

**AN UPDATE ON AMERICAN DIPLOMACY
TO ADVANCE OUR NATIONAL
SECURITY STRATEGY**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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**AN UPDATE ON AMERICAN DIPLOMACY
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WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2018

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:05 p.m. in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Risch, Rubio, Johnson, Flake, Gardner, Young, Barrasso, Isakson, Portman, Paul, Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, and Booker.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

The CHAIRMAN. The Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

I know that sometimes these hearings can generate a little emotion. I just want to say again we have been very generous on the committee in the past when people have been arrested. When you are hauled out of here, you are arrested. And I have gone down in the past and caused people to be un-arrested. But that cannot happen anymore. So if you would, please respect others who are here. This is what great democracies do. We are glad to have our outstanding witness here, and we will begin our work.

Secretary Pompeo, we are glad to have you here today. We are grateful for your service to our country. I have faith in your leadership and I appreciate what you are doing to change the culture of the State Department in positive ways.

But I want to get straight to the point. You come before a group of Senators today who are filled with serious doubts about this White House and its conduct of American foreign policy. There are a number of reasons to be concerned. Among them is the lack of information the administration has provided to members of this committee. It is our hope that you will reduce our level of concern by providing us with clear answers that might help convince us that those at the White House know what they are doing and that, to be candid, you know what they are doing.

I cannot say it more forcefully. We really need a clear understanding as to what is going on, what our President is agreeing to, and what our strategy is on a number of issues.

Last week, President Trump held a summit with Vladimir Putin, someone who has violated the most fundamental international norms through his efforts to annex Crimea, has interfered with elections, including our own, has supported the brutal Assad regime in Syria, has used chemical weapons to poison a Russian agent and his daughter in the United Kingdom, has occupied portions of Georgia, continues to violate the INF Treaty, has reportedly hacked U.S. utilities. The list goes on and on, and you know the list.

In the face of these hostilities and the summit's aftermath, we saw an American President who appeared submissive and deferential. We have heard that some agreements were reached but as of yet have little idea what those might be, even though the President has already extended an invitation to Putin to come to Washington to discuss the implementation, quote on quote, "of these undefined agreements."

The President also recently met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, one of the most ruthless leaders on the planet, who has continued to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles that could hit the United States, has executed his half-brother with poison in Malaysia, and reportedly killed his uncle back home, has essentially murdered an American college student, and has enslaved millions of his own people. One in 10 North Koreans are living in slavery today, and 1 in 5 children are stunted due to malnutrition. In the face of these realities, the President has called him very talented and that he loves his people. Really?

At the recent NATO summit, the President not only pushed NATO member countries to dedicate more of their budgets to defense, a goal we all share. He went on to berate them, question the very premise of NATO, in my opinion used false information to turn public opinion in the United States against the alliance. He even went so far as to cast doubt on the United States' willingness to enforce article 5 of the NATO treaty. We want to know if this is real or just another off-the-cuff statement.

And the confronting of our partners goes beyond traditional security and extends to the economic space as well. I know you are aware of my strong feelings about the administration's abuse of its authorities in using section 232 to implement tariffs in the name of national security. So far, we have zero clarity from the administration as to what the end game is on the Trump-Pence tariffs, which in reality are a massive tax increase on American consumers and businesses. And now the administration appears ready to offer welfare to farmers who would rather have trade than aid.

As you know, Senators have gone to the White House in groups to discuss these actions, and not a single person that I am aware of has left those meetings with the sense that there is a coherent strategy driving these policies. The administration tells us do not worry, be patient, there is a strategy here. But from where we sit, it appears that in a ready, fire, aim fashion, the White House is waking up every morning and making it up as they go.

This is the first in a series of hearings we will hold in coming weeks dealing with the troubling dynamic I have described, one in which we are antagonizing our friends and placating those who clearly wish us ill. This series will deal specifically with Russia as

perhaps the most troubling example of this emerging reality. I hope that in your position you will do all in your power to provide us with the answers we need today and as we move forward in our future hearings.

I look forward to your testimony, and I want to thank you again for being with us and for the many outstanding people you are bringing on to the State Department to work with you.

With that, I will turn to Senator Menendez.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me start by saying I applaud you for making this the first of a series of rigorous oversight hearings on Russia. The committee has gone for about a year without a full committee hearing on either Russia or North Korea. So I appreciate your leadership in this regard.

And now it seems to have taken a three-ring circus of a debacle of a meeting with President Putin, a walk-back of whether the President's trusts his own intelligence officials, the suggestion that it might be even okay for a U.S. diplomat to be interrogated by Russian intelligence, and a reality TV summit that was little more than a photo op with a brutal dictator to merit one hearing with the Secretary of State.

Having said that, Mr. Secretary, welcome and thank you for your service to our country.

The members of this committee are strongly supportive of strategic, well-crafted diplomacy to advance America's foreign policy interests. Unfortunately, all we have come to expect is a saber-rattling President who embraces and provides legitimacies to some of the world's most notorious bad actors and who denigrates our closest allies, whose sons and daughters have gone to war alongside Americans. We have not seen any substantive deals or strategies that put Americans or American national security first. We have seen our President look weak as he stands beside our adversaries and intends to roll out the red carpet at the White House. I hear that is postponed till January, but nonetheless, to invite Putin to the White House, a thug who is actively trying to undermine our elections.

Well, Mr. Secretary, we in this body are taking heed of our intelligence and law enforcement officials and working to protect our country from the flashing red lights of ongoing Russian aggression. Senator Graham and I and others plan to introduce legislation in the coming days to ensure we have the toughest tools to go after Russian bad actors.

As of this moment, we find ourselves in an unimaginable situation. The American people, elected officials in this body, and members of the President's own cabinet have heard more about the meeting in Helsinki from Putin and his associates than from our President. We know that the Kremlin state-run media operations have a dubious commitment to the truth, but we do not know what the truth is because nobody else was in the room where it happened. The American people expect and I believe they deserve to know what happened.

I also have serious questions about the summit in Singapore that took place nearly 2 months ago. In that time, we have yet to hear or see anything that provides us with real confidence that North Korea, as the President gloated, quote, “no longer poses a threat to the United States” or that we have a coherent strategy to achieve a verifiable denuclearization agreement. We have only seen a vague agreement of promises to make more promises but of weaker commitments that North Korea has previously made. The United States and North Korea seem to remain far apart on even basic issues such as the definition of denuclearization. In fact, over the past 18 months under this administration’s watch, North Korea has perfected its intercontinental ballistic missiles and tested its largest nuclear detonation rather than any verifiable steps to dismantle their program. It seems Kim Jong Un got everything he wanted in Singapore, including international recognition and the suspension of U.S. military exercises.

Now, this week’s reports of dismantlement at a launching station may be good news, but it may simply be a signal that North Korea has completed all the testing it needs to. Frankly, the Singapore agreement seems more the art of concessions than the art of the deal. And we are weaker for it.

Last week, Russia and China blocked a U.S. request to impose penalties on sanctions violations, calling our maximum pressure posture into question. As you know, I have introduced bipartisan oversight legislation, along with Senator Gardner, to provide the sort of support and guidance that this diplomatic effort needs and exercise the oversight responsibility Congress owes to the American people. Goals that you previously laid out before this committee are incorporated.

Finally, let me raise one more deeply alarming issue that broke this week. I understand that despite its ability to stop this ridiculous notion, the State Department is about to allow Internet posting of do-it-yourself 3-D printable firearm blueprints. Why on earth would the Trump administration make it easier for terrorists and gunmen to produce undetectable plastic guns?

I remain deeply concerned by the administration’s incoherent and contradictory views. We need comprehensive strategies across the world because the result of the lack thereof is chaos and confusion or even worse.

I recognize the President considers himself to be a masterful deal-maker and a very stable genius. But we need to call the President’s statements out for what they are. At this point, I find him to be misleading and untruthful. So I look forward to your testimony to find out what the truth really is.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Secretary, we welcome you again. If you could summarize your comments. If you have any written materials you would like entered into the record, we will do so. And with that, we look forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE POMPEO, SECRETARY OF STATE,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Secretary POMPEO Good afternoon, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Senator Menendez, and distinguished members. Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today.

During my confirmation hearing, you asked me to work on a host of world problems, and for 12 weeks, I have been doing just that. I hope we get a chance to talk about each of those today. In the last few weeks, I have been engaged in three areas of particular interest to this committee: North Korea, NATO, and Russia.

On the subject of Russia, I want to bring something to your attention right off the bat today. Today the Trump administration is releasing what we are calling the Crimea Declaration. I will not read the whole thing. I will submit it for the record. It has been publicly released as well. But one part reads as follows. “The United States calls on Russia to respect the principles to which it has long claimed to adhere and to end its occupation of Crimea.”

[The information follows:]

CRIMEA DECLARATION

Russia, through its 2014 invasion of Ukraine and its attempted annexation of Crimea, sought to undermine a bedrock international principle shared by democratic states: that no country can change the borders of another by force. The states of the world, including Russia, agreed to this principle in the United Nations Charter, pledging to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. This fundamental principle—which was reaffirmed in the Helsinki Final Act—constitutes one of the foundations upon which our shared security and safety rests.

As we did in the Welles Declaration in 1940, the United States reaffirms as policy its refusal to recognize the Kremlin’s claims of sovereignty over territory seized by force in contravention of international law. In concert with allies, partners, and the international community, the United States rejects Russia’s attempted annexation of Crimea and pledges to maintain this policy until Ukraine’s territorial integrity is restored.

The United States calls on Russia to respect the principles to which it has long claimed to adhere and to end its occupation of Crimea. As democratic states seek to build a free, just, and prosperous world, we must uphold our commitment to the international principle of sovereign equality and respect the territorial integrity of other states. Through its actions, Russia has acted in a manner unworthy of a great nation and has chosen to isolate itself from the international community.

Secretary POMPEO. I want to assure this committee that the United States does not and will not recognize the Kremlin’s purported annexation of Crimea. We stand together with allies, partners, and the international community in our commitment to Ukraine and its territorial integrity. There will be no relief of Crimea-related sanctions until Russia returns control of the Crimean

peninsula to Ukraine. This Crimea Declaration formalizes U.S. policy of non-recognition.

There is another indicator of diplomatic progress I want to mention. This morning, Pastor Andrew Brunson, who was in prison in Turkey for nearly 2 years, has been let out of jail in Buca. He is still under house arrest, so our work is not done. But it is welcome progress, one that many of you have been engaged in and something the State Department has been working on diligently as well. We will continue to work for the speedy return of all Americans unjustly held captive abroad. President Trump will never forget about our own.

Our diplomacy on these issues is advancing the goals of President Trump's National Security Strategy, which laid down guiding principles for American foreign policy in December. In late April, I started executing on the strategy of Secretary of State, and today here we are and I want to present you some progress.

The National Security Strategy established protecting the American people, the homeland, and the American way of life as the pillars of our national security. On July 17th, President Trump stated his firm conviction that diplomacy and engagement are preferable to conflict and hostility. These principles have guided our actions on North Korea. President Trump's diplomacy deescalated a situation in which the prospect for conflict was rising daily. Americans are safer because of his actions.

As far as the Trump administration's goals on North Korea are concerned, nothing has changed. Our objective remains the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea, as agreed to by Chairman Kim Jong Un.

As a follow-up to the President's successful summit with Chairman Kim, on July 5th I traveled to North Korea to make progress on the commitments that were made in Singapore. We are engaged in patient diplomacy, but we will not let this drag out to no end. I emphasized this position in the productive discussions I had with Vice Chairman Kim Yong Chol.

President Trump remains upbeat about the prospects for North Korean denuclearization. Progress is happening. We need Chairman Kim Jong Un to follow through on his commitments that he made in Singapore. Until North Korea eliminates its weapons of mass destruction, our sanctions and those of the United Nations will remain in effect. Multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions require North Korea to eliminate all of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. Those resolutions were passed unanimously and they remain binding. We absolutely need every single nation to maintain the enforcement of those sanctions to which every nation has committed. The path ahead is not easy, but our hopes for a safer world and a brighter future for North Korea endure.

The National Security Strategy also calls for peace through strength. President Trump's engagement on NATO has resulted in greater burden sharing that will strengthen the entire alliance against myriad conventional and unconventional threats. Allies have spent more than \$40 billion in increased defense spending since 2016, and there will be hundreds of billions of dollars more in the years ahead.

Last year's \$14.4 billion in new spending was a 5.1 percent increase. It was the largest in a generation. Eight allies will meet the 2 percent this year; 18 are on track to do so by 2024. The Trump administration is demanding that every country make its own commitment.

NATO will remain an indispensable pillar of American national security. We know weakness provokes our enemies, but strength and cohesion protect us. The more every NATO member contributes, the better the alliance can fulfill its mission of deterring threats to each of our nations. This is the increased commitment that the President wants.

From the outset of this administration, the National Defense Strategy and the Russia Integrated Strategy—our approach has been the same: to steadily raise the cost of aggression until Vladimir Putin chooses a less confrontational foreign policy, while keeping the door open for dialogue in our national interest. Between our two nations, the United States and Russia possess over 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons. President Trump believes that two great nuclear powers should not have a contentious relationship. This is not just in our interest but in the interest of the whole world. He strongly believes that now is the time for direct communication in our relationship in order to make clear to President Putin that there is the possibility, however remote it might be, to reverse the negative course of our relationship. Otherwise, the administration will continue imposing tough actions against Russia in response to its malign activities.

We cannot make progress on issues of mutual concern unless we are talking about them. I have heard many of you on this panel say that for years and years. I am referring to key issues like stopping terrorism, obtaining peace in Ukraine, stopping the civil war in Syria and delivering humanitarian assistance, ensuring security for Israel, and shutting down all of Iran's malign activity.

And on the subject of Iran, President Trump has said that Iran is not the same country it was 5 months ago. That is because our campaign of financial pressure, our withdrawal from the nuclear deal, and our full-throated support for the Iranian people, which I articulated in a speech this past Sunday, are having an impact.

In Helsinki, we sought to explore whether Russia was interested in improving our relationship but made clear that the ball is in Russia's court. We defended America's fundamental strategic interests in Syria and Ukraine, and I personally made clear to the Russians there will be severe consequences for interference in our democratic processes.

I would also add that President Trump is well aware of the challenges that Russia poses to the United States and our partners and allies. He has taken a staggering number of actions to protect our interests. As just a few pieces of proof, I would like to cite the following: 213 sanctions on Russian entities and individuals in the Trump administration; 60 Russian spies expelled from the United States of America and the closure of Russia's consulate in Seattle in response to Russia's chemical weapons use in the United Kingdom; the closure of Russia's consulate in San Francisco, cutting U.S. diplomatic staffing by Russia by almost 70 percent. 150 military exercises have been led or participated in Europe this year

alone. More than \$11 billion have been put forward for the European Defense Initiative. We made defensive weapons available to Ukraine and to Georgia, and just last week, the Department of Defense—this is after Helsinki—added an additional \$200 million in security cooperation funds to Ukraine. None of this happened for the 8 years that preceded President Trump.

If it is not enough for you, there is a long list. I am happy to go through them. And I am guessing sometime today I will get that opportunity. I look forward to it.

Finally, I want you to know, President Trump has stated that he accepts our intelligence community's conclusion that Russia meddled in the 2016 election. He has a complete and proper understanding of what happened. I know. I briefed him on it for over a year. This is perfectly clear to me personally. I am also certain he deeply respects the difficult and dangerous work that our patriots in the intelligence community do every single day, and I know that he feels the same way about the amazing people that work at the United States Department of State.

Thank you, Chairman Corker.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Pompeo follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE POMPEO

Good afternoon, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members.

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you today.

During my confirmation hearing you asked me to work on a host of world problems—so I did. In the last few weeks I've been engaged on three areas of great importance to SFRC members: North Korea, NATO, and Russia.

Our diplomacy on these issues is advancing the goals of President Trump's National Security Strategy, which laid down guiding principles for American foreign policy in December. In late April, I started executing on the strategy as Secretary of State. And today in July I present to you the progress we are making.

The National Security Strategy established "Protecting the American People, the Homeland, and the American Way of Life" as one of the pillars of our national security. On July 17th, President Trump stated his firm conviction that "diplomacy and engagement are preferable to conflict and hostility." These principles have guided our actions on North Korea. President Trump's diplomacy de-escalated a situation in which the prospect for conflict was rising daily. Americans are safer today because of his actions.

As far as the Trump administration's goals on North Korea are concerned, nothing has changed. Our objective remains the final, fully-verified denuclearization of North Korea, as agreed to by Chairman Kim Jong Un.

As a follow-up to the President's successful summit with Chairman Kim, on July 5th I traveled to North Korea to make progress on the commitments that were made in Singapore. We are engaged in patient diplomacy, but we will not let this drag out to no end. I emphasized this position in the productive discussions I had with Vice Chairman Kim Yong Chol.

President Trump remains upbeat about the prospects of North Korean denuclearization. Progress is happening. We need Chairman Kim Jong Un to follow through on his commitments made in Singapore. Until North Korea eliminates its weapons of mass destruction, our sanctions, and those at the United Nations, will remain in effect. Multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions require North Korea to eliminate all of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. Those resolutions were passed unanimously, and are binding. We absolutely need every single nation to maintain the enforcement of those sanctions to which every nation is committed. The path ahead is not easy, but our hopes for a safer world—and a brighter future for North Korea—endure.

The National Security Strategy also calls for "Peace through Strength." President Trump's engagement on NATO has resulted in greater burden sharing that will strengthen the entire alliance against myriad conventional and unconventional threats. Allies have spent \$41 billion in increased defense investment since 2016.

Last year's \$14.4 billion in new spending, a 5.1 percent increase, was the largest in a generation. Eight allies will meet the 2% pledge this year, and eighteen are on track to do so by 2024.

NATO will remain an indispensable pillar of American national security. We know weakness provokes our enemies, but strength and cohesion protect us. The more every NATO member contributes, the better the Alliance can fulfill its mission of deterring threats to our nations. This increased commitment is what the President wants.

From the outset of this administration, as outlined in the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, and the Russia Integrated Strategy, our approach has been the same: to steadily raise the costs of aggression until Vladimir Putin chooses a less confrontational foreign policy, while keeping the door open for dialogue in our national interest. Between our two nations, the U.S. and Russia have 90% of the world's nuclear weapons. President Trump believes that two great nuclear powers should not have such a contentious relationship. This is not just in our interest, but in the interest of the whole world. He strongly believes that now is the time for direct communication in our relationship in order to make clear to President Putin that there is the possibility to reverse the negative course of our relationship. Otherwise, the administration will continue imposing tough actions against Russia in response to its malign activities.

We can't make progress on issues of mutual concern unless we are talking about them. I am referring to key issues like stopping terrorism, obtaining peace in Ukraine, stopping the civil war in Syria and delivering humanitarian assistance, ensuring security for Israel, and shutting down all of Iran's malign activity.

On Iran, President Trump has said that "Iran is not the same country it was five months ago." That's because our campaign of financial pressure, our withdrawal from the nuclear deal, and our full-throated support for the Iranian people, which I articulated in a speech this past Sunday, are having an impact.

In Helsinki, we sought to explore whether Russia was interested in improving the relationship, but made clear that the ball is in Russia's court. We defended America's fundamental strategic interests in Syria and Ukraine, and I personally made clear to the Russians that there will be severe consequences for interference in our democratic processes.

I would also add that President Trump is well-aware of the challenges that Russia poses to the United States and our partners and allies. And he has taken a staggering number of actions to protect our interests. As just a few pieces of proof that President Trump holds Russia accountable when warranted, I cite, as a sample:

- the 213 sanctions we have imposed on Russian entities and individuals,
- the 60 Russian spies expelled from America and the closure of Russia's consulate in Seattle in response to Russia's chemical weapons use in the U.K.,
- the closure of Russia's consulate in San Francisco, in response to Russia's cutting U.S. diplomatic staffing in Russia by almost 70 percent,
- the 150 military exercises we have led or participated in in Europe this year alone,
- the more than \$11 billion we have put forward for the European Deterrence Initiative,
- and the defensive weapons we have helped make available to Ukraine and Georgia.
- And just last week the Department of Defense announced an additional \$200 million in security cooperation funds to Ukraine.

If that is not enough for you, I brought a long list with me today of other actions the administration has taken in response to Russian malign activity.

Additionally, I want to assure this Committee that the United States does not, and will not, recognize the Kremlin's purported annexation of Crimea. We stand together with allies, partners, and the international community in our commitment to Ukraine and its territorial integrity. There will be no relief of Crimea-related sanctions until Russia returns control of the Crimean peninsula to Ukraine. To this end, today we are formalizing United States policy of non-recognition by releasing a Crimea Declaration.

Finally, President Trump has stated, "I accept our intelligence community's conclusion that Russia's meddling in the 2016 election took place." He has a complete and proper understanding of what happened. This is perfectly clear to me personally based on the many hours I have spent briefing President Trump on Russia-related issues as CIA Director and Secretary of State.

I am also certain he deeply respects the difficult and dangerous work that our patriots in the intelligence community do every single day.

I'm now happy to take your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

The Secretary's staff has asked that we absolutely stay to the 7-minute deal. So if we could not ask five-part questions and end at 6:58, if you give the respondent time to answer within the 7 minutes too, I would appreciate it.

With that, I will defer to Senator Menendez. I withhold my time for interjections along the way. Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, when the President meets alone with President Putin, it allows the Kremlin-sponsored state media and the Russian Ministry of Defense to provide more information, at least from their perspective, not only to the American people, but sometimes it seems to the members of the President's own cabinet. So I would like to ask you some questions to get to understand what actually happened.

Has the President told you what he and President Putin discussed in their 2-hour closed door meeting in Helsinki?

Secretary POMPEO. The Presidents have a prerogative to choose who is in meetings or not. I am confident you have had private one-on-one meetings in your life as well. You have chosen that setting as the most efficient way to—

Senator MENENDEZ. I just asked you a simple question. Did he tell you whether or not—what happened in those 2 hours?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, Senator. The predicate of your question implied some notion that there was something improper about having a one-on-one meeting. I completely disagree with the premise of your question.

Senator MENENDEZ. I did not ask you a predicate. I asked you a simple question. I hope we are going to get through it. Did he tell you what transpired—

Secretary POMPEO. I have had a number of conversations with President Trump about what transpired in the meeting. I was also present when he and President Putin both gave us a sense of what they discussed in the meeting that followed immediately after. I have also had the chance to speak with Sergey Lavrov twice about the Russian view on what took place. I think I have a pretty complete understanding of what took place in that meeting.

Senator MENENDEZ. Good. Did you speak to the translator who was at that meeting?

Secretary POMPEO. No, I have not.

Senator MENENDEZ. Have you seen any of her notes?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I have never—I have been in lots of meetings. I have had lots of notetakers and lots of translators. I have never relied on the work that they did to understand what took place in that meeting, and it does not need to be done here.

Senator MENENDEZ. Did the President discuss—

Secretary POMPEO. And it will not be.

Senator MENENDEZ. Did the President discuss relaxing U.S. sanctions on Russia, including CAATSA sanctions?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, the U.S. policy with respect to sanctions remains completely unchanged.

Senator MENENDEZ. So the President did not—is what you are telling me—I asked a very specific question.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, Senator, and I gave you a very specific answer.

Senator MENENDEZ. Did the President tell you that he discussed relaxing Russia sanctions or not? Yes or no?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, Presidents are entitled to have private meetings. I am telling you what U.S. policy is. I came here today—

Senator MENENDEZ. No. But you told me that you had a conversation—

Secretary POMPEO. That is right.

Senator MENENDEZ. —in which he told you what transpired. I think the nation and all of us who are policymakers deserve to know so that we can fashion policy accordingly. Did he tell Putin that I will release or ultimately relax sanctions?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, what you need to conduct your role, your appropriate role, I will provide you today, that is, United States policy with respect to the issues you request. You asked me about U.S. policy with respect to sanctions, and I can confirm to you that no commitment has been made to change those policies in any way.

Senator MENENDEZ. Did the President at this meeting call upon President Putin to withdraw from Crimea and eastern Ukraine?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I began my statement today with the United States Government's policy with respect to Crimea.

Senator MENENDEZ. I understand the declaration. I welcome it. I am glad—it seems like we had to do a lot of effort to get there, but the question is, when he had a chance, did he confront Putin and say we do not recognize your annexation of Crimea, we do not recognize your continuing hostilities in eastern Ukraine, and there are consequences for that?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, the President was very clear with Vladimir Putin about U.S. positions. They are the U.S. positions that are the Trump administration's positions, and he spoke about them very firmly and clearly when he met with Vladimir Putin.

Senator MENENDEZ. And he told you that.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am telling you what he had a conversation with Vladimir Putin about, and I am telling you what U.S. policy is today. Senator, I understand the game that you are playing.

Senator MENENDEZ. No, Mr. Secretary, with all due respect, I do not appreciate you characterizing my questions. My questions is to get to the truth. We do not know what the truth is. And the only way that we will know what the truth is, what transpired in those 2 hours, a highly amazing period of time to spend alone one-on-one, is by understanding at least that if you were briefed by the President, what he told you. I do not think that is unfair to know, to understand what policy is.

Let me ask you this. Did the President say that we are going to change our force structure in Syria?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, Presidents are permitted to have conversations with their cabinet members that are not repeated in public. I owe the President the capacity for him to have conversa-

tions with him, provide him the best foreign policy advice that I can. It is what I was brought on to do.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you, Mr. Secretary. Here is something you can answer for me because you are not going to answer any of the questions that would get us to the truth.

As CIA Director, you stated in an interview with the BBC that you fully expect Russia to continue its attacks on our democracy by attempting to interfere in our midterm elections as we speak. In his conversation with Putin, I hope the President laid out the consequences of interference in the 2018 election. But I know you cannot tell me that.

Secretary POMPEO. Actually I can tell you that.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. You want to share that one with me.

Secretary POMPEO. No, I cannot—

Senator MENENDEZ. That one you want to share with me?

Secretary POMPEO. No, Senator, I can tell you that because the President has disclosed that. The President disclosed what he said to Vladimir Putin about Russian interference in our elections, and he said that he is confident that as a result of that conversation, Vladimir understands that it will not be tolerated.

Senator MENENDEZ. I wish he had said that in public in Helsinki.

Let me ask you this. Senator Graham and I and others are working on a new bill to hold Russia accountable. Given that you assert the administration is tough on Russia, will you commit to working with us on a new Russia sanctions bill?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

North Korea. When you last appeared, I asked you a series of critical questions about what is our policy in North Korea, and to your credit, I must say that I largely agreed with what our goals are.

Now I want to ask you, since we have not heard anything, not a classified briefing, not anything as it relates to North Korea, did North Korea agree with our definition of denuclearization, meaning the dismantlement, removal of all nuclear weapons, facilities, technology, and material from North Korea?

Secretary POMPEO. I think I can answer your question, but let me begin by saying I am engaged in a complex negotiation with the North Koreans, so I do not intend in this public setting to share the details of every conversation that took place in those. But I will attempt to answer your questions without disclosing the contents of the negotiation.

I am very confident that the North Koreans understand our definition of denuclearization, a very broad one that goes from infrastructure and nuclear warheads through chemical, biological weapon—

Senator MENENDEZ. We understand it because you laid it for the record.

Have they agreed with you that that is the definition—

Secretary POMPEO. I believe they thoroughly understand that.

Senator MENENDEZ. They understand it, but they did not agree.

Did they agree to end their production and enrichment of uranium and plutonium for military programs?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I would welcome the chance to respond to your questions. If you would let me finish—

Senator MENENDEZ. It is a simple yes or no.

Secretary POMPEO. —I think it would be most illuminating for the folks watching.

Senator MENENDEZ. It is a simple yes or no.

Secretary POMPEO. Could you repeat the question, please, Senator. It was the previous question I did not have a chance to answer.

Senator MENENDEZ. Surely. Did North Korea agree to end the production and enrichment of uranium and plutonium for military programs?

Secretary POMPEO. They have agreed to denuclearize fully. Yes, Senator. And it certainly includes the full range of—

Senator MENENDEZ. I would love for you to come to a classified setting and tell all members what exactly transpired because we do not know.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Mr. Secretary, thank you for doing this job. The President made a wise decision appointing you as Secretary of State, and you are acquitting yourself very well here today and we appreciate that. You have always been straightforward with us, and I appreciate that. I know many of my colleagues—not all, but many of my colleagues fully appreciate that.

Secretary POMPEO. Are you prepared to say “most,” Senator, or are you just going to go with “many”?

Senator RISCH. I am going to stay with “many.”

[Laughter.]

Senator RISCH. Let me say that as far as what happened at the NATO summit, very few Americans heard anything except the argument that went on about funding. Now, I know the President believes and I know you believe and I believe and I think most everyone believes that NATO is the most successful military alliance in the history of the world. And as you pointed out, it is certainly one of the pillars of our national security and one that we need to support and one that we need to work well.

There are very few downsides of NATO, but there is one blemish. And the President has underscored that publicly and well. His predecessor attempted to do it. All their predecessors attempted to do it. All those of us that meet with the Europeans from time to time underscore it, and that is the funding, or the lack thereof, that the Europeans have done. Only eight of the NATO nations are actually meeting the commitment of 2 percent. First of all, the President is to be commended for underscoring this, as only he can do in his unique way, and actually getting them to start talking about and now finally starting to agree to that.

But there were other things that were lost as far as that meeting is concerned, and I would like you to talk about those things for a few minutes.

Number one is on the deterrence side, the four 30s commitment to increase NATO readiness and speed up the time it takes allies to assemble and deploy forces. And that is a huge step forward.

The efforts to improve mobility and establish a process to enhance the speed at which NATO can make decisions.

The fight against terrorism and increase in allied resilience against terrorist threats through a new framework to share biometric data is a major accomplishment.

And finally, the opportunity for Macedonia to receive an invitation to join NATO and fulfill the promise from the Bucharest summit. That was a positive step for the alliance and for the Balkans.

Could you comment on those very important steps forward that happened at this NATO summit?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator Risch, it was an incredibly productive NATO summit. From my conversations with Secretary General Stoltenberg, he said among the most productive that he had ever been part of, and he has been doing this a little while.

You talked about the four 30s, 30 squadrons, 30 battalions, and 30 naval combatants ready to go in 30 days. It is something NATO has not been able to do for quite some time. There is now a real commitment. We have to follow through to make sure that the implementation of that occurs. It would be a great thing to deter Russia if we can get those countries and our allies to get to that level.

You talked about the increase in burden sharing. It seemed to get all the focus. It is certainly important that the Europeans are as committed to deterring Russia as the United States of America and need to demonstrate that through their defense not only dollars but readiness as well. We have seen reports about the absence of German readiness. They need to truly be ready.

The President also raised another issue about energy and energy security at the NATO summit. He talked about the Nordstream 2 pipeline and the risk that that creates to the alliance in the event that Russia should decide to use energy as a weapon to coerce either formally or informally Germany or other European countries. He raised it to the forefront, and frankly, there are European countries that understand that risk and support America and our position on that as well.

And then finally you talked a little bit about the NATO mission, its new role in fighting terrorism. I want to say thanks to so many of the European countries that have stepped forward. Even just this past few—I guess it is now 2 weeks since the NATO summit—over 1,000 additional commitments from allied NATO partners headed to assist us in Operation Resolute Support in Afghanistan. That is a great commitment, something that President Trump worked hard on at the summit and really good outcomes for America.

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you so much. You are to be personally commended for those great successes, as is the President, for leading in that regard.

It is unfortunate that our friends and allies' feathers were ruffled a little bit just because we said they were not paying their bills, but that has been going on for some time and I think we are going to tolerate that. But they have got to step up, and I know you underscored that and the President has certainly underscored that with them.

I want to talk about Iran for just a moment. One of the big unreported stories as far as foreign relations is concerned is the issues

and the difficulties that the Iranian people are having internally, financially and otherwise. And I know we are not in a classified setting, but there is some open reporting on these sources. And the regime that is there is struggling with this. Indeed, I think that is probably why they tried to poke the President the other day to try to take the heat off, the heat they are getting at home.

Could you talk a little bit about what is going on internally, again knowing that we are in an open setting?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, there is an enormous economic challenge inside of Iran today. It is an economic structure that simply does not work. When you are a country of that scale that foments terror through Lebanese Hezbollah, through Shia militias in Iraq, into Yemen, conducts assassination attempts in European countries, provides enormous support for Hafez al-Assad outside of Lebanese Hezbollah in Syria, that is expensive.

And I think the Iranian people are beginning to see that that is not the model that they want, that the Iranian expansionism that the Supreme Leader and Qasem Soleimani so favor is not what they are looking for. And I think you are beginning to see the economic impact combined with understandings inside of Iran of the kleptocracy that it is leading to fundamental decisions that the Iranian people will ultimately have to make.

Senator RISCH. Do you agree with me that that acceleration of that understanding by the Iranian people has been very rapid over the last 6 months?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. I think it has been going on longer than that, but yes.

Senator RISCH. It has been going on longer, but I am talking about the acceleration.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, Senator, I think that is a fair statement.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could, just one interjection. I know the phrase "paying their bills" has been used, and every NATO country needs to be contributing 2 percent to defense. And I have noticed those near the Russian border always do. But that is a misnomer, is it not? What we want them to do is contribute at least 2 percent. These NATO countries are not paying bills to the United States, as sometimes is projected. Is that correct?

Secretary POMPEO. The shortfalls that the President identified really are in two buckets. There is a NATO common fund that is contributed to by every nation, and the United States is, by far, the largest contributor to that fund. And then there are monies that are paid for nations to raise their own militaries and to defend themselves. That is the 2 percent number to which we have been referring.

The CHAIRMAN. Right, right. But it would be a mischaracterization to make it appear that they are not paying bills to the United States.

Secretary POMPEO. That is correct, Senator. That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here.

It is my understanding that the President is going to invite Mr. Putin to the United States to follow up on the understandings

reached in Helsinki. Can you just briefly tell me what those understandings or agreements reached in Helsinki at the meeting are?

Secretary POMPEO. Sure. I can certainly share with you the things that we have been tasked to follow up on by President Trump following that meeting. There is a handful.

So there is an agreement to establish some business-to-business leadership exchanges as historically had been undertaken but have fallen away. These would be business leaders that would participate in this. I understand that this went on for years and years and was ceased a handful of years ago.

Senator CARDIN. If we could do it briefly. I understand you want to give a complete thing, and I appreciate that.

Secretary POMPEO. It is what you asked for.

Senator CARDIN. I understand that. Business-to-business. Next issue?

Secretary POMPEO. The President asked us to look at reestablishing a counterterrorism council that was held at the level of the Deputy Secretary of State for many years, but had also ceased to happen. I think at this point I think that makes sense—

Senator CARDIN. Counterterrorism cooperation.

Secretary POMPEO. We are working to see in Syria what are the possibilities that can be achieved so that the now between 6 million and 7 million externally displaced persons have the opportunity to return. We made clear this should happen through the political process in Geneva. But we are working to see if we cannot get Russia to be more cooperative in terms of driving towards a political resolution there that would take down the violence levels and create some opportunity to begin a political resolution of the process in Syria.

Senator CARDIN. Any discussions on sanctions? You said there was no easing of the sanctions.

Secretary POMPEO. No, Senator, no easing of the sanctions.

Senator CARDIN. Was there any discussion about Magnitsky? Because certain names associated with Magnitsky came out in Helsinki. Was there any discussion with the President on the Magnitsky sanctions?

Secretary POMPEO. No. There has been no change in U.S. policy with respect to Magnitsky.

I think I know what you are referring to. Let me make clear. The United States will defend our team in the field and the team that has been in the field when it retires and leaves the field. We understand that Americans deserve the protection of the United States of America both during their time in service and thereafter.

Senator CARDIN. Was there any agreements reached in regards to Ukraine?

Secretary POMPEO. No, Senator. That is an agree to disagree. That is, the U.S. policy has not changed and you can see that. Right? \$200 million since the Helsinki summit provided to the Ukrainians. I think there was lots of concern, and I saw it. I could find you all's quotes if you would like me to go drag them out—concerns that President Trump would make a change in position with respect to Ukraine.

Senator CARDIN. And you made that clear.

Secretary POMPEO. And there is none. It is a policy that the previous administration refused to undertake. So I hear comparative—it is important, Senator. Comparison matters here because there is a narrative that has developed that somehow President Trump is weak on Russia, when in fact the converse is true.

Senator CARDIN. I heard you talk and brag about the number of sanctions—

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, these were just facts.

Senator CARDIN. The fact is that the Congress passed the CAATSA statute that required sanctions to be imposed, and there are sanctions that are to be imposed under CAATSA that have not been imposed. And the facts are the administration has sought a waiver in regards to CAATSA in regards to the National Defense Authorization Act. So I just really want to point out—and we have had this from previous administrations, but not as much as we are hearing today, that what Congress is requiring you to do all of a sudden you found religion and have taken credit for it. But in reality you have not implemented on time the sanctions that have been passed by Congress.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, first, well, that is not true. We have passed a number of sanctions under the CAATSA provisions and it is also true—at least my best recollection of the Constitution is the President signed that law as well . . .

Senator CARDIN. And he complained when he signed it.

Secretary POMPEO. . . . So I thank you for presenting that law. We appreciate it. We think it makes good sense. The President signed it as well. We have passed sanctions under that very law, and we have passed sanctions previous administrations did not do.

Senator CARDIN. Please read the President's comment when he signed the law because it is very interesting—his comments.

Let me move on to our policy in regards to nuclear proliferation in Iran and in North Korea because I am having a hard time understanding the comparison between these two countries.

In North Korea, we have a country that has a nuclear weapon. The President has met with the leader of that country and has at least given a signal to some countries that in fact there may be relaxation of those. We are having problems with China today, as I understand.

In Iran, we had a commitment for a short-term ending of their nuclear program. We were able to isolate Iran, getting the support of China, Russia, and Europe. And we were able to keep the temperature down in regards to their nuclear program. Now by pulling out, we are now seeing we do not have any commitments on the short term if Iran walks away from the agreement because there are already sanctions now under the United States. We have been isolated, not Iran. And of course, Iran today was not pursuing a nuclear program. I agree with you there may be long-term issues.

So I am having a hard time understanding our strategy in regards to preventing nuclear proliferation.

The last point I would make. We had a hearing in this committee as to what is necessary to move forward with North Korea on giving up nuclear weapons. And the first thing they talked about, you have to have a full declaration of its nuclear arsenal and a timeline for dismantling. And I am getting my information now from the

South Koreans, not from the Americans. The South Koreans have been reported to say that you asked for that information and you have not been able to get that information from Kim Jong Un or his representatives.

So what have we gotten in North Korea, and why are we allowing North Korea to continue to have a nuclear weapon when the strategy is that as long as Iran is doing any types of enrichment, we are going to impose sanctions against them?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, let me try—that was a long question. Let me try and unpack it a little bit.

So let me give you the common theme. We want neither Iran nor North Korea to have the capacity to proliferate nuclear weapons, to enrich uranium, or build their own weapons program. That is the mission set. It draws them together. That sets the conditions for President Trump's understanding of how one achieves non-proliferation in the world, and that is the missions we are undertaking in each of those two countries. They are in different places, and we are working on an approach in each place that we think increases the likelihood that we are able to successfully achieve that, a mission I know you share.

The CHAIRMAN. Before turning to Senator Rubio, a second interjection. I know mention was made of a waiver in the NDAA by Senator Mattis—I mean, Secretary Mattis. Yes, he would not want to be demoted to that level I know. But I support that. And the purpose of that waiver, was it not, was to allow countries that we are dealing with that we wish to buy American military equipment to be weaned off Russian equipment. They still had to buy parts to do so, so that we can more fully implement strategies with them, working with them to really push back against other countries? Is that correct?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator Corker, you captured it very well. Secretary Mattis and I both put forward this proposal, a request to the Senate for these waivers. These are countries that have historic Russian weapon systems. If we deny them to have the capacity to have spare parts or to round out that process, then we are likely to drive them into the hands of the Russians. I do not think that was the aim of the sanctions themselves, and so we are working to effectuate the intent of the statute by seeking this waiver. It is pretty narrow.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Rubio?

Senator CARDIN. Would the chairman yield so I could clarify that?

The CHAIRMAN. Rubio may yield. Go ahead.

Senator CARDIN. My point is that this is an issue we talked about in the development of the CAATSA bill. There was absolutely no debate in this committee on the waiver request by the administration. I disagree with our distinguished chairman as to whether it was handled right. The countries had over a year to resolve that.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. It had become an acute issue, and it is a defense-related issue. And I am glad that we have been able to resolve it in a manner that will allow these countries to wean off Russian equipment and begin buying ours.

Senator Rubio?

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. Just watching to see if they reset my clock. It is like an NBA game.

The CHAIRMAN. Reset the clock.

Senator RUBIO. That is all right. We will figure it out. I will tell you when the time is up. Do not worry.

When Vladimir Putin decided to interfere in our elections, you would agree he undertook a cost-benefit analysis. This is what the price would be for doing this. This is the benefit I think I would gain from it.

And so where it leaves us is we have to do two things. We have to defend against potential interference, election systems and the like. But I think the other is we have to make sure that the price is higher than the benefit.

And that actually points to one of the things you have already mentioned and that is what we have already done. If you start to line up some of the things that we have done in response to that and other things, it is a pretty extensive list, including things we have been asking for, for 4 years that have finally happened: the Javelin anti-tank missiles for Ukraine and Georgia, the support of NATO's new posture in Central and Eastern Europe, the variety of designations under both Ukraine and cyber-related executive orders that were from the Obama administration, sanctions under CAATSA and others more to come for cybersecurity, several rounds of designation of individuals for weapons proliferation, terror and transnational crime, export restrictions on entities that violated the INF Treaty. We closed consulates in San Francisco and in Seattle. We closed an annex in DC. We closed the trade office in New York after the poison nerve gas attack in the U.K. We have expelled 60 other diplomats. All of those things happened under this administration, and these are pretty substantial, including the sanctions.

But, obviously, even that price is not high enough because the intelligence community continues to tell us that they are postured and are actively engaged in both attacking our democracy and posturing to do more of that in the future.

So my question is along the lines of a piece of legislation that Senator Van Hollen and I and a group of other Senators have jumped on board on, and it aims to do three things. One is sort of define interference. It is not just five Russian guys on Twitter. I mean, define it in terms of its meaning to our republic. Require the Director of National Intelligence to issue a report within 30 days of the election about whether or not interference occurred. And then put in statute a menu of very crippling sanctions. And the purpose of that would be so that Vladimir Putin knows before he makes this decision going to 2018 or in the future this is the price I will pay if I do this again. That is why it is called the DETER Act to get on the front end of it.

I do not ask you to opine on the bill because I know you do not have it before you, but on the concept of building in deterrence on the front end, is that not an approach that we can take to hopefully deter him from doing this in the future by making him clearly understand how high the price would be in comparison to the benefit?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I completely agree with you that there is a cost-benefit calculation that is undertaken before the Russians act. So it follows necessarily that putting on notice with

essentially a failsafe, if you will, about things that will follow has the likelihood of being successful in raising the costs in terms of how he calculates risk associated with a wide range of actions.

Senator RUBIO. You will be asked plenty about Russia, so I do not want to undermine that. But I think the single biggest national security threat in the long term to the United States is China. I mean, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, we are in competition with a near peer adversary. And it is not just military. It is economic. It is technological. It is geopolitical and the like. We have seen their impressive and massive military buildup, the quantum leaps they are making in technology. We see that the work they are undertaking to sort of destroy the U.S. world order and rebuild it to one more of their liking. We have seen the gains they have made on 5G alone. I mean, China Mobile will be the only company in the world that can build standalone 5G networks by 2020. And what is really outrageous is many of these advances are not the result of hard work and ingenuity. They are also the result of intellectual property theft, forced transfers, and the like.

This is part of a tactic that they have been using for a while. And I think the South China Sea is a great example of it. They do not make these big, sweeping changes. It is sort of a sustained sort of slow and incremental but more assertive demands each time creating new normals along the way. And what they have done in the South China Sea is evidence of that.

And the only ways that seems to work in response to their aggression are two things. The first is committed and sustained escalation across the relationship, meaning you do not carve out pieces of it. They do it that way. We have to do it that way. Our whole relationship, sustained and committed pressure. And the other is invoking the help of our foreign partners.

And what I am troubled by in regards to the administration posture on this is invoking the help of our foreign partners has become complicated because we are currently engaged with trade disputes with the EU and Japan, Mexico, and Canada, which we should have teamed up with to confront them. And I understand that trade is an issue that needs to be addressed, but I do not know why we did not address China first together and then dealt with our allies second.

And the other is the sustained and committed escalation across the entire relationship. And on that front, I am puzzled by the decision the administration made on ZTE. And I know that was not a State Department decision. It was a Commerce one. Because I agree that if the ZTE issue was simply a sanctions violation, the penalties imposed have been devastating. But ZTE is more than a sanctions threat to the United States. It is part of a broader telecommunication threat that the Chinese industries pose to the United States. And to threaten to shut them down and then pull back from it is not the sort of committed and sustained escalation across the entire relationship. The carving out of one company sends them the message that they can pick away at different parts of that relationship and undermine our willingness to sustain pressure on them to get a better equilibrium.

So I do not know what the State Department's role was in that decision, but moving forward, what is our broader strategic ap-

proach to the threat that China poses? Because they do not seek parity. They seek to overtake us.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, you have laid out what I think is the principal challenge for the United States over the coming years, maybe a decade, the issue of China. They have got a lot of folks and a big economy. That puts them in the position to be a competitor of the United States in a way a country like Russia with an economy smaller than Italy's cannot maintain over some period of time. And so we do need a broad, comprehensive response.

And I think all of the West, not just the United States, was too slow in seeing this. Your point about how they turned up the heat slowly over time. I think that recognition is there, but I do not believe that the structures are in place today to respond to that comprehensively.

I was with Australian partners yesterday at a meeting with Secretary Mattis and myself and our Australian counterparts. They too—they just passed a set of non-interference rules on China. They are getting up to speed in the same way that as you all took a look at CFIUS and FIRRMA. We are getting up to speed. We are beginning to strike that comprehensive response versus China that I think will ultimately do what has historically happened, allow America to prevail.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you very much.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you, Assistant Secretary Mitchell, and our charge in Turkey, Phil Kosnett, for your hard work and coordination on the efforts to release Pastor Brunson. As you pointed out, his move from prison to house arrest is a positive development. Obviously, we have a lot more work to do in terms of getting him back to the United States and also pressing the Turkish Government to release the other Americans that they are holding. But it is a positive step, and thank you for that.

I am concerned, Mr. Secretary, because it has been 1 week—a little over a week—since the Helsinki meeting between President Trump and Vladimir Putin, and yet other than the brief description you just gave us, we do not really know what was discussed in that meeting. We have heard DNI Coats, General Votel, and a number of State Department officials, including those who were present in last week's committee meeting on Iran, indicate that they still do not have a full understanding of what was discussed in that meeting. And we are seeing almost daily attempts by the Kremlin to take advantage of this opportunity as they release their own readouts of the conversation and broadcast news of various agreements that they say were reached in that meeting. So for me, that is why I am so concerned and why I want to know exactly what was agreed to in that meeting.

On Syria, President Trump said at his joint news conference that the two leaders discussed Syria at length. The Russian Ministry of Defense has indicated that the two leaders agreed to military cooperation in Syria. Did they do that?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, the United States policy with respect to de-confliction with Russia has not changed. I will defer to the Department of Defense for details around that, but I can tell you

that the policy that was in place with respect to their efforts to keep American pilots safe and keep American forces safe in Syria—that policy has not changed.

Senator SHAHEEN. Do you know if they discussed that policy?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I do know that they discussed Syria. They absolutely discussed Syria. The focus of that discussion—I think President Trump assured this was an effort to find a political resolution there and to get the displaced persons the opportunity to return to Syria.

And I think the President has talked about one more item. So as the President shared it, I feel like I can as well. I think he also talked about America's continued commitment to ensure that Israel was secure from threats in Syria as well, and that topic was discussed by them as well. I think the President has previously shared that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Do you know if there was any sort of downgrading of our U.S. presence in Syria that was discussed?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, there has been no change in U.S. policy with respect to our activities in Syria.

Senator SHAHEEN. I understand, but that is not exactly the question I am asking.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, it is what matters. It is what matters. What matters is what President Trump has directed us to do following his meeting with Vladimir Putin. It is that he has told his senior leadership team to do and how he wants us to deploy his foreign policy strategy.

Senator SHAHEEN. And do you know if the frozen stabilization funds for Syria, the \$200 million—was that ever discussed?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, we are still working to review that policy. That is a State Department policy. We are still working to review it. The policy was the same day before as it was the day after the President's meeting with Vladimir Putin.

Senator SHAHEEN. And do you know if Iran was referenced in the context of Syria in their discussions?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, again, it is not for me to disclose the contents of those conversations. I can tell you that each time I have spoken with President Trump both before the Helsinki summit and after, Iran has been a central point that we have focused on with respect to U.S. policy in Syria. It, I am confident, will remain so.

Senator SHAHEEN. So in an interview, General Votel was asked about whether a deal had been made on Syria between President Trump and Vladimir Putin. And he said, as you indicated, that he had received no instructions to change what he is doing. And he went further on to say—and I quote—"I would want to make sure that this is not something that we stepped into lightly. I am not recommending that, and that would be a pretty big step at this point."

In response to his comments, the Russian Ministry of Defense put out a statement and also posted on social media—and again, I am quoting the Russian media. They say—ministry, I mean. With his statements, "General Votel not only discredited the official position of his supreme commander-in-chief but also exacerbated the illegality under international law and U.S. law of the military presence of American service men in Syria."

Can you tell me what our response has been to the Russian Ministry of Defense with respect to this statement?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, my guess, the response would be most appropriately from the Department of Defense and not from the Department of State. But I will humbly suggest to you that you ought to have more confidence in statements from General Votel than the Russian Ministry of Defense.

Senator SHAHEEN. I do have more confidence in General Votel's statement. That is why I am raising this question because it seems to me that our response to the Russian Ministry of Defense ought to be very strong to say they have nothing to say about what our generals are doing in Syria. That is not their business. That is our business. And I would hope that that is a point that we make very strongly.

I had the opportunity to visit Syria a little over 2 weeks ago, and I was very impressed with the work that our military has been doing in northeast Syria along the Turkish border. I was very impressed with the work of the Syrian Democratic Forces. And what I heard over and over again, both from the men and women who were serving and from the Syrian civilians on the ground, was please do not leave us here to the fate of either Assad or the Russians or other forces that may come into that part of Syria. And please, just a little bit in help for reconstruction efforts would go a very long way.

That part of Syria has stabilized. They are into reconstruction. They are sending back people who have been displaced to their homes, and it would be, I believe, a real terrible reversal of policy for us to leave those folks after what we have done and to turn them over to the Russians or to Assad's forces.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, if I might, just so the facts are clear, the previous administration is the one that enabled Russia to have the capacity that they have in Syria today.

Senator SHAHEEN. I am not defending the previous administration, Mr. Secretary. I want this administration to continue doing what is working.

Secretary POMPEO. It is policy, this administration's policy. You are advocating for the continuation of this administration's policy. I think that is important for everyone to understand.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Flake?

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary, for your testimony.

I wanted to commend the State Department, you in particular, for quick statements with regard to the nature of the conversation, as it was between President Putin and President Trump, regarding certain individuals like Mr. McFaul and others traveling to Russia to be interrogated by the Russians. The State Department came out and said that was inappropriate despite the President's statement that it was an incredible offer. It took the White House a full 2 days or 3 days to contradict that statement that President Putin had made. The State Department quickly said that that was inappropriate. So thank you for doing that.

Secretary POMPEO. Thanks. But, Senator, you give me a little bit too much credit. I am doing my level best every day to implement

the President's policies. And that statement was from the United States President's State Department.

Senator FLAKE. Okay. But the United States President said that it was an incredible offer, and so that is why I am pointing out the difference and commending you. Please take it.

[Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. With regard to what else was said during that meeting, I know you have given some indication of what was discussed. Let me just give a sense of how Russia is characterizing that meeting. And this is the problem with a private meeting like this. Many of us voiced strong concerns about having a private meeting like this with no readout officially for what happened.

And here is what happens when a private meeting like that is held. Vladimir Putin's meeting with Donald Trump was, quote, "better than super", Russia's top diplomat has said. The leaders' summit in Helsinki was fabulous. I think that was Lavrov who also said that. The remarks reported by Russian news agencies summed up the mood that Mr. Trump sided with the Kremlin over his own intelligence agencies. So they are reporting that as well. Here is how one paper in Russia characterized it. Trump has failed to dominate Putin. Another tabloid said, "a quiet, modest Trump has paled in comparison with Vladimir Putin". It is clear that Putin has outmaneuvered the U.S. President. That is the Russian media characterizing a meeting, and we have no readout to dispute any of it. All we have are the statements made by the President that they had made an incredible offer, for example, to have former U.S. diplomats shipped off to Russia to be interrogated.

I am glad to hear that, one, a little more time will be had before a new meeting takes place between the two principals. By the way, I think that it is good that our President and the Russian president speak and meet together. That is a good thing. I do not think it is a good thing to meet in private with only an interpreter present with no readout so that whatever is characterized is only characterized by the Russian side.

Do you have any response or thoughts on that?

Secretary POMPEO. So I have a personal experience. I had a private conversation with the North Koreans. We did not issue a readout on the conversations, quite intentionally, and the North Korean press chose to characterize it. We thought it was in America's best interest not to respond tit for tat about the nature of that conversation. We knew the truth. We knew what had taken place there. And you know, it is the North Korean press. And so I assume that most reasonable people will discount it fairly significantly the same way that one might the Russian press.

These are important decisions about how much to disclose about private conversations that were had because everyone knows that you may have an expectation that you will have another private conversation one day. And the absence of their belief that that private conversation has the capacity to remain in that space reduces the freedom to have those conversations.

I know you have had this in your life too, Senator. I know you have had private conversations and you valued them. It was just you and someone else in that room, and it was important. And you did not give anyone a readout from it because you wanted to have

the chance to do that again because you thought you could make real progress with that person.

Senator FLAKE. Let us talk about North Korea. You brought it up. You mentioned that you traveled to North Korea to continue on, as you put it, I guess to follow up on commitments made in Singapore. Let us talk about those commitments for a minute. You mentioned that they have committed to denuclearization. They may have a different readout than we do on what that entails. But so far, they seem to be walking back any commitment, real commitment that was made there.

What commitment, firm commitment, other than discussion of returning remains—I am not discounting that, but in terms of denuclearization, what real commitments were made?

Secretary POMPEO. I am not going to get into the private commitments that have been shared.

I do not think it is fair to characterize them walking back from commitments. Remember where we were. Right? So it all depends on what you draw as the projected line to say are we in a better place or a worse place than we would have been absent the Singapore summit. One can draw counter-factual—we will never know where we might have been.

But I will concede there is an awful long way to go. I am not trying to oversell the accomplishments that we have had towards the path of denuclearization to date. There remains a great deal of work to do. It will be highly contested. That is, the modalities, the means, the timing of this will be things that I am confident we will be discussing for a period of time.

