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**1. [Amb. Power at U.N. Security Council Debate on Middle East](#) (04-21-215)**

*Remarks by Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at a UN Security Council Debate on the Middle East, April 21, 2015*

Thank you, Minister Judeh; thank you for chairing this session. Your presence testifies to the huge significance of the issues before us.

On April 8th, two Israeli soldiers – a medic and a paramedic – were stabbed in the West Bank by a Palestinian man. On April 20th, a 28-year-old Arab municipal worker was stabbed in Herzliya, north of Jerusalem, by an Israeli who reportedly screamed, “Death to Arabs.”

These are just two of the recent attacks which reflect the persistent and deadly tension between Israelis and Palestinians. It is critically important that leaders urgently reengage in efforts to achieve peace, which is the most effective way to prevent such tension from escalating, as it has too many times before.

The United States remains committed to a two-state solution that results in a secure Israel alongside a sovereign and independent Palestine, and that can bring lasting peace and stability to both

peoples. A two-state solution is the only way for Israel to ensure its future as a Jewish and democratic state. And it is the best path forward for Israel's security, for Palestinian aspirations, and for regional stability.

It is important that both sides refrain from any actions that could further destabilize the situation in the region and undermine the prospects of reaching a two-state solution.

It is good that the parties have reached agreement on the transfer of Palestinian clearance revenues, an important step that will benefit the Palestinian people and help stabilize the situation in the West Bank.

We welcome the arrival of the new UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nikolay Mladenov, who brings with him deep diplomatic experience in the region and has already been meeting with key figures since he arrived on the ground about a week ago. We encourage all sides to work closely with him.

We also strongly support UN efforts to encourage donors to disburse funds as soon as possible to meet the commitments they made in Cairo in October 2014. To support that effort, the United States has disbursed more than 95 percent of our Cairo pledges and provided additional money above our original pledge amount. However, though up to 100,000 Palestinians reportedly remain displaced in Gaza, only a fraction of the funds pledged in Cairo has been released. UN Member States must step up and UN agencies must be able to carry out their operations in Gaza without disruption.

Let me now turn to Syria.

In the weeks since ISIL, with the support of the Nusra Front, advanced on the besieged community of Yarmouk – the already desperate situation of its estimated 18,000 residents, most of them Palestinians, has gotten even worse. People long deprived of food, potable water, medical supplies, and other vital humanitarian support now find themselves trapped between warring parties, which show a callous disregard for the welfare of civilians. Residents have reportedly been barrel-bombed by the regime from the air, and shot at by ISIL and other armed groups from the ground. While thousands appear to have escaped, many thousands are still trapped.

In Tadamoun, a neighborhood bordering Yarmouk, some of those who have managed to escape are sheltering in a school. Last week, a man there said of the Assad regime siege in Yarmouk, “We lived inside a disaster. We were dying there. Two years and six months. No water, no electricity.” Another escapee said, “We got out just as you see us, with nothing else. We ate animals and leaves.” A woman named Fatima stood cradling her baby boy, born less than two weeks earlier in Yarmouk. Fatima told the officials she had fled because she feared her son would die if they did not get out.

Siege is a tactic we see applied across Syria by both the Assad regime and terrorist groups. Last month, Under-Secretary General Amos told this Council that the UN estimates 440,000 civilians are living in besieged areas, meaning most people cannot get out and assistance cannot get in. Some aid groups estimate the total is much higher. In Deir ez-Zour, another besieged city, ISIL has systematically blocked humanitarian access and even cut off the water supply for months at a time, while regime forces have prevented residents from leaving. The Assad regime and the terrorists use the suffering of Syrian civilians as just another tool to advance their position or undermine that of their enemies.

This must stop. All parties have an obligation to protect civilians, and all parties have an obligation under resolution 2165 to enable the immediate and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance directly to people throughout Syria by UN agencies and implementing partners. All civilians who want to leave besieged areas must be allowed to do so safely, without being detained, interrogated, or separated from their families. The Assad regime's assurances count for nothing, so international supervision for any relocation from Yarmouk is necessary, urgently necessary.

We members of the Security Council have an obligation, as well – to ensure that the reported use of chemical weapons is investigated thoroughly and promptly, and that those responsible are held accountable. Since members of this Council adopted resolution 2209 on March 6th, 2015, condemning the use of chlorine as a chemical weapon, we have seen allegations of at least a dozen attacks involving the use of chlorine or other chemical agents.

Last week, Council members heard first-hand from Dr. Tennari, who works in Sarmin's field hospital, which received more than 120 victims of just one of those attacks – so many victims, he said, that they were piled on top of one another on the floor. He told us about how he and his colleagues did everything they could to save three siblings – age 1, 2, and 3 – with the hospital's paltry resources; he told of the doctors and nurses' sense of helplessness as they tried to pump oxygen into the delicate chests of these small children; and he told of his unspeakable grief as he washed their tiny, lifeless bodies.

If we members are appalled upon hearing such accounts – and I do not believe there was a person in that meeting who was not shaken by Dr. Tennari's experience – we must channel our indignation into stopping more attacks like it from occurring.

That begins with the Council enforcing the resolutions it has already adopted, such as 2209 and 2118, which the Assad regime has repeatedly ignored. Ending these attacks also requires countries to stop propping up and arming the regime, and instead use their leverage to help stop Assad from gassing, barrel-bombing, torturing, and starving Syrian civilians.

Countries in the region, and those with influence, must come together to press for a political solution, which is the only way to end this wretched conflict. To that end, we welcome the renewed push by Special Envoy de Mistura to expand ongoing dialogue efforts, and the Secretary-General's robust support for those efforts. As President Obama has said repeatedly, the only viable political solution is one without Assad in power; he has no legitimacy and no role to play in Syria's future. Partnering with Assad will not help us defeat violent extremist groups, it will only make them stronger.

One reason it is so important to reach a political solution is the deeply destabilizing effect the conflict is having on Syria's neighbors, such as Lebanon, where one in four of the country's residents is now a Syrian refugee. Since the influx of refugees began, Lebanon's unemployment has doubled, and its schools have taken to teaching double shifts. The crisis in Syria has also exacerbated Lebanon's security challenges, particularly those posed by violent extremist groups. The Lebanese security and armed forces have played a crucial role in countering these threats and defending the state's authority. We also commend the ongoing effort by UNIFIL and Special Coordinator Kaag to prevent any escalation in hostilities along the Blue Line – an effort made all the more challenging by Hizballah's dangerous actions, such as its acquisition and evident willingness to use weapons in UNIFIL's area of operations.

