, and I will continue to, that religious freedom remains an integral part of our global diplomatic engagement. The release of this report is an important part of those efforts. This report is a clear-eyed objective look at the state of religious freedom around the world, and when necessary, yes, it does directly shine a light in a way that makes some countries – even some of our friends – uncomfortable. But it does so in order to try to make progress.

Today of all days, we acknowledge a basic truth: Religious freedom is human freedom. And that's why I'm especially proud to be joined today by President Obama's newly-minted nominee as our next Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Rabbi David Saperstein. When it comes to the work of protecting religious freedom, it is safe to say that David Saperstein represents the gold standard. Think about the progress of the last 20 years in elevating this fight, and David has been at the lead every step of the way – serving as the first chair of the U.S. International Religious Freedom Commission, Director of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, and as a member of the White House Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

But David's resume is not just a list of titles or positions. That's why he pushed for the U.S. Government to engage in partnerships with communities that work across faith lines. That's why he's worked to forge deeper partnerships with women of faith networks to advance peace and development. And that's why he's worked to engage American Muslim communities and their groups on global Muslim engagement affairs. And that's why he made it his mission to promote tolerance and mutual understanding in Sudan.

I have witnessed his exceptional skill, his patience, his ability to listen, his sense of humor, and his tenacity as an advocate over the course of my years on Capitol Hill. He is simply one of America's most compelling and committed voices on religion in public life. And I could not be more grateful for his willingness to now serve on the front lines of our global push to expand religious freedom, and I look forward, I hope, to his rapid confirmation by the United States Senate.

One thing is for sure: Rabbi Saperstein is joining an important effort at a very important time. When countries undermine or attack religious freedom, they not only unjustly threaten the people that they target; they also threaten their country's own stability. That's why we, today, add Turkmenistan to the list of Countries of Particular Concern. We have seen reports that people in Turkmenistan are detained, beaten, and tortured because of their religious beliefs. The Government of Turkmenistan has passed religious laws that prohibit people from wearing religious attire in public places or that impose fines for distributing religious literature. And the authorities continue to arrest and imprison Jehovah's Witnesses who are conscientious objectors to military service.

I want to emphasize: This effort isn't about naming countries to lists in order to make us feel somehow that we've spoken the truth. I want our CPC designations to be grounded in plans, action that help to change the reality on the ground and actually help people. That's why we are committed to working with governments as partners to help them ensure full respect for the human rights of all of their citizens.

And when 75 percent of the world's population still lives in countries that don't respect religious freedoms, let me tell you, we have a long journey ahead of us. We have a long way to go when governments kill, detain, or torture people based on a religious belief.

North Korea stands out again in this year's report for its absolute and brutal repression of religious activity. Members of religious minorities are ripped from their families and isolated in political prison camps. They're arrested and beaten, tortured and killed. And we've seen reports that individuals have been arrested for doing nothing more than carrying a Bible.

And North Korea is not alone. Earlier this month, Chinese officials sentenced Christian pastor Zhang Shaojie to 12 years in prison for peaceful advocacy on behalf of his church community. And just last week, I welcomed the release of Meriam Ishag, a mother of two young children who had been imprisoned on charges of apostasy in Sudan. From South Asia to Sahel, governments have silenced members of religious groups with oppressive laws, harsh punishments, and brutal tactics that have no place in the 21st century.

In Iran, U.S. Iranian citizen Pastor Saeed Abedini remains imprisoned. The Iranian authorities sentenced him to eight years behind bars simply because of his religious beliefs. We will continue to call for his release and we will continue to work for it. And make no mistake: We will continue to stand up for religious minority communities under assault and in danger around the world, from Jehovah's Witnesses to Baha'is to Ahmadi Muslims.

So we have a long way to go to safeguard these rights. We also have a long way to go when governments use national security as an excuse to repress members of minority religious groups.

In Russia, the government has used a succession of ever more punitive laws against what they call extremism to justify crude measures against people of faith. In China, authorities harass Christians. They arrest Tibetan Buddhists simply for possessing the Dalai Lama's photograph. And they prevent Uighur Muslims from providing religious education to their children or fasting during Ramadan. And in Uzbekistan, the government continues to imprison its citizens, raid religious gatherings, and confiscate and destroy religious literature. These tactics continue to pose an incredible test. But make no mistake: These tactics will fail the test of history.

One of the troubling trends identified in this year's report is how sectarian violence continues to displace families and devastate communities. Thousands of Rohingya Muslims have been displaced in Burma in the wake of sectarian violence, and tens of thousands more are living in squalid camps without adequate medical care.