There have been public reports. And I know the United States is tracking the disassembly of a missile engine test site, something that Chairman Kim committed orally. It was not in the written agreement itself, but Chairman Kim committed in his conversation with President Trump to do. They are beginning to dismantle that. It has to do with their missile program. It is a good thing. Steps forward.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Quickly before the time is out, something completely different. The country of Rwanda right now—and you may be familiar with this because of this week's focus on religious freedom—has indicated a move toward severe restrictions on religious freedom, particularly from outside groups. What are the plans of the State Department to let them know that that is not in their own interests nor ours?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I share your concerns. I will need to get back to you in terms of what actions we think we—I know we will call it out. I know we will label it for what it is. It is tragic. Anyway, I share your concern, Senator. It is a huge challenge for us.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Secretary, just a couple of thoughts. I was very discouraged at the Helsinki summit when the President basically was offered

a choice in some of the questions, did he believe U.S. intel or did he believe Vladimir Putin's protestations that he had engaged in hacking of the election. And he basically said my own people have made a great case to me, and Vladimir Putin has made a great case to me. I do not see why Russia would have done this. He came back and corrected it the next day in the United States, but at the end, he said I believe my intel community but there are a lot of people out there. It could have been someone else. And then this dragged on for a couple of days.

You know where I live. You know I have a lot of constituents who used to be your employees at the CIA. People come up to me all the time in Virginia and say I am with the IC. And they are very demoralized by this. They are very demoralized that when standing next to Vladimir Putin, the President's words were to suggest that he trusted Vladimir Putin over them.

There was the suggestion when President Trump said it was an incredible offer about Ambassador McFaul, that he was also potentially willing to throw not just intel folks under the bus but State Department diplomats under the bus. They live in Virginia too. They feel the demoralization about your comments today that we are going to go to bat for a current reformer. That is very, very helpful.

But what I want to ask you about is our military and our military leadership. There was an article yesterday in "The Washington Post." General Joseph F. Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—as of Monday, Dunford still had not been briefed on Helsinki even though it directly affects 1 million troops Dunford oversees.

Do you know why there would have been no briefing of General Dunford about the discussions that took place at Helsinki?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, you have to ask the Department of Defense or Chairman Dunford.

Senator Kaine. But you do not dispute that that was—you have no knowledge that there was a briefing of General Dunford today about the Helsinki discussion. Do you?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, you just read me a piece from "The Washington Post."

Senator Kaine. Yes, but I am asking your knowledge. Do you have any knowledge that the administration has shared discussions about U.S.-Russia military issues with the head of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff?

Secretary POMPEO. I have actually spoken with Chairman Dunford about it. I was with him yesterday in a series of meetings, and we had a chance to have a conversation about it. Yes, absolutely.

Senator Kaine. So yesterday may have been the first time he was briefed about it.

Secretary POMPEO. That is possible, yes.

Senator Kaine. I was going to ask about General Votel, the information that Jeanne Shaheen, Senator Shaheen, mentioned earlier. He expressed wariness about working with Russia and the Russian Defense Ministry. This is an interesting statement. They went after General Votel, the head of CENTCOM, who oversees, as you know, U.S. military operations in the Middle East, including Syria.

Quote: With his statements, General Votel not only discredited the official position of his supreme commander-in-chief. Are you aware of what the official position is that is being referenced in that statement?

Secretary POMPEO. You would have to speak with the Russian Ministry of Defense to know what it was he was referring to.

Senator KAINE. But you can understand why we are concerned if it is being reported in the Russian press, as Senator Flake and Senator Shaheen said, that they are talking about official positions that the President has outlined. As far as you know, General Votel's statements did not violate any official position of the United States. Did they?

Secretary POMPEO. You seem to be giving a great deal of credit to the Russian Ministry of Defense.

Senator KAINE. Let me ask you about General Votel.

Secretary POMPEO. They might not share that same—

Senator KAINE. Let me ask you about General Votel.

Secretary POMPEO. I have great belief in his truthfulness.

Senator KAINE. So you do not believe that any of the statements that he has made, including those that I read, violate any official position of the United States. Do you?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, if you would, it is best to approach General Votel, the Department of Defense. I mean, we are now three orders removed.

Senator KAINE. If I could introduce for the record—there is an interesting article in BuzzFeed News just recently, today, that just lists a whole series of headlines. And I think these are instructive, Mr. Chair. Trump's announcement that he will end U.S.-Korea drills catches Pentagon off guard. Pentagon and Seoul surprised by Trump pledge to halt military exercises. Pentagon caught off guard by Space Force announcement. Trump signals withdrawal of various U.S. troops from Syria surprising Pentagon and the State Department. Pentagon, caught by surprise by Trump's travel ban, pushes for some Iraqis to get special consideration. U.S. Joint Chiefs blindsided by Trump's transgender ban. NORTHCOM caught off guard as Trump orders troops to U.S.-Mexico border. If I could introduce this for the record, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The information referred to is located at the end of the hearing]

Senator KAINE. I worry about an administration that would take the Putin position over our intel community. I worry about the administration that would suggest it might be a great deal to consider handing over a former diplomat for questioning. I worry about an administration that is catching the Pentagon off guard, that is not consulting with General Dunford or briefing him for a week after a summit of this importance to our military.

Mr. Secretary, you are aware of the NDAA prohibition, the current prohibition, on Russian and U.S. joint military operations. Are you not?

Secretary POMPEO. I am aware of the existence of that provision. Yes.

Senator KAINE. The provision prohibits any use of funds—it is in the NDAA—to support joint Russia and U.S. military operations,

and it also gives the Secretary of Defense the ability to undertake a national security waiver if he thinks that that is the right idea.

Does the administration accept the legality and binding nature of that provision of law?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I think the DOD General Counsel would be the right person to ask about the intricacies of an NDAA provision that had to do with complex issues that span the gap between—I think what you are getting—between deconfliction and coordination. It is a complex undertaking, not a waiver that the State Department has the authority.

But broadly, yes, this administration follows the law.

Senator Kaine. So sitting here today, you are not aware of a legal concern that the administration has about this NDAA provision. Are you?

Secretary POMPEO. I am not aware of one.

Senator Kaine. And you are not aware that the Secretary of Defense has issued any kind of a waiver to allow U.S.-Russia military joint operations. Are you?

Secretary POMPEO. No, Senator.

Senator Kaine. With respect to North Korea, we were told by our expert witnesses—and I echo a little bit what Senator Cardin said that a first test of their seriousness is will they disclose what they have. In your discussions with North Korea, have they reached a point yet where there has been any agreement made about them discussing the extent of their nuclear infrastructure?

Secretary POMPEO. I would prefer not to answer questions about the nature of our negotiations other than to say that your proposition that a good first step is the disclosure of the range of their nuclear infrastructure capabilities. An initial declaration, so to speak, is something that is at the very forefront of what it is—we think makes sense to get them to a point where we can verify their full denuclearization.

Senator Kaine. Thank you.

And, Mr. Chair, I would like to put one other additional item in for the record, which is an article just recently written by the Saudi Ambassador to the United States, Prince Khalid bin Salman, why Iran's malign behavior must be confronted, not appeased. And the thing that I think is interesting for us is he basically makes this argument and says that Saudi Arabia stands very willing to help the United States undertake all the actions that he suggests should be taken. I am very concerned about this too, but my time would not allow further questions on it. But I would like to put it in the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, it will be entered.

[The information referred to is located at the end of the hearing]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Barrasso?

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Good to see you again.

It seems every time we have a chance to visit, I bring up the issue of energy security, and I was very happy to see President Trump talking with our NATO allies and specifically with Germany about their ongoing dependence on Russia for energy and

specifically the upcoming concern with the Nordstream 2 and increasing that dependence by Germany of Russian energy.

I know the President met today with the European Commission president to talk about energy security issues.

I would just ask your assessment of our NATO allies and if they understand the security threat and the leverage that they are giving Russia by this over-reliance on Russian energy resources because it does not seem to be acting in their own security best interests.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, it is a fair question. I think their willingness to acknowledge that risk varies. I think some European countries accept that risk or are prepared to act in a way that might cost them a little bit more money to prevent that risk. I think there is probably a continuum of European countries. This issue has been raised by this administration consistently in every forum, directly with the Germans as well. The Germans just do not see it that way.

Senator BARRASSO. Are our NATO allies and the European Union doing anything in their discussions with Germany in terms of ending this Nordstream 2 pipeline project?

Secretary POMPEO. Again, mix within the European Union. There are some countries that share our position. There are some that do so publicly. There are others that do so privately, that is, they have concerns about speaking out against other European Union countries, so their conversations have been—or their sharing of their view on Nordstream 2 with us has been private, I suspect private with the other parties that they are opposing as well.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, I appreciate everything that you continue to do and am grateful for what the President is doing in terms of trying to lessen this influence of Russian energy on the European Union and certainly on Germany.

Russian officials after the meeting with President Trump—and I know you made the point about not—the President not making additional statements on specific agreements. I guess the Russian Ambassador has talked about important verbal agreements on New START and INF at the Helsinki summit. So I just wanted to ask a little bit about that.

Have specific agreements been made between President Putin and President Trump on arms control treaties?

Secretary POMPEO. No. We are still working our way through. These issues were raised. I think the President said that. We are trying to get the Russians back inside the INF, trying to use every tool possible to get them to acknowledge that they are in non-compliance and get them moved back inside the box. And then we are—President Trump's administration is considering how best to respond to that, both on the INF Treaty and the New START. What are the best modalities to achieve what we are looking for to decrease the risk of proliferation or a potential nuclear conflict between our two countries?

Senator BARRASSO. I appreciate your efforts there. I think it did seem that President Trump is taking the right decisions in terms of—with these intermediate nuclear weapons in terms of providing for Poland the missile capacity there to defend. The previous ad-

ministration pulled out of that capacity. And so I am happy to see that.

With New START, I always felt that was a treaty that had significant concessions on our side and very little, if anything, from Russia in terms of the number of the missiles because they did not have to give up much, if anything, and we had to give up quite a bit. So I would be very concerned about what that next treaty may look like.

Secretary POMPEO. The INF Treaty similarly restricts just a couple countries, and the world has changed dramatically since that treaty began. So we are conducting a full-on review so that we can respond and then work with Russia to get an outcome that is in America's interests with respect to the full scope of the proliferation agreements between the two countries—the nuclear proliferation agreements between the two countries.

Senator BARRASSO. The President yesterday was at the VFW convention in Nashville, convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars. I wanted to talk a little bit after the discussion in Singapore with the North Korean leader and the signing of a declaration committing to the return of remains of American soldiers to the United States. I know there were many U.S. troops lost in North Korea. I understand that our military has moved coffins to the Demilitarized Zone to prepare for North Korea's return of the remains. This is an issue that comes up when I talk to veterans in Wyoming, and I would not be surprised if it came up when the President was there with the VFW.

Could you give us any update on North Korea's compliance with what they had agreed to do relating with the remains of our veterans?

Secretary POMPEO. So they reaffirmed their commitment to return remains that they have in their possession, as well as to begin to work on—there is an agreement that had been in place previously about how we would conduct recovery operations inside of North Korea. And we will, in relatively short order, if the North fulfills its commitment, begin to put things back in place such that we can begin not only the return, the repatriation of existing remains, but the recovery of remains that have not yet been recovered. I understand that it is not directly on point with denuclearization. I get that. But, boy, for the families that are missing loved ones, it is a big deal, and I am very hopeful that the North Koreans will continue to move towards honoring the commitment that Chairman Kim made.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. I am very grateful for your continued commitment to all these efforts. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

Senator Markey?

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, President Trump is claiming that North Korea is, quote, no longer a nuclear threat. And we do know that is absolutely not true. We have yet to see any tangible progress towards denuclearization. And I know that it is clear to everyone that North Korea's dismantling of an outdated missile test facility, as

well as a previously dismantled ICBM assembly building, which can be rebuilt within 3 days, are empty gestures and not indicative that North Korea has changed its tune. They are continuing to use the Kim family playbook going back to his grandfather where they frontload rewards to themselves while exploiting ambiguity and delaying real concessions to the United States and to the West.

We do not have nuclear inspectors yet on the ground in North Korea. Is that correct, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary POMPEO. That is correct.

Senator MARKEY. North Korea continues to produce fissile material, nuclear bomb material. Is that correct?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am trying to make sure I stay on the correct—yes, that is correct. I am just trying to make sure I do not cross into classified information. I am not trying to hesitate. Yes, they continue to produce fissile material.

Senator MARKEY. Yes. So North Korea is continuing on both of those fronts.

Is North Korea continuing to pursue submarine-launched ballistic missiles?

Secretary POMPEO. I cannot answer that for you here in this—

Senator MARKEY. You cannot answer that?

Secretary POMPEO. No, Senator.

Senator MARKEY. Well, I look forward to your providing that in a classified setting so that the members of this committee and ultimately the American people can know what is happening. I think it is pretty clear they are, but we will move on.

Has North Korea committed to you that it will destroy its chemical weapons stockpiles?

Secretary POMPEO. The North Koreans understand precisely our definition of denuclearization and have agreed to denuclearize.

Senator MARKEY. Have they committed to destroying chemical weapons stockpiles?

Secretary POMPEO. We have talked about CBW, their CBW programs, as being part of that denuclearization. And as I said, they have indicated that they fully understand the scope of what denuclearization entails.

Senator MARKEY. Have they committed to destroying their biological weapons?

Secretary POMPEO. In the same way I just described, Senator.

Senator MARKEY. They have committed?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, what I said is as follows. We have made very clear that the entirety of the North Korean CBW program is contained in the U.S. understanding of denuclearization, and I am confident that the North Koreans understand clearly America's definition. And they have agreed to denuclearize.

Senator MARKEY. Does the United States have an inventory of North Korea's warheads, materials, facilities, and other programs?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I cannot answer that here.

Senator MARKEY. Has North Korea committed to halting its human rights abuses?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, their human rights abuses continue today.

If I might say with respect to each of these questions, each of the activities that you have described was taking place on January

19th, 2017. And we are working to stop them in ways that were not being undertaken prior to the time the Trump administration took office. There were full-on trade with North Korea—

Senator MARKEY. And I appreciate all that. I guess what I am saying is I appreciate that.

Secretary POMPEO. I think it is important to understand the progress that we have made and the efforts and the modalities we are using to stop the activity that had gone on for decades.

Senator MARKEY. I am just going back to the statement made by President Trump that North Korea is no longer a nuclear threat, and I am just trying to determine what that means.

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to help—I am happy to articulate what I think is—

Senator MARKEY. Is there any verifiable evidence of progress towards denuclearization?

Secretary POMPEO. Oh, yes, absolutely.

Senator MARKEY. What is verifiable?

Secretary POMPEO. We are sitting at the table having conversations. We have had lots of discussions that I am not going to get into here today.

But I would tell you, you discounted the destruction of the missile engine test facility. That missile engine test facility was functional, viable, and operational and in use in January of 2017 before this administration took office.

Senator MARKEY. I guess you and I—

Secretary POMPEO. Just facts.

Senator MARKEY. You and I interpret that gesture differently.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I have made no interpretation.

Senator MARKEY. In terms of verifiable progress, I am talking about not trusting Kim Jong Un without verifying North Korea's actions. So that is really what the discussion is about. What has been verified? I understand that you are talking, but here is what I also understand, that the United States has unexpectedly suspended military exercises with South Korea, that North Korea has not started returning American war dead despite the President's announcement that the returns had already taken place. China and Russia continue to export oil to North Korea in violation of the U.N. resolutions and U.N. sanctions.

Secretary POMPEO. Sanctions that did not exist before this regime took office.

Senator MARKEY. And North Korea still has chemical and biological weapons and brutalizes its own people. And again, there is no verifiable evidence that North Korea is denuclearizing.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator—

Senator MARKEY. So I am afraid that at this point the United States—the Trump administration is being taken for a ride.

Secretary POMPEO. Fear not, Senator. Fear not.

Senator MARKEY. There is no evidence to the contrary.

Secretary POMPEO. Fear not, Senator.

Senator MARKEY. There is no evidence.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, fear not. May I—

Senator MARKEY. Please.

Secretary POMPEO. I guess you did not ask a question. So I will—

Senator MARKEY. No. That is all right.

Secretary POMPEO. Fear not. This administration has taken enormously constructive actions that have put us in a place that is far better than in either of the two previous administrations, one Republican and one Democrat. We have put a sanctions regime in place that is unequaled. We are continuing to enforce that sanctions regime. We have made incredibly clear that we will continue to enforce that sanctions regime until such time as denuclearization, as we have defined it, is complete. Pressure on the regime is clearly being felt. We have lots of work to do.

But unlike previous administrations, Senator, we have no intention of allowing the U.N. sanctions, the world's sanctions that we led the charge to have put in place, to allowing those sanctions to either be lifted or not enforced. And until such time as Chairman Kim fulfills the commitment he made, which I am incredibly hopeful that he will, those sanctions will remain.

We have not been taken for a ride, Senator. I hope you can sleep a little bit better tonight.

Senator MARKEY. One quick issue, which is something I know you are familiar with, is the State Department export controls that are designed to help ensure that weapons do not get into the wrong hands abroad. So I want to bring to your attention a special exemption from those export control rules that the State Department plans to use to issue this Friday. It will allow blueprints for downloadable guns to be published online and acceptable worldwide. I do not think that we really want to be in a world where Hamas in the Gaza has an ability download a capacity for an AR-15 that could endanger security in that region and the same thing could happen around the world. I ask the State Department to please reconsider this decision. I think it has long-term national security and domestic security considerations for our country.

Secretary POMPEO. You have my commitment. I will take a look at it.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Paul?

Senator PAUL. Thank you for your testimony.

There has been a great deal of gnashing of teeth and wringing of hands and dozens and dozens of Senators saying that the President should have met with President Putin. And I guess I wonder because if somehow we have become a little bit sidetracked by partisanship because in the past President Obama met with President Putin. President George Bush met with Putin. And I guess the question I have is whether or not we are entering into sort of a naive time where we think unless someone is a perfect Jeffersonian democrat, we are not going to meet with them.

We also have people saying, well, he should have shook his fist at him and he should have called him a murderer and a thug.

Do you think that there is a possibility that we can have a relationship where we criticize the human rights records of other countries but still also sit down and attempt to have diplomacy and at least channels so we do not escalate things? Do you think that it was a right idea for President Trump to meet with President Putin?

Secretary POMPEO. I think you asked two questions, and it is yes to each of them. I think we can accomplish that. I think we can

meet with less than perfect citizens of the world and hopefully move the ball in the right direction.

Second, I think it was more than appropriate that President Trump meet with Vladimir Putin.

Senator PAUL. And my own personal opinion is I think we need to deescalate some of the partisan tensions in our country and try to look towards ways that we can have discussions with foreign leaders and not be so simplistic that somehow they have to have a perfect record or that we have to shout and scream. I mean, I think back to Reagan talking to Gorbachev. He said tear down that wall. He called him an evil empire. But I just do not imagine Reagan sitting down with Gorbachev and yelling and screaming and shaking his fist and saying murderer, thug, and reciting Stalin's human rights abuses. So I think there is a difference for anybody who has ever thought about this between sitting down and how diplomacy would occur between individuals and reciting a litany of human rights abuses.

In that vein, I think there seems to be sort of a limitless appetite for more sanctions, but maybe insufficient interest in describing what actions are needed to remove sanctions.

And so Senator Rubio mentioned this DETER Act. I guess my concern with some of this is that the definition of who might be meddling in an election in our country is not limited just to Russia. It could include even allies who spend money on social media somehow in our country. It does not seem to differentiate between social media and actually hacking into our electoral system and changing thousands of votes. It also takes the power away from the President and gives it to the Director of National Intelligence. This is the DETER Act we are talking about.

And I know you indicated that, well, sanctions are probably a good idea to deter them. But do you think it is a good idea to take the sanction power, give it to the DNI, and then the sanctions have to remain in place for 8 hours with the President not having any ability to decide whether there has been some kind of change in behavior by the malefactors?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, without having seen the legislation, I do not think that is a good idea.

Senator PAUL. I liked in your statement where you said that President Trump believes that now is the time for direct communication in our relationship in order to make clear to President Putin that there is the possibility to reverse the negative course of our relationship. And I think that gets at the heart of why we have these discussions. So if you heap sanctions on and Congress puts them on and they have to stay on for 8 years and they could never could off, if there is no off ramp, if there is no discussion, that is sort of what diplomacy is supposed to be about.

So I do commend you for talking to Kim. Are we here to extol Kim's record on human rights? Obviously not. But at the same time, for sanctions to have an effect, you have to have negotiation.

So what I would say to my colleagues who have been all over TV saying there should not have been a meeting, think again. We just keep heaping these sanctions on and you do not want any ability to talk to the adversary about how we would actually remove the sanctions if behavior changed. You have got to have communica-

tions, not to mention the fact that we have planes flying within a mile or within 100 yards of each other in Syria. We have to have open lines of communication.

So what I would ask is that we try to deescalate the partisanship in our country so we can once again be open to some kind of diplomacy.

I have one question with regard to Iran. And you and I differ on the possibility of a further Iranian agreement. I think it is actually much more difficult. And I had my own criticisms of the nuclear agreement. I did not think it was perfect. And yet, I would have tried to have built upon it rather than destroy it.

We had a lot of money at the time that was a carrot to try to bring Iran to the table, but now instead of a smaller group of issues, we have a bigger group of issues. The nuclear issues are back on the table if we have to renegotiate the nuclear agreement and the ballistic missile issue.

And the point that I think that we need to think through in discussions with Iran is that I think Iran from their perspective would see getting rid of their ballistic missile program as basically unilateral surrender. It is not my viewpoint. I think it is what I believe their viewpoint.

I think they also see Saudi Arabia as a great adversary, and I think they see Israel as a potential adversary. You know, it would be great if you got all three to come together and have a multilateral agreement on not developing nuclear weapons and not having ballistic missiles. I do not see the other two coming to the table, frankly, to do that.

And so I think in moving forward, I think it is just important that you understand this is not going to be easy. The first Iran agreement also was a multilateral agreement. You had multilateral sanctions. You now have more unilateral sanctions, and you are going to have a unilateral agreement that is sort of your own agreement. So I just think we should not be so optimistic.

And I guess I would like to hear from you what makes you believe that Iran will come to the table to discuss ballistic missiles.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am under no illusions about how important Iran views its ballistic missile program. I agree with you there.

The question that President Trump faced was the JCPOA good enough. He concluded it was not remotely good enough. I think he said it was one of the worst deals in history. I do not want to get the language wrong. And so he concluded we would find ourselves in a better place with an opportunity to revisit all of these issues, the broad spectrum of issues, not just the nuclear portfolio but the missile program, their malign activity around the world, all of them in a package. It did accept the understanding that there would be those that would not come alongside of us.

But you should know there is a coalition. It is not America and America alone. We have others who believe that this was the right decision too, the Israelis, the Saudis, the Emiratis, the Bahrainis, other smaller European governments, not the E-3 themselves. But there are a number of folks who are beginning to coalesce around an understanding of how we can appropriately respond to Iran to

take down the nuclear risk to the United States, as well as the risk from these other malign activities.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Udall?

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Secretary Pompeo, for your service.

Secretary Pompeo, we have quite the record of President Trump's business relations with Russia. Extensive reporting and public records show a large amount of money from former Soviet states and Russia into Trump projects. Trump International Tower and Hotel in Toronto, the Trump Hotel in Panama, the Trump project in SoHo in New York City are a few of the big examples where. And here is another one. A Russian oligarch bought a property from President Trump for—candidate Trump at the time or maybe a little before—for \$95 million in 2008, less than 4 years after President Trump paid \$41 million. So he more than doubled his money.

Donald Trump, Jr. in 2008 stated at a real estate conference in New York—and I quote here—Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross section of a lot of our assets. End quote.

Donald Trump tried to build a Trump tower in Moscow for 30 years. He even tweeted in 2013, Trump Tower Moscow is next. That is in quotes.

In 2015, answering a question from indicted Russian operative and alleged spy Maria Butina, candidate Trump made clear his desires with Russia stating I would get along well with Putin and that I do not think we need the sanctions.

Now the Russian Ambassador to United States has said the President made—and this is his quote—important verbal agreements with President Putin. And he seems to know more about Helsinki and what happened there than the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

As we saw in Helsinki and throughout his presidency and the campaign, this President is extremely sympathetic to the very Russian Government that attacked and continues to attack our democracy and those of our allies. It is a fact of political life today that many Americans are concerned about the unthinkable, that a U.S. President could have a compromising relationship with a foreign power. The President could clear this all up in three simple ways: releasing his tax returns and those of the Trump organization and the taxes from the various family businesses, some of which we do not even know about.

After Helsinki, do you think that the American people deserve to know what is in President Trump's tax returns and business interests that are intertwined with Russia?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am going to try to stay out of the same political circus that you and I ended up in last time I was sitting here and simply respond by saying this same President, with which you seem to express such deep concern, is engaged in a massive defense buildup which threatens Vladimir Putin's regime. He instructed us to put together a nuclear posture review that has set Vladimir Putin on his ear because of its robustness and the recapitalization of our nuclear program. He has kicked out 60 spies. We banned Kaspersky. He put \$11 billion—

Senator UDALL. Mr. Secretary, you have already——

Secretary POMPEO. No, Senator. Actually I have not even begun describing——

Senator UDALL. No, no, no. But you have not answered my question. So let me try it a little different way.

Would you not want to know as Secretary of State—I mean, I am taking you and your sincerity here as Secretary of State—whether all these Russian financial interests, oligarchs, and others are part of the decision-making of the President? I mean, would you not want that out in the open and to understand what went on at Helsinki? It is an easy kind of yes or no question.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I do not need secondhand understandings of what President Trump is instructing his administration to do to push back against Russia. I have firsthand understandings.

Senator UDALL. Well, let me ask the question a little bit differently here.

Secretary POMPEO. We have opposed Nordstream 2. We have got a four by 30 out of NATO that also is a big setback for Russia. I mean, I am happy to continue the list. I am happy to cease there. But I will submit the entirety of this administration's actions against Russia for the record, if I might.

Senator UDALL. Please do.

Secretary POMPEO. We will back a truck up and get it on in here.

[The information was not available at time of print]

Senator UDALL. Candidate Trump has failed to keep his promise to disclose his tax returns. Every presidential candidate since Richard Nixon has disclosed. Jimmy Carter even sold his peanut farm to avoid a conflict of interest. The situation with President Trump's potential foreign policy conflicts of interest is unprecedented and unacceptable. And under the Emoluments Clause, I think it is unconstitutional as well.

But let me just ask a couple of questions about Helsinki. You talked about what you were tasked with. The Director of National Intelligence Coats stated at the Aspen Security Forum that he did not know what happened during the one-on-one meeting in Helsinki.

Did the President personally debrief you on this conversation, and are you 100 percent confident that you know everything that President Trump discussed with President Putin? That is a very easy yes or no. If you do not want to answer it, I will move on to the next one. Is it a yes or a no?

Secretary POMPEO. I am very confident that I received a comprehensive debriefing from President Trump.

Senator UDALL. Good. Okay.

Now, do you know for a fact whether President Trump or President Putin discussed any investments in Trump properties or any Trump projects such as the previous attempt to build a Trump real estate project in Moscow?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, again, I am going to try and stay out of the political circus. That question gets to the political circus.

Senator UDALL. Sir, were you tasked with that? You gave us a list of what you were tasked ——

Secretary POMPEO. I came here to talk about American foreign policy today. I have attempt to articulate President Trump's policy with respect to Russia.

Senator UDALL. All of these business interests are entwined, sir, with our foreign policy.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, a foreign policy that has led to a massive defense buildup, a nuclear posture review that has frightened Vladimir Putin, 60 spies, I mean, 213 sanctions.

Senator UDALL. Let me also ask you about an additional question on Helsinki.

Secretary POMPEO. When I was a Member of Congress, I tried desperately to get President Obama to do one of those things and was unsuccessful.

Senator UDALL. When President Trump hosted top Russian officials at the White House last year, he bragged about how he had fired James Comey. At his press conference with Putin, President Trump called Special Counselor Mueller's investigation a disaster for the country.

Can you tell us what President Trump discussed about the investigation during his private meeting with President Putin?

Secretary POMPEO. I am not going to talk about private—

Senator UDALL. Well, were you tasked with anything in that respect?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, when I am tasked about something for American foreign policy, I promise you this committee will know.

Senator UDALL. Okay. And you were not tasked with anything there.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, when I am tasked with something by the President that relates to foreign policy, I assure you that this committee will be made aware of it.

Senator UDALL. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Gardner?

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your service to the country and your time with us today.

When you were last here, I asked you a question about whether or not you agreed with Secretary Mattis that North Korea is the most urgent security threat the United States faces. In light of recent developments, do you still agree with that? At the time, you said that you did.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. It is still a real priority.

Senator GARDNER. Do you believe it is the most urgent national security threat?

Secretary POMPEO. I do. But having said that, I do not recall the precise timing when I was here.

Senator GARDNER. I think it was in April perhaps.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. So it is. The fact that we are having conversations and we have not had additional missile tests and nuclear testing—maybe it is still a priority. I do not know how to think about it, but I am optimistic that we are headed on a path that is the right direction and we just got to get the rate of change right.

Senator GARDNER. The testimony—you used the term “final, fully verified denuclearization.” In previous testimony, you have used the word “permanent,” verifiable, irreversible denuclearization. U.S. law says complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization. U.N. resolutions call for complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization.

Are these the same terms? Do they mean the same thing?

Secretary POMPEO. Precisely the same thing.

Senator GARDNER. Exactly. Full, complete, total denuclearization according to U.S. law and U.N. security resolutions.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, Senator.

Senator GARDNER. Why the different words?

Secretary POMPEO. Sometimes one needs to just break away. I am happy to use the term “complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization.” Yes, they mean the same thing.

Senator GARDNER. Okay.

The CVID declaration or determination—was that directly addressed at the Singapore summit with President Trump and Chairman Kim?

Secretary POMPEO. It was.

Senator GARDNER. And it was brought up—the complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization. Why was it not in the communiqué following the Singapore summit?

Secretary POMPEO. I would rather not talk about the course of the negotiations and how we arrived at the language that we did.

Senator GARDNER. Okay.

Is North Korea still moving or making advancements, undertaking a nuclear program?

Secretary POMPEO. May I answer that question in a different setting?

Senator GARDNER. You cannot answer that question here?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I would prefer not to.

The CHAIRMAN. We would love to provide that setting for you soon.

Secretary POMPEO. Happy to do it if we need to. I am happy to do that.

Senator, I am not trying to be cute. We are engaged in a complex negotiation with a difficult adversary, and each of the activities that we undertake is not going to be fully apparent to the world at the moment it is undertaken. And there will be processes and discussions that will be had that are important that they not be real-time disclosed. And as I answer one question and then choose not to answer another, it becomes patently obvious why I chose not to answer one or the other. And therefore, it seems to me that a blanket prohibition on heading down that path is the only way to ensure that I have the opportunity to negotiate this thing in a way that is not being done in “The Washington Post” and “The New York Times.”

Senator GARDNER. I understand. I think is a very important point of information that we get, though, to know whether or not North Korea is either overtly, covertly, however they are doing it, making advancements in their nuclear program or still continuing a measure of their nuclear program. I think it is very important for us—

Secretary POMPEO. So I did answer one question that touches on that at least. I answered a question—I think it was from Senator Markey—about whether they are continuing to create fissile material. I answered that, indeed, that they are.

Senator GARDNER. The goal originally I think was complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization by the end of the President's first term. Is that correct?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator GARDNER. Does that remain the goal?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, more quickly, if possible.

Senator GARDNER. When will we know if North Korea is moving toward denuclearization, concrete, verifiable steps?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not know. I do not know the answer to that. I could not tell you what day.

And by the way, I am guessing this group would disagree about when that moment took place. That is a process for sure. And some will find the first step along the way a demonstration of—I think you said—substantial progress. Others may want to wait until we are almost done to declare substantial progress. So I cannot answer that. It is definitely a process and will definitely take time.

Senator GARDNER. We have had a lot of discussions in this committee on strategic patience. The statement you used uses patient diplomacy. Is the U.S. doctrine toward North Korea still one of maximum pressure?

Secretary POMPEO. It is. I will tell you that difference is a little bit subtle and perhaps—I do not want to overstate the difference in the language. Here is what is different. Strategic patience was in our judgment standing around hoping that something worked right. Here we have a strategic objective backed up with diplomatic and economic pressure, which we believe gives us a pathway to achieve the objective and also an off ramp in the event that we conclude that it does not work, to head another direction to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea.

Senator GARDNER. Maximum pressure utilizes section 102 of the North Korea Sanctions Policy Enhancement Act, which requires the President to initiate investigations into possible designations of persons upon evidence that they are violating—proliferating activities, et cetera so that we can apply additional sanctions.

How many investigations into new designations are taking place right now?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not know how many, Senator, but I may try and answer your question in another way and see if this meets the bill. It is the case that this administration is continuing to work on enforcement actions for the existing sanctions regime. That is, we are not going to let it wander off. We are not going to let it weaken. You cannot rename a ship and get out from underneath the sanctions regime. There is active enforcement work being done at the State Department and at the Department of the Treasury related to North Korea.

Senator GARDNER. So it is your view that there are additional North Korean or Chinese entities that could be identified for additional sanctions. Is that correct?

Secretary POMPEO. Oh, yes, sir.

Senator GARDNER. And those designations are not being upheld or laid off. They will continue?

Secretary POMPEO. We are going to use them in a way that we think increases the likelihood that Chairman Kim fulfills the commitment that he made to President Trump.

Senator GARDNER. And why have we not seen any designations recently?

Secretary POMPEO. I cannot answer that question.

Senator GARDNER. I would like to get an answer for that, if we could.

Has South Korea made additional requests to the United States for sanctions relief as it relates to additional activities with North Korea?

Secretary POMPEO. So I think the requests that South Korea has made are public and have occurred through the committee up at the United Nations. So I think the list of things that the South Koreans are requesting in terms of either making sure that their activity is consistent with the sanctions regime—there are exceptions. There are humanitarian exceptions. And so there are—

Senator GARDNER. And is the U.S. considering any of those sanctions, granting any of those sanctions?

Secretary POMPEO. We are reviewing each of the requests that the North Koreans made. We approved one—

Senator GARDNER. South Koreans.

Secretary POMPEO. I am sorry. South Korea, yes. I am sorry. Thank you for the correction.

We approved one that had to do with a military-to-military communications channel. The others are currently under review.

Senator GARDNER. If we could perhaps get an understanding of what some of those measures are, that would be great.

You gave a speech, a very good speech, Sunday, July 22nd on Iran policy at the Reagan Library, as you mentioned. If you were to substitute the word “Iran” out and substitute in the word “North Korea,” would your speech still accurately describe the state of affairs in North Korea?

Secretary POMPEO. Boy, it was a long speech, Senator.

Senator GARDNER. Basically—

Secretary POMPEO. I think in large part it would be consistent. There is a difference in terms of their operational capacity for their nuclear program, but the nature of the two regimes is similar.

Senator GARDNER. I am out of time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. Before turning to Senator Merkley, I am going to use a little bit of my time.

You obviously acquit yourself very well, and those of us who know you and work with you have mostly—I know many of us—I will include me and I will say most of us actually. We have tremendous faith in your ability to make things happen, and we thank you for all the issues you are taking on. You are building a great culture in the State Department, bringing on people that are truly exemplary.

We feel the same way about Secretary Mattis, the way he conducts himself and what he does. I think there is tremendous faith on both sides of the aisle in his abilities and what he does.

Much of what you are hearing today has nothing whatsoever to do with you, and I would agree with you that the policies that we are putting in place in many cases are stronger than have ever been put in place. I agree with you.

It is the President that causes people to have concerns. And I would love to have some insights into you as to—for instance, at the Helsinki conference to create an equivalence between our intelligence agency and what Putin is saying, that shocks people. I mean, you can imagine. You saw Dan Coats' response afterwards and yours today I think candidly was related to what he said at Helsinki.

And then the notion of even thinking about exchanging diplomats, sending diplomats over to be interrogated by Putin, to even think about that, to let that be said as an official statement coming out of the White House to—this is my opinion, and I believe it is right.

To purposely cause the American people to misunderstand about the NATO contributions and to cause them to doubt NATO and to really drive public opinion against NATO—that to me was purposeful, not unlike what happened right after Charlottesville.

And then article 5. To go on television and say, you know, why would we honor—I am paraphrasing, but why would we honor article 5 in Montenegro? You know, we passed a law—I think only two people dissented—to ascend them into NATO. He signed it. I mean, it would be a dereliction of duty if he did cause that to be the case.

So why does he do those things? I mean, is there some strategy behind creating doubt in U.S. Senators' minds on both sides of the aisle, doubt in the American people as to what his motivations are when we, in fact, have tremendous faith in you? I think you are a patriot. Tremendous faith in Mattis. But it is the President's actions that create tremendous distrust in our nation. Among our allies, it is palpable. We meet and talk with them. Is there a strategy to this, or what is it that causes the President to purposely—purposely—create distrust in these institutions and what we are doing?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I just disagree with most of what you just said there. You somehow disconnect the administration's activities from the President's actions. They are one and the same. Every sanction that was put in place was signed off by the President of the United States. Every spy that was removed was directed by the President—

The CHAIRMAN. Go to the points I just made. Go to the points I just made. Talk to them. Talk to them. I know what we are doing. Talk to the points I just made.

Secretary POMPEO. Here is what the world needs to know. With respect to Russia, this administration has been tougher than previous administrations, and I fully expect it will. The President's own words were he is happy to figure out if we can make improvements with respect to the relationship between he and Vladimir Putin and change the course. But if not, he will be their—I will get the words wrong. He will be their toughest enemy, most difficult enemy. I think I can prove that that is the case today. I think I have.

And so somehow there is this idea that this administration is free floating. This is President Trump's administration. Make no mistake who is fully in charge of this and who was directing each of these activities that has caused Vladimir Putin to be in a very difficult place today.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, look, you handle yourself in exactly the way you should in my opinion as it relates to comments. I notice that you are not responding to what I am saying.

Secretary POMPEO. I think I responded to everything that you have said, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. No, you did not. And the fact is that—you just did not. Okay?

Secretary POMPEO. We disagree, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. No. We do not disagree. Let us run the transcript again if you want to talk about it.

But the fact is—

Secretary POMPEO. All right. We will let the world decide.

The CHAIRMAN.—it is the President's public statements that create concern amongst Senators on both sides of the aisle. And I was asking you if, in fact, there was some rhyme or reason that this type of distrust or discord will be created. I know you are not going to answer the question. I am trying to make a point as to why—

Secretary POMPEO. I know you are.

The CHAIRMAN. —why the opening comments and the questions and just the energy behind this hearing are what they are. It is not about you, and it is not about Mattis, and it is not what we are doing on the ground.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, you went through a long litany of statements. First of all, I will tell you I talk to the same allies you do. I speak to their foreign ministers directly. It is the case that they are behaving differently today. There is no doubt about that. They are now scrambling to figure out how to make sure that they are fully part of NATO. Some of that is a result of the statements that you referred to, Senator. Some of that is identifying Nordstream 2—

The CHAIRMAN. I actually agree with that.

Secretary POMPEO. Right. Well, there you go. I will let the record reflect that Senator Corker agreed—

The CHAIRMAN. I will say some of—

Secretary POMPEO. —that some of these statements actually achieve important policy outcomes for the United States of America.

The CHAIRMAN. Some of them do.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And some of them are very damaging.

Senator Merkley?

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary.

So in response to Senator Barrasso's question on New START, I wanted to follow up a little bit. Both the United States and Russia came into compliance in February 2018, met the deadline on deployed nuclear warheads. But my impression from your dialogue was the U.S. does not yet have a position on whether to work to extend the New START agreement past 2021.

Secretary POMPEO. That is correct. We are very hopeful that we can achieve—we view them—they are individual agreements as a legal matter, and they can be worked on independently. But the deterrence model, the underpinnings, the framework of these nuclear agreements—they are connected whether they be things covered by New START, things covered by the INF Treaty, other provisions. They are of a part, and it is the case that we are—as we begin to evaluate how to approach that, we are trying to do it in a holistic way.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

I think I can anticipate that this will be something that you and your team will be working on in the year ahead, setting the groundwork for understanding the options there. Thank you.

So Russia oil tankers reportedly supplied fuel to North Korea via sea transfers several times in 2017. President Trump made a reference in which he talked about saying that what China is helping us with, Russia is denting. And then he says specifically also Russia is not helping us at all with North Korea.

Did this issue of Russia bypassing the U.N. sanctions come up in the conversation between President Putin and President Trump?

Secretary POMPEO. I think I can answer that question because I believe President Trump has talked about this. In fact, Russia's commitment to help us achieve denuclearization of North Korea did come up. The two of them did discuss it. And the centrality of continuing to enforce the U.N. Security Council resolutions, resolutions that the Russians voted for, were raised between the two of them. I heard in a subsequent meeting, at which I was present—I heard Vladimir Putin reiterate his commitment to doing each of those two things.

Senator MERKLEY. And to follow up on your conversation with Tim Kaine about the communique from the Singapore summit and the details that need to be worked out in regard to having a survey to just the starting point, if you will, of a detailed nuclear agreement, when you have an agreement regarding the details of how such a survey of North Korean missiles, nuclear materials, and so forth—when you have that agreement, will you brief this committee on that?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am sure we will be able to share some elements of that with you. I am harkening back to the Iran agreement, the JCPOA, in which they provided a declaration which was knowingly false—that is, the administration knew did not reflect accurately the history of the Iranian weapons program. I promise you I will not do that. I promise you I will not lie about the contents of their declaration. If we disagree or if we think they are wrong, we will acknowledge that. I will have to think through precisely how, in the appropriate way, we would share that information with you. But you have my commitment not to allow a false declaration to form a fundamental pillar of a nuclear agreement in the way that it did with JCPOA.

Senator MERKLEY. I will tell you we all had privy not just to a briefing on it but to the actual document and details. And so we had that standard. In fact, those were made public as well.

Would you expect to meet those two standards eventually—

Secretary POMPEO. When the agreement is complete, yes. I was thinking you were talking about sort of during the process. I believe those documents were made public at the time that the legislation was being considered and when the agreement was final. We hope to bring this agreement to Congress, and it is, of course, the case that you would need to see the underpinnings of that agreement. And part of that would be—there will probably be a series of declarations associated with it.

Senator MERKLEY. I will tell you it did bother me some that because those details have not been worked out yet, that the President already conceded to setting aside the joint exercises with South Korea. Were the South Korean leaders briefed in advance of that announcement?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am going to leave that to the Department of Defense to answer. It would have been conducted between—in military channels.

Senator MERKLEY. President Trump blamed poor relations with Russia on U.S. foolishness. And I am surprised he blamed U.S. foolishness rather than Russia annexation of Crimea, of their occupation of eastern Ukraine, of their attacks on individuals in Britain, of their support of the Syrian Government when the Syrian Government is using barrel bombs and gas on its own people, and given Russia's significant cyber-attack on our elections. Do you believe that the poor relations with Russia is a result of U.S. foolishness?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I think there are countless reasons. You identified several. I could go on about the reason that we find ourselves in this place with Vladimir Putin and his regime today. Not a good place, to be sure, a place that the President is working to develop a relationship to try and reconfigure at least at the level of making sure these two leaders understand each other and know how each other are thinking about the problem set. I think that is important and appropriate, and hopefully he can be successful in that.

Senator MERKLEY. It is a nice essay. It did not answer my question, but I will go on.

The President has also said there is no longer a nuclear threat from North Korea and that we could all sleep well. Given that we do not yet have an agreement on even surveying the stockpile of what North Korea has or an agreement on eliminating their weapons or their missiles or an agreement on verification strategies, should we not more accurately approach this from the viewpoint that there is still a nuclear threat from North Korea? The President's team is working to eliminate it, but it is still a nuclear threat as of today.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. I think the President would agree that the primary systems that have threatened America continue to exist. I think what his comment was, was that the tension had been greatly reduced. We are at a point where it is possible that there could be a miscalculation.

Senator MERKLEY. I have got 20 seconds. So I wanted to ask you one last question on a completely different topic.

Fortify Rights, a human rights group that traveled to Burma to document what happened with the Rohingya, came out with a re-

port detailing devastating atrocities, which you have also seen from elsewhere. And we also have the report that Senator Brownback, our Ambassador on Religious Freedom, is making.

Is it time for the Senate to act on the sanctions against the Burmese military that we passed out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee?

Secretary POMPEO. I will leave it to Senators to decide if it is time for the Senate to act. I can only say that the underpinnings that you described, the atrocities you described are very real.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, I would say this is the type of thing where executive leadership makes a difference in giving direction to this body. And so that is why I was seeking your and the President's opinion on whether it is time to really send a strong message against such ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Can we expect such leadership from the President or yourself?

Secretary POMPEO. I remember what Secretary Tillerson did before me on this issue. You can be sure that we will be serious and lead on this important issue.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Mr. Secretary, thank you. I appreciate your stamina. You have been here for quite a while.

I want to let you know how much I appreciate your leadership as you have filled this role during this tumultuous period in international relations. I have to say since you have taken this position, the interaction our office has had with members of the Department of State and with you individually has really markedly improved. And so I am appreciative of that.

One of the axioms of diplomatic or military strategy is that you want to unite your allies and divide your enemies. And as I see it, this is one of the things that Vladimir Putin has been succeeding in doing. He seeks to divide and weaken NATO, for example. He wants to divide the American people. And the more we make Russia's meddling in our own elections a partisan issue, I think the more we play into Putin's hands.

The intelligence community has been clear and consistent. Russia did, indeed, meddle in our elections. So I think we need to stand together as Americans, not as Republicans or Democrats with respect to this issue. What are your thoughts on this matter, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I think it is the case that the Soviet Union and now Russia's efforts to undermine Western democracy are long and continuous. I think they occurred in 2016. I am confident that the Russians are endeavoring to divide, to separate us from our allies to create space to find partners for themselves around the world in the same way that we will go out and work diligently with our allies. I always think that having a united United States, folks who come at these problems with seriousness and thoughtfulness towards a shared goal, increases the likelihood of America prevailing in these challenges—against these challenges.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I happen to agree with you. I hope that my colleagues and I will adopt a tone and approach to this very serious

issue which impacts all Americans in recognition of everything you just said.

Mr. Secretary, just about an hour ago, President Trump convened a joint press conference with the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker. And in the press conference, both the presidents announced they were going to launch a bilateral U.S.-EU set of negotiations with the goal of reducing terrorists, increasing economic cooperation between the EU and the United States, and working together to counter the predatory economic practices that we have seen from countries like China.

I cannot tell you how encouraged I am by this. I think with our collective leverage brought to bear, perhaps even ultimately pulling in other G7 countries like the Japanese, we have a real possibility of reducing the intellectual property theft, reducing the incidents of forced technology transfer, of state-owned enterprises dumping things into our economy, precisely the sorts of objectives I know the administration has.

So do you agree that the United States, moving forward, has to prioritize a trade dialogue with the EU in order to eliminate current retaliatory tariffs on farmers and manufacturers in places like Indiana, as well as to effectively combat China's nefarious activities?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. Do not forget Kansas farmers too.

[Laughter.]

Secretary POMPEO. So I do not have the benefit of having seen the press conference. I was sitting here. I did not see the announcement or what they said. I know this was one of the things that President Trump was trying to accomplish in his conversations with Mr. Juncker. It sounds like they made at least some progress in that regard.

Look, the President has been clear with respect to trade policy. The Europeans will not accept our agriculture products. There are other markets that are closed to us. He is endeavoring to get them opened. He is trying to drive towards zero, zero, zero; zero tariffs, zero non-tariff barriers, and zero subsidies. That is the place he is trying to get the whole world, and he is confident that when we get there, Americans will out-compete the rest of the world. And whether it is manufacturers or innovators or farmers or all of the above, they will ultimately be very successful, and there will be enormous wealth creation not only in the states but elsewhere as well.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I will just add that I find this effort of working cooperatively with the EU and other major economies as coherent and workable, if we are trying to really address the greatest challenges, which is those seen by the state capitalist countries, China being the worst offender. I do not have as much clarity with respect to our trade strategy as I would like to. That is one of the reasons that I keep emphasizing I think we need to actually have a written one, just as we do a National Security Strategy. But I am very appreciative of President Trump's announcement today.

Lastly, Mr. Secretary, I would like to call to your attention that my home State of Indiana is home to 23,000 Burmese Americans. And as I travel the state and listen to so many of my constituents that are Burmese Americans, they reiterate to me three things.

Number one, they express grave concern regarding the Burmese military's atrocities against the Rohingya, and they want to see those perpetrators brought to justice. Number two, they reiterate a desire to expand people-to-people ties between Burma and the United States. And thirdly, they express concern regarding the treatment of Chin Christians in Burma.

Now, I note that you are hosting this week the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom focused on combating religious persecution and discrimination. And as we appropriately address within that forum the Rohingya crisis, I would just ask the Department to continue to also make clear to the Burmese Government that all religious minorities, including Christians, should be respected.

So, Mr. Secretary, will the Department of State work with my office to not only continue our joint efforts related to the Rohingya, which I support, but also to encourage the Burmese Government to end any policies whatsoever that treat Christians as second-class citizens?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, Senator, we will.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here.

I certainly associate myself with many of the comments by the chairman about the administration. The President is making up foreign policy on a day-by-day basis. I think you have got a tiger by the tail. You have a difficult and enviable job, and I appreciate you spending so much time with us here this morning.

We focus on words from the President because our allies and our adversaries listen to those words, and they calibrate their actions based upon those words. While you are right that the President, about 20 to 30 hours later, did correct himself after the Helsinki summit to say that he did, indeed, agree with U.S. intelligence services and not with Putin, 5 days later he went back on Twitter and said this. So President Obama knew about Russia before the election. Why did he not do something about it? Why did he not tell our campaign? Because it is all a big hoax. That is why. That is the most recent statement from the President saying that Russia's interference in the election is all a big hoax.

So I guess my question is why should we not accept this most recent statement from the President as U.S. policy rather than the statement that you referenced on July 17th?

Secretary POMPEO. Well, Senator, I cannot go through the litany of all the statements you just gave. I have a list from January '17, June '17, July '17, again July in '17, November '17, March '17. I am happy to go through them, each of which the President confirmed that he understood that Russia had meddled in the election. And then I could give you—although I could not recount them, I could tell you numbers of times when I was personally with him where he told me directly he understood that and indeed, provided guidance to—at this time it was the intelligence community. But I think he gave similar guidance throughout the government that we needed to do all we could to push back on election interference. And I have a catalog of activities that this administration has undertaken to do just that.

Senator MURPHY. So then what do you make of his most recent statement—

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I will leave you—you can speculate. You can draw whatever inferences you want for whatever purposes you so choose. Here is what I can tell you. I can tell our allies—

Senator MURPHY. There is no inference. I mean, it is a statement from the President in which he says that the Russian interference in the U.S. election is a hoax from July 22nd. There is no inference that I need to draw from that. That is the President's statement.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, you are certainly trying to draw inferences about American policy, and I am laying out for you American policy.

And I am happy—let me talk to you about what we have done on election interference, if I might.

Senator MURPHY. I understand. I understand that you draw a distinction between the President's comments and U.S. policy. What I am trying to suggest to you is that what the President says is U.S. policy because our allies and our adversaries make decisions based upon those comments.

And so let me try to drill down on a specific issue that Senator Corker raised, and that is the comments the President made regarding our potential defense or non-defense of Montenegro.

Tucker Carlson asked him a question, suggesting that Montenegro is too small to be defended, and the President responded by saying, I understand what you are saying. I have asked the same question. Montenegro is a tiny country with very strong people.

Now, I know you are going to tell me today that the official policy of the United States is to defend Montenegro and to defend our NATO allies. But can you understand why we would be concerned that the President would draw a question as to whether we would defend Montenegro? Because in the end, that is a communication of Vladimir Putin about whether the President is going to come to NATO's defense. As you know, an attack on NATO will not be a Russian army moving across the border. It will be a hybrid attack, a disguised attack. There will be some question as to whether the United States should respond or not.

So can you at least understand why we are concerned about the President raising questions about the utility of the United States defending Montenegro?

Secretary POMPEO. So I think the President has been unambiguously clear. And I can go read you his policies.

Senator MURPHY. And if you are going to his policies or the separate statements, I am asking you about this statement.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, because—

Senator MURPHY. Explain it to us. What did he mean?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, the policies are themselves statements as well. Indeed, they are the most important statements that the administration makes.

Senator MURPHY. Well, policies are statements and statements are policies. It goes both ways.

Secretary POMPEO. No, that is not true. That is absolutely not true. I make lots of statements. They are not U.S. policy. The President says things. The President makes comments in certain

places. We have a National Security Council. We meet. We lay out strategies. We develop policies. Right?

Senator MURPHY. So how do I know the difference?

Secretary POMPEO. The President then sets the course.

Senator MURPHY. How do I know the difference between a presidential statement that is not a policy and a statement that is?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, here is what you should look at. Compare the following. Barack Obama speaking tough on Russia and doing nothing.

Senator MURPHY. I understand you want to rewrite the Obama policy on Russia, but that is simply not true. You organize—

Secretary POMPEO. Okay. Let us go. Let us go, Senator. Let us go—

Senator MURPHY. —all over the world to put a comprehensive, unprecedented set of sanctions on Russia.

Secretary POMPEO. The man said he would have more flexibility after the election.

Senator MURPHY. I am not—listen, my question was not about—is not about—I know you want to turn constantly back to President Obama.

Secretary POMPEO. No. I just want to look at facts and policies, Senator. I am trying to get to U.S. policy. It is what I do. I am America's chief diplomat implementing U.S. policy.

Senator MURPHY. I think you have been dealt a tough hand and you do a credible job with it.

Let me turn—let me ask a less adversarial question to end with.

You said two very important things on North Korea. You said that they have agreed to denuclearize and that they understand our definition of denuclearization.

Secretary POMPEO. That is correct.

Senator MURPHY. What is most important is that those two statements link, is that they have agreed to denuclearize according to our definition of denuclearization. Is that your testimony today?

Secretary POMPEO. The definition was set forward, and denuclearization was agreed to. I do not know how else to—

Senator MURPHY. I am not trying to give you a hard time. I am just trying to understand.

Secretary POMPEO. And I am trying to articulate what has been agreed to. We made clear what we viewed as the scope of denuclearization. It is not dissimilar to what the U.N.—how the U.N. has characterized it and how the South Koreans have characterized it. And when we did that, the North Koreans said, yes, we agree to denuclearize.

Senator MURPHY. So your understanding is their commitment is upon our definition.

Secretary POMPEO. It is, Senator. Yes.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Before turning to Senator Isakson, so in essence the communique that we saw coming out of the Singapore meeting—that is the sum total of the agreement we have with them.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. We have also had conversations after that. It is also the case that that agreement incorporated the Panmunjeom Declaration which, in turn, incorporated previous inter-Korean agreements as well. So the Singapore summit is

stacked on a series of agreements, each of which is encompassed within the agreement between President Trump and Chairman Kim. So you can look to the full breadth and scope of those agreements about things the North Koreans have committed to.

The CHAIRMAN. And, look, I do not think any of us would expect that there would be a meeting in Singapore and all the issues would be worked out. I think we all understand it is going to take a long time to get this all worked out.

Senator Isakson?

Senator ISAKSON. I spent all week trying to come up with intuitive, brilliant, incisive questions to ask you, recognizing how intelligent and articulate you are, and I ran into everything except one thing. I had it written down here it would be the first question I would ask you, and then, by golly, the president of the EU had an agreement while we are sitting in here listening to this that answered my question. But I want to repeat it anyway.

Are you seeing consequences of the trade proposals of the President's, particularly the 232 and the tariffs being applied, having any impact diplomatically on the United States of America?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator ISAKSON. I do too. And the reason I brought it up is this. Actions have consequences, and I hope the administration will look to the State Department for insight and advice on the effects of the tariffs on the diplomacy of the United States of America vis-a-vis the rest of the world because it has a significant impact because agriculture is the number one thing upon which we are going to get levied the punitive tariffs by the people we are trying to raise tariffs on now. We feed the world. We are the free world's bread basket. This committee has passed the Feed the Future legislation some time ago, but we are going to be in deep trouble if we do not have a policy that recognizes both our responsibility and the world's need and food's importance in peace and security.

So not to lecture you because I would not do that. You have forgotten more than I know. But I do know that the President's proposals and the tariffs are serious business and he needs to consider the consequences on the diplomacy of the United States and hunger in the world.

So I will let you respond to that.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I think the President appreciates that. I think he understands that the tariffs that have been imposed have a diplomatic effect. They are part of my broader effort, to be sure. Some of those things create difficulties. Some of those things create real opportunities. We have seen each from the sanctions that have been levied to date. And I know President Trump—it sounds like he made some progress today with the EU. I have watched Secretary Mnuchin, Bob Lighthizer, and the team try to use the effect of those tariffs to achieve good outcomes so that farmers can have access to markets, so that we get energy sold to countries that refused to take our energy. Each of those things are important parts of the President's agenda to try and create wealth for ordinary Americans.

Senator ISAKSON. And I commend the administration's commitment to zero, zero, zero being the goal, as far as the trade policy is concerned. But getting to that goal is going to require good com-

munication between all facets of our government, including yourself and the State Department.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir.

Senator ISAKSON. And that was the point I was trying to make.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir.

Senator ISAKSON. I also am sorry Senator Paul left because I was going to begin my remarks by saying I agreed with him on something, and I do not always do that. But you all want to need to tell him that I prefaced my remarks.

But he is right about not being afraid of meeting with Vladimir Putin and the Russians. Meetings with these people in my judgment are not as bad as a lot of people have professed them to be. I have seen some people who have said we ought to back up from meeting with him. But I think the more open we can be in meeting with the leadership of countries we are having to deal with one way or another, the more it forces them to be open.

What the President has done, when he went to North Korea, is all of a sudden Kim Jong Un, sitting on the other side of the table, said I am sitting across the table with the President of the United States. The world media is here and they are looking to me for answers. And all of a sudden, after it is all over and the pomp and circumstance is all over, North Korea has got to be accountable or it is going to have pressure to be accountable. So I think the President's engaging these leaders makes an awful lot of sense in terms of bringing them out to surface in the dealings that we have with them. And I just wanted to throw that in there because I think it is an important thing.

Lastly, on bipartisanship, Senator Coons is here who, by the way, had a significant role in your getting confirmed, as you know, and you and I have talked about that. So I am proud of my friend Chris Coons and I am proud of you, and you are a great choice for Secretary of State.

But he and I have worked together on State Department issues and trade issues and tariff issues on behalf of poultry in the United States of America and particularly with the South Africans. We cracked down the door here 2 years ago and now we are getting 19 million metric tons of chickens from Delaware and Georgia sold to the South Africans who love them and are eating them.

And it pointed out to me, once again, to reinforce what I did in my first statement about agriculture. We have such a powerful force with our agricultural productivity and the level to which we have taken it in our technology in agriculture. We need to use that as a tool for our relationships around the world. And I know you want to do that and want to be a part of that. You can help us in doing that because every time we make a trade deal that sells Georgia chickens or Delaware chickens to the South Africans, is good for Georgia and Delaware, but it is good for America too.

Secretary POMPEO. Amen. I agree, Senator.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you for your service to the country.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I am not sure Senator Coons wanted you to advertise that again. I am sure his social media account will have a lot of incoming in explaining.

But with that, Senator Coons. I am thankful for the role you play.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I was grateful for an opportunity to just show a little courtesy to a dear friend, Senator Isakson, in that previous incident you are referring. And I will, at the risk of not being as gracious as I should be, just share that when Senator Isakson and I met with the South African minister, that meeting was to hear their concerns about the impact of the steel tariffs on a very important alliance. Chairman Corker and I recently were in Sweden and had a chance to hear from them about their concerns about the steel tariffs.

I am encouraged by the announcement that has just come out an hour ago about the meeting with the EU leadership, but remain very concerned that some of our closest allies around the world are getting the wrong message. In a dinner last night with the Canadian Ambassador, a large bipartisan group of us were there to try and reassure them. I do think that we should be corralling our allies and partners in confronting China's aggressive, prolonged, and inappropriate trade actions and avoiding some of the needless harm we have caused to close alliances. The point of the South African meeting was that they are preparing countervailing tariffs that might well shut down our access to their market. But I am not here to talk about chickens, as much as I do love talking about chickens with my friend, Senator Isakson.

Mr. Secretary, I just want to say first thank you for this very long hearing. I want to confirm. A number of Senators have asked you pointed questions about progress with North Korea, with Russia, issues around Syria and Iran, and you have said not in this setting. Will you return soon to brief us in a classified setting? Because there is a number of important and pressing things we really have not been able to address today. Will you come back and give us that classified briefing?

Secretary POMPEO. Of course.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

And a number of Senators on both sides have recognized that you have got an important role in a very difficult time. I want to, up front, just say I was pleased to hear about the Crimea Declaration. I think it is important for the administration to be forceful and clear about our position with regard to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea.

I remember my whole childhood, there was a little box in every American map that said we refused to recognize the illegal annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union in 1940. And for decades, folks just thought that was just aspirational and would never happen. Today the Baltic States are free. They are NATO allies.

And the chairman and I recently visited Latvia as well and heard from them about their determination to remain free and to take strong steps against Russia's interference.

Finland and Latvia, the Baltic States, other allies of ours in that region are prepared to invest more in their own defense and to strengthen their defenses against Russian interference in their upcoming elections. There are elections in Latvia and Moldova and Sweden that are happening soon.

What best practices are you seeing among our European allies? What tools do you think the State Department can and should be using? And how should we be doing, as you put it, everything we can to push back on likely election interference by Russia to our vital allies, as well as to our upcoming midterm elections?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. It is a good question.

We, the United States Government, my previous organization in the intelligence world did a great deal of work with our European partners. We did it with the German election, French election, to try to help identify threats and vectors, good, solid intelligence sharing. I think that is an underpinning so that these governments can understand the threat. Sometimes America is better positioned to see them and observe them than some of these other countries would that are smaller with fewer resources.

And then I think it is also important—and we have begun to do this—that countries begin to share the actions that they observed, that is, not only the precursors, the indications, but what actually took place to download so that we can begin to understand how to push back.

I think it was Senator Paul who said earlier there are lots of variations on the theme. There are overt efforts. There are—call them—

Senator COONS. Covert efforts.

Secretary POMPEO. The covert efforts. There are influence operations. There are lots of methods by which adversaries, not just Russia, can attempt to undermine elections in democracies. We have an obligation to the Europeans, and it benefits America as well if we try and help them ensure that their democracies are protected as well.

Senator COONS. And I do think we would benefit from hearing more and more regularly more clearly what we are doing with our close allies to convey that we get what is happening to them and that we are concerned about what is happening to us.

Frankly, I want diplomacy to succeed. I prefer an environment of diplomacy to one of a perception of imminent conflict with either North Korea or Russia.

And you have been very forceful, even aggressive today in advancing the administration's position. As the chairman said earlier, a lot of the tension here I think comes from the gaps between your forcefulness and clarity and what I perceive and many perceive to be the President's lack of forcefulness and clarity. In your written statement, you say that President Trump has stated, quote, I accept our intelligence community's conclusion that Russia's meddling in the 2016 election took place. And then you go on to say, he has a complete and proper understanding of what happened.

My concern, if I could just directly, is that our President has never made a clear and comprehensive speech outlining the threat posed by Russia, our strategy to respond to it, and criticizing directly President Putin for directing the attack on our election in 2016.

Just a few days ago—now I guess more than a week ago—Robert Mueller delivered indictments against 12 Russian military intelligence officers, GRU officers, calls them out by name, gives enormous detail of how Russia attacked our 2016 election. And one of

the ways in which our President then undermines the clarity and credibility of that action by our Department of Justice is by calling the Mueller investigation a rigged witch hunt or by standing next to President Putin in Helsinki and suggesting he is uncertain whether our intelligence account of what happened in 2016 is the more credible or the Russian one.

Could you please clarify for me? If there are clear indicators that Russia continues to interfere in our election planning up to this November, would you advise the President to rescind an invitation to Vladimir Putin to come and meet in the White House? Do you think it is unwise to extend the credibility and the prestige of a White House meeting without being clear about Putin's threat to our upcoming elections?

Senator Paul said—and I agree with him—we should meet with our adversaries. But as President Reagan did, we need to be clear-eyed about who they are and call them out for being adversaries before sitting down with them.

Can you commit to being clear with the President and helping us understand whether or not the President clearly understands the attack on our election?

Secretary POMPEO. So I have tried to do that earlier today, Senator Coons. I think the President is very clear about that. I find it surprising that statements that are made, especially a statement like a statement for the record. I mean, you should all know the White House cleared that secret. I uttered the words. These are President Trump's statements in that sense as well. These are statements from the United States Government, of which President Trump is very clearly in charge. And somehow there is this effort to suggest that they are not that. The statements that I have made today are fully consistent with—unless I misspoke somewhere along the way, which is possible after a couple hours. These are, indeed, the administration—President Trump's policies that we are implementing.

Senator COONS. My core point, Mr. Secretary, was that while your statements have been clear, our President's statements have confused our allies, encouraged our adversaries, and have failed to be comparably clear. And I am concerned that an invitation to President Putin to the White House, without clarity about his threats to our election, his threats to our allies, puts at risk clarity. I welcome the Crimea Declaration today. I think that is an important step forward, but I urge you, if President Putin attacks our next election, advise President Trump to withdraw any invitation to President Putin.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Portman?

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming back to testify again. You have had a long afternoon. I think you ought to do it more often. I mean, while you have been here, we managed to negotiate a successful preliminary agreement with the European Union. You managed to issue a declaration supporting what many of us have been hoping to see with regard to Crimea. And there was a third thing that happened, and I do not know if it is good or bad. But my un-

derstanding is the White House has decided to postpone the visit of President Putin until after the first of the year.

Secretary POMPEO. When I left my business, it began to succeed as well.

[Laughter.]

Secretary POMPEO. So I will come down here.

Senator PORTMAN. I think they are waiting until you are gone before they make all these decisions. No.

I want to comment briefly on what you responded to with Senator Coons on what tools could we use with regard to pushing back on some of the interference in other countries' elections. I had hoped that you would say the Global Engagement Center because it is a tool you have. And frankly, although Senator Murphy and I wrote legislation to give you the authority to do it, you have more aggressively used that tool both by providing funding for it and now hiring the right people than your predecessors.

And it is precisely this sort of situation. I will give you the recent example—it is very important—which is what is going on with Macedonia. As they go for their referendum to be part of Europe, these European integration efforts tend to be the place where the Russians see an opportunity and engage in significant disinformation, a great opportunity for us to push back in the appropriate way through the Global Engagement Center.

Would you confirm to me that you have thought about that and you will think about that in the future?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, of course. May I add one thing that I think you will find interesting? When I was with my Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, he is very aware of the Global Engagement Center.

Senator PORTMAN. He should be.

Secretary POMPEO. He raised the issue with me when I met him. I think it was when I met with him in person. It may have been in a conversation by phone. But in my last interaction with him, he raised the issue.

Senator PORTMAN. As compared to the resources the Russians put into their efforts, it is minuscule, as you know, but it is significant. And I think it will be done professionally thanks to some of the work you have done, and I applaud you for that.

We discussed at your confirmation hearing in April the need for us to focus more on Central and Eastern Europe, specifically Ukraine—I had just come back from a trip to Ukraine. I had been out in the contact line in April—where there is a hot conflict going on, I mean, where there are people dying. And it is, when you go there, pretty moving because you see how the Ukrainians have had to defend themselves and their territorial integrity really for the last 4 years against Russian aggression.

And I believe, as I think you do, that a successful pro-Western Ukraine is not only critical to the region but I think it is the best antidote to Russian expansion in the region.

Along those lines, I want to commend you for last week releasing the \$200 million in military assistance. This goes for equipment training, other assistance. And I think we have not taken enough credit for what happened, which is we told the Ukrainians, you need to make reforms. And when I was there in April, I talked to

President Poroshenko. I also talked to Speaker Parubiy then and again last month about this. In fact, I talked to him the day after they passed reforms, saying we need to see these reforms to your defense system by, frankly, getting away from the Russian influence system they had into one that is more consistent with European democracies having a civilian control of their military, among other things.

They did that. You then were able to release the \$200 million. That is exactly how it should work. Right?

So I commend you for that, and I think it is going to make a huge difference. The lethal weapons they now have to defend themselves makes a huge difference. And so the actions sometimes do speak louder than the words, and in those cases, I think it is very important.

On the resolution which you issued today with regard to Crimea, I was really happy to read it. I know that many in our community in Ohio who follow this closely are pleased with it. They believe this puts the United States clearly in the position where we will not release sanctions until this issue is resolved.

And I would ask you today, can you confirm that the Russians have a clear understanding that sanctions related to Crimea will not be able to be reduced or certainly eliminated so long as Crimea remains an issue?

Secretary POMPEO. I think they did before the statement, and I am confident after the statement that the President released, that will reaffirm their understanding.

Senator PORTMAN. Do you believe the Russians have a clear understanding of the sanctions related to their actions in eastern Ukraine along the border cannot be altered without real implementation of the Minsk Agreement and the end to that aggression?

Secretary POMPEO. I do.

Senator PORTMAN. There is a lot of talk about new sanctions, as you know, with regard to Russia. And I do support us having a better bilateral relationship with Russia. I think it is important. We are two major nuclear powers. We have got a lot of weapons pointed at us. I also support discussions that are prepared. I think it is very important that our statements both in private and in public are clear and consistent, and I think that needs to happen from the President all the way down to our diplomats such as yourself. And again, I think you have done that. I think that was the issue with Helsinki.

In addition to what is going on in the eastern border of Ukraine and Crimea, I think there is a clear consensus in the national security community, not just the IC, but the national security community more broadly about the severity of the short and midterm threat that Russia poses. It is espionage. It is cyber. It is information capabilities, meddling in the 2016 elections, and now in the 2018 elections, our intelligence communities seem to have a consensus around that, including you in your previous role.

And we have sanctions in place, but they do not seem to be working. I mean, that long list that I just gave—they do not seem to be working.

So let me ask you a question, and this is not an easy one to answer. But, one, why are they not working? Second, do you support

new sanctions specifically related to the new information we have about 2016 and about 2018 interference in our democratic process? And if so, what kind of sanctions would be more effective?

Secretary POMPEO. So your point is well taken. In spite of the work that has been done by this administration, there continues to be Russian malign activity. We have to use sanctions as a tool. You talked about the Global Engagement Center. I think there are many tools that we can use. In my role as a diplomat, we have a handful, and we are working to do what I think it was Senator Rubio at the beginning of this hearing described as raise the costs sufficiently and convince Vladimir Putin that it is not in his best interest to continue this behavior. That is going to be difficult. I know precisely who Vladimir Putin is. I know his history. But that is the task. The task is for us, the U.S. Government. That includes you and the executive branch to raise the costs on Russia sufficiently that they cease this malign activity that adversely impacts the United States.

Senator PORTMAN. Do you believe new sanctions are appropriate to raise the cost—

Secretary POMPEO. I do.

Senator PORTMAN. —this new information we have received?

Secretary POMPEO. I do, Senator. If we can find the right places and the right leverage point, the things that will actually make a difference to Russia, I think it would be constructive to head down that path.

Senator PORTMAN. And can you tell us what you think might more effective than the previous sanctions that have not been effective in accomplishing those means?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not know that I have a great answer for you.

Senator PORTMAN. Do you think it is focusing more on individuals, on oligarchs? Do you think it is focusing more on some of the economic chokepoints?

Secretary POMPEO. It would be my judgment that each of those is necessary. The things that impact the Russian economy are the things that I hear the Russians most concerned about.

Senator PORTMAN. Secretary, thank you. I am glad you are there, and we appreciate your testimony today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much. I guess I am battling cleanup. I appreciate the endurance of our Secretary. I know he has hard days, long days, and I am grateful for this opportunity to question him.

I really want to pick up on some of the line of questioning that Senator Portman asked.

It is important what Presidents say, and you and I come from that school, I imagine, where you have Ronald Reagan's clear, unwavering commitment to standing strong against then the Soviet Union. You saw it in the next George Bush. You have seen it in Presidents.

And so here is a clear statement of fact that the President tweeted out. I am concerned that Russia will be fighting very hard to have an impact on the upcoming election, which is consistent

with intelligence communities that they are continuing to attack. Of course, he said based on the fact that no President has been tougher on Russia than me, they will be pushing very hard for the Democrats. They definitely do not want Trump. They do not want Trump. Now, that obviously was surprising to see, given that we just heard from Vladimir Putin that he prefers Trump.

But I am concerned that the President does not understand that this ongoing threat is happening. When he came out of his secret meeting with Putin that was shrouded in secrecy, he said our relationship has never been worse until it is now because that has changed as of about 4 hours ago.

Has anything changed in the Russian attacks or ongoing threats to our 2018 elections?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, what I believe the President was referring to there—and obviously, he speaks for himself in that sense. But what I understood him to say was that he had had—for the first time in his administration, he had had a chance to have an extensive, candid conversation with the leader of Russia, lay out and articulate America's interests to him so that he understood unambiguously what those interests were, and to, in turn, hear from Vladimir Putin about the things that he thought mattered most to Russia. So when I heard him say things have changed, I think that is what he was referring to. It was the first time—they had met before but—

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Secretary, I have got limited time. So I agree with Senator Rubio. There has got to be a cost to people when they attack the United States, not just attacking the United States. They have assassinated people on British soil. They are threatening our allies. They are intervening in Western democracies, annexing Crimea, ongoing hostilities in the Donbas region of Ukraine.

And we passed legislation here, the CAATSA legislation, which you had an exchange with my colleague, Senator Cardin, about, and I think you said—this is the transcript that you said. You said, thank you for presenting the law. We really appreciate it. We think it makes good sense. The President signed it as well. We have passed sanctions under the law. But we have not used all of the sanctions.

Now, I was excited to see Nikki Haley come out and say that we were about to put on new sanctions. In fact, the RNC got talking points from the White House telling their pundits to say exactly what Nikki Haley said before the United Nations, that we were going to put on additional sanctions. But we have not used those tools in our toolbox. They said that Nikki Haley was confused. She said, I am sorry, I was not confused. This was a step that the White House was going to take.

And so I hope you understand that there are many of us in a bipartisan manner that feel like we have put tools in the toolbox, but the President has shrunk from taking them and using those tools to stand strong against people that are ongoing attacks on the United States of America.

Nikki Haley said, absolutely, you will see that Russian sanctions will be coming down. Secretary Mnuchin will be announcing those. It has already said that they are going to go directly to any sort

of companies that are dealing with equipment related to, in this case, Assad and chemical weapons use.

So I am having trouble—and, again, I think I am one of those people who agrees with some of my Republican colleagues that Presidents should be allowed to meet with folks one-on-one. But this is, as far as my staff can find, the only meeting with anybody in the G-20 that has been a one-on-one meeting without staff the details of which have not been disclosed.

And it is particularly troubling given, as Senator Udall said, we have a long history of this administration having ties to the Russians. He read a list, whether it is the Russian oligarch close to Putin who bought property from Trump at a significant profit, whether it was tweeting about his deals, whether it was Trump, Jr. talking about Russians make up a disproportionate cross section of our assets, whether it was Maria Butina who is asking a question with Trump responding, I do not think we need more sanctions. I do not think we need sanctions. But this goes on.

As Senator Coons just said, we have a President that right now sees that we have an ongoing investigation into the very attacks that the Russians did to us that have resulted in over 80 charges, over 30 people being charged, people in the administration, and people of the campaign. And this is a President that is having private meetings with the Russians.

Now, this is actually not the first private meeting that he had. I am sure you remember that this President pulled aside at a G-20 meeting and had a one-on-one discussion, unbeknownst to his staff, and had a conversation that he then said, when asked what they discussed—and I quote—he said “we discussed adoptions”. Now, “adoptions” is a code word, as we see, for sanctions. It is the same code word that was used to describe pre-election meetings between Kushner, Manafort, Don, Jr., these ideas of adoptions.

Now, I have listened very closely. I am the last person to ask questions, but you have refused to even say if relaxing sanctions, directly if relaxing sanctions was part of the meeting that the President had. And so I find it hard to believe that we are a nation that is under ongoing attack, and you cannot come forward and say—this is a president that you say you represent—that we are standing strong against the person. But we are not. The very President who actually invited some of this here when he said—and I quote—“Russia, if you are listening, if you are able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing”—he invited the very attacks that we are talking about.

And so what I want and what I think my colleagues want on both sides of the aisle is to understand and believe that we are not having private discussions about relaxing sanctions, that we are showing the same kind of strength that past Presidents have shown when enemies attack the United States of America.

And you just committed to Senator Portman that you believe more sanctions are needed. And so are we to expect in the coming days that we will be applying the sanctions that the Senate has provided this President in a bipartisan way to hold Russia accountable and show them that there will be a cost for their attacks on this nation?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I think this administration's record, over 200 sanctions—200 sanctions, Senator—is reflective of this administration's steadfastness with respect to our willingness to push back against Russia. I think it is unquestioned. You just spoke for coming on 7 minutes about a whole litany of things political. Let me give you America's foreign policy. 200-plus sanctions—

Senator BOOKER. Well, sir, clearly there have been divisions in the administration if Nikki Haley is talking about sanctions on one day and then you are not putting them on, on the next day.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, there is vigorous debate in this administration on lots of things. There is no doubt about that. The President did not hire a single shrinking violet, not one of us, and we often disagree about things. There is no doubt about that. And sometimes we prevail and sometimes we do not. The President calls the ball, and the President called the ball over 200 times to sanction Russian entities. That is pretty strong.

Senator BOOKER. The President is not using the tools that the United States Senate—

Secretary POMPEO. We have used CAATSA. We have complied with CAATSA. We will continue to comply with CAATSA. I put this administration's work on sanctions against Russia. Let us just rack and stack for the last 8 years.

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Chairman, I want to conclude with entering into the record the President of the United States' statements on CAATSA. And I will read them and put the whole statement in the record. This is what he said on the day CAATSA was introduced.

Since the bill was first introduced, I have expressed concerns to Congress about the many ways it improperly encroaches executive power, disadvantages our country, and hurts the interests of this nation. Still, the bill is seriously flawed, particularly because it encroaches on the executive branch's authority. Congress could not even negotiate a health care bill after 7 years. By limiting the executive ability's authority, this bill makes it harder for the United States to strike good deals.

Secretary POMPEO. I actually agree with—

Senator BOOKER. And hold on. The Framers of the Constitution—well, you did not agree with it when you were talking—I can read your words back about how great this CAATSA deal is.

I put this in the record.

[The information referred to is located at the end of the hearing]

Senator BOOKER. And I finish my comments just simply by saying this is not a President who is using the tools. This is not a President who is strong against Russia. This is not a President that is standing up against people that are doing ongoing attacks on the United States of America that are continuing at this moment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, Mr. Chairman, let me thank the Secretary for being here. But I must say that after nearly 3 hours, here are my takeaways.

This administration is increasingly not transparent. It is not transparent as to what takes place at the summits. It is not transparent in terms of their—I hear that there is an effort not to have readouts when the President has conversations with foreign leaders, which has historically been the case. There is an increasing less number of briefings. We have not still had a briefing on North Korea in a classified setting nearly 2 months afterwards.

So what I took away is that as it relates to North Korea, we have no agreements on anything. The best I can glean is that they understand what we mean by denuclearization, but they have not agreed to that definition.

I really do not believe, Mr. Secretary, you know what happened during the President's 2-plus hour conversation with President Putin. And I really do not know much more about the summit after sitting here for 3 hours than I did before.

I want to say to you I want you to think about the suggestion that what the President says is not the policy of the United States. When the President speaks—

Secretary POMPEO. Can I clean that up, Senator? You are right. I misspoke there.

Senator MENENDEZ. If you want to clean it up—

Secretary POMPEO. I would love to. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. —because when he speaks, that is the policy of the United States.

Secretary POMPEO. I would love to, Senator. I would love the chance to do that.

Senator MENENDEZ. Yes. Go ahead.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. I misspoke. It is the case. The President calls the ball. His statements are in fact policy. But it is the case that when all of us speak in informal settings in response to questions, we are not covering the full gamut of things that impact the world. That is what I intended to say. I saw the glee on your side walking away trying to make a political point from that. That is silliness. This President runs this government. His statements are in fact U.S. policy.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right. So now we understand that when the President speaks, it is the policy of the United States.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, you have seen his policies, 200-plus sanctions. You have seen them, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. I am asking you questions. I understand you are summarizing here.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I have now been here 3 hours, and you have got a political soliloquy.

Senator MENENDEZ. No. You know what? I have listened to your political soliloquy as a Secretary of State sitting at that table demeaning some members here because you said that Senator Shaheen believes more the Russian Defense Ministry. She was quoting them only because we do not what our own government is saying. So please, do not talk to me about politics. If you want to talk about politics, if President Obama did what President Trump did in Helsinki, I would be peeling you off the Capitol ceiling. Please.

So here is the point. When the President speaks, it is the policy of the United States. And so when he says in one respect—I applaud this declaration about Crimea, but then he goes and says

that Russia should join the G7. Well, the reason Russia is not in the G7 is because they invaded Ukraine. So which is the policy? Because when the President speaks, it is the policy. And I must say, sir, when you speak around the world, people believe that what you say is a reflection of the policy of the United States.

So I want to close by saying one thing I heard here today that I can agree with you is that we need more sanctions, and I look forward to working with the chairman and Senator Graham and others who are interested in this regard. Hopefully we can come together in common cause to push back on Russia on sanctions that we can pursue.

And secondly, I want to reiterate I believe that it is rightful for the members of this committee, even if it is in a classified setting, to speak to the translator and/or to see her notes because that is the only way we will know what truly transpired.

The CHAIRMAN. Would you like to give any response?

Secretary POMPEO. Not a word.

The CHAIRMAN. You had earlier tried to lay out the things the administration was doing relative to the election and were cut off. Would you like to do that in a public setting?

Secretary POMPEO. I am just fine, Senator. I think I have had the opportunity to respond adequately. I appreciate you having been so gracious to have permitted me to do that.

The CHAIRMAN. And we had some exchange relative to a classified briefing. Let me say this. I know you are busy.

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to try and find a time that works for everyone to do that, as I think I committed to another Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. We will keep the record open until the close of business tomorrow for written questions. I know you have got a lot to do. To the extent your staff could help answer those questions as briefly as they could, that would be most helpful.

Secretary POMPEO. We will do it.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate you coming before us today.

And with that, the meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 6:00 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF HON. MIKE POMPEO TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. What would a failed denuclearization process with North Korea look like? At what point should the United States be prepared to walk away from negotiations?

Answer. Peace is worth the effort. The United States and its allies are committed to the same goal—the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea, as agreed to by Chairman Kim Jong Un. Our focus right now is to make these negotiations successful. We take Kim Jong Un at his word that he intends to denuclearize. If we find that is not the case, we will respond accordingly.

Sanctions will remain in full effect until North Korea denuclearizes. The full implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions by the international community brought us to this moment and are necessary for a successful outcome of this process.

Question. What role do human rights play in our engagement strategy with North Korea? Does the administration intend to continue to speak out about human rights abuses in North Korea, including the upwards of 2.6 million North Koreans enslaved by their own government?

Answer. The President raised North Korea's human rights record in his summit meetings with Chairman Kim Jong Un, and the United States will continue to raise these issues at all levels going forward. We remain deeply concerned by the egregious human rights violations and abuses committed by the North Korean government and will continue to promote accountability for North Korean leaders responsible for these acts. The United States also remains deeply concerned about the well-being of the North Korean people.

This administration has been very clear about defending human rights. We will continue to work with the international community to raise awareness, highlight abuses and violations, promote access to independent information, and keep pressure on the DPRK to respect human rights.

Question. How does a peace treaty fit into the engagement process with North Korea? What, if any, sequencing on this issue has been agreed to with North Korea? What countries would be a party to such an agreement?

Answer. Our objective is the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as Chairman Kim Jong Un committed to during his summit with the President in Singapore. We have made clear to all parties involved that a final peace settlement on the Korean Peninsula, including a peace treaty to replace the armistice, will require the complete denuclearization of the DPRK.

Question. What is the administration's message to South Korea on joint economic projects with the North? Is the administration prepared to provide sanctions exemptions?

Answer. We have been clear with our South Korean ally that sanctions remain in effect and will be enforced. The international community cannot let up on pressure until the DPRK denuclearizes. We support the deepening of inter-Korean ties, but we will not get pulled into a cycle of providing economic benefits to the DPRK without action on the denuclearization issue. We are closely aligned with the Republic of Korea on this message.

Given high degree of United States national security interest across the Horn of Africa from Somalia to Sudan, recent political and policy decisions in Ethiopia and Eritrea provide a significant moment for historical transformation that could stabilize and provide significant opportunity for economic and security reforms and development.

Question. As China invests significant amounts in new and influential ways in the region, from a military base and personnel in Djibouti to a range of economic incentives that put national sovereign independence at risk, how is the United States ensuring its national security interests and influence remains dynamic in the face of such incipient influence?

Answer. Africa offers real opportunities thanks to some of the world's fastest growing economies and an expanding labor force. The United States must do more to present our African partners with better alternatives so Africa can realize its full economic potential while advancing our national security interests. For example, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the Generalized System of Preferences trade preferences program, for which both Djibouti and Ethiopia are eligible in 2018, encourages continued progress in good governance and other areas including the rule of law, anti-corruption, poverty reduction, workers' rights, advancing a market-based economy, and cooperating in anti-terrorism activities to support U.S. national security.

We are not seeking an adversarial relationship with China. We will not shy away, however, from speaking forthrightly about and contesting Chinese policies and actions that aim to undermine U.S. interests in Africa. We will continue to ensure our allies and partners are secure from military threat or coercion. We will also seek to expand and modernize U.S. development finance tools to send a clear message that we continue to lead the world in supporting sound, responsible, and fair economic growth, as well as sustainable and fair business practices.

Question. Similarly, Russia is investing in direct ways intended to undercut and displace American bilateral influence in the Horn and beyond. How does the U.S. perceive recent increases and rhetoric by Russia and what efforts are being made to appropriately address our national interests as they pertain to these efforts?

Answer. We will remain vigilant in our observation of Russian developments, such as arms deals and basing, to adequately address them if they encroach on our national interests. The United States will continue to pursue our compelling interests in advancing good governance and maintaining our security through security cooperation efforts in Africa.

Turkey and Qatar are in a continuing and escalating battle with Saudi Arabia and the UAE that has had problematic and wide-ranging effect from South Africa to Egypt. The Red Sea and Sea of Aden are home to critical chokepoints that remain strategically important to international trade and our military's proper use of the maritime environment. Today, reports indicate that Saudi Arabia suspended its oil shipments through the region due to threats from Iranian backed Houthi in Yemen.

Question. Given the high and strategic interest of the region to the United States, is there any strategy to address the creeping influence that puts our own at risk? Is there any consideration for a regional senior diplomatic official that can effectively identify and address the accelerating regional contest between the two jurisdictions of Africa and the Gulf?

Answer. We are committed to countering Iran's malign regional influence through our comprehensive Iran strategy. This strategy includes efforts in Yemen, where our goals are: persuading parties to resolve the conflict under U.N. auspices, countering Iranian influence, addressing the dire humanitarian situation, preventing terrorists from exploiting Yemen's vulnerability, and protecting allies and partners in the region as well as freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. We are concerned about recent attacks on commercial vessels and other threats to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and through the Bab al Mandeb. Senior Department officials encourage all sides of the Gulf rift to resolve their differences peacefully and with mutual respect. Working-level officials in the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and African Affairs coordinate closely. We emphasize to all sides that the Gulf rift undermines our shared goal of building a unified front against Iranian influence in the region. It is important that states in the Horn of Africa should not feel the need to "pick sides" in the Gulf rift. New developments in the Ethiopia—Eritrea relationship show the welcome potential for peace in the region and present an important opportunity for U.S. engagement.

Question. The Pakistan elections appear to have resulted in the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party of former cricketer, Imran Khan, in a lead coalition position. What would a Khan government likely mean for U.S. efforts to gain greater cooperation from the Pakistan government in counter terrorism and reconciliation in Afghanistan?

Answer. I am reluctant to speculate on the specific policies of Pakistan's new leaders, particularly since coalition-building is ongoing, and a civilian government has not yet been formed. We will stress to Pakistan's new leadership that Pakistan is important to the success of the President's South Asia strategy, but we will not continue with business as usual as long as Pakistan does not address U.S. concerns about its destabilizing policies, including its failure to curtail the Taliban, Haqqani Network and other externally-focused militant and terrorist groups. Our requests to Pakistan have been specific and consistent, and we will continue our frank discussions with the new government.

Question. The Pakistan elections appear to have resulted in the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party of former cricketer, Imran Khan, in a lead coalition position. He has made inflammatory comments about the United States during his long run to power. Is he considered independent of the Pakistan military or a product of its manipulations?

Answer. While Imran Khan has made some concerning statements in the context of political campaigns, I am hopeful that we will be able to work with the new government towards a productive bilateral relationship. We have been consistent, however, that, for this to happen, Pakistan must take decisive action against all militant groups based in Pakistan and play a constructive role to facilitate the Afghan peace process. I would refer you to the State Department's July 27 statement regarding concerns with the pre-voting electoral process and our belief in the importance of further strengthening legitimate democratic institutions. I will continue to look for opportunities to further these objectives with the new government.

Question. The Pakistan elections appear to have resulted in the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party of former cricketer, Imran Khan, in a lead coalition position. Are extremist groups and terror groups more or less likely to gain influence with a Khan government?

Answer. I am reluctant to speculate on the specific policies of Pakistan's new leaders, particularly since coalition-building is ongoing and a civilian government has not yet been formed. One positive outcome of Pakistan's July 25 elections is that candidates associated with the designated terrorist group Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LeT) lost in every race they contested. Our requests to Pakistan to curtail the Taliban, Haqqani Network and other externally-focused militant and terrorist groups have

been specific and consistent, and we will continue our frank discussions with the new government.

Question. The administration's recently completed inter-agency Stabilization Assistance Review was well informed by a wide range of experienced actors and drew both internally and externally from activities taking place today and historical experience to develop a comprehensive understanding, including a long-sought definition for stabilization efforts. The review provides a foundation from the inter-agency to better apply lessons learned and more efficiently manage and maintain personnel with the necessary skill sets to operate in challenging and hazardous environments, often alongside the military. What steps are being taken to institutionalize these findings so that we ensure lessons missed do not diminish our efficiency and effectiveness as the United States continues to respond to such complex crises?

Answer. The Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR) identified ways that the United States can more effectively leverage diplomatic engagements, defense, and foreign assistance to stabilize conflict-affected areas. Secretary Mattis, Administrator Green, and I support the results of this review and have directed our Departments and Agencies to work on implementing the SAR framework and mainstreaming the core principles into policy and practice. With the support of the National Security Council, we are developing an interagency approach outlining key tasks to advance the seven lines of effort in the SAR framework. We appreciate Congress' support for this effort to date and look forward to continued collaboration.

Question. How are the findings and recommendations being employed to improve outcomes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, the Sahel, and the Lake Chad basin?

Answer. The Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR) identified ways that the United States can more effectively leverage diplomatic engagements, defense, and foreign assistance to stabilize conflict-affected areas. Secretary Mattis, Administrator Green, and I support the results of this review and have directed our Departments and Agencies to work on implementing the SAR framework into policy and practice. Accordingly, we are working to ensure that the strategies and assistance plans for priority conflict-affected countries and regions reflect the SAR's principles. We are also working to ensure that our U.S. country teams and civilian teams deployed with the military in those places have the tools and support they need to apply the SAR framework. We look forward to continuing to update you about these efforts as they progress.

Question. Secretary Pompeo, would you please let us know if this administration has raised or intends to raise with the Russian government the provision of information they may have regarding Korean War and Cold War era POW and MIAs? More specifically, will the administration raise with the Russian government the prospect of reviewing Soviet-era intelligence and military archives for records on interrogations of U.S. service members who were captured during the Korean War? More specifically still, will the administration raise with the Russian government the case of Major Sam Logan, a U.S. Air Force B-29 pilot who was shot down in North Korea in September 1950 and may have been interrogated by Soviet officials?

Answer. The Department is working closely with other members of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on Prisoners of War and Missing in Action (POW/MIA) (USRJC) as the United States engages with Russia on POW/MIA cases from the Korean Conflict and other U.S. conflicts and wars that remain unresolved. Major Sam Logan, a U.S. Air Force B-29 pilot who was shot down in North Korea in 1950, is one of these important cases that has been discussed within the context of the USRJC. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is aware of your request and can provide additional information.

RESPONSES OF HON. MIKE POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB MENENDEZ

NORTH KOREA

In earlier testimony before this Committee and during the hearing yesterday I asked you a series of questions about necessary elements for any deal with North Korea. Again, I would like for you to provide an update and answer to the following questions regarding your negotiations with North Korea:

Question. Did North Korea agree to permanently dismantle and disable its nuclear weapons infrastructure, including test sites, all nuclear weapons research and

development facilities, particularly with respect to advanced centrifuges, and nuclear weapons enrichment and reprocessing facilities?

Answer. Diplomatic talks with the DPRK are ongoing. In Singapore, Chairman Kim agreed to our goal of achieving the final, fully-verified denuclearization of the DPRK. In Pyongyang, I had detailed and substantive discussions about next steps toward fully verified and complete denuclearization. During those discussions, North Korea reaffirmed the commitment it made in Singapore to destroy its missile engine test site, and its overall commitment to complete denuclearization.

Question. Did North Korea agree to put forward a full, complete, and verifiable declaration of all its nuclear activities?

Answer. Diplomatic talks with the DPRK are ongoing. In Singapore, Chairman Kim agreed to our goal of achieving the final, fully-verified denuclearization of the DPRK. We want denuclearization that is fully verified and, importantly, final—the President wants to denuclearize North Korea once and for all and not have the nuclear issue resurface again.

Question. Did North Korea agree to dismantle all ballistic missiles and a prohibition on all ballistic missile development?

Answer. Diplomatic talks with the DPRK are ongoing. In Singapore, Chairman Kim agreed to our goal of achieving the final, fully-verified denuclearization of the DPRK. We want denuclearization that is fully verified and, importantly, final—the President wants to denuclearize North Korea once and for all and not have the nuclear issue resurface again.

Question. Did North agree to a robust compliance inspections including a verification regime for its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, including complete access to all nuclear related sites and facilities with real time verification including “anywhere, anytime” inspections and snap-back sanctions if North Korea is not in full compliance?

Answer. I’ve been very clear with my North Korean counterparts on what final, fully verified denuclearization means and they understand and acknowledge that denuclearization absent verification makes no sense. The U.S. government is committed to the robust verification protocols and mechanism that will be required to achieve complete denuclearization.

Question. What have you actually achieved regarding denuclearizing the Korean peninsula?

Answer. Progress on denuclearization includes building upon the commitments made by President Trump and Chairman Kim. In Pyongyang, I had detailed and substantive discussions about next steps toward fully-verified and complete denuclearization. During those discussions, North Korea reaffirmed the commitment it made in Singapore to destroy its missile engine test site, and its overall commitment to complete denuclearization.

Question. Is North Korea making significant and meaningful steps towards denuclearization? Is the activity at Sohae (so-hey) significant, or reality TV? Are international inspectors verifying the significance of North Korea’s actions? Are these steps irreversible? Are these steps ratified in a written agreement between the U.S. and North Korea, and part of a bigger plan to dismantle all nuclear and missile capabilities? Do these steps affect core North Korean capabilities, or are they measures North Korea can take—in the expectations of payment—that are in effect cost-free?

Answer. The administration continues to work towards the full implementation of the commitments Chairman Kim made in Singapore, and to plan for the final denuclearization of North Korea, including the specific steps necessary to accomplish this.

North Korea’s destruction of the site at Sohae, if verified, would be a significant step by the DPRK towards meeting those commitments.

The President remains committed to fully and finally resolving the issue of North Korea’s illicit and threatening WMDs and their delivery systems.

Question. Do you still maintain progress on sanctions relief should be dependent on dismantlement and removal of North Korea’s nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs?

Answer. Our goal is clear—we must achieve the final, fully-verified denuclearization of the DPRK as agreed to by Chairman Kim. Should the DPRK follow through on its commitments to denuclearization, the U.S. looks forward to even-

tually helping North Korea obtain prosperity and earn the respect of the world. Sanctions remain in full effect until North Korea denuclearizes.

Question. Given Chinese, South Korean and Russian defections and pressure to adjust or end sanctions, can “maximum pressure” still be said to credibly exist? If talks break down, and the U.S. is held equally (or more responsible) for failure, is it realistic to expect that maximum pressure can be maintained, imposed, or strengthened?

Answer. All U.N. member states are required to implement the obligations contained in the United Nations Security Council sanctions resolutions in good faith, and we expect them all to do so. The United States continues to work with governments around the world to ensure all nations are fully implementing these obligations. The pressure campaign will continue until the DPRK denuclearizes.

2)3-D PRINTING OF GUNS

The State Department is engaging countries around the world for action to pressure the DPRK and ensure global compliance with United Nations Security Council resolutions. We are cooperating with many countries, including China, to take decisive action against entities involved in DPRK sanctions evasion activity.

We will not hesitate to take unilateral action against entities that continue to support the DPRK regime in contravention of U.N. sanctions.

The State Department is about to allow the Internet posting of information to enable the production of plastic firearms on 3-D printers. Why on Earth would the Trump administration and the State Department make it easier for terrorists to produce undetectable plastic guns to hijack aircraft and endanger or kill Americans is beyond belief.

Question. Can you explain the justification for the State Department’s decision to allow the release of this information?

Answer. As I committed in my testimony, I will review this issue and have my staff provide a briefing on the complexities of this matter.

Question. Does the Department really want to enable ISIS and al-Qaeda to learn how to smuggle firearms past the TSA?

Answer. No. As I committed in my testimony, I will review the Department’s next steps on this issue and have my staff provide a briefing on the complexities of this matter.

Question. You committed to review the Department’s decision to allow the release of information on 3-D guns. Please describe that review process, the steps taken this far, and the status of that review.

Answer. As I committed in my testimony, I will review the Department’s next steps on this issue and have my staff provide a briefing on the complexities of this matter.

Question. Why didn’t the Department provide the Committee notice of its decision to release this information, in accordance with the Arms Export Control Act?

Answer. Notification to Congress is not required for a temporary exemption under International Traffic in Arms Regulations § 126.2. We will submit a 38(f) notification prior to any final rule that would revise the U.S. Munitions List (USML), remove listed items from the State Department’s jurisdiction under the USML, and transfer them to Commerce’s jurisdiction under the Commerce Control List.

DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

Mr. Secretary, I sent you a letter on Monday regarding the lack of Daily Press Briefings during your tenure as Secretary and more broadly during this administration. Daily press briefings are critical to keeping the American people informed and promoting transparency and accountability. They also send an important signal to the rest of the world about the importance of a free press.

Question. Do you commit to reinstating daily press briefings?

Answer. The Department values media outreach and is committed to the principles of transparency and press freedom. The Spokesperson briefs journalists at televised press briefings frequently in Washington, DC and from abroad while supporting the Secretary’s travel schedule. While on travel, Spokesperson Nauert has an acting deputy spokesperson who has gaggled with reporters in Washington. The Department’s press officers rapidly respond to domestic and international journalist queries.

The Department travels with a broad contingent of reporters. The Spokesperson and Secretary engage and brief them daily while traveling. Over the past year, we have dramatically increased journalist access by making available more seats on the plane. We also provide access to subject experts across the Department who can delve into policy issues in greater depth, via background briefings open to domestic and international reporters including on critical issues as Iran, North Korea, sanctions, and Russia in recent weeks.

The Department is also emphasizing a range of venues and briefing opportunities to support a diverse media environment. The Department's regional spokespersons conduct interviews regularly on the most influential television channels in the Arabic, French, Hindi, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu media markets.

Question. Do you agree that the free and open press is a critical element of democracy?

Answer. The Department remains steadfastly committed to the principles of transparency and press freedom. We demonstrate that commitment every day in our engagement with journalists foreign and domestic, and this in turn serves as an example for other countries.

We believe in the importance of a free and open press in all societies. I would point you to my statement this year commemorating the 25th anniversary of World Press Freedom Day, reaffirming our commitment to promoting and protecting a free press. A free press is an essential pillar of democracy and a key component of democratic governance.

The Department Spokesperson and her team engage with individual American and international journalists daily to answer their inquiries and inform their reporting. I have sat for an increasing number of interviews, and have made available additional airplane seats for journalists on my official travel. The State Department's regional spokespersons conduct interviews regularly in the Arabic, French, Hindi, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu media markets. All these efforts underscore the importance the Department places on engaging with media and encouraging the work of a free and active press corps.

Question. Do you agree that the State Department has a role to play in demonstrating to the rest of the world that the United States values and supports a free and open press? If so, how do you intend to demonstrate that?

Answer. An independent and unfettered media is an essential element of any democratic, open society, and the Department remains steadfastly committed to the principles of transparency and press freedom. We demonstrate our commitment to those principles every day, and do our utmost to support the work of the journalists who cover the State Department.

We have a robust and multi-faceted media engagement strategy, emphasizing a range of venues. While the Spokesperson briefs journalists at televised press briefings, this is only a fraction of the work that the Spokesperson undertakes to keep Americans, foreign governments and publics, and the foreign affairs community informed. Beyond televised press briefings, subject experts across the Department provide briefings on policy issues. The Spokesperson and her team also engage thousands of individual American and international media queries daily.

Since becoming Secretary, I have made a point of reaching out to the press corps and supporting increased engagement. We have made available additional airplane seats dedicated to journalists on official travel, including on such critical events as the summit with the North Korean leadership in Pyongyang and the G7 and NATO summits as they unfold in real time.

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

At the end of the hearing on July 25, you stated that the words of the President are U.S. policy.

Question. In a recent interview on Fox News, President Trump refused to use the word "adversary" to describe Russia because they "really helped us" during World War II. A few days earlier, the president referred to the European Union as a "foe" during a discussion of trade policy. This is despite the fact that members of the armed forces of our NATO allies have served side by side with us for decades—as of May 2017, over 1,000 NATO soldiers alone had given their lives fighting with us in Afghanistan alone. Yes or no—is the European Union a foe?

Answer. The European Union (EU) is one of our closest, most capable partners on a host of international security, economic, diplomatic, and humanitarian efforts. While we may have our differences, the United States and the EU agree far more than we disagree, as evidenced in our continuing close cooperation on issues of mutual importance, including: addressing conflicts in the Middle East, confronting ma-

align state actors, countering terrorism, and improving European security. The EU leverages the capacities of all 28 member states to address challenges around the world. It is able to lead and conduct missions to secure its borders and project stability outside of Europe. On trade policy, as the President announced July 25, the United States and the EU are working together toward zero tariff and non-tariff barriers, including subsidies on non-automotive goods, increasing U.S. exports of liquefied natural gas to the EU, reducing bureaucratic obstacles to trade, and reforming the WTO to better protect European and American companies from unfair trade practices.

Question. On June 13, 2018 President Trump tweeted that “There is no longer a nuclear threat from North Korea.” What steps has North Korea taken that provide us with confidence the North Korea nuclear threat has been eliminated to the United States and our Asia-Pacific allies?

Answer. The President achieved his objectives at the Singapore Summit. He secured a DPRK commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and built a good working relationship with Chairman Kim. This is the beginning of the process for final, fully-verified, denuclearization of the DPRK as agreed to by Chairman Kim.

Our alliances remain ironclad, and ensure peace and stability in the region.

The security of South Korea and Japan are essential to America’s security, and we will continue to meet all our alliance commitments.

Question. In May 2018, President Trump described immigrants from Mexico and Central America by stating, “You wouldn’t believe how bad these people are. These aren’t people. These are animals.” Is it U.S. policy that immigrants from Mexico and Central America are animals?

Answer. The Department of State protects U.S. citizens and their interests abroad, supports U.S. border security, and facilitates travel by visitors or immigrants to the United States. The Department is committed to treating every visa applicant with dignity and respect.

We have strong partnerships with Mexico and the countries of Central America that enhance our shared goal of promoting a more competitive, prosperous, and secure region in order to reduce illegal migration and illicit drug flow in the region. Our countries are neighbors and allies, strengthened by common values and strong trade linkages. The Department will continue to work with Mexico and the countries of Central America to build strong relationships and to address a broad range of bilateral and national security issues.

Maintaining robust screening standards for visa applicants is a dynamic practice that must adapt to emerging threats. We are constantly working to find mechanisms to improve our screening processes, allowing travel and immigration to the United States while protecting U.S. citizens and excluding individuals who might pose a threat to the United States.

In FY 2017, the Department issued 113,776 immigrant visas to citizens of Mexico or Central American countries.

Question. In June 2018, President Trump described Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as “very dishonest & weak.” Is it U.S. policy that Prime Minister Trudeau—the head of government of a NATO ally—is very dishonest and weak?

Answer. No. It remains U.S. policy to work closely with our Canadian allies and friends on the entire spectrum of security, economic, and other issues. Our 5,525 mile shared land border and our vast and shared economic, defense, cultural and family ties make our relationship with Canada unique in the world. The United States will continue to engage with Canada in ways that enable us to achieve our shared objectives.

Question. In May 2018, President Trump, referring to his proposed border wall between the United States and Mexico, stated that “in the end Mexico is going to pay for the wall.” Is it the policy of the United States that Mexico will pay for President Trump’s proposed border wall?

Answer. Like the President, I am committed to securing our borders and protecting the homeland. Half a million people enter the United States from Mexico each day and too many of them do so illegally. Border infrastructure, to include walls, is a critical piece of strengthening control of the border. Securing our borders provides security for the American people and allows the United States to facilitate legitimate trade and travel, while preventing the movement of illicit goods and travelers. The President and Congress will ultimately make a decision about funding.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S SUMMIT WITH PRESIDENT PUTIN

Question. Did he President hold any Cabinet meetings before the summit to strategize his one on one meeting with President Putin?

Answer. The Department of State in coordination with the National Security Council prepared extensively for the meeting in Helsinki.

Question. Has the President held an official cabinet meeting since the summit to read out his national security team?

Answer. I refer you to the White House for specifics, but as I mentioned in my testimony, I have spoken with President Trump multiple times about the subject matter of the Helsinki meetings.

Question. Do you know with certainty whether the President and President Putin discussed any changes to international security agreements?

Answer. There were no “agreements” reached in Helsinki beyond agreement for our two sides to keep talking on the entire range of issues the Presidents discussed.

Question. Do you know with certainty whether the President called upon President Putin to uphold Russia’s commitments, agreed to at the Presidential level last year in Da Nang, Vietnam, with respect to the de-escalation zone in southwest Syria, especially the presence of Iran and Iranian-aligned forces?

Answer. The situation in Syria was one of the key issues discussed between President Trump and President Putin. Both agreed that the regular, ongoing de-confliction efforts through military channels on Syria are essential to avoiding miscalculations and unintended escalation during the Defeat ISIS Campaign.

The United States is determined to see the removal of all Iranian forces from Syria and an end to Iran’s continuing malign influence there.

Question. What were the “suggestions” President Putin made to the President?

Answer. The formation of two working groups was suggested to enable discussion on a range of issues. One is a business leadership working group made up of U.S. and Russian Chief Executive Officers of major private companies, which would present ideas to address economic relations between the two countries. The second proposed group is the political, or Track II, working group of academics and former U.S. and Russian officials to suggest possible solutions to issues affecting the bilateral relationship.

The U.S. and Russian National Security Councils staff are developing a dialogue to explore these proposed working groups.

Question. Do you know with certainty whether the President and President Putin talked about Paul Manafort, or his ongoing trial?

Answer. I will not comment on every detail of private one-on-one conversations between President Trump and the leaders of other countries. As I noted during my testimony, the President was very clear about U.S. policy positions, and he spoke about them very firmly and clearly in his meeting with President Putin.

Question. Do you know with certainty whether the President and President Putin talked about the Mueller investigation or about indictments of the President’s former campaign staff?

Answer. I will not comment on every detail of private one-on-one conversations between President Trump and the leaders of other countries. As I noted during my testimony, the President was very clear about U.S. policy positions, and he spoke about them very firmly and clearly in his meeting with President Putin.

Question. Do you know with certainty whether the President and President Putin talked about Natalia Veselnitskaya—the Russian lawyer who met with Donald Jr.?

Answer. I will not comment on every detail of private one-on-one conversations between President Trump and the leaders of other countries. As I noted during my testimony, the President was very clear about U.S. policy positions, and he spoke about them very firmly and clearly in his meeting with President Putin.

Question. Do you know with certainty whether the President and President Putin talked about Yevgeny Prigozhin or the Internet Research Agency?

Answer. As I noted during my testimony, the President was very clear about U.S. policy positions, and he spoke about them very firmly and clearly in his meeting with President Putin.

In February, a grand jury returned an indictment presented by Special Counsel Mueller charging Mr. Prigozhin and the Internet Research Agency for committing federal crimes as part of an effort to interfere in the U.S. political system. Mr.

Prigozhin and the Internet Research Agency are also subject to U.S. sanctions targeting malicious cyber actors, including those involved in interfering with election processes or institutions. The administration will continue to take action, including implementation of sanctions, to respond to Russian election interference in the United States.

Question. Do you know with certainty whether the President and President Putin discussed former Ambassador Michael McFaul? Bill Browder?

Answer. I will not comment on every detail of private one-on-one conversations between President Trump and the leaders of other countries. As for any current or former U.S. government employee, as I noted during my testimony, the United States will defend our government personnel, whether in the field, in Washington, or retired from service.

Question. Do you know with certainty whether the President and President Putin discussed the issue of political prisoners with President Putin, including that of Oleg Sentsov, the Ukrainian filmmaker who has been detained for 4 years and is on hunger strike?

Answer. During their discussions, the President raised a number of issues with President Putin, including Russia's election interference, Ukraine and the occupation of Crimea, DPRK, Syria, and arms control.

We share your concerns about the continued wrongful imprisonment of Crimean film director Oleg Sentsov. The State Department continues to call on the Government of Russia, in both public statements and private discussions, to end its repressive occupation of Crimea and cease its campaign of pressure on opponents of the occupation, such as Mr. Sentsov.

We have frequently called on Russia to release all victims of politically motivated prosecution, including Mr. Sentsov and the approximately 70 other Ukrainian citizens it has unjustly imprisoned. Department officials frequently meet with relatives of and advocates for these prisoners and we remain committed to pressing for their release.

Question. Following the summit, President Putin held a press conference outlining the outcomes of the Helsinki meeting with President Trump. He also apparently had calls with the Belarusian President to describe the nuances of the Helsinki meeting. Why hasn't President Trump done the same with the American people or congress?

Answer. President Trump and President Putin held a press conference outlining the details of the Helsinki meeting. For further comments, please refer to the White House.

Question. Has the U.S. provided any briefings about the summit to our allies?

Answer. Yes. On July 23, I sent a readout of the Helsinki discussions to our chiefs of mission overseas and instructed them to share the readout with their host country counterparts. I know that the National Security Council staff also held a readout session with DC-based embassies, and I would refer you to the NSC for details on that briefing.

Question. Did you speak with the interpreter following the summit?

Answer. As I said in my testimony, I have not spoken with the President's interpreter.

Question. Did you, or did anyone from the State Department or the national security team, speak with the interpreter or review her notes?

Answer. As I said in my testimony, I have not spoken with the President's interpreter or reviewed her notes. I cannot speak for the national security team; I would refer you to the White House.

Question. Were any notes by the interpreter preserved, in line with a request I made on July 16?

Answer. The Department is committed to maintaining records in accordance with the Federal Records Act and will ensure all relevant Department records pertaining to the meeting are appropriately safeguarded as required by law.

Question. Have all relevant documents and memos related to the summit been preserved, in line with a request I made on July 16?

Answer. The Department is committed to maintaining records in accordance with the Federal Records Act and will ensure all relevant Department records pertaining to the meeting are appropriately safeguarded as required by law.

Question. Is the Israeli government asking the Trump administration to recognize Assad regime control over southern Syria?

Answer. We continue to consult closely with Israel on regional security issues, including Syria. While I will not comment on the content of those discussions in this format, I can say that the removal of Iranian and Iranian proxy forces from the country, the enduring defeat of ISIS, and an end to the Syrian conflict through a political solution remain top foreign policy priorities for the Trump administration.

Question. How are you ensuring Israel's security when you rely on Russia, who continues to cooperate with Iran?

Answer. We strongly support Israel's right to self-defense and recognize the legitimate security concerns Iran's current force posture in Syria poses for Israel's security. We continue to work extensively with likeminded countries, including Israel, to deter and disrupt Iranian threats. As part of our commitment to bolstering Israel's defense capabilities, we will begin to implement the new 10-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in FY 2019. The MOU commits us to provide \$3.3 billion in Foreign Military Financing funds per year as well as \$500 million in Department of Defense funds for cooperative missile defense, and we completely support ensuring Israel receives all the assistance appropriated by Congress.

Question. After attempts in the previous administration, and now this administration, to test Russian will and capability to uphold commitments in Syria ... why are you now optimistic that Russia will successfully compel the Iranians to withdraw their forces and advisers?

Answers. Each time I have spoken with President Trump about U.S. policy in Syria, both before the Helsinki meeting and after, Iran has been a central point of focus. The President discussed Syria with President Putin and talked about America's continued efforts to ensure that Israel was secure from threats from Syria. Despite Russia's complicity in the atrocities carried out by the Syrian regime, its considerable influence in Syria makes it an essential actor. Engagement with Russia by the United States and like-minded partners will continue to be a necessary component of any lasting solution in Syria.

Russia and Iran lack the material resources to provide for the stabilization and eventual reconstruction of Syria. Russia has approached the United States and international partners about providing that assistance, but the United States and our allies will not provide international reconstruction assistance absent a credible political process in Geneva that leads unalterably to constitutional reform, U.N. supervised elections, and a political transition that reflects the will of the Syrian people.

Question. How do you propose to address the Iranian presence in the rest of Syria?

Answer. At the meeting between President Donald Trump and President Putin in Helsinki, key Iran-related issues were discussed. This included the removal of all Iranian and Iranian proxy forces from Syria. The United States remains committed to using every tool at its disposal to counter malign Iranian influence throughout the region. Iranian support to Assad, particularly the use of sectarian militias guilty of abuses against the civilian population, undermines the legitimate political process to resolve the conflict in Syria. Additionally, Russia and Iran lack the material resources to provide for the stabilization and eventual reconstruction of Syria. Russia has approached the United States and international partners about providing that assistance, but the United States and our allies will not provide international reconstruction assistance absent a credible political process in Geneva that leads unalterably to constitutional reform, U.N. supervised elections, and a political transition that reflects the will of the Syrian people.

U.S.-RUSSIAN NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL MATTERS

Secretary Pompeo, in response to a question for the record following your nomination hearing on April 12, you stated your belief that "the New START Treaty currently contributes to preserving strategic stability between the United States and Russia and is in the national security interest of the United States." You added that the administration "will continue to fully implement New START and will consider next steps related to the New START Treaty at the appropriate time." The treaty, which expires in February 2021, can be extended by up to five years. Following the July 16 meeting with President Trump in Helsinki, President Putin expressed Russia's willingness to begin discussions about an extension and warned that the treaty will expire in a year and a half unless work on an extension begins soon. For his part, President Trump did not publicly comment on New START during his time

in Europe but did say of his meeting with Putin that “Perhaps the most important issue we discussed at our meeting . . . was the reduction of nuclear weapons throughout the world. Meanwhile, the administration is continuing to conduct a review of the pros and cons of extending the treaty.

Question. Did Presidents Trump and Putin discuss New START and a possible extension during their private meeting and if so how did President Trump respond to President Putin’s willingness to begin talks on doing so?

Answer. There were no “agreements” reached in Helsinki—beyond agreement for our two sides to keep talking on the entire range of issues the Presidents discussed, including arms control. Both President Trump and President Putin publicly acknowledged the fact that the United States and Russia possess over 90 percent of the world’s nuclear weapons, and as such share a special responsibility to maintain a stable, strategic relationship. Both leaders reiterated their commitment to discussing issues related to strategic stability and arms control, of which New START is one component. The United States is fully committed to implementing the New START Treaty, but has made no decision regarding a potential extension. This decision will be made at the appropriate time.

Question. What is the administration’s timeline for the completing its review of whether to extend New START?

[No Response Received]

Question. Last year General Hyten, head of U.S. Strategic Command, said that he supports the strategic nuclear limits put in place by the New START Treaty. What would be the consequences if there are no data exchanges, reciprocal inspections or verifiable limits on U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear forces, which would be the case if New START is allowed to expire with nothing to replace it?

Answer. The New START Treaty constrains Russia’s deployment of strategic nuclear forces, including intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, heavy bombers, and deployed strategic nuclear warheads. The treaty further permits the United States to verify information about Russia’s strategic nuclear arsenal and contributes to strategic stability. The verification regime under the existing Treaty includes 18 on-site inspections per year which are utilized to verify the thousands of notifications updating the status and location of nuclear forces that each side sends, a biannual comprehensive data exchange, and biannual meetings of the Treaty’s Bilateral Consultative Commission to promote the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty. Should the New START Treaty expire without a replacement agreement, this information would no longer be provided, and U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear forces would be unconstrained for the first time since 1994 when the START I Treaty entered into force.

The United States and Russia held a first round of strategic stability talks last September in Helsinki. The specific agenda was not disclosed. A second round of talks was slated to take place on March 7–8 in Vienna, but Russia announced that it would not participate in the talks, citing the U.S. cancellation of bilateral consultations on cybersecurity that had been scheduled to take place in late February in Geneva.

Question. Did Presidents Trump and Putin discuss the resumption of strategic stability talks at their July 16 meeting? What are the administration’s goals for strategic stability discussions with Russia?

Answer. There were no “agreements” reached in Helsinki—beyond agreement for our two sides to keep talking on the entire range of issues the Presidents discussed. The leaders affirmed the importance of continuing discussion on arms control and strategic stability, as our two countries hold the preponderance of the world’s nuclear weapons and have a duty to manage our relations responsibly. We expect another round of strategic stability talks in the future. There are no specifics regarding potential topics at this time.

MALIGN INFLUENCE

The Kremlin’s malign interference—including corrupt influence, cyberattacks, disinformation, and other tools—continues not just against the U.S. but against multiple countries in Europe.

Question. Have you been personally tasked by President Trump to coordinate with other cabinet agencies on a whole-of-government response to Kremlin malign interference?

Answer. Russia has shown through its aggressive actions that it rejects the post-Cold War order. Russia's efforts have extended beyond traditional military campaigns to encompass a suite of "hybrid" tools used to gain influence. Safeguarding the United States and our allies and partners from Russian malign influence campaigns is a core component of the administration's Russia strategy, our diplomatic engagement with partners and allies, and our foreign assistance.

The Department works across the interagency, as well as closely with allies and partners, to deter and defend against Russian malign activity both at home and abroad. The Department's whole-of-government approach combines diplomatic, foreign assistance, intelligence, and law enforcement lines of effort to deter and defend against these activities.

Question. Echoing Bush-era CIA Director George Tenet, DNI Coats recently said that the "light was blinking red again" regarding cyber attacks and foreign attempts to interfere in American elections. Has the President issued a directive to take specific actions to disrupt and deter Russian interference and cyberattacks into the midterm elections? If so, what are they?

Answer. Russian efforts to undermine democratic processes and the sovereignty of its neighbors are unacceptable and require a whole-of-government response. The Department of State works closely with other departments and agencies, as well as closely with Allies and partners, to protect our nation against potential interference in our election processes.

As the lead foreign policy agency, we communicate to the Russian government when its behavior is unacceptable, working with our interagency partners to impose costs in response, and building international coalitions to actively deter malign Russian activities—including those carried out through cyberspace—and to share best practices. The Department will continue to support the efforts of the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice and, as appropriate, state and local officials to secure our elections, leveraging all necessary and available Department resources to counter Russian interference efforts.

In 2016, Montenegro uncovered a planned assassination against its pro-Western Prime Minister that aimed to prevent Montenegro's ascension to NATO. Investigations are ongoing to determine the source of the plot, but British intelligence has said it was a Russian-backed coup attempt.

Question. Does the administration believe that Russia took measures to prevent Montenegro's ascension to NATO?

Answer. The evidence presented by Montenegrin prosecutors overwhelmingly links Russian intelligence services to the attempted coup plot in October 2016. In particular, the Montenegrin authorities have connected Russian GRU officers Vladimir Popov and Eduard Shishmakov, who were previously expelled from Poland for espionage, to the plot. There are also records of financial transactions, spoken testimony, seized encrypted phones, and email addresses that link to Moscow.

Russian coercion and interference in Montenegro is not new; following NATO's decision to admit Montenegro into the Alliance, Moscow funded anti-NATO political groups and protests and began a propaganda smear campaign to harm Montenegro's tourism industry. The Montenegrin government has stood strong and repeatedly asserted its sovereign right to choose its own alliances.

Question. Why did President Trump single out Montenegrins—recent victims of Russian aggression—as 'aggressive' while calling U.S. commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty into question?

Answer. The United States is proud to have supported Montenegro's NATO accession in 2017. The President reiterated the ironclad American commitment to collective defense at the recent NATO Summit. Montenegro continues to play an active role through its contributions to NATO's mission in Afghanistan, and the United States welcomes Montenegro's recent announcement of its intent to strengthen its commitments to NATO in support of operations in Iraq and Latvia. I am proud to call Montenegro an Ally.

RUSSIA

The Kremlin's agenda of aggression and interference toward the United States and our allies and interests around the globe continues unabated. Meanwhile, seven mandatory sanctions provisions in CAATSA have yet to be implemented by the Trump administration, and the President's public waffling on the Russian threat call into question his willingness and capacity to prioritize and lead a whole-of-government effort to respond to Russian government actions. You have stated that you

met with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in Helsinki and have had conversations with him since then.

Question. Please describe in detail the working groups that were agreed to between the United States and the Russian Federation during the meeting in Helsinki.

Answer. The goal of the Helsinki meetings was to have a conversation about the state of U.S.-Russia relations, which are their lowest level since the end of the Cold War, and to explore Moscow's willingness to address the very real issues that have led us to this place. There were no agreements reached in Helsinki beyond agreement for our two sides to keep talking on an entire range of issues.

The U.S. and Russian National Security Councils staff are developing a dialogue to assist in these discussions. Two new proposed working groups are the initial efforts in this dialogue. The business leadership working group would consist of U.S. and Russian Chief Executive Officers of major private companies, who will present ideas to address economic relations between the two countries. The political, or Track II, working group of academics and former U.S. and Russian officials would suggest possible solutions on issues facing the bilateral relationship.

Question. In your July 25 hearing, you said FM Lavrov raised the Global Engagement Center—please summarize his comments on this issue and your response?

Answer. I have been clear with Foreign Minister Lavrov that Russian attempts to undermine democratic processes, including through disinformation and propaganda, are unacceptable. The Global Engagement Center is an important part of Department efforts to deter and defend against Russian sponsored disinformation and propaganda.

Question. Did you raise with FM Lavrov in Helsinki, or in other venues, the issues of Kremlin interference in our and others' democratic processes; its deployment of cyber-attacks, disinformation, and corruption; its illegal annexation of territory in Ukraine and its support to separatists in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova; and its support for the Syrian regime's brutality and its attacks on U.S. service members in Syria? How would you characterize his response, and how will you continue to address these issues with the Russian government?

Answer. Russian efforts to undermine democratic processes, the sovereignty of its neighbors, and international stability are unacceptable and require a whole-of-government response. We are working across the U.S. government, as well as closely with allies and partners, to deter and defend against these activities both at home and abroad. I continue to raise concerns about Russia's destabilizing activity with FM Lavrov at every opportunity and our policy towards Russia will not change until Moscow takes demonstrable steps to disavow this activity.

Question. Has President Trump convened any cabinet level meetings to design a strategy to stop the Russian government threats described above? Has the Trump administration developed any responses to punish and prevent the various forms of Kremlin aggression described above? Please describe any such responses that have been developed.

Answer. Russia has shown through its aggressive actions that it rejects the post-Cold War order. Safeguarding the United States and our allies and partners from Russia's destabilizing activity is a core component of the administration's Russia strategy, our diplomatic engagement with partners and allies, and our foreign assistance. We've been clear with Russia that its malign activity has consequences. Moreover, this administration has sanctioned 213 individuals and entities in Russia for their destabilizing activity.

The Department is part of an interagency, whole-of-government approach that combines diplomatic, foreign assistance, intelligence, and law enforcement lines of effort to deter and defend against these activities. As the lead foreign policy agency, we communicate to the Russian government when its behavior is unacceptable, work with our interagency partners to impose costs in response, and build international coalitions to actively deter malign Russian activities—including those carried out through cyberspace. The Department will continue to support the efforts of the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice and will leverage all necessary and available Department resources to counter Russian interference efforts.

Question. Using the same logic applied to the North Korea case, has President Trump determined that Russia is a state sponsor of terrorism? Is the administration considering such a determination?

Answer. As a matter of law, in order for any country to be designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, the Secretary of State must determine that the government

of that country has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism. State Sponsor of Terrorism designations are made after careful review of all available evidence to determine if a country meets the statutory criteria for designation. The U.S. government has already taken a number of significant and effective steps to indicate our concern about and respond to Russian aggression and destabilizing behavior. We will continue applying pressure until Russia chooses to become a responsible member of the international community.

Question. Will you identify additional sanctions targets under existing sanctions authorities and what considerations are guiding your identification of such new targets? Per your statement in the July 25 hearing about finding “the right places and the right leverage points . . . that will actually make a difference to Russia,” what new sanctions authorities do you believe would be useful in curbing Kremlin aggression?

Answer. We remain fully committed to implementing CAATSA, just as we remain fully committed to imposing costs on Russia until it has changed its destabilizing activities. Nonetheless, we cannot comment on potential specific future sanctions actions.

We have the necessary tools to impose costs on Russia for its destabilizing activities, and we are actively using them. The administration has already designated 213 individuals and entities for their involvement in Russian malign activities, including through use of CAATSA. We are committed to utilizing existing authorities to find the right places and the right leverage points that will actually make a difference to Russia.

Rather than hurt Russia, additional mandatory sanctions could have significant negative consequences on U.S. and EU businesses. U.S.-EU transatlantic unity is critical to the effectiveness of our sanctions on Russia and we want to focus the sanctions costs on the Russian government and minimize unintended impact on our allies. After April 6, U.S. and allied businesses estimated lost revenue in the millions of dollars as a direct result of sanctions against Russia oligarchs and their companies.

HUNGARY

As you know, since the Hungarian government’s passage of a law last year curtailing academic freedom and foreign institutions in the country, the Central European University (CEU) sought the Hungarian government’s agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding with the state of New York that would allow the university to remain in Budapest. But with no response from the Hungarian government side and its future in Budapest uncertain, CEU has been forced to develop contingency plans to relocate its campus to another country even as it aims to maintain normal operations in Budapest absent a resolution.

Question. Have you personally raised this issue with Foreign Minister Szijjarto? Do you commit to the earliest available opportunity to raising this issue with him, and directing state officials to raise with their Hungarian counterparts, to encourage an agreeable resolution of this issue?

Answer. I raised the issue of the Central European University (CEU) personally with FM Szijjarto. The State Department’s Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and our embassy in Hungary also have been highlighting this issue with Hungarian officials for some time, and they have been in regular contact with CEU. Ambassador Cornstein has made successful resolution of this issue a priority, and we will continue to underscore the importance of CEU until its status is resolved.

NORTHERN IRELAND

There are growing concerns that the Good Friday Agreement will be further jeopardized by the United Kingdom’s departure from the European Union, and U.S. engagement to encourage full implementation of the agreement remains critical.

Question. Since taking office, have you considered the appointment of a Special Envoy to Northern Ireland and what are the plans of the Trump administration to appoint someone to this position, as we understand it has expressed intent to do?

Answer. The United States remains firmly committed to the Northern Ireland Peace Process including the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and subsequent agreements. We will continue to engage all parties and communities to work together to build a better, shared future. Through our Consulate in Belfast we promote reconciliation, two-way trade and investment, and cultural exchanges. We will work with the British and Irish governments, as co-guarantors of the Good Friday Agree-

ment, and the European Union to ensure twenty years of gains in the peace process are not sacrificed by the exit of the U.K. from the EU.

We are looking into the possibility of naming an envoy to the region. No personnel decision has been made.

Question. Are you working to appoint a U.S. ambassador to Ireland, vacant since the beginning of the Trump administration? How does the lack of an ambassador there affect U.S. interests with respect to the Good Friday Agreement and issues surrounding Brexit?

Answer. The President is committed to nominating an ambassador to Ireland as soon as possible. In the meantime, we continue to engage all parties and communities to work together to build a better, shared future through our Consulate General in Belfast and Embassies in London and Dublin. We will continue to work with the British and Irish governments, as co-guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement, and the European Union to ensure twenty years of gains in the peace process are not sacrificed by the exit of the U.K. from the EU.

CRIMEA

There are concerns among many international observers about continuing human rights violations in Crimea under the Russian Federation's illegal occupation of the peninsula—and no doubt that Russia is responsible for any such violations in territories it illegally occupies. Recent hunger strikes by political prisoners held in Crimea or who have been transferred from Crimea to prison inside the Russian Federation demonstrate the acute risk to life from Russia's illegal occupation. There is also concern that resolving the situation in Crimea risks being overshadowed by the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

Question. What are you doing to raise human rights concerns in Crimea with your counterparts in the Russian government, and to advocate specifically for the release of political prisoners from Crimea? Have you personally raised the case of hunger striker Oleg Sentsov with your Russian counterpart, and if you haven't, will you commit to doing so at the soonest opportunity?

Answer. We share your concerns about the appalling human rights situation in Crimea and about the continued wrongful imprisonment of Crimean film director Oleg Sentsov. The State Department continues to call on the Government of Russia, in both public statements and private discussions, to end its repressive occupation of Crimea and cease its campaign of pressure on opponents of the occupation. Our missions at the U.N. and the OSCE, and embassies in Kyiv and Moscow, have prioritized engagement on human rights concerns in Crimea. We have frequently called on Russia to release all victims of politically-motivated prosecution, including Mr. Sentsov and the approximately 70 other Ukrainian citizens it has unjustly imprisoned. Department officials frequently meet with relatives of and advocates for these prisoners and we remain committed to pressing for their release.

MH-17

According to a recent report, the Department of State drafted, but did not publish on its website, a statement on "Remembering the Shoot Down of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17." While the Department did publish the Joint Statement from the G7 Foreign Minister on MH17, the State Department's message—which reportedly briefly appeared on the website of the U.S. Embassy Moscow before being taken down—reportedly contained more details from the work of the Joint Investigation Team connecting the missile to a Russian military unit, and also had a stronger condemnation of Vladimir Putin's disinformation campaign and efforts to impede the investigation.

Question. Did the State Department draft its own statement on the MH17 shoot down, but not publish it? If so, who made the decision not to publish the statement and what was the reason for that decision? Did the State Department briefly publish the statement on the U.S. Embassy Moscow page and then take it down? If so, who made the decision to take the statement down and what was the reason for that decision? Why did the State Department not post the G7 statement on MH17 until Wednesday, when other G7 governments, like those of Canada and Britain, posted the statement on the Sunday it was released? Is it true that the State Department only posted the G7 statement after it was contacted by a reporter asking about the matter? How specifically is this administration working to support an accounting by Russia of its role in the MH15 incident and questions on potential breaches of international law, as well as efforts to support justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators?

Answer. I have complete confidence in the findings of the Joint Investigation Team (JIT), and I call on Russia to account for its role in the July 2014 downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine. I stand by the Department's May 24 and May 25 statements on the downing of MH17 and I reemphasized these points with my G7 foreign minister counterparts in our July 15 joint statement. Our policy is clear in these three statements.

Per standard practice, multiple offices at the Department of State work together to draft and/or coordinate statements and then determine the appropriate time and mode for releasing them. Given the strength of the multilateral G7 statement, we deemed it unnecessary to release a separate unilateral message we had drafted as a contingency. Generally, multilateral statements are posted on the relevant organization's website, but when the lack of a unilateral statement was misconstrued as a change in policy, the Department posted the G7 Foreign Ministers Statement to reiterate the U.S. position. There was and is, no change in the U.S. position regarding the MH17 investigation. The Department continues to engage with relevant counterparts on ways we can continue to support the Dutch and Australian-led effort to hold Russia to account for its role and in the anticipated criminal cases in the Dutch judicial system.

TURKEY/GREECE/EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Question. Is the administration is considering a new approach towards Turkey, in light of statements by President Trump and Vice President Pence about possible new sanctions? How are Turkey's aggressive actions against its NATO ally Greece being considered when sanctions or the transfer of F35s are contemplated?

[No Response Received]

Question. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Orthodox Christianity who is headquartered in Istanbul, and the church that he leads, has had its properties in Turkey confiscated, its Halki Seminary closed down, and many religious freedoms curtailed. How are you approaching this situation and what priority does it take in your bilateral engagements with Turkey?

Answer. The United States supports religious freedom for all, including the freedom for members of religious groups to govern their religion according to their beliefs and practice their faith freely, without government interference.

The United States Chargé d'Affaires in Ankara, visiting senior U.S. officials, and embassy and consulate officials continue to engage with Turkish government officials and emphasize the importance of respect for religious diversity and equal treatment under the law. Embassy and consulate representatives and visiting U.S. government officials continue to urge the government of Turkey to lift restrictions on religious groups and make progress on property restitution and specific cases of religious discrimination as well as to negotiate the reopening of Halki Seminary on terms acceptable to the Church. Embassy officials also meet with a wide range of religious community leaders, including those of the Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Christian, Protestant, Alevi, and Syriac Orthodox communities, to underscore the importance of religious freedom and interfaith tolerance and to condemn discriminatory language against any faith.

Question. What is your policy view on the joint efforts in the field of hydrocarbons among Israel, Greece and Cyprus? How is the Trump administration responding to Turkish threats against hydrocarbon exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean?

Answer. Discoveries offshore Cyprus, Israel, and potentially Greece have already redefined regional relationships and I believe will continue to be a catalyst for increased economic and political cooperation through interconnection and integration. The successful exploration, production, and export of the hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean will require exactly the political cooperation and economic integration that the United States has long supported in the region. The United States recognizes the right of the Republic of Cyprus to develop resources in its exclusive economic zone. I believe the island's hydrocarbon resources, like all its resources, should be shared equitably between both communities in the context of an overall settlement.

I discourage any actions or rhetoric that increase tensions in the region. Turkey's actions in February undermine its international reputation and economic interests. I am monitoring the progress of hydrocarbons exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean very closely.

RUSSIA HUMAN RIGHTS

Putin's aggressive foreign policy to undermine democratic processes and values in Europe and the United States is a function of his domestic policy to eliminate dissent and shore up his brittle, corrupt regime. So part of our response to Russian aggression must be to support to those Russians pushing for reform, transparency, and human rights in their own country. As you know, many of your predecessors met with human rights activists in Russia as a matter of course during their visits to Moscow, though notably, Secretary Tillerson did not.

Question. These issues have only grown in importance after Putin's re-election in April showed, according to international observers, "a lack of genuine choice" and "continued pressure on critical voices." What is the State Department specifically doing to engage the Russian people and support their human rights and their hope for transparent, accountable governance?

Answer. The U.S. government's commitment to supporting democracy and civil society in Russia remains firm. The Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports an open marketplace of ideas, transparent and accountable governance, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without fear of retribution.

Although the space for civil society and free media in Russia has become increasingly restricted, independent Russian organizations and individuals continue to express a desire to engage with the United States. As long as this continues to be the case, the United States will support opportunities for direct interaction between Russians and Americans, including through peer-to-peer, educational, cultural, and other regional programs that provide exchanges of best practices and ideas on themes of mutual interest.

The United States also continues to call on the Government of Russia to uphold its international obligations and commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to cease restrictions on the work of civil society organizations in Russia.

NORTH KOREA

Secretary Pompeo, you visited the U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Friday (July 20) to discuss preparations for the U.N. General Assembly in September.

Question. What plans, if any, are being made to coordinate a second meeting between President Trump and Kim Jong Un?

Answer. The Singapore summit, which occurred a little over a month ago, created great momentum for positive change and was the first step in this process. President Trump has expressed openness for a second meeting in connection with Kim Jong Un's commitment to denuclearize, but at this time, no second meeting is planned. We want denuclearization that is fully verified and, most importantly, final—the President wants to denuclearize North Korea once and for all and not have the nuclear issue resurface again.

Question. Mr. Secretary you have visited Pyongyang three times now. Has the administration assembled a working-level team or teams to negotiate with the North Koreans? Does you intend to continue to lead this effort, or does you intend to appoint an official, such as a Special Representative for North Korea Policy? Could you provide the committee with the names of the experts and scientists and the names of the offices and agencies with whom you and your team are presumably consulting with to develop technically-sound proposals for denuclearization?

Answer. I have established a post-Singapore Summit working group dedicated to directing my Department's planning, policy, implementation and verification of our efforts to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea consistent with the Singapore Summit's joint statement. The working group is led by Alex Wong, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs; Ben Purser, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation; Mark Lambert, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Korea and includes many other colleagues, drawing upon the expertise of the entire Department. The team supports Ambassador Sung Kim's ongoing negotiation efforts. We will continue to closely collaborate with the interagency.

Question. Is the administration considering offering the North Koreans either a political statement ending the war or a final peace treaty in place of the current armistice agreement? Where in a diplomatic sequence should a peace statement or treaty come—before, during, or after denuclearization? If so, what prompted the ad-

ministration to offer this during the negotiations? Does the administration believe the North Koreans will follow through with their end of any agreement that results in a peace treaty?

Answer. We are considering multiple options; denuclearization is an indispensable condition for a secure and permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. I do not want to get into hypotheticals regarding timing, but the President is confident Chairman Kim will honor the commitments made in Singapore.

NORTH KOREA POLICY OVERSIGHT ACT OF 2018

Senator Gardner and I have introduced the North Korea Policy Oversight Act of 2018 to provide congressional oversight of U.S. diplomacy with North Korea and any agreement that emerges from the administration's engagement with Kim Jong Un.

Question. What are your views of the bill?

Answer. As a former congressman, I believe congressional oversight is key, and I am committed to working with Congress on this issue.

Question. Does the administration plan to submit a binding U.S.–DPRK agreement to the Senate as a treaty?

Answer. I do not want to comment on hypotheticals of what form any outcome of our discussions with the DPRK may take, but as a former Congressman, I am committed to working with Congress and ensuring appropriate oversight of our engagement with the DPRK.

NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR THREAT

You stated the words of the President are U.S. policy. On June 13, 2018 President Trump tweeted that “There is no longer a nuclear threat from North Korea.”

Question. What steps has North Korea taken that provide us with confidence the North Korea nuclear threat has been eliminated to the United States and our Asia-Pacific allies?

Answer. The President achieved his objectives at the Singapore Summit. He secured a DPRK commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and built a good working relationship with Chairman Kim. This is the beginning of the process for final, fully-verified, denuclearization of the DPRK as agreed to by Chairman Kim.

Our alliances remain ironclad, and ensure peace and stability in the region. The security of South Korea and Japan are essential to America's security, and we will continue to meet all our alliance commitments.

DENUCLEARIZATION

Before the Singapore summit, President Trump said denuclearization should start “without delay,” and after the meeting, he spoke of the process beginning “very quickly.” National Security Advisor John Bolton said North Korea could dismantle all of its nuclear weapons, threatening missiles and biological weapons “in a year.” Now the President is saying “we have no time limit. We have no speed limit on limit” on the denuclearization process. This a remarkable shift. It appears to me the administration is satisfied with the current situation and is willing to allow it continue indefinitely.

Question. What is the administrations' timeline for negotiations?

Answer. The Singapore summit, which occurred a little over a month ago, created great momentum for positive change and was the first step in this process. We are moving together for further negotiations, and the United States seeks to move quickly. There is much work to be done, and my team looks forward to working with the DPRK to establish clear timelines and milestones. We want denuclearization that is fully verified and, most importantly, final—the President wants to denuclearize North Korea once and for all and not have the nuclear issue resurface again.

Question. What immediate steps from North Korea are you looking for to determine whether North Korea will serious begin the denuclearization process?

Answer. Diplomatic talks with the DPRK are ongoing. In Singapore, Chairman Kim agreed to our goal of achieving the final, fully-verified denuclearization of the DPRK. In Pyongyang, I had detailed and substantive discussions about next steps toward fully verified and complete denuclearization. I look forward to continuing discussions, and we remain open to any number of immediate steps the DPRK might take.

Question. What sort of reciprocal steps is the United States considering offering North Korea if it takes concrete actions to denuclearize?

Answer. We are committed to continued engagement on implementing the agreement reached in Singapore. Diplomatic talks with the DPRK are ongoing. We want denuclearization that is fully verified and, importantly, final—the President wants to denuclearize North Korea once and for all and not have the nuclear issue resurface again.

Question. What are the specific, verifiable steps toward denuclearization that the administration expects North Korea to take in the next 12 to 24 months and how will the administration reciprocate?

Answer. The administration continues to work towards the full implementation of the commitments Chairman Kim made in Singapore, and to plan for the denuclearization of North Korea, including the specific steps necessary to accomplish this.

Question. Short of complete denuclearization, what specific confidence building measures would the administration welcome from North Korea?

Answer. Through my discussions with North Korean officials, I have made it clear what gestures or actions would signal their commitment to denuclearization. We anticipate receiving and repatriating our fallen heroes' remains soon as a tangible step toward the realization of President Trump's and Chairman Kim's commitments in Singapore. Though the DPRK's dismantlement of its nuclear test site and a missile engine test stand are encouraging signs, steps toward denuclearization require verification. We would welcome the DPRK allowing international inspectors to verify these actions, as well as further concrete and irreversible actions toward North Korean denuclearization.

Question. North Korea has cited the United States' "hostile policy" as the rationale for its nuclear program. How does the administration intend to reassure the North that it has no hostile intent?

Answer. During the Singapore Summit, President Trump committed to provide security guarantees to the DPRK, while Chairman Kim reaffirmed his commitment to complete denuclearization. President Trump's objective is the final and fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK. We seek to accomplish that objective through diplomatic means and have made this clear to the DPRK.

Question. North Korea has not tested a nuclear weapon since September 2017, and has not tested a ballistic missile since November 2017. Has the administration requested North Korea make the nuclear test moratorium legally-binding and verifiable by signing the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty? What is the administration doing to make this test moratorium official? Did you raise concerns about on-going North Korean activities to continue to advance their nuclear programs? Did you raise concerns that we need to see meaningful and concrete steps to indicate North Korea's commitments, not just the made for TV steps North Korea has taken thus far?

Answer. The President remains committed to fully and finally resolving the issue of DPRK's illicit and threatening WMDs and their delivery systems at the earliest opportunity. Verification is an essential part of complete denuclearization, and President Trump and Chairman Kim both committed to this in Singapore. The U.S. government is committed to robust monitoring and verification measures that will be required to achieve complete denuclearization and to not have the nuclear issue resurface again.

Question. Without any interim agreement on fissile material production, North Korea will be free to expand its nuclear weapons program. Is the administration pursuing a verifiable freeze on production as a realistic near-term goal for denuclearization talks? If not, why?

Answer. The administration is pursuing steps to denuclearize North Korea—which includes eliminating all of DPRK's illicit and threatening WMDs and their delivery systems—at the earliest opportunity. We remain committed to fully and finally resolving the issue of DPRK's illicit and threatening WMDs and delivery systems.

Question. Given that South Korea appears interested in moving forward with North-South diplomacy, how do we keep the North-South tracks and the denuclearization tracks lashed together?

Answer. We support the deepening of inter-Korean ties in hopes of establishing lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. However, as the President has said, "sanc-

tions will be enforced and remain in effect. The international community cannot let up on the pressure until the DPRK denuclearizes.” We are closely aligned with the Republic of Korea on this message.

CHINA’S INFLUENCE

Question. What mechanism does the United States have to break this stalemate and put additional pressure on North Korea to engage seriously in these talks? Is China allowing more or less trade into North Korea since the summit? How can a policy of maximum pressure be effective if China reengages in economic interchange with North Korea, as now appears to be the case after the summit?

Answer. The United States seeks a constructive and results-oriented relationship with China. China must continue to hold the North Korean regime accountable through applying economic and diplomatic pressure in order to bring about our shared objective of the final and fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. This includes the continued implementation of all relevant UNSCRs, which remain critical to ensuring progress on the commitments North Korea made at the Singapore summit. We continue to engage Chinese officials at all levels on this objective, to include taking decisive action against entities involved in DPRK sanctions evasion activity. We will not hesitate to take unilateral action against entities that continue to support the DPRK regime in contravention of U.N. sanctions

Question. I believe China, will continue to play a critical role as North Korea moves to halt, dismantle, and remove its nuclear weapons. Will you maintain a tough approach to China to assure that it, in turn, delivers North Korean performance?

Answer. As North Korea’s largest traditional trading partner, China has a special responsibility to ensure the continued implementation of relevant UNSCRs and to maintain pressure on North Korea.

After the June 12 summit in Singapore, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) issued a statement describing its approach to North Korea as “committed to . . . tireless efforts toward denuclearization of the Peninsula, the maintenance of peace and stability on the Peninsula and resolution of issues through dialogue and consultations.” We continue to engage Chinese officials to urge them to maintain economic and diplomatic pressure on North Korea. We are cooperating with many countries, including China, to take decisive action against entities involved in DPRK sanctions evasion activity. We will not hesitate to take unilateral action against entities that continue to support the DPRK regime in contravention of U.N. sanctions.

CHINESE POLITICAL PRISONERS

On behalf of Senator Schumer, from the great state of New York, we wanted to ask you about Americans who have been detained in China. As of today, there are approximately 100 Americans detained or imprisoned in China. There are nearly 40 other Americans who are subject to “exit bans” and are therefore unable to leave China. Amongst those imprisoned is Li Kai, a New Yorker who was arrested by the Chinese authorities in September 2016 and was recently sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Question. Will you commit to advocating for the release of Li Kai and all Americans imprisoned in China? What actions can you take going forward to advocate for the prompt release Li Kai and all other Americans imprisoned in China?

Answer. One of the highest priorities of the Department of State is to protect the lives and serve the interests of U.S. citizens overseas. This includes providing all appropriate assistance when a U.S. citizen is detained abroad. While a U.S. embassy or consulate has no authority to intervene in a foreign country’s legal process, U.S. consular officers may visit and provide support to detained U.S. citizens. In the case of Mr. Kai Li, we have closely monitored his case and visited him regularly since his detention.

The U.S. Mission in China works closely with local officials to ensure that consular officers have regular access to detained U.S. citizens and that those citizens are being treated fairly, humanely, and in accordance with Chinese law to include access to a lawyer and a fair trial. The Department routinely presses the Chinese government on the treatment of detained U.S. citizens, as appropriate, and in certain exceptional cases, the U.S. government has called for a prisoner’s release on humanitarian or human rights grounds, based on case-specific facts.

READOUTS OF CALL WITH FOREIGN LEADERS

Question. The White House has recently ceased making readouts of the President's calls with foreign leaders public. Do you support that decision?

Answer. The Department is committed to transparency and accountability to the American people. We have multiple ways to ensure the U.S. and foreign publics are informed about U.S. foreign policy. Readouts of my calls and meetings with foreign officials are one important way of doing so. Since I began my tenure as Secretary, I have authorized release of 72 readouts (as of July 30) of my call and meetings.

As the Secretary of State, I meet regularly with the President on all matters related to foreign policy including his contacts with foreign leaders. When the President speaks to foreign leaders, I am briefed about his conversations and meetings.

Question. Are you still receiving readouts when the President speaks with foreign leaders?

Answer. As the Secretary of State, I meet regularly with the President on all matters related to foreign policy including his contacts with foreign leaders. When the President speaks to foreign leaders, I am briefed about his conversations and meetings.

REORGANIZATION OF PRM

The Bureau of Population Refugees and Migration within the Department of State provides critical multi-functional leadership by being able to pair humanitarian assistance and refugee resettlement as part of U.S. foreign policy and national security negotiations overseas. Dismantling these functions would inhibit the Bureau's and the State Department's effectiveness in securing U.S. interests.

Question. What is the current state of discussions in the administration, and your views, vis-a-vis transfer of any of PRM's functions to other agencies, including USAID?

Answer. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration is an integral part of State's foreign policy efforts to prevent and respond to crises and conflict, and promote regional stability. In response to Executive Order 13781 and the Executive Branch reorganization report issued by the White House and OMB in June that included principles for a review of our humanitarian assistance structures, I initiated a process to develop recommendations for my consideration. That process is underway, but nothing has been finalized. The aim of the process is to optimize U.S. diplomacy and assistance to displaced people around the world, ensure our programs are effective and efficient, and are structured in a way that best adheres to our mission.

REFUGEES

Violent conflict, political unrest, and uprisings have unleashed refugee crises of unparalleled magnitude around the world, forcing millions across borders and conflicts—many for years. Protecting and assisting refugees is inherently political.

Question. Will you ensure that the State Department continues as the lead agency for high level/strategic engagement on refugees and humanitarian response and assistance to refugees?

Answer. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration fulfills a critical role in providing humanitarian aid, durable solutions and other assistance for refugees, conflict victims, and stateless people. It is an integral part of State's efforts to prevent and respond to crises and conflict around the world. As part of the executive branch review of agencies' policies and structures in pursuit of increased efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability, we will optimize U.S. diplomacy and assistance to displaced people around the world.

REFUGEE ADMISSIONS

This week you hosted a Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom in Washington. However, refugee admissions of persecuted religious minorities, including religious minorities from Iran through the Lautenberg program, have plummeted.

Question. How will you address this drastic decline in the refugee admissions during your Ministerial and beyond?

Answer. The President authorized the admission of up to 45,000 refugees in FY 2018. Over the last year and a half, U.S. government agencies have worked to strengthen the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program's security measures. While necessary to improve national security and public safety, these reviews and enhance-

ments have lengthened processing times for some cases thus slowing the rate of admissions. In addition, the United States is focusing resources on the domestic asylum backlog, which is over 300,000 cases and growing. Nevertheless, the United States continues to prioritize the resettlement of the world's most vulnerable refugees. We work closely with U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and other partners to identify the refugees at greatest risk and in most need of resettlement in a third country.

Refugee resettlement is an important American diplomacy and national security lever.

Question. How do you convince countries with much smaller GDPs compared to the U.S. to continue to take on the financial burden of hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees - countries like Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey - to continue doing so when we can't reach our own record low cap of 45,000 refugee arrivals?

Answer. The United States is the largest single country provider of humanitarian assistance worldwide, providing more than \$8 billion in humanitarian assistance worldwide in FY 2017, including to refugees. Our assistance reaches tens of millions of displaced and crisis-affected people, including those who will never be considered for resettlement. In addition, the United States continues to prioritize the admission of vulnerable refugees who have been persecuted because of race, political opinion, nationality, religion, or membership in a particular social group. In response to Executive Order 13780, Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States, the U.S. government identified additional screening and vetting procedures to enable departments and agencies to more thoroughly review refugee applicants to identify potential threats to public safety and national security. These enhancements increased processing time for some cases.

When the U.S. reduced refugee arrivals from nearly 85,000 in FY16 to less than 55,000 in FY17, and now with the U.S. on pace to only resettle 21,000 refugees this year, other resettlement countries have also reduced their numbers.

Question. How will you convince other countries to resettle more refugees when our own resettlement numbers are plummeting? How many refugees does the State Department support resettling next fiscal year?

Answer. The United States is the largest single country provider of humanitarian assistance worldwide, providing more than \$8 billion in humanitarian assistance, including to refugees. Our assistance reaches tens of millions of displaced and crisis-affected people worldwide, including those who will never be considered for resettlement. The United States continues to prioritize the admission of vulnerable refugees who have been persecuted because of race, political opinion, nationality, religion, or membership in a particular social group. The Presidential Determination will be made prior to the start of FY 2019, after consultations with Congress.

LGBT

Over the last year, in a number of places around the globe, LGBTQ people have been targeted, rounded up, tortured and even killed, just for being who they are. We've seen it in Chechnya, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Bangladesh and other places. I was therefore please to see your statement last month marking the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia that the U.S. "opposes criminalization, violence and serious acts of discrimination" against LGBTI persons.

Question. Based on that, what specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Chechnya, Egypt and elsewhere to ensure they are not targeted for abuse?

Answer. As I confirmed in my statement on the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, "the United States stands with people around the world in affirming the dignity and equality of all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics. Human rights are universal, and LGBTI people are entitled to the same respect, freedoms, and protections as everyone else." Under my leadership, the Department will continue to use a range of public and private actions to counter violence and severe discrimination against LGBTI persons by offering emergency assistance to LGBTI persons and organizations at risk and by imposing visa restrictions and economic sanctions, as appropriate, against those who violate their human rights.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The events in Chechnya have been particularly disturbing, with over 100 men arrested on suspicion of being gay or bisexual and as many as 20 killed. Nevertheless,

in May, a Russian representative told the U.N. that his government found no evidence of the crimes that had taken place there and that they could even find gay people in Chechnya. And it does not appear that President Trump raised the issue in his meeting with President Putin last week.

Question. What will you do to hold Russia and Chechnya accountable for these crimes? What will the U.S. do to ensure that these crimes are not forgotten, so that they cannot happen again, either in Chechnya, Russia, or elsewhere?

Answer. The Department of State remains deeply concerned by the Russian Federation's failure to hold accountable those responsible for the brutal campaign of extrajudicial killings, torture, mass arbitrary detentions and other violations and abuses perpetrated against suspected gay men in Chechnya, and by attempts by local authorities to cover up what took place. We have been clear and consistent in condemning these abuses through bilateral channels in Washington and in Moscow, including a personal letter to Foreign Minister Lavrov. We have insisted at the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and other multilateral fora that the Russian Federation act to end impunity for these and other human rights violations and abuses that have taken place in Chechnya under Ramzan Kadyrov. Moreover, we sanctioned Kadyrov and police official Ayub Katayev under the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012 (Russia Magnitsky Act) in December 2017. With our allies and partners, we continue to shine a light on the human rights situation in Chechnya, and to evaluate additional diplomatic measures to ensure that these crimes are not forgotten and do not happen again.

SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF LGBTI PERSONS

Question. For over a year, the State Department has not had a Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI persons. I was pleased that you also committed to appoint a Special Envoy in your answers on the record to the Senate during your confirmation process, but that has not happened yet. Do you have a timeline for making that appointment? When can we expect that to happen?

Answer. Consistent with the administration's prior commitment, I intend to retain the position of Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons. The Department is working to fill the position. Filling vacant leadership positions is a top priority of mine, and I am working closely with the White House to do so.

ROHINGYA

Since last summer, more than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims have been forced to flee a systematic military campaign by the Burmese military of killings, arson, rape and other mass atrocities amounting to genocide. For more than three decades, America stood with our allies to support democracy in Burma and to demand freedom for thousands of Burmese political prisoners. We need to show equal resolve now to end impunity in Burma and hold perpetrators of these most recent atrocities accountable.

Question. What will the United States do next at the United Nations to advance accountability for the Rohingya crisis?

Answer. On May 31, the U.N. Security Council issued a letter to the Burmese government calling for independent and transparent investigations into all allegations of human rights abuses. We are now working with likeminded countries and allies to determine the appropriate next steps at the United Nations to promote accountability for the Rohingya crisis. This discussion will continue to evolve as we discuss the findings of the State Department's upcoming report on these atrocities and as we review the findings and recommendations of the U.S.-supported U.N. Fact Finding Mission for Burma, which is due to release its report in September.

Question. How can the United States use its role as P5 member to ensure those most responsible for atrocities are held to account? What steps can the United States take in the General Assembly to end impunity for the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya?

Answer. As a P5 member, the United States will continue to work with U.N. member states, in both the Security Council and the General Assembly, to look for ways to promote justice and accountability and encourage the Burmese government to end ongoing abuses, ensure they do not occur in the future, and take credible steps to redress the past abuses against the Rohingya and other ethnic populations. We coordinate closely with the United Kingdom and other like-minded partners in the Security Council. Further, we regularly consult with the other P5 members and other member states to urge Burmese authorities to make progress toward meaning-

ful accountability for atrocities. We also co-sponsored the U.N. General Assembly's Third Committee resolution on the human rights situation in Burma last year, and look forward to working with Member States this year on a resolution that addresses the human rights situation there.

Question. Do you support action by the Treasury Department to make additional sanctions designations to hold to account Tatmadaw and other Burmese officials responsible for atrocities against Myanmar's ethnic and religious minorities?

Answer. In December of 2017, the President sanctioned former Western Command Major General Maung Maung Soe for his role in the events related to the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and administration officials have publicly discussed the possibility of further targeted sanctions, among other actions, against those responsible for or associated with serious human rights abuses.

COORDINATING AID ACROSS STATE, USAID, AND OTHER AGENCIES

Question. How do you intend to partner with USAID Administrator Mark Green going forward to ensure that both U.S. foreign policy objectives and longer-term development objectives are not only achieved, but serve our national security interests? What can the U.S. Government do to improve coordination, oversight, and accountability of foreign aid administered by a multitude of aid agencies, including but not limited to State or USAID? How might creating a U.S. Global Development Strategy that guides policy for all U.S. development agencies help further clarify roles and responsibilities, while serving as a complement to our National Security Strategy?

Answer. Administrator Green and I share a strong commitment to using foreign assistance dollars in support of our foreign policy goals to secure our national interests. At my direction, the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources works to promote strategic coordination of U.S. foreign assistance resources, working to align foreign assistance with the National Security Strategy, the State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan, as well as country and sector strategies. I am supportive of a strategy for all of foreign assistance, which encompasses much more than development assistance. Such a strategy would help ensure that all of the taxpayer dollars committed to our foreign policy goals, and the agencies that program them, are aligned. The administration, including the National Security Council, the Department of State, USAID, and the Office of Management and Budget, is currently discussing the framework for such a strategy.

BUILD ACT/DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

Bicameral, bipartisan legislation called the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act or BUILD Act (S.2463/H.R.5105) would enhance U.S. development finance tools by creating a new Development Finance Corporation (DFC). The legislation's goals are supported by the White House, and the House version of the legislation was recently passed via voice vote.

Question. Since the BUILD Act designates you as board chairman of the International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), will you commit to making sure that the achievement of development outcomes is central to the DFC's mission and that the all projects the DFC supports demonstrate clear development goals?

Answer. As board chair, I would commit to make our foreign policy priorities including national security, commercial and development objectives central to the mission of the USIDFC. The BUILD act provides for the establishment of strong institutional linkages to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the USAID Administrator would serve as Vice Chair will help insure achievement of development goals.

Question. Should the achievement of development outcomes be the central goal of our development finance institution's missions?

Answer. Achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals, including development priorities, is the mission of the USIDFC. The reformed USIDFC would provide new, modern tools and enable enhanced government-wide coordination to achieve improved development outcomes.

Question. How do you see U.S. development finance partnerships supporting U.S. national security?

Answer. Building private sector partnerships, especially with U.S. companies will help promote the U.S. economic model globally by serving as an alternative to state-driven models. Catalyzing private investments in developing countries will drive economic growth in developing countries helping them graduate from foreign assist-

ance and form strategic partnerships with the United States. This helps the United States maintain and expand our global influence. These partnerships will also promote market access and opportunities for U.S. commercial interests and benefit the U.S. economy.

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE REVIEW

It has come to my attention that OMB has instructed USAID to undertake a significant review of all foreign assistance programs. Administrator Green has confirmed to the Foreign Relations Committee that this review is happening.

Question. What role is the State Department playing in this review? When do you anticipate this review to be complete? Will the State Department, USAID and/or OMB brief the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the preliminary finding and results of the review prior to publication? What is motivating this review? If you do not know, and you feel that this question is more appropriately directed to OMB, why don't you and why are you not more engaged in this review process? Given that this is a directive from OMB, not from experts with the appropriate experience, what guarantees can you provide that this review will be a verifiably objective assessment of U.S. foreign assistance programs?

Given the very public skepticism that some of the administration's political leadership have expressed towards the value of foreign assistance, including the very public threats to cancel foreign assistance to certain countries and withhold U.S. contributions to various multilateral funds . . . What assurances can you provide the committee that the final review of this project will be based on objective evaluations of foreign assistance programs? Do you have any assurances from OMB or the White House that they will publish or make publicly available USAID's raw and objective analysis? How do you anticipate this review will impact foreign assistance programs, or be used to justify future budget requests or programs allocations?

Answer. The administration, including the National Security Council, the Department of State, USAID, and the Office of Management and Budget, is currently discussing the framework for continuing to ensure that U.S. foreign assistance aligns with our core national interests. At the same time, interagency policy reviews of foreign assistance for specific countries are ongoing. The details of the strategy effort are not yet determined, nor have the reviews been completed. Delivering foreign assistance is an important mission of the Department of State and USAID, and I am committed to working with Congress to ensure it serves our national security interests.

TRANSITIONING OVER TIME AWAY FROM FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

For the last several years, Congress has approved appropriations bills with an important provision requiring all future country development strategies to include a plan for transitioning over time away from foreign assistance.

Question. How are you working with both USAID Administrator Green and Congress to approach strategic transition planning?

Answer. "The Journey to Self-Reliance" is a simple idea that the purpose of foreign assistance is to end its need to exist. We want to build the capacity and commitment of our partner countries so they no longer need our financial help to be strong economic, political, and national security partners for the United States. When that day comes that a country has surpassed the need for development assistance, the U.S. Government should move away from providing dollars, and strategically transition that country to a new relationship model built on private-sector trade and mutual benefit.

The strategic transition planning that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is undertaking is a way for us to assess when and how the U.S. Government will transition its relationships with certain partner countries. Our strategic transitions effort will (1) identify USAID's most-self-sufficient partners through our new Self-Reliance Metrics that track countries' progress; (2) closely examine the nature of each partnership through heavy consultations with our Country Teams; (3) assess whether or not a new form of a partnership might be more appropriate, given a country's high level of self-reliance through a series of strategic and analytical lenses; and, (4) if so, determine how to move towards a new partnership model and over time. This assessment and planning will take place in close coordination with my Department and the rest of the interagency, as well as in broader consultation with both the host country and the Congress. We are currently working closely with Administrator Green on choosing two pilot countries to flesh out this approach,

and I look forward to discussing them further with you in the coming months as we bring to life the proposed transitions.

Question. What do you believe is the appropriate way for the U.S. Government to help countries move responsibly along a continuum of partnership with the United States?

Answer. Administrator Green's vision of the Journey to Self-Reliance is about understanding each country's own ability to plan, finance, and implement solutions to solve its own development challenges. Insofar as we are talking about a continuum of partnerships with the United States in the development space, this vision is compelling—the Journey to Self-Reliance provides a common framework by which we can assess more precisely what a country needs to take on, in terms of responsibility for its own development journey, so that we, as the U.S. Government, can evolve the development-focused aspects of our partnerships accordingly over time. Ultimately, the goal is to end the need for foreign assistance in a country by building our partners' abilities to plan, finance, and implement solutions to solve their own development challenges—their self-reliance—and Administrator Green's framework provides a way to do just that.

Question. Do you believe that supporting partner countries in their Journey to Self-Reliance supports the goals of the National Security Strategy?

Answer. Absolutely. Specifically, the Journey to Self-Reliance is built upon assessing each country's commitment and capacity to plan, finance, and implement solutions to solve its own development challenges. In particular, we will assess areas like a country's commitment to open and accountable governance, inclusive development, fundamental freedoms, and sound economic policy choices—including openness to direct foreign investment and U.S. trade. These are, of course, areas reflective of our own American values, and what we believe constitute the prerequisites for a robust development pathway. In addition, these areas map closely to the President's National Security Strategy (NSS)—in particular, the priority actions cited under the Champion American Values dimension of Pillar IV, Advancing American Influence. If we support countries to focus on these areas and build capacity therein, then the approach of the Journey to Self-Reliance will directly support the NSS through its alignment to the goals of Pillar IV.

The transitions to deeper forms of strategic and economic partnership with the U.S. worked well in South Korea and Panama because the partner country was able to increasingly mobilize their own resources for development. The FY19 budget requests \$75 million for domestic resource mobilization (DRM) assistance.

Question. Please describe this approach to scaling up development finance in greater detail. Specifically, what agencies are contributing and what are the desired near and long-term outcomes?

Answer. Domestic Resource-Mobilization (DRM) is an important component of the Agency's goal to end a country's need for foreign assistance, as it improves countries' abilities to raise and manage public revenues to pay for their own services. With the FY19 budget request, USAID intends to expand the reach of its DRM programming by including staff and resources from a suite of economic-growth areas. These include generating and managing public revenues and expenditures, improving border-management and promoting trade-facilitation, harnessing private-sector growth, deepening financial markets, empowering women, and improving entrepreneurial opportunities and the business environment.

USAID, MCC, PEPFAR, and the Office of Technical Assistance (OTA) at the U.S. Department of the Treasury have intensified cooperation so our collective investments in DRM are complementary. USAID will capitalize on its ability to assist partner governments' capacity to simplify regulations, streamline and enhance procