

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE
May 13 - 21, 2015

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1. [Dempsey: Iraqi Forces Not Driven From Ramadi, They Drove Out of Ramadi](#) (05-21-2015)

By Jim Garamone

Iraqi security forces weren't "driven from" Ramadi, they "drove out of Ramadi," the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said here today.

Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey told reporters traveling with him that he has said from the start that the mission against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant would take years to accomplish. "At the start I said three years," he said. "That still might be the case, we may be able to achieve our objectives in three years. But I said then, and I reiterate now, that there may be tactical exchanges -- some of which go the way of Iraqi security forces and others which go the way of ISIL. But the coalition has all the strategic advantages over time."

Time will tell, the general said, and time is also a factor because the key to victory is not just military success on the battlefield, but the ability of the Iraqi government to draw the various groups in the country back together.

After-action Review

U.S. commanders in Iraq are working with their Iraqi counterparts to work out exactly what happened. Reports indicate that Iraqi security forces drove out of Ramadi – an important provincial capital – during a sandstorm May 16.

“This group of [Iraqi security forces] had been forward deployed in al Anbar [province] – arguably the most dangerous part of Iraq,” Dempsey said. “They believed they were less well-supported. The tribes had begun to come together, but had not ... allied themselves with the [Iraqi forces].” The Iraqi commander may have believed the sandstorm precluded air support, but that was never the case, said U.S. Central Command officials. American air support was always available. Still, the Iraqi commander on the ground made “what appears to be a unilateral decision to move to what he perceived to be a more defensible position,” the general said.

Success Demands Commitment

Success against ISIL requires the commitment of the Iraqi government, the Iraqi security forces and the Iraqi people, he said.

There must be political reconciliation among the various actors, a plan for the reconstruction of those areas that have been affected by ISIL attacks and the promise of “governance that gives the people the belief that they will be cared for in the future,” Dempsey explained. From the start of the campaign against ISIL, the United States has been clear that support is conditional on Iraq’s government accomplishing these goals, the general said. “They have to happen, and if they don’t happen, then this campaign won’t succeed,” he said. “That’s been clear from the start.”

The anti-ISIL coalition is working to coalesce the Sunni tribes in Anbar against ISIL. The coalition will give the tribes some training and equipment, “but all that necessarily needs to flow through the government of Iraq,” the chairman said. “The coalition will only support those groups that subordinate themselves to the government.”

2. NATO Adjusts to Change, Military Committee Chief Says (05-20-2015)

By Jim Garamone

A constantly changing security environment is the new norm, the chairman of the NATO Military Committee said here today as he opened a meeting of the alliance’s military chiefs.

Gen. Knut Bartels of the Danish army noted that the fighting in Yemen is threatening to become a regional conflict, and the move by the European Union to respond to the Mediterranean migration crisis are just two examples of changes in the security environment.

Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is attending the meeting. “Our meeting today will establish a common understanding of the issues as the first step in developing coherent responses,” Bartels said. “It will set the tone and identify the way ahead for the NATO military authorities in the second half of this year.”

This is the general’s last meeting as chair of the committee. He steps down next month, and Gen. Peter Pavel of the Czech Republic will succeed him.

Bartels said the alliance will implement the Readiness Action Plan by the alliance's summit in Warsaw next year. The plan creates new capabilities to ensure NATO can respond quickly and firmly to challenges. It responds not only to the challenges Russia has posed, but also to threats from the Middle East and North Africa.

Restructuring, Beefing Up NATO Response Force

The plan restructured and beefed up the NATO Response Force in the land, sea and air domains. Part of the restructuring was creation of a quick-reaction Spearhead Force -- a brigade that will be able to deploy within 48 hours of notification. The force strengthens alliance collective defense capabilities and ensures NATO has the right forces in the right place at the right time, NATO officials said.

The Spearhead Force has reached interim capability and will continue exercises through 2015. Bartels said the committee also will hear about progress on command and control centers being established in Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania.

The NATO Military Committee plans meet with partners to discuss the interoperability achieved from working together in Afghanistan and ways to continue that growth, and it will also receive briefings from Army Gen. John F. Campbell, commander of the alliance's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan.

"We will complete our partner sessions by meeting with our special partners, Ukraine and Georgia," Bartels said. "In both meetings, we will receive updates on how these two nations assess their regional security situation and on NATO's support to enhance the resilience of their military institutions."

3. State Dept. Background Briefing on Iraq (05-20-2015)

MODERATOR: Hello. Good morning, everybody. So just to keep introductions short, this discussion will be on background, so senior – senior State Department official – sorry. Of course, you all know [Senior State Department Official], but from here on out, it's senior State Department official. And we'll let [Senior State Department Official] say a few words to start, and we've got about 30 minutes so we'll try to get to questions right away. With that, [Senior State Department Official], I'll hand it over to you.

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: I thought I'd just go through an opening briefing. I want to talk about Ramadi, what happened in Ramadi. I want to talk about the Iraqi security response, the political response, and what we're seeing from the coalition and the response. First on Ramadi, I think it's important to remember that ISIL first moved in to Ramadi in force on January 1st, 2014, so that was six months before Mosul. The city has been contested for 18 months. Half the city had been under control of ISIL for some time. You might remember Fallujah fell immediately in January of 2014. The Iraqis have been fighting in Ramadi constantly for 18 months, and it was a very vicious, bloody fight. They suffered thousands of casualties over these 18 months. Our assessment of ISIL all the way back last summer – well, and we've said this publicly – is that ISIL as an organization is better in every respect than its predecessor of AQI; it's better manned, it's better resourced, they have better fighters, they're more experienced. And we know what it took for us, the best military in the world, to get a handle on AQI, so I think that also puts things in a little bit of context.

We've been working with the Iraqis to hold the center of Ramadi for some time, and I think the last time I spoke with you one of you asked me what keeps you up at night or something. I said look, this is a really formidable enemy; it's going to have surprises and that's going to happen over the course of this, what will be a very long, multiyear campaign.

Over the course of 96 hours in Ramadi, and what we've been able to collect looking at different things, about 30 suicide VBIDs in Ramadi and the environs of Ramadi. Ten of them, I've been told, had the explosive capacity of an Oklahoma City type attack.

Questions and Answers find at:

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2015/05/20150520315772.html#axzz3aqZC0FAZ>

4. Missile Defense and the U.S. Response to the North Korean Ballistic Missile and WMD Threat (05-19-2015)

Remarks by Frank A. Rose

Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
Institute for Corean-American Studies (ICAS)

Thank you so much for that warm introduction. It is a pleasure to speak at this ICAS Symposium today and to return to Capitol Hill where I began my career just across the street on the Senate side. Twenty years ago, I worked as a staffer for the then junior Senator from my home state of Massachusetts. Little did I know then I would have the privilege to rejoin Secretary Kerry as his Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance.

My work at the State Department is focused on enhancing strategic stability around the world. A key part of our Bureau's portfolio is addressing emerging security challenges. North Korea's cyber-attack on Sony last December is an example of one such type of emerging challenge that has highlighted the need to build global consensus against destructive attacks in cyberspace.

The AVC Bureau also plays a key role in strengthening regional missile defense architectures to confront ballistic missile threats. This afternoon, I'll focus my remarks on a timely and important subject; North Korea's evolving ballistic missile and weapons of mass destruction program. First, I will begin by outlining the threat posed by North Korea's illicit ballistic missile program and nuclear weapons ambitions. Second, I will discuss what North Korea may seek to achieve through its provocative actions. Third, I will discuss the range of missile defense capabilities the United States and its regional allies have deployed to confront the threat from North Korea. Lastly, I will touch on a few of the ways the United States demonstrates its security assurances to allies and partners that live in the shadow of the North Korean threat.

The Threat from the DPRK's Ballistic Missile and WMD Programs

Just ten days ago, according to U.S. government information, North Korea conducted a ballistic missile-related ejection test, which was related to the DPRK's effort to develop a ballistic missile submarine. While this test is just one step in a long process, it nevertheless heightened tensions on the Peninsula and in the region. The test was also a clear violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions, including UNSCR 1718, that require North Korea to suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile program.

North Korea's ballistic missile programs date back to the 1990s.

In 1998, the DPRK conducted a test launch of a long range ballistic missile that overflew Japan and irresponsibly dropped a rocket stage close to Japanese territory. The launch was not a success.

However, the launch was a highly provocative act that spurred a concerted effort by the United States and our Allies to monitor, deter, and counter North Korean ballistic missile capabilities. Since that time, North Korea has continued to make quantitative and qualitative advances in its ballistic missile program. For example, in 2012 North Korea placed a satellite in orbit with its Taepo-Dong space launch vehicle, which could be used as a ballistic missile. Furthermore, at a parade in Pyongyang in 2012, the regime unveiled what appeared to be a mobile ICBM (KN-08) with a range purportedly capable of reaching the United States. In addition to this ICBM, North Korea also has an intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), which has not been flight-tested, but that is potentially capable of holding Guam and the Aleutian Islands at risk.

As part of a series of provocations last year, North Korea conducted multiple short- and medium-range ballistic missile launches and threatened to conduct additional longer-range launches. Today, North Korea fields hundreds of Scud and No Dong missiles that can reach all of the Korean Peninsula and threaten U.S. forces deployed in the region.

Running in parallel with an ever evolving ballistic missile program, North Korea's nuclear weapons program remains a priority for the ruling regime. The United States and its Five Party partners – the Republic of Korea, Japan, China, and Russia – remain committed to North Korea's complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. We remain open to dialogue with the DPRK, with the aim of returning to credible and authentic negotiations on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, but North Korea has thus far been defiant. One of North Korea's more inflammatory actions was its third nuclear test conducted February 2013, timed with the birthday of the late Kim Jong-il.

North Korea's Ballistic Missile and WMD Programs

So why is North Korea so keen on continuing its current course of behavior even in the face of enormous international costs?

By developing ballistic missile and weapons of mass destruction capabilities, North Korea intends to intimidate its neighbors and prevent the United States from meeting its regional security commitments. The DPRK does this despite receiving a number of security assurances over the years, and being the outlier in a region otherwise marked by peace and prosperity. One of the most glaring miscalculations of the North Korean regime is believing that its military capabilities will garner it respect in the international community. As North Korea spends staggering amounts of its GDP on military hardware to threaten its neighbors, it finds itself increasingly isolated and with its citizens deprived of basic needs.

Through North Korea's provocative missile and nuclear tests and through its official public statements, it has made clear its intentions to threaten the United States with long-range nuclear-armed ballistic missiles. As the North Korean ballistic missile threat to U.S. and allied interests grows, so too must our response.

The BMD Response to the Threat from North Korea

The U.S. approach to defending against the possible ballistic missile threats from North Korea is two pronged. First, the United States is improving its capability to protect the U.S. homeland from an intercontinental ballistic missile launched from North Korea. Second, the United States works with regional allies to defend their territories from North Korean aggression, and in the case of our alliances with Seoul and Tokyo, to develop alliance solutions to these threats. Simply put, as long as

North Korea continues to develop and deploy ballistic missiles, the United States will work with our allies and partners to defend against this threat. This is a measured, limited, and prudent response. With respect to the defense of the United States homeland, we are working toward greater missile defense capability and capacity with our commitment to increase our homeland defenses to 44 Ground Based Interceptors (GBIs) by the end of 2017. Additionally, we are also working to field a new kill vehicle for our Ground Based Interceptors and are continuing the development of a Long-Range Discrimination Radar (LRDR) with persistent sensor coverage that will improve our ability to discern between decoys and real incoming missiles fired against the U.S. homeland. Our regional missile defenses in the Asia-Pacific help to reassure our allies and to deter North Korea from seeking to coerce or attack its neighbors.

We have encouraged our allies to contribute to their own defense by providing capabilities that can enhance their own security and add to stability in the Asia-Pacific region. The Korean Integrated Air and Missile Defense capability is a means to do just that and we continue to support South Korea in its development.

There has been a lot of discussion in the press recently about the possible deployment of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense or THAAD system in the region. I will underscore although we are considering the permanent stationing of a THAAD unit on the Peninsula, we have not made a final decision, and we have had no formal consultations with the Republic of Korea on THAAD deployment. To be clear, THAAD is a purely defensive system that would improve our ability to intercept short- and medium-range ballistic missiles from North Korea. It does not and cannot impact broader strategic stability with Russia and China.

Earlier this year, I had an opportunity to visit the Korean demilitarized zone. Seeing UN and North Korean military personnel just yards apart highlighted the immediate stake South Korea has in preventing missile strikes fired from the North. We have worked closely with South Korea to ensure that our Alliance has the capacity to do just that. The United States deploys Patriot PAC-3 batteries in South Korea to defend U.S. and South Korean forces. In addition, South Korea is taking steps to enhance its own air and missile defense systems, which include sea-and land-based sensors, and upgrading its Patriot PAC-2 batteries to the PAC-3 system. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Defense continues to consult with South Korea about how it can improve its missile defense capabilities as part of an Alliance response to the growing North Korean missile threat. North Korea's missile development does not just threaten South Korea, it also explicitly threatens Japan and the U.S. ability to deploy forces into the region in the event of a crisis on the Korean Peninsula. A number of North Korea's provocative missile tests have overflowed the Sea of Japan, creating understandable cause for alarm. In response to this growing threat, the United States and Japan continue to deepen their cooperation on BMD in several ways. Just last December, the United States and Japan announced the deployment of the second AN/TPY-2 radar to Japan. This radar, along with the first AN/TPY-2 already deployed in Japan, provides a critical addition to our regional deterrence and defense architecture, and builds on a deep and broad cooperation between the United States and Japan. This cooperation also includes joint development of an advanced interceptor and continuing work on enhancing interoperability between U.S. and Japanese forces. Finally, we welcomed the inclusion of missile defense in the updated guidelines for U.S.-Japan defense cooperation. This reflects the valuable contribution of BMD to our collective self-defense and an acknowledgement of North Korea's destabilizing role in the region.

Extended Deterrence

As we speak here today, states parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) are gathered in New York for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. One of the cornerstone bargains of the Treaty

is that non-nuclear weapon states vow to forgo nuclear ambitions and nuclear weapon states move towards disarmament.

In the forty-five years since the NPT entered into force, the United States has done just that. The U.S. nuclear stockpile has been slashed by approximately 85% and the role it plays in national security strategy reduced. However, it is clear that not all states that possess nuclear weapons are moving in the preferred direction of reducing their inventories and the role those weapons play in their national security strategies; indeed, one such state is North Korea. A North Korea armed with nuclear weapons and a means to deliver them constitutes a serious threat to international peace and undermines the stability of the Korean Peninsula and the broader Northeast Asia region.

I echo the words of the President in saying that our commitment to the security of allies who live in the shadow of the North Korean threat will not waiver. The United States remains fully prepared and capable of defending itself, our allies, and the peace and security of the region with the full range of capabilities available, including our conventional and nuclear forces.

An important component of this effort is the work we do with Japan through the Extended Deterrence Dialogue and with South Korea through the Deterrence Strategy Committee. In his visit to Seoul yesterday, Secretary Kerry affirmed that “The U.S.-Republic of Korea alliance has literally never been stronger...we are united firmly in our determination to stand up against any threats from the DPRK.” Having led bilateral consultations with our Japanese and South Korean partners, I can attest to the value of dialogue in strengthening our already strong bilateral alliances.

Conclusion

To conclude, the diplomatic pressure on North Korea continues to intensify. In January, President Obama signed an Executive Order that authorizes new sanctions. Last September, the IAEA General Conference unanimously condemned North Korea’s nuclear program, which China has exhibited unprecedented firmness in opposing.

Even as the international community grows more united, the United States and its allies cannot and will not stand idle in the face of threats and destabilizing actions by North Korea. Simply put, North Korea cannot obtain the security, prosperity, or respect it wants without negotiating an end to its provocative nuclear and missile programs.

Our goal remains to bring North Korea into compliance with all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and its commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six Party Talks. We continue to call on North Korea to take credible steps to demonstrate its genuine commitment to denuclearization. Until the day North Korea embraces that opportunity, the United States will work to build homeland and regional missile defenses to deter and to respond to North Korean aggression.

5. Obama’s Meeting with National Security Council on ISIL (05-19-2015)

The President met today with his National Security Council to discuss the situation in Iraq and our strategy to counter the threat posed by ISIL in Iraq and Syria. The President was briefed on the latest developments in Iraq and our support to the Iraqi security forces and local tribal fighters responding to the situation in Anbar province. The President reaffirmed the strong U.S. support for Prime Minister Al-Abadi’s efforts, and welcomed the decision issued earlier today by the Iraqi Council of Ministers to accelerate the training and equipping of local tribes in coordination with

Anbar authorities, expand recruitment into the Iraqi Army, train local police, and develop a consolidated plan to retake Ramadi with all associated forces acting under Iraqi command. The President reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi people in the fight against ISIL.

6. [Biden's Call with Prime Minister Al-Abadi of Iraq \(05-15-2015\)](#)

Vice President Biden spoke with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi today to reaffirm continued U.S. support for the Iraqi government's ongoing efforts to defeat ISIL. The Vice President thanked Prime Minister Al-Abadi for his steadfast leadership in Iraq and for promoting national unity at a time of significant security challenges, including today's ISIL attack on Ramadi. The Vice President assured the Prime Minister of continued and expedited U.S. security assistance to confront ISIL. This will include delivery of heavy weaponry, including AT-4 shoulder-held rockets to counter Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices, additional ammunition, and supplies for Iraqi forces. Both leaders agreed on the importance and urgency of mobilizing tribal fighters working in coordination with Iraqi Security Forces to counter ISIL and to ensure unity of effort among all of Iraq's communities.

7. [Critical moment' for Russia to abide by Minsk \(05-14-2015\)](#)

Secretary of State John Kerry has urged Russian President Vladimir Putin to work with the government of Ukraine to fully implement a cease-fire agreement reached earlier in 2015 in Minsk, Belarus.

"I think there was strong agreement among all of the NATO members that this is a critical moment for action by Russia, by the separatists, to live up to the Minsk agreement," said Kerry in a [statement](#) at the NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Antalya, Turkey, May 13.

As part of implementing the Minsk agreement, Kerry called for the Russia-backed separatists to end the fighting in eastern Ukraine, particularly in the coastal town of Shyrokyne, where fighting continues despite the cease-fire. Kerry also said it was critical to allow members of the Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to enter the areas of conflict.

Kerry also urged both sides of the conflict to work together to determine an election process in areas of eastern Ukraine. The Minsk agreements stipulate that the elections must be monitored properly and conform to the Ukrainian constitution.

"This is an enormous moment of opportunity for the conflict there to find a path of certainty and resolution. And we hope very, very much that President Putin, Russia, the separatists, will come together to work with the government of Ukraine in order to fully implement it and make progress," Kerry said.

Sanctions against Russia would remain in place as long as Russia continues to violate the cease-fire agreement, he added.

8. [Ambassador Baer on Russia's Ongoing Violations in Ukraine \(05-14-2015\)](#)

Ongoing Violations of International Law and Defiance of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation in Ukraine

Each week we express concern over the continued ceasefire violations and intense fighting in eastern Ukraine, which demonstrate the failure of Russia and the separatists it backs to comply with the provisions laid out in Minsk. This week has been no exception.

The Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) observed the increased movement of military forces in off-limit areas established by the Minsk agreements, particularly in separatist-controlled areas. On May 6, the SMM witnessed an exercise near Debaltseve conducted by combined Russian-separatist forces using anti-tank weapons, armored personnel carriers, and small arms. On May 10, the SMM registered the movement by the separatists of six T-72 main battle tanks, three multiple launch rocket systems, self-propelled howitzers, and anti-aircraft systems. And the weekly report distributed yesterday included evidence that the separatists continue to acquire new kinds of weapons. I'd like to quote: "Near 'DPR' controlled Samsonove (81km south-east of Donetsk), the SMM spotted some Grad-P portable rockets (9P132) and their tripod launchers. This highly mobile weapon system is more commonly seen in the Middle East than in this conflict, but Ukrainian military analysts reported seeing them in the 'Lugansk People's Republic' ('LPR')-controlled areas in late March. Now the Grad-Ps are seen near the line of contact in 'DPR'-controlled territory, as confirmed by SMM Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) video footage."

I would note also in connection to this the reported arrival today of the latest illegal resupply convoy in the city of Donetsk.

The SMM continued to observe intense fighting with heavy weapons near the Donetsk airport and Shyrokyne, two locations where the Russia-backed separatists are trying to extend their control beyond the ceasefire line.

While the SMM reported that monitors were able to visit two formerly off-limits towns in separatist-controlled territory on May 7, large-scale access restrictions on the part of combined Russian-separatist forces continue.

Even more worrisome is the fact that the SMM could not patrol as broadly as intended in the run up to the May 9 Victory Day celebrations due to an upsurge in violence. The safety and security of SMM monitors is of the utmost importance. We are concerned by a report that an SMM patrol came under fire from a member of the Ukrainian armed forces who was not aware of the patrol's presence in the area. While the Ukrainian commander apologized to the SMM for the incident, we urge appropriate follow-up actions and renewed caution and restraint. As Secretary Kerry made clear in his public remarks following his May 12 meeting with President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov, both sides need to take every possible step to implement Minsk fully, and that includes preventing any breaches of the ceasefire.

Mr. Chair, let us remember that the SMM is an instrument of the international community, and the access the SMM is permitted in eastern Ukraine is indicative of what the parties want the international community to know about the situation on the ground. The SMM has nearly full access to areas under Ukrainian government control. In contrast, the SMM continues to be denied access to large swathes of territory controlled by the combined Russian-separatist forces, particularly areas along the border with Russia.

This indicates that Russia and the separatists do not want the international community to know the real situation on the ground, both the military situation and the humanitarian situation. Further evidence of this was the closing last week of the International Rescue Committee's offices in Donetsk, where gunmen appeared and detained international aid workers before expelling them

from separatist-controlled territory. This action demonstrates the brutality of those running the separatist-held territories. It also speaks to the critical need to implement the Minsk agreements fully and ensure a lasting peace.

Russia has repeatedly argued that Ukraine has failed to engage in dialogue with its citizens in the east. Yet, as we speak, in Kramatorsk, the Donetsk Oblast administration, in cooperation with the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine (PCU), is holding a forum with community and business leaders to discuss economic development, infrastructure, security, the humanitarian situation, and the improvement of cooperation between government authorities and civil society. Similarly, Ukraine's Human Rights Commissioner, jointly with ODIHR, recently launched a two-year civil society project that will enhance mechanisms to address human rights issues throughout Ukraine.

We applaud Ukrainian national and local authorities, the PCU, and ODIHR, for undertaking activities that will advance efforts to forge a peaceful and democratic future for all of Ukraine's people.

It is Russia's actions, in fact, that are hindering efforts toward a peaceful future for all of Ukraine. Russia maintains military command and control elements in eastern Ukraine, and coordinates joint military operations with the separatists. Russia continues to support and train the separatists. These actions are clearly contrary to the Minsk agreements.

We welcome the inaugural meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group's working groups, while stressing that their success rests on the full implementation of the Minsk agreements through a genuine ceasefire and the verifiable withdrawal of heavy weapons. We urge the members of the working groups to take immediate and concrete actions that ensure the full implementation of Minsk. The test of success is not in the holding of meetings, but in progress on the ground. As the working groups get underway, we support the ongoing efforts of Ambassador Tagliavini to convene the representatives of Ukraine and Russia in the Trilateral Contact Group format.

In closing, let me remind colleagues that as we discuss the immediate situation in eastern Ukraine, we should not forget that this crisis began when Russian troops entered Crimea in 2014. Russia must respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and end its occupation of Crimea.

9. Statement to Press at NATO Ministerial

Remarks by John Kerry, Secretary of State

Antalya, Turkey, May 13, 2015

Thank you. Just very quickly (inaudible). Let me just say quickly that I'm very appreciative to my colleagues for their courtesy in recognizing that because I have to be back in Washington for the GCC meeting tonight we would speed up some of the topics that we needed to discuss.

And I was privileged to brief all of our NATO colleagues on the meetings held yesterday in Sochi with President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov. I think there was strong agreement among all of the NATO members that this is a critical moment for action by Russia, by the separatists, to live up to the Minsk agreement. And that it is critical to be able to get the OSCE into areas of conflict, it is important to end the conflict in those areas, particularly Shyrokyne. They need to try to come to an agreement on a ceasefire. We need to see the full implementation of Minsk, and I think everybody here is united in the notion that our preference is not to have sanctions, but the sanctions will be

there in an effort to try to secure the peace that everybody wants in Ukraine.

There's unanimity among all of the members here in the urgency of the Minsk agreement being fully implemented, and that means that the reforms, the election process, the working groups, this is an enormous moment of opportunity for the conflict there to find a path of certainty and resolution. And we hope very, very much that President Putin, Russia, the separatists, will come together to work with the Government of Ukraine in order to fully implement it and make progress.

We also talked today about Syria, about Libya, about terrorism in general, and the responsibility of NATO to be able to come together to work on each of those challenges. And in addition we talked about the Iran nuclear talks and the unanimity between the P5+1 that we will move into these last six weeks of negotiations with a view to securing the good agreement that we have talked about, in which we will have adequate access, and in which the four pathways to a nuclear weapons will, in fact, be shut down. We're very hopeful, everybody here is, that that can be a successful negotiation and bring about a transformation within the region.

Obviously, key to everybody is the question of the GCC meeting that we are having tonight and tomorrow at Camp David, and I think all of the member states feel very strongly that defining a more – a clearer defense arrangement between the GCC and other friendly countries and the United States is going to be critical to helping to push back against the terrorism, as well as some of the other activities that take place in that region that are unsettling to all of those countries. So we're very hopeful – I think we had a very – though quick – lengthy exchange and in depth exchange.

One other thing: The United States stands very firmly behind the Wales commitments, with respect to NATO. We believe very strongly in NATO's role, particularly on the southern flank in dealing with Libya, in dealing with some of the problems of migrants. And I hope that out of this will come a recommitment to the future mission over these next few years of a new headquarters, of a clearer definition of the mutuality of the role, and that countries will move towards the 2 percent financial commitments that reflect the shared responsibility of support for NATO.