In Pakistan, militants killed more than 500 Shia Muslims in sectarian bloodletting and brutally murdered 80 Christians in a single church bombing last year. The Pakistani Government has yet to take adequate steps to bring those responsible to justice.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram has killed more than 1,000 people over the last year alone, and that includes Christian and Muslim religious leaders, individuals who were near – near – churches and mosques, worshipers and bystanders alike. And we have all seen the savagery and incredible brutality of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – the wholesale slaughter of Shia Muslims, the forced conversions of Christians in Mosul, the rape, executions, and use of women and children as human shields.

All of these acts of barbarism underscore the stakes. Just the other week, ISIL declared that any remaining Christians in Mosul must convert, pay a tax, or be executed on the spot. Around the world, repressive governments and extremist groups have been crystal clear about what they stand against. So we have to be equally clear about what we must stand for. We stand for greater freedom, greater tolerance, greater respect for rights of freedom of expression and freedom of conscience.

With this report, I emphasize we are not arrogantly telling people what to believe. We're not telling people how they have to live every day. We're asking for the universal value of tolerance, of the ability of people to have a respect for their own individuality and their own choices. We are asserting a universal principle for tolerance. The Abrahamic faiths – Christianity, Judaism, and Islam – have to find new meaning in the old notion of our shared descent. What really is our common inheritance? What does it mean to be brothers and sisters and to express our beliefs in mutual tolerance and understanding? Answering those questions is our mission today. Edmund Burke once famously said, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." This report is the work of good men and women who are doing something profound in the face of bigotry and injustice.

And let me share with you around the world, some of today's greatest advocates in this cause are doing their part every day, some of them at great risk and in great danger. They are doing it in order to force light into darkness. In Pakistan, following the militant attacks I just mentioned, members of the Muslim community formed human chains around churches to demonstrate solidarity against senseless sectarian violence. In Egypt, Muslim men stood in front of a Catholic church to protect the congregation from attacks. And in London, an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood watch team helped Muslim leaders protect their mosque and prevent future attacks.

There are many, many, many examples of people standing up for this universal value of tolerance and doing so for themselves at great risk. There are many whose names and communities and watch teams we will never know. But they will not receive prizes; they may not ever receive recognition. Their courage goes unremarked, but that makes it all the more remarkable, because they put their lives on the line in face of beatings and imprisonment and even death, in the near certainty that their sacrifice will be anonymous. Believe me, that's the definition of courage.

So while serious challenges to religious freedom remain, I know that the power of the human spirit can and will triumph over them. It is not just up to the rabbis, the bishops, and the imams. It's up to all of us to find the common ground and draw on what must be our common resolve to put our universal commitments into action.

Tom Malinowski will speak further, be prepared to answer any questions, and I'm very grateful to you all for being here for this important report and for allowing me to introduce you to the President's nominee. Thank you.

Related Sites:

[Executive Summary of State Dept.'s 2013 Religious Freedom Report](#)

[2013 International Religious Freedom Report](#)

[Fact Sheet on 2013 International Religious Freedom Report](#)

---

#### **4. Ambassador Power at U.N. Debate on Peacekeeping Efforts in Africa (07-28-2014)**

*Remarks by Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at an Open Debate on Regional Partnerships and Peacekeeping, July 28, 2014*

Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Secretary General, European External Action Service Deputy Secretary-General Popowski, and African Union Ambassador to the United Nations António.

And thank you, Ambassador Gasana for convening and framing today's debate, which could not be more timely.

Rwanda knows of what it speaks. Rwandans understand the importance of getting peacekeeping right, having experienced the catastrophic consequences of it going terribly wrong.

As we meet, regional organizations are playing a more central role in peacekeeping than ever before, particularly in Africa. They have proven swift and nimble in responding to serious crises. They have been willing to take on robust protection mandates and we've seen, in the last 18 months alone, the AU and ECOWAS have deployed to address the urgent burning crises in Mali and the Central African Republic.

When African countries came together in 2002 to form the new African Union, they decided they never wanted to stand by as atrocities were being committed on the continent. They refused to accept the arguments of those who said that such violence was endemic to Africa; that their newly created union lacked the capacity or the authority to stop it; and that it was not in their collective interest to intervene. They knew such atrocities could be stopped, and that they had the power and the responsibility to do so. And so they enshrined a commitment to non-indifference in the very charter establishing their new union. They committed not to turn a blind eye to atrocities.

Not only does the AU have the right to intervene in the face of atrocities, but any member can request an intervention when such horrors occur.

The AU charter gives letter to the growing consensus that neighbors, regions, and the entire international community have a profound stake in the security and stability of countries in conflict. In every region of the world, we've seen that conflicts don't respect borders, especially when they are fueled by groups intent on targeting civilians and sowing terror. And ignoring these conflicts can be devastating, not only for the countries and regions where they occur, but for all of us.

In order for mandates to protect civilians to be effective, they must be enforced. And enforcement is the key to deterrence.

Warlords and militants take notice of peacekeepers' willingness to stand up or to stand by. The failure to uphold the commitment to protect civilians in one mission can undermine the legitimacy of all of the others.

That is part of why it is so troubling that – according to a March report by the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services – UN peacekeeping missions have routinely failed to use force to protect civilians under attack, despite the mandates under which they operate. Of the 507 attacks against civilians that the OIOS reviewed from 2010 to 2013, it found that peacekeeping missions almost never used force to protect civilians under attack.

The Secretary-General has launched a comprehensive review of peacekeeping which needs to tackle this grave challenge head on. It should draw lessons from the leadership of Rwanda, as well as that by other countries like Ethiopia and Nepal, regarding the protection of civilians. Rwanda's troops were among the first boots on the ground when conflicts metastasized in the Central Africa Republic and South Sudan. And it's not just that the Rwandans volunteer for complex and dangerous missions. It's that because of their commitment to protect civilians, the population in countries where the Rwandans serve trust them; troops from other countries who serve alongside them draw strength from their fortitude; and aggressors who would attack civilians fear them.

We recognize the many challenges to making regional and international peacekeeping missions work. The challenge of training and equipping troops; the challenge of airlifting them into theater; and the challenge of maintaining their supply lines once they're there.

So we're investing deeply in regional missions, as well as in the capabilities of troop contributing countries. The United States contributed more than \$500 million to the AU mission in Somalia and \$166 million toward equipment and training for the African contingents deploying to the UN mission in Mali, as well as logistics support to its African-led predecessor. And we are providing up to \$100 million in similar support to the AU-led mission to CAR, MISCA. Our African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program has trained nearly 250,000 peacekeepers from 25 partner countries since 2005.

Our support for regional initiatives is a clear affirmation of our broader commitment to making peacekeeping more effective, as well as to our partnerships with countries that contribute troops to critical missions. Next week, President Obama will meet with African Heads of State at the Africa Leaders Summit in Washington, DC to discuss how the United States can deepen our partnership with countries that commit troops both to UN and regional peacekeeping, and how we can help them address persistent operational challenges along with other partners.

This regional cooperation is in everyone's interest. First and foremost, it is in the interest of civilians threatened by violent conflicts. It is in the interest of the United Nations, because regional peacekeepers often lay the foundation for the UN's multidimensional peacekeeping efforts, and advance the core principles of the UN charter. And it is in the interest of countries that send troops, countries whose stability is enhanced by the investments in training and equipment that come with such interventions – and the stability from having played a role in preventing deadly conflicts from spreading across borders.

Perpetrators who commit atrocities are routinely testing peacekeepers' limits. When the first killings began in Rwanda in the spring of 1994, Romeo Dallaire – the UN force commander there at the time – appealed for reinforcements. He cabled UN headquarters and said that he could do more. He needed more, better trained peacekeepers, he said. He recognized that if he could send a clear message early on, a wholesale massacre might be averted.

Regional organizations have shown that not only can they do more, but they are willing to do more. As they step forward – it is not just the people who they protect who benefit from greater peace and stability, but all of us. We owe it to regional and international peace and security and to the civilians – the many civilians in harm's way right now – to give them our full support.

Thank you.

---

## **5. Dempsey: Russian Attacks Change Europe's Security Landscape (07-25-2014)**

By Claudette Roulo  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

ASPEN, Colo., July 25, 2014 – Russia's decision to fire artillery from within Russia onto Ukrainian military positions transforms the security environment throughout Eastern Europe, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said here yesterday.

"You've got a Russian government that has made the conscious decision to use its military force inside of another sovereign nation to achieve its objectives -- first time, I think, probably, since 1939 or so that that's been the case," Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey said at the Aspen Security Forum.

Russian leader Josef Stalin invaded Poland on Sept. 17, 1939, claiming to be protecting ethnic minorities living there.

The military actions in Ukraine mark a change in the relationship between Europe and Russia, and between the United States and Russia, Dempsey said, though the true meaning of the change isn't yet defined.

Since 2008, the Russian military has increased its capability, its proficiency, and the level of its long-range aviation and air-launch cruise missile testing activities, the chairman said.

"They clearly are on a path to assert themselves differently, not just in Eastern Europe, but in Europe in the main and toward the United States," he said.

The next thing that must happen is to define what these changes mean for NATO, Dempsey said, noting that NATO was created to increase stability and offset Soviet aggression at the time while maintaining a stable Europe.

"And we've been successful at it for 60 years," he added.

Suggestions that the U.S. withdrawals from Iraq and Afghanistan caused the nation to appear weak or unwilling to use force and created an opening for the Russian military actions in Ukraine are without merit, the chairman said.

"I think this is very clearly Russian President Vladimir Putin, the man himself, with a vision for Europe, as he sees it, to what he considers to be an effort to redress grievances that were burdened upon Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union, and also to appeal to ethnic Russian enclaves across Eastern Europe with ... a foreign policy objective, but also a domestic policy objective," Dempsey said. "And he's very aggressive about it, and he's got a playbook that has worked for him now two or three times. And he will continue to use it."

Russia's violations of Ukraine's sovereignty have triggered a rise in nationalism around Europe, the chairman said. "If I have a fear about this," he added, "it's that Putin may actually light a fire that he loses control of."

Dempsey said he believes in keeping an open line of communication with his Russian counterpart, Army Gen. Valery Gerasimov, the chief of the General Staff.

"I think that the Russian military is probably reluctant -- -- you know, this is risky for me to say this, and 10 of them could end up in a gulag tomorrow -- but I think that the Russian military and its leaders that I know are probably somewhat reluctant participants in this form of warfare," he said.

His real concern, the chairman said, is that having this fire in an isolated part of Eastern Europe may not stay in Eastern Europe.

"And I think that's a real risk," he added. "So I am maintaining an open line of communication with my counterpart, and so far, he's doing the same with me."

The United States isn't sitting idly by as these events unfold, the nation's top military officer said. An active process is going on to determine what support can be provided to Ukraine, he said, and the United States is working with its NATO allies to build capability and readiness.

In addition, he said, “we’re looking inside of our own readiness models to look at things we haven’t had to look at for 20 years, frankly, about basing and lines of communication and sea lanes.”

Biographies:

[Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey](#)

Related Sites:

[Video: "DoD News Live" Report](#)

[Special Report: Aspen Security Forum](#)

[DoD News Broadcast Page](#)

[DoDLive Blog](#)

---

## **6. Cape Ray Crew Continues Neutralizing Syrian Chemical Materials (07-25-2014)**

By Amaani Lyle

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, July 25, 2014 – Teams aboard the U.S. ship MV Cape Ray continue to neutralize materials from Syria’s declared chemical stockpile, Pentagon spokesman Army Col. Steve Warren said today.

Warren told reporters the teams had used the installed field deployable hydrolysis system to destroy 411 tons of chemicals as of July 21.

“As of this morning, the crews neutralized over 25 percent of the DF or methylphosphonyl difluoride, which is a sarin precursor,” the colonel said, adding the international Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has verified the amount.

Warren showed reporters an OPCW pie chart indicating two chemical classifications: Category 1 chemicals, which have little or no peaceful use and were removed from Syria for destruction outside of the country, as well as isoproponol, and Category 2, which includes other toxic chemicals and other chemical agents outside of Category 1.

The chart showed that as of July 21, 36.6 percent, or 380.1 of the 1038.5 metric tons of declared Category 1 chemical materials, had been destroyed, as well as 12.4 percent, or 31.5 of 254.17 declared metric tons of Category 2 chemical materials.

Joint teams from the OPCW and the United Nations began securing Syrian chemical sites in early October, and the Syrian government gave up the last of its declared chemical stockpiles June 23. The Cape Ray was modified and deployed to the eastern Mediterranean to dispose of the chemical agents in accordance with terms Syria agreed to late last year.

Related Sites:

[Special Report: Cape Ray](#)

[DoD News Broadcast Page](#)

[DoDLive Blog](#)

---

## **7. Ambassador Baer on Extension of OSCE Ukraine Mission (07-24-2014)**

*By Ambassador Daniel B. Baer to the Permanent Council, Vienna*

### **Interpretative Statement on the Adoption of an Extension of the SMM Mandate**

In connection with the decision to extend the mandate of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1 (A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United States welcomes the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. In so doing, we reaffirm the interpretative statement we made on 21 March, upon adoption of the mandate, under paragraph IV.1 (A) 6 of the Rules of Procedure, and we note that that interpretative statement remains in force. We remind the Permanent Council of the key elements of that statement.

- The United States reaffirms our firm commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.
- We note that that the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine has a mandate to work throughout Ukraine, including in Crimea.
- We note that all participating States must cooperate with the Special Monitoring Mission and should take no actions to obstruct its access to Crimea or any other region of Ukraine.

In addition to recalling those key elements of our interpretative statement – a statement that remains in effect with the renewal of this mandate – we would also like to use this opportunity to offer our gratitude to all monitors, staff, and leadership of the Special Monitoring Mission. Some of the conditions that they have faced have been difficult and at times unacceptable – in particular that monitors of this Mission were kidnapped and held hostage for more than one month. Their kidnapping serves to remind us all of the particular challenges and risks these devoted professionals face as they monitor ongoing actions by the Russian Federation that contravene OSCE principles and commitments in Ukraine. We call upon the Russian Federation to cease providing weapons, financing, and fighters to the separatists. In addition to de-escalating the crisis, those measures will improve the safety in which the SMM monitors should be operating.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and to the Journal of the Day.

Related Statements:

[Ambassador Baer on Detention of Ukrainian Journalist Anton Skiba](#)

---

## **8. Regional Approach to ISIL is Needed, Official Tells Senate (07-24-2014)**

By Terri Moon Cronk  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, July 24, 2014 – When the extremist group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant marched into Mosul, Iraq, whether the Iraqis could defend Baghdad was a critical first question, a senior Defense Department official said today.

Elissa Slotkin, performing the duties of the principal deputy undersecretary of defense for policy, made her remarks before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee.

“One of the early things that we saw as we got on the ground was that there was a stiffening of the Iraqi security forces in and around Baghdad to protect the capital, which we thought was critically important.”

Slotkin told the committee said she did not want to restrict her views and comments just to Iraq during the hearing. “I do believe we have a real regional problem on our hands,” she said.

Jordan has been “very particularly a focus” for the Defense Department, given its border area with Iraq, Slotkin said.

“This is part of the administration's attempt to try and create this counterterrorism partnership fund to shore up, particularly, the neighbors of Iraq and Syria,” she said.

“It is impossible to just look at the ISIL threat at Iraq only, because it's kind of like air in a balloon. You squeeze on one end, and it just goes somewhere else.”

Telling Senate members that the United States has a vital security interest to ensure Iraq and other countries don't become a safe haven for terrorists, Slotkin said it's a regional approach that's needed. “We need a comprehensive approach, outside-in and inside-out,” she said.

Biographies:  
[Elissa Slotkin](#)

Related Sites:  
[State's McGurk at Senate Hearing on Iraq \(07-24-2014\)](#)

---

## **9. Iraq Must Do Its Heavy Lifting, Pentagon Official Says (07-23-2014)**

By Terri Moon Cronk  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, July 23, 2014 – Though the United States must protect its people and is helping Iraq to face the threat posed by the extremist group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, it is up to Iraq to do the heavy lifting, a senior Defense Department official said today.

Elissa Slotkin, performing the duties of the principal deputy undersecretary of defense for policy, told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the United States has a vital national security interest to ensure Iraq and other countries don't become safe havens for terrorists who could threaten the U.S. homeland, its citizens or interests abroad, or its partners and allies.

The immediate goals are to protect American people and property in Iraq, gain a better understanding of how the United States might train, advise and assist Iraqi security forces as necessary, and expand the nation's understanding of ISIL intelligence, Slotkin said.

All three factors are critical, she said, to any future U.S. strategy involving Iraq, and the nation has three measures in the strategy:

-- The United States added forces to protect its people in Iraq. "The safety of U.S. citizens and personnel throughout Iraq is our highest priority," Slotkin said, adding that DoD is meeting all requests from the State Department for extra security for the U.S. Embassy and the airport.

-- Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel ordered the amphibious transport ship USS Mesa Verde into the Arabian Gulf. "Its presence adds to the other naval ships there, such as the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush and provides the president with additional options to protect American citizens and interests," she said.

-- Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets are part of the U.S. ramping-up effort. "We've significantly surged ISR capabilities into Iraq, to over 50 sorties a day, compared to one a month in previous months," Slotkin added.

"We are now capable of around-the-clock coverage of Iraq, and have been focusing particularly on ISIL-controlled territory and around Baghdad," she said.

The small teams of 300 U.S. military advisors in Iraq are assessing and evaluating how the United States might potentially help Iraqi security forces, Slotkin said.

Hagel and Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, received the draft assessment from U.S. Central Command last week, she told the panel.

"Department leaders are taking a deliberate approach and reviewing this lengthy assessment," Slotkin said, adding that the assessments will be used to make recommendations to the president.

"Additional assessment work continues in and around Baghdad with respect to the developing situation on the ground," she added.

Related Sites:

[Visas for Deserving Afghans: Our Moral Responsibility](#) (07-24-2014)

---