Resolving the Syria crisis and mitigating the unrivaled suffering caused by the conflict inside Syria and in the neighbors – and Minister Judeh, I thank you for Jordan's generosity in sheltering so many refugees from Syria – resolving this crisis could not be more urgent. Thank you.

## **2. Carter, German Minister Discuss Defense Issues at Pentagon (04-20-2015)**

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, April 20, 2015 – Defense Secretary Ash Carter today met with German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen at the Pentagon, according to a Defense Department statement.

During the 45-minute meeting, the leaders discussed their continuing efforts in NATO and support to Iraq and Afghanistan, according to the statement.

It was Carter's first meeting with the German defense minister, the statement said.

Carter and Minister von der Leyen emphasized the importance of NATO unity against Russian aggression and discussed ways to work together to support NATO reassurance measures, the statement said.

The U.S. defense secretary thanked the minister for Germany's support to Kurdish forces in fighting ISIL, and welcomed Germany's continued leadership and commitment in Afghanistan, according to the statement.

The two leaders expressed their commitment to a strong working relationship and noted that they are looking forward to meeting at upcoming NATO ministerials, the statement said.

Related Sites:

[Readout of Secretary of Defense Ash Carter's Meeting with German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen](#)

[State Department Fact Sheet on Germany](#)

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## **3. Military Exercises Begin in Ukraine, Philippines (04-20-2015)**

By Cheryl Pellerin

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, April 20, 2015 – Military training exercises begin today in Ukraine for Fearless Guardian, and in the Philippines for the 31st iteration of Exercise Balikatan, a Pentagon spokesman said today.

During a briefing with Pentagon reporters, Army Col. Steve Warren said that about 300 Sky Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade, based in Vicenza, Italy, will train members of the Ukraine National Guard at the International Peacekeeping and Security Center in Yavoriv near the Polish border.

The United States has trained at the same center for years with other allies and partners, he added.

“This latest training, which is as valuable in peacetime as it is in times of conflict, is to establish a professional force that protects and defends Ukraine's people and the country's sovereignty,” Warren said.

## **Sky Soldiers**

Three hundred Sky Soldiers will train about 900 Ukrainian national guardsmen during three training rotations, each about two months long, he said.

The small-unit trainers will focus on defensive and civil military operations.

Specific blocks of instruction include medical training, casualty evacuation, counter-unmanned-aerial-vehicle tactics, counter-insurgency training, counter-improvised-explosive-device training, and more, Warren said.

Human rights and use-of-force training also will be conducted, along with common soldier and collective tasks such as individual conduct and law of war, first aid, survival, land navigation, communication, unit operations, and counter-chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear training.

## **Joint Commission Plus Canada**

“The Defense Department will continue to work closely with Ukraine to provide assistance, training and advising support,” Warren said, “including through our U.S.-Ukraine Joint Commission on Defense Cooperation, to Ukraine, over the long term.”

The Joint Commission formed in July 2014, and Canada was an observer at the inaugural meeting in October 2014. Later, Canadian leaders requested an invitation for membership on the Joint Commission.

On Feb. 2, Canada’s Defense Minister Rob Nicholson announced that Canada would join the commission “to better coordinate Canada’s ongoing provision of assistance to the Ukrainian Armed Forces.”

## **Nonlethal Aid to Ukraine**

Warren said the United States also jointly hosts two Partnership for Peace exercises each year in Ukraine, a ground forces peacekeeping exercise called Rapid Trident and a naval exercise called Sea Breeze.

The training in small-unit tactics includes instruction on how to shoot, how to move, how to communicate and other individual soldier skills, Warren added, during which the National Guardsmen use Ukrainian weapons and their own munitions.

“Thus far, we have provided the Ukrainians with nonlethal aid only,” he said, adding that the department delivered 30 Humvees to Kiev in March and will deliver another 300 in the coming months.

The DoD is monitoring events in Ukraine, Warren said, “particularly in Eastern Ukraine where we know Russian forces are contributing to the destabilization and unrest.”

## **Exercise Balikatan**

Also today in the Philippines, U.S. and Philippine forces began the 31st iteration of Exercise Balikatan, Warren said.

The annual bilateral training exercise and humanitarian assistance engagement seeks to improve the readiness of participating U.S. and Philippine forces.

“It is a signature element of our alliance,” Warren said.

Balikatan takes place in the Philippines starting today to April 30, and about 6,000 U.S. personnel will participate this year, he said, noting that 4,100 of the forces will be U.S. Marines.

### **Humanitarian Assistance**

The exercise trains Philippine and U.S. military forces to provide relief and assistance in the event of natural disasters and other crises that endanger public health and safety.

“This training proved invaluable during the relief mission of November 2013 in the wake of super typhoon Haiyan,” Warren said. The typhoon devastated more than 35 provinces in the Philippines and displaced nearly half a million residents.

Military service members from both countries also will conduct combined command-post exercises and field training and live-fire exercises, the colonel said.

Related Sites:

[Special Report: Operation Atlantic Resolve – America’s Continued Commitment to European Security](#)

Related Articles:

[Canada Joins Ukraine National Guard Training Program](#)

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## **4. Global Cooperation To Combat Global Crime (04-18-2015)**

*By Evan Ryan, Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs*

Twenty years ago, organized crime was largely a regional problem. Today, organized criminals behave more like global businesses. They think globally, and act globally. Criminal organizations of today are often fluid and transnational, ever expanding and evolving. According to a December 2014 Global Financial Integrity report, there was an illicit financial flow of \$6.6 trillion over the past ten year period. To put that in perspective, only the United States and China had GDPs larger than \$6.6 trillion per year.

To counter global crime, we need global solutions. Here at the State Department, one solution has been to bring together law enforcement officials from around the world to better understand how to work together and share best practices. This week, 70 such officials convened at the State Department. They met with their U.S. counterparts, including experts from the State Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, and Interpol.

In today’s world, working together matters. Following the day-long plenary, the international officials came out energized, and many commented about the ideas discussed during the session. Often we think about solving problems internally -- and we often don’t look outside of our own organizations. The panelists and speakers repeatedly praised the value of cooperation to solve the toughest issues they face: border security, child pornography, extremist efforts to recruit youth, trafficking in persons, among many others. The morning panelists emphasized how law

enforcement agencies in the United States have worked much more closely with one other since September 11, 2001. Afterward, many of the participants said the conference helped them realize that the issues they face, even in some of the world's poorer countries, are often similar to those faced here in the United States.

These participants will now branch out to cities across America where they will look at another issue so important to global crime: community involvement. Strengthening partnerships between community-based organizations and law enforcement officials at all levels is yet another way to fight this shared challenge. Finally, before heading home, the group will reconvene in New York for the Eighth Annual Combating International Crime: Global Cooperation Conference, which aside from the plenary and panel style discussions, will also feature site visits to various New York City landmarks to discuss security procedures. The conference, organized in concert with the New York regional headquarters of the FBI, will cover a wide spectrum of relevant topics, such as countering violent extremism, money laundering, cybercrime, and law enforcement training.

This program, part of a new diplomatic initiative called "Towards a More Safe and Secure World," will now be an annual affair. [The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement affairs](#) will continue leading Department efforts to assist and work with international local law enforcement. With our diplomatic reach and our broad foreign assistance authorities, the State Department is uniquely positioned to help law enforcement agencies become just as agile and coordinated as illicit networks without sacrificing our integrity, laws, or respect for sovereignty.

About the Author: Evan Ryan serves as Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Follow Assistant Secretary Ryan on Twitter @ECA\_AS.

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## **[5. Work Discusses Russia with Military, Intelligence Leaders \(04-17-2015\)](#)**

By Jim Garamone  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

ABOARD A MILITARY AIRCRAFT, April 17, 2015 – Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work participated in what he called a wide-ranging and frank discussion with U.S. European Command leaders in Stuttgart, Germany, today, listening to the challenges they face in the theater and how the command plans to balance them.

"They worry about foreign fighters that flow back and forth, they worry about all the illicit forms of trafficking that come up from the south, and then, of course, there is all the activity in Ukraine," Work said in an interview on the way back to Washington.

The deputy secretary said he particularly wanted to hear their thoughts on Eastern Europe and the Russian activities in Ukraine.

"It was a very interesting and frank conversation," he said, "and it is invaluable to me -- someone who sits in the Pentagon most of the time -- to hear commanders in the field talk about issues."

Work spoke with a group composed of officers in the field and members of the intelligence community so they could cross-talk to each other. "One of the things that is evident is over the past 13 years of war we've focused on the Central Command area of responsibility, and therefore, the majority of our intelligence focus has been in that area, as you would expect in a time of war," the deputy secretary said.

## Lessons of Cold War

European Command needs some of the intelligence expertise it once had when the command was America's bulwark against the Soviet Union, Work said. "Eucom is thinking about a lot of the lessons of the Cold War that we need to think about again," he added.

Since 1989, Work noted, the entire U.S. national strategy has been trying to get Russia into Europe as a contributing partner. "We believed for the longest time we were doing well in making them a partner," he said. "But President Vladimir Putin has surprised us. It's clear that he doesn't want to be a partner."

But Russia did sign the Minsk Agreement, Work pointed out, and he called on Putin to honor that pact. "We've asked for Russia to remove all its troops from Ukraine," he said. "We've asked them to stop supplying separatists, because that has caused the separatists to violate the Minsk agreement. Right now, I'm satisfied the strategy is a good one. But like any strategy, it's an interactive game. It depends on what the other side is thinking."

## Seeking Impartial Monitors in Ukraine

Putin is not admitting the troops in Eastern Ukraine are Russian, even though Eucom and NATO have shown the world the proof. "President Putin is lying to the Russian people; there are Russians in eastern Ukraine," Work said.

"We would welcome impartial monitors to look on both sides and have been trying to get Organization of Security Cooperation in Europe monitors in," he added. "It would be very interesting to hear how President Putin explains when there is clear evidence that his people are there."

Also, Work said, in the 13 years of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Russian and Chinese capabilities expanded "faster than we anticipated."

The most recent Quadrennial Defense Review looked at two combatant commands as being the most challenging: U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Central Command, Work said, and Russia's actions in illegally annexing Crimea from Ukraine and its continued actions in eastern Ukraine add U.S. European Command to the list.

"We are trying to make Russia and China partners in the international order," the deputy secretary said. "We do not want to fight them. The key question now is asking what are their aims, what would deter them, and how do we keep from getting into a crisis?"

Biographies:

[Bob Work](#)

Related Sites:

[Special Report: Travels With Work – April 2015](#)

[U.S. European Command](#)

[Amb. Baer's Reply at OSCE on Russian Activities in Ukraine](#)

[Amb. Baer on Ukrainian Hostages Illegally Held by Russia](#)

[Amb. Baer on Russia's Ongoing Violations, Defiance in Ukraine](#)

## **6. State's Talwar at Norwegian American Defense Conference (04-17-2015)**

*Remarks by Puneet Talwar, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, at the Norwegian American Defense Conference*

Thank you Peter for that kind introduction, and thank you to the Norwegian American Defense Industry Council for having me here today. It's an honor to be here with Foreign Minister Brende, Ambassador Aas, and a very distinguished group of fellow speakers and guests, all of whom care so deeply about the U.S.-Norway relationship.

There are few countries in the world today as close as the United States and Norway. Having spent five years at the National Security Council working on Middle East issues, I can tell you that the deep appreciation and admiration for Norway's global leadership and outsized contributions are felt no matter what region you work on, from the President on down.

As Secretary Kerry said just a few months ago, "On every major conflict in the world, Norway – not the biggest country in the world, but the biggest in heart and in commitment – is always by our side and is a superb ally."

In my current job, I oversee a global portfolio that extends beyond the Middle East, and we work very closely with our European Allies and partners on political-military issues across the world. That's why it's a special pleasure to be here today to discuss our bilateral relationship – and the wide range of issues where we are leading in lockstep.

Seventy-three years ago, during World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt met with the King of Norway, and through the Lend-Lease Act, transferred a vessel to Norway as a token of admiration and friendship of the American people.

As he announced this ship transfer, Roosevelt spoke about the Nazi occupation of Norway and said something which remains as true today as it was in 1942. He said, "With Norway fell the concept that remoteness from political controversy ... could give any Nation immunity from attack in a world where aggression spread unchecked."

In other words, that no nation – no matter how generous – is immune from international events. He was speaking at the time of the Nazi occupation of Norway, but we can think of many more examples since then, including the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Simply put, Roosevelt understood that the world is interconnected; that what happens in the far seas or distant mountains half a world away affects us right here. That's true today more than ever before, because today's greatest challenges do not affect only one nation. Nor can they be solved by only one nation. Norway understands this. And it is that fundamental principle that drives our leadership in the world today.

When you look across the globe at the many challenges facing us, the United States and Norway are leading together, whether the challenge is near or far, easy or hard.

Look, for example, at ISIL, which poses a clear danger to the Middle East, to Europe, and to other regions around the world as well.

That's why, last year, President Obama outlined a comprehensive strategy to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL – a strategy that includes working with the Government of Iraq, the moderate opposition in Syria, and an international coalition of over 60 nations, including Norway.

So far, the Coalition, which includes several Arab states, has conducted over 3,000 airstrikes against ISIL terrorists. These strikes have had a significant impact. The Coalition and our partners on the ground have taken back more than a quarter of the populated territories ISIL controlled last August. We have worked closely with industry to rapidly equip our partners on the front lines. Prime Minister Abadi was just in Washington this week, and I met with his national security advisor who I've known for quite some time. There will be good days and bad days, and this will be a long fight. But ISIL's momentum has been blunted, and we are making progress.

But all of you know that this is not just a military effort. Together with our coalition partners like Norway, we are using all elements of our power in this fight – because that's how we must lead in today's world. Yes, we are using our military might. We are building the capabilities of our partners in the region. But we are also working to cut off ISIL's financing; to stop the flow of foreign fighters; to stabilize Iraqi communities; to train and equip appropriately vetted Syrian opposition members. And we are working to counter ISIL's ideology and propaganda. This is a multi-dimensional effort, and it must be for us to succeed. Because we know that it's just as important to undercut ISIL's ideology as it is to undercut ISIL's fighting positions.

Norway has been absolutely integral in this effort. Last year alone, Norway donated some \$31.5 million to Iraq and \$124 million to Syria. And in 2015, Norway has already pledged \$93 million to support Syria and neighboring countries, with \$18.6 million of that devoted to education and child protection efforts. Our Norwegian allies are actively involved in several lines of effort and we truly count on their leadership and wisdom every day.

Norway was also critical to the international effort to get chemical weapons out of Syria. Our Norwegian colleagues provided a naval frigate and civilian transport vessel to remove chemical weapons from Syria for destruction, and they have been generous contributors to the OPCW. There is still more work to do, but with the help of Norway and other international partners, we have eliminated the deadliest chemical weapons in the Asad regime's declared stockpile.

In Afghanistan, Norway remains a critical contributor to the Resolute Support Mission, and a generous supporter of the Afghan people.

Beyond the Middle East and South Asia, we also welcome Norway's leadership and strong contributions to UN peacekeeping missions around the world, in Mali, Cyprus, South Sudan, and elsewhere. Since the end of World War II, Norway has contributed over 50,000 troops to over 25 UN peacekeeping operations. Foreign Minister Brende was a leading participant in Vice President Biden's peacekeeping summit last year. And today, we recognize that peacekeeping is more critical than ever before – but it is also under severe strain. We are demanding more from our peacekeepers in more places. In times like these, we know we can count on Norway's continued leadership.

And even as Norway and the United States contribute to peace and security around the world, we also stand firmly together in Europe. Russia's flagrant violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity – and of international law – is unacceptable. The events on Europe's eastern edge are sharp reminders that security threats in Europe are not just a relic of history, but something we and our Allies in NATO, and our partners in the European Union and around the world, must confront today.

Russia's attempts to redraw maps behind the barrel of a gun have been met with the condemnation of the world, and with concrete action.

Together with our European Allies and partners, we have enacted targeted sanctions on Russia, and these have combined with low oil prices and structural weaknesses to impose costs on the Russian

economy. Russia's standing in the world has plummeted, while the world's support for Ukraine only continues to grow.

The United States continues to support the Government of Ukraine. Since the start of the crisis, we are proud to have committed about \$120 million in security assistance to the Ukraine Ministry of Defense, State Border Guard Service, and National Guard.

And we continue to stand united with our NATO Allies against Russia's aggression. Our persistent, rotational air, land and sea presence are not only demonstrative of NATO's commitment to collective defense, they also maintain and enhance our common interoperability. These are strong, unified actions.

Throughout Europe, we and our close friends and Allies, including Norway, stand squarely together. Make no mistake: no amount of propaganda can obscure the reality that Russia's actions in Ukraine are in violation of international law.

We have said repeatedly that when Russia fully implements its commitments from Minsk, significant sanctions will be rolled back. But words are not enough. We will judge Russia by its actions.

Let me mention one other item this morning. Next week, I will be heading to Copenhagen to lead the U.S. delegation to the inaugural U.S.-Nordic-Baltic Political-Military Dialogue. This new forum will bring together senior civilian and military officials, and the U.S. and Norway will be joined by representatives from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Sweden.

In light of the new challenges confronting the region, we will focus on global and regional security and defense issues, including hybrid threats, border security, and cybersecurity, as well as ways to improve interoperability and readiness.

As the Foreign Ministers of Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland wrote last week, "A closer Nordic cooperation and acting in solidarity with the Baltic states contributes to increased security in our region and lowers the risk of military incidents. By acting firmly, predictably and consistently, we may contribute to peace and security in this part of the world." We in the United States wholeheartedly agree.

As you can see from the examples I've outlined, from the Middle East to South Asia to Europe and beyond, the United States and Norway are leading. And we are leading together.

Our leaders play a major role in that – but so, too, does industry.

Today, when companies like Raytheon and Kongsberg team up to produce a fifth-generation naval strike missile; when our equipment is interoperable; when over the last three years, my team at the State Department has authorized nearly 2,000 licenses totaling \$1 billion in defense articles to Norway ... that shows the positive impact that industry can have not just on our relationship, but also on world events.

I think it also shows the depth of this relationship, and the level of trust that exists at the highest levels. Because your work in industry is an opportunity to not only boost bottom lines, but also to strengthen American and Norwegian troops on the front lines.

The United States and Norway share a deep historical bond. We share a rock-solid commitment to democratic values. And we share an enduring vision for how our efforts around the world can

contribute to global peace and security. With all your help, we look forward to continuing to turn that vision into reality, together.

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## **7. U.S., Japan, South Korea Hold Trilateral Security Talks (04-17-2015)**

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, April 17, 2015 – The United States, South Korea and Japan today concluded what a joint statement called a “productive and substantive” two-day security meeting here.

Officials said the meeting was held to enhance trilateral defense cooperation in light of the evolving security environment in the region.

Yoo Jeh-seung, South Korea’s deputy minister for policy, led his country’s delegation. David B. Shear, assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific security affairs, led the U.S. delegation, and Japan’s delegation was led by Tokuchi Hideshi, vice defense minister for international affairs.

### **Deterring North Korean Provocations**

The officials reaffirmed that their governments will not accept North Korea as a nuclear-armed state, and agreed to closely coordinate to deter North Korean provocations, the joint statement said.

Each side welcomed the cooperation enabled by a document called the "Trilateral Information Sharing Arrangement Concerning the Nuclear and Missile Threats Posed by North Korea," the statement said, noting that the three countries decided to continue working-level consultations for effective implementation of the arrangement for sharing information on North Korean nuclear and missile threats.

South Korea provided a briefing on a conditions-based approach to the transition of operational control of all forces on the Korean Peninsula to South Korea in wartime, the statement said. The officials of the three countries confirmed that it would contribute to the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula, the statement added.

### **Guidelines for U.S. Japan Cooperation**

The statement also said the delegations held a “constructive discussion” on the guidelines for U.S.-Japan defense cooperation, which will be revised within the framework of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

“The officials agreed that it is important to promote these initiatives in a manner that contributes to regional peace and stability with transparency and in accordance with international law, including the respect for sovereignty of third countries,” the joint statement said.

In addition, the statement said, the three countries held a productive discussion on cooperative measures for nontraditional security issues, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, counterpiracy operations, and efforts to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Related Sites:

[U.S. Relations With South Korea](#)

[U.S. Relations With Japan](#)

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## **8. Carter Discusses Top National Security Priorities (04-16-2015)**

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, April 16, 2015 – Defense Secretary Ash Carter today discussed his top priorities and other defense issues at a Pentagon news conference.

Carter met with reporters along with Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

### **Defense Priorities**

The secretary said his first priority is to help President Barack Obama to make the best possible national security decisions and then to implement those decisions.

Second, he said, is to ensure the strength and health of Defense Department personnel around the world, and the third priority is the future of the department's course, its people and its technology.

To achieve these priorities, Carter said, he's traveled to Afghanistan and Kuwait to meet with American personnel working there, and he has worked with Congress to secure the resources needed to protect the country and continue to build the force of the future while gaining stability in the defense budget.

"I've spoken with our partners in the State Department and other agencies," he said, "about working together in new ways and on new endeavors and visited with allies, and partners -- both here and in Washington -- and just last week in the Asia-Pacific."

The defense secretary said he's also met with service members across the country and abroad to express his appreciation while ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect.

### **Efforts Continue**

That work continues this week, Carter said, noting "productive" discussions with Iraq's prime minister and defense minister about the U.S.-Iraqi security partnership, and the "real progress we're making in the campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant."

"I was up-front in our meetings," he said, "about how a lasting victory over ISIL requires inclusive governance in Baghdad and respect for local populations in all areas liberated from ISIL control."

Next week, Carter said, he'll speak with ROTC cadets and midshipmen in Washington about sexual assault prevention and response, and then will meet with battalion- and brigade-level first responders for their perspective on preventing sexual assault and combating retaliation.

Finally, the defense secretary said, he'll travel to California to deliver a lecture at Stanford University on the future of technology, innovation and cybersecurity before meeting with technology executives to discuss working together for mutual benefit.

### **Turmoil in Yemen**

Carter also addressed a range of situations abroad beginning with the situation in Yemen and the threat posed by al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. The terrorist group, he said, is a branch of al-

Qaida that has shown a particular determination to attack Americans and the United States, and is, therefore, of serious concern. “We continue to watch them and take action against them,” he added.

It’s easier to conduct counterterrorism operations when Yemen has a settled government, Carter said. “But in the meantime,” he added, “we need to, and do through other means, protect ourselves against al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, because they are dangerous. And there are other things we can do to act against them, and we are.”

### **Economic Sanctions Against Russia**

Asked whether economic sanctions against Russia for its actions in Ukraine have been effective, Carter said they have.

Russia is participating in fomenting trouble in eastern Ukraine, he said, and as a principal point of pressure, the United States has used economic pressure. It’s important to note that in addition to the United States, European nations also have imposed sanctions, “because they have the most economic leverage over Russia.”

“I’m not an economist,” he said, “but I understand that those sanctions are having an effect on Russia, along with plummeting oil prices. Those are the two factors bringing pressure to bear upon the Russian economy. So the first line of pressure for us is economic and political, and we’re doing that.”

Carter emphasized that “abundant evidence” has convinced the international community to take these strong economic steps.

“My understanding is ... that this is having a real effect on the Russian economy,” he said. “At some point, the Russian people are going to ask themselves whether these kinds of adventures are worth the price.”

### **Providing Options**

Regarding the nuclear situation in Iran, Carter said that while it’s not the Defense Department’s role to conduct those negotiations, there are two roles it does have.

“The first is to make sure that we have, as the president says, other options on the table,” he said. “That’s something we take very seriously here, and we do have other options on the table.”

The second, Carter said, is to continue to play a stabilizing role in the region as a whole with all U.S. friends and allies while continuing to strengthen their capabilities and confidence. Those are DoD’s two jobs, he said, and the department is very attentive to them.

Biographies:

[Ash Carter](#)

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## **9. Amb. Power at U.N. on Syrian Chemical Weapons Victims (04-16-2015)**

*Remarks by Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at a Stakeout following an Arria-Formula Meeting on Syria Chemical Weapons Victims: First-Hand and Expert Accounts, April 16, 2015*

Thank you all for coming out. The first thing I want to do is to encourage you to, later this afternoon, have the experience that the Council just had, which is to listen to three remarkable

individuals who testified to the experiences that they have had inside Syria, related to Syrian chemical weapons use – chlorine use most recently. And in the case of Qusai Zakarya, his experience of being left for dead in August 2013 in the chemical weapons attack in Moadamiya.

What the Council heard were testimonies from Dr. Tennari, who is a Syrian Arab Red Crescent-affiliated physician in the town of Sarmin, who dealt with the chlorine attacks that occurred in March – at great risk to himself and the other medical professionals he was working with tried to resuscitate and care for the people who came to his hospital, his impromptu field clinic, you might say, and were in desperate need of help. They were choking, they were vomiting and they bore all of the tell-tale signs of chemical weapons use. None of them, as he'll describe, had fragments, shell fragments, or any of the kinds of injuries you would expect from conventional weapons use, or even from conventional barrel bombs use – if you can put it that way.

So Dr. Tennari described the horror of being in a situation where you can't help everyone who comes to you: when parents are bringing their children and you are trying to resuscitate them and you cannot because you don't have the medical supplies and because the toxic chemicals are so overpowering. We also heard from Dr. Zaher Sahloul who is the President of the Syrian-American Medical Society, who has made innumerable medical missions to Syria, who raises money here in this country and elsewhere to try to fund medical supplies, to try to care for people who suffer all injuries and ailments. And Zaher is just back from a medical mission where he talked to and saw the doctors and the survivors of the Sarmin attack, as well as others.

In terms of the Council, we held this meeting – we brought the Council members together with these remarkable individuals because the Security Council has come together to pass Security Council resolution 2118, which has come a long way in dismantling Assad's declared chemical weapons program. But that resolution, which was a resolution – unusual for Syria that all members of the council were able to agree upon, and very much the product of U.S.-Russian cooperation in dismantling the Syrian chemical weapons program – has not resulted in the end of chemical weapons use in Syria. And the council, as you know, came together again recently in resolution 2209 to make very clear that chlorine use is a form of Syrian chemical weapons use. It's not what people think of necessarily. They think of it being a household product. But when you stick it in a barrel bomb and you turn it into a toxic weapon, it is prohibited by the chemical weapons convention, it is prohibited by resolution 2118 and it is made very clear that it is utterly condemned and prohibited by resolution 2209.

So what we've done today is brought individuals who can testify to what happened; brought the facts to the council in as rapid and moving a way as we could do, and it is now in our view, incumbent on the Council to go further than we have been able to come to this point, to get past the old divisions, to draw on the unity that we have managed to show on the single issue of chemical weapons, and stop these attacks from happening. Now the form that that takes, of course, getting everything through 15 members of the Security Council is extremely challenging – there were 4 vetoes issued on Syria, on attempted Syrian resolutions in the past – but we feel as though anybody who witnessed what we just witnessed, and what you will hear from these individuals later today I hope, can't be anything but changed, can't be anything but motivated. And we need an attribution mechanism so we know precisely who carried out these attacks; all of the evidence of course shows that they come from helicopters, only the Assad regime has helicopters; that's very clear to us. But we need to move forward in a manner that also makes it very clear to all Council members, and then those people responsible for these attacks have to be held accountable.

The very last thing I'd say, because I know there's a lot of skepticism about accountability, because of the veto that we experienced when we put forward, with our partners, a referral of the crimes in

Syria to the ICC: it is true that we failed to secure an ICC referral out of the Security Council, but it is not true that that means that accountability will not happen in Syria. Individuals who are responsible for attacks like that will be held accountable, and the documentary record is being built, the testimonies are being gathered and the long arm of justice is taking more time than any of us would wish right now, but this documentary record will be used at some point in a court of law and the perpetrators of these crimes need to bear that in mind.

Reporter: Ambassador, can you describe to us what the atmosphere was like in the room when you saw and heard this evidence?

Ambassador Power: The only analogue I can come up with is the experience of seeing the Caesar photos. I mean, the video, in particular, of the attempts to resuscitate the children – if there was a dry eye in the room, I didn't see it. It was – it's just devastating to see the facts of what this regime is doing. So people were visibly moved, people had questions, very fair questions, about "how do you know this?" and "what are the symptoms?" But for the most part, almost every Council member prefaced what they said by saying, "forgive me if I don't use diplomatic language, but I am so moved and so overwhelmed by what I have seen," and then they proceeded with their comments. It was an extremely unusual and very, very emotional meeting.

Reporter: How do you see an attribution mechanism – you mentioned an attribution mechanism?

Ambassador Power: You know, we have to work through the modalities on this. Traditionally, criminal responsibility is best established in a criminal tribunal, which is why we and so many Council members supported an ICC referral. But in this instance, that has not proven possible at this point. And of course, the Syrian authorities are in no position to judge themselves, given that they are gassing their own people and dropping barrel bombs on civilian neighborhoods. So we need to think through what are the right modalities for an attribution mechanism. The OPCW already, as you know, has fact-finding missions that it has dispatched and they have produced very important layers and layers of testimonies and eyewitness reports and have shown, and reported with high confidence, that chlorine is being used as a chemical weapon in Syria, systematically. But what the OPCW has never done is point the finger and establish attribution. And that has not been in their mandate up until this point. Bear in mind, again, that the traditional model for OPCW is parties to the chemical weapons convention who want the OPCW's help getting rid of their chemical weapons stockpile or monitoring it – we haven't had a circumstance like this where we have a party to the chemical weapons convention that is still prepared to use chemical weapons. And so OPCW and the UN Security Council have to come together and deal with a devastating and grotesque historical anomaly.

Related Articles:

[State's Richard: Don't Forget About Syria, Aid Still Needed](#)

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## **10. [State's Rose on Security of Outer Space Environment \(04-16-2015\)](#)**

*Remarks by Frank A. Rose, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, 31st Space Symposium, Colorado Springs, CO*

***Using Diplomacy to Advance the Long-term Sustainability and Security of the Outer Space Environment***

Thank you for your kind introduction and the opportunity to speak to you today.

My name is Frank Rose, and I am the Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance. It's a pleasure to be back at the Space Symposium, and I'd like to thank Elliot Pulham and all the sponsors for inviting me back again.

By way of introduction, while I am the Assistant Secretary for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, my work at the State Department is focused on enhancing strategic stability around the world. Arms control, verification and compliance are some of the tools we use to enhance strategic stability and reassure our allies and partners that we will meet our security commitments. Given the importance of outer space to our national security, we also work on efforts to ensure the long term sustainability and security of the outer space environment.

This morning I would like to discuss steps the United States is taking diplomatically, in concert with international partners to address the growing threats to space security.

### **Threats to the Space Environment**

First, the threat to outer space is real and growing. As Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said in his recent Congressional testimony,

“Threats to U.S. space systems and services will increase during 2015 and beyond as potential adversaries pursue disruptive and destructive counterspace capabilities. Chinese and Russian military leaders understand the unique information advantages afforded by space systems and services and are developing capabilities to deny access in a conflict.”

In particular, China's continued development of anti-satellite weapons remains a major challenge to the outer space environment. China's 2007 anti-satellite test left thousands of pieces of debris in orbit that continues to threaten the space systems of all nations.

The 2010 U.S. National Space Policy makes it clear that it is not in the interest of anyone for armed conflict to extend into space. It states,

“The United States considers the space systems of all nations to have the rights of passage through, and conduct of operations in, space without interference. Purposeful interference with space systems, including supporting infrastructure, will be considered an infringement of a nation's rights.”

It also states that,

“the United States will employ a variety of measures to help assure the use of space for all responsible parties, and consistent with the inherent right of self-defense, deter others from interference and attack, defend our space systems and contribute to the defense of allies space systems, and if deterrence fails, defeat efforts to attack them.”

It is not in the international community's interest to engage in a space weapons arms race. Such a race would not bode well for the long-term sustainability of the space environment.

Indeed, protecting U.S. national security by preventing conflict from extending into space in the first place is a major goal of our diplomatic engagements. In that regard, we work to prevent conflict from extending into space via two diplomatic tracks; strengthening our deterrent posture, and encouraging responsible behavior to prevent mishaps, misperceptions, and the chances of miscalculation.

## **Strengthening Our Deterrent Posture**

First, we use diplomacy to gain the support of our allies and friends. We have established numerous space security dialogues with our Allies and Partners. These dialogues help them understand the threat, as well as our diplomatic and national security goals, which is critical in persuading them to stand by our side, often in the face of tremendous pressure from our adversaries. Not only have I made numerous trips to meet with our allies in Canada, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific, I have also visited India (where we held our first space security dialogue this March), South Africa, and elsewhere in Africa to raise U.S. concerns about the threats to space systems and to discuss the way forward diplomatically. Furthermore, our Department's leadership has also carried our message in numerous bilateral and multilateral dialogues.

Diplomacy also prepares the way for closer military-to-military cooperation and allied investment in capabilities compatible with U.S. systems. We work very closely with our interagency colleagues in the Department of Defense to make sure our efforts are synchronized so that investments by our allies and friends contribute to strengthening the resilience of our space architectures and contribute to Space Mission Assurance. The resulting deterrent effect created by such a web of integrated capabilities is greater than the sum of its individual parts.

For example, the Department of State works closely with the Department of Defense on Space Situational Awareness (or SSA) information sharing agreements with foreign partners. The United States has found international cooperation on SSA to be important, as international partnerships bring the resources, capabilities, and geographical advantages. We have also worked to strengthen military-to-military cooperation in satellite communications and space-based maritime domain awareness.

## **Promoting the Responsible Use of Outer Space**

Second, we use diplomacy to promote the responsible use of outer space and especially strategic restraint in the development of anti-satellite weapons.

Diplomacy has an important role in responding to the development of anti-satellite weapons developments that threaten the outer space environment. Responding both privately and publicly to tests of anti-satellite systems is a critical component of our diplomatic strategy.

For example, in 2007, China faced tremendous international pressure following its destructive ASAT test, and this response from the international community appears to have been a factor in China changing its approach. We have not seen a destructive ASAT test since then, although China did conduct a non-destructive test of this system in July 2014. I have not been shy about expressing the U.S. Government's concerns about Chinese anti-satellite tests directly to our Chinese counterparts. We need to continue to call out the disruptive actions of countries like Russia and China both publicly and in cooperation with our allies and partners.

The Department of State is also using diplomacy to reduce the chances for conflict extending into space through the promotion of responsible international norms of behavior, both bilaterally and multilaterally. Norms matter because they help define boundaries and distinguish good behavior from bad behavior.

For example, we have discussed preventing mishaps and reducing potentially destabilizing misperceptions or miscalculations with China.

In addition, and very importantly, through bilateral and multilateral dialogue and diplomatic engagement we seek to identify areas of mutual interest and hopefully reach agreement on how to prevent those interests from being harmed in peacetime, and in conflict.

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union found many areas of mutual interest in avoiding potentially destabilizing actions. The 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty, which prohibited the testing of nuclear weapons in outer space, started a fifty-plus-year string of bilateral arms control treaties and agreements with the Soviet Union, and later the Russian Federation. We also came to agreement in many other realms, including chemical and biological weapons.

Simply stated, if the United States and the Soviet Union could find areas of mutual interest in the realm of nuclear deterrence and chemical weapons -- with the tensions and stakes as high as they were -- then in today's climate we should be able to find areas of mutual interest among all space-faring nations regarding space security.

Indeed, I would argue that it is reasonable to assume that most nations, if not all nations, would find it to be in their national interest to prevent conflict from extending into space, knowing that such conflict would degrade the sustainability of the space environment, hinder future space-based scientific activities, and potentially reduce the quality of life for everybody on Earth if the benefits of space-based applications were eroded. Convincing other nations, including China and Russia, of this objective is the role of diplomacy.

The United States and China have already implemented some bilateral transparency and confidence building measures (or TCBMs) to prevent the generation of additional debris in space. As part of the 2014 U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, led by Secretary of State John Kerry, we reached agreement on the establishment of e-mail contact between China and the United States for the transmission of space object conjunction warnings. Not only does this communication help prevent collision between objects in space, it will help to develop trust and understanding between the United States and China.

Over the past few years the United States has also supported a number of multilateral initiatives that should reduce the chances of mishaps, misperceptions and potential miscalculations. Multilateral TCBMs are means by which governments can address challenges and share information with the aim of creating mutual understanding and reducing tensions. Through TCBMs we can increase familiarity and trust and encourage openness among space actors.

One of the key efforts that we have been pursuing is working with the European Union to advance a non-legally binding International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. The Code would establish guidelines to reduce the risks of debris-generating events and to strengthen the long-term sustainability and security of the space environment. Among the draft Code's most important provisions is a commitment for the subscribing States to refrain from any action -- unless such action is justified by exceptions spelled out in the draft Code -- that brings about, directly or indirectly, damage or destruction of space objects. We view the draft Code as a potential first step in establishing TCBMs for space.

The State Department is also leading U.S. efforts in the framework of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS) to move forward in the development of a draft set of guidelines for sustainable space operations to include ways to prevent the generation of space debris.

Another important recent effort was the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) study of outer space transparency and confidence-building measures. That UN group, for which I served as the U.S. expert, published a consensus report in July 2013 endorsing voluntary, non-legally binding TCBMs to strengthen sustainability and security in space. The United States subsequently co-sponsored a resolution with Russia and China referring the GGE report's recommendations for consideration by the relevant entities and organizations of the United Nations system.

These diplomatic efforts contribute to reducing misperceptions and miscalculations and help lower the chance of conflict extending into space.

I would like to add one more thought for your consideration. If we do not lead with active diplomacy on international space security issues, it is more likely that others will seek to fill the diplomatic vacuum with initiatives that meet their own national interests without regard for the broader interests of the international community.

The United States has focused on TCBMs over the last several years because these can make a real difference in the near term. Such measures can lead to greater mutual understanding and reduce tensions.

In contrast, Russia's and China's diplomatic efforts to pursue legally binding treaties and other measures do not reduce the chances for mishaps, misunderstanding or miscalculation and provide little or no verification capability to make sure that everyone is playing by the same rules. Moreover, their diplomatic efforts do not address very real, near-term space security threats such as terrestrial-based anti-satellite weapons like the one China tested in 2007.

To be more specific, Russia and China continue to press for a "Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects," known as the PPWT. Russia also is making concerted diplomatic efforts to gain adherents to its pledge of "No First Placement" of weapons in outer space. These two documents are fundamentally flawed. They do not address the threat of terrestrially-based ASAT capabilities, and they contain no verification provisions. Yet, at the same time, these proposals may gain some support internationally because many countries are attracted, naturally, to the idea of preventing the weaponization of space. As a diplomat, it is my job to explain why support for these Russian and Chinese proposals is misplaced and may even be counterproductive, while offering pragmatic alternatives, such as TCBMs, which demonstrate U.S. leadership and help shape the international space security agenda.

## **Conclusion**

If conflict extends into space, the right to explore and use space for peaceful purposes would be threatened.

If diplomacy fails, and the use of force does extend to space, the United States must be prepared to protect our space capabilities and prevail in conflict. That is absolutely clear.

The goal of our diplomacy, however, is to prevent conflict from extending into space in the first place.

Diplomacy can help strengthen U.S. and allied deterrent posture and help prevent mishaps, misperceptions, and mistrust among nations.

These two diplomatic tracks, supported by other instruments of U.S. national power and the support of our allies and friends, will hopefully persuade any potential adversary that attacking the United States in space would not be in its best interests.

Thank you for your time and attention.

**11. Kerry, Germany's FM Steinmeier on Ukraine, Iran, Others (04-15-2015)**  
**G-7 Foreign Minister's Meeting**

*Remarks by Secretary of State John Kerry And German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Lubeck, Germany*

FOREIGN MINISTER STEINMEIER: A very special welcome to our friend, John Kerry, who came a long way after his hearings in the Congress yesterday evening. It's sunny weather in Lubeck, but that shouldn't irritate us because the weather in international politics is quite stormy. The conflict in the eastern Ukraine is only two hours away from here, and we are discussing the situation in Ukraine, the Ukrainian conflict later on. And we are starting today with the stand on our negotiations with Iran. We have to discuss the situation in the Middle East with ISIS, about Iraq and Syria, and new reporting nearly every day about the changing situation in Yemen. We are quite satisfied that the United Nations Security Council yesterday decided about the resolution against arms delivery to the Houthis in Yemen. This is a little bit progress, but we are far away from a situation in which we are able to calm the situation to de-escalate or to find a political solution. We will discuss about the consequences of climate change for foreign policy and the stability of states and international relations, and we will discuss about maritime security here in a city in which we have a great tradition in which the Hanseatic League was founded and in which there is a (inaudible) experience on a regular base international order, and how to deal with situation in which this order is broken by somebody.

So I think it's a splendid environment for our discussions today. And again, not only a good morning, but welcome here in Lubeck.

Some words?

SECRETARY KERRY: Well, we're – first of all, let me say what a tremendous pleasure it is to be here in this world heritage city of Lubeck, which, as Frank Steinmeier just said, was the heart of the Hanseatic League and an important precursor to the rule of law. And we're very, very privileged to be here with the G7, which has a critical voice right now on the major challenges that we face – ISIS, Yemen, the Middle East, Syria, Ukraine, Libya. The voices of every single country here are critical to the resolution of each of these conflicts. And I'm particularly grateful – and I think the other ministers join me in saying a profound thank you to Germany – for Germany's great leadership. And Germany, together with France, have been absolutely critical to working through the challenge of Ukraine. We look to their leadership, and they've provided it.

So we have a lot to talk about today. And of course, looming large is the challenge of finishing the negotiation with Iran over the course of the next two and a half months. Yesterday, there was a compromise reached in Washington regarding congressional input. We are confident about our ability for the President to negotiate an agreement, and to do so with the ability to make the world safer. And again, every partner here has been absolutely critical to our ability to be able to get where we are today. So I'm grateful to be here to be part of this discussion for the period of time I can be, and I'm really grateful to each and every colleague here for the incredible partnership that is represented by the G7 at this point in time. And it's wonderful particularly to be here in this historic city. Thank you.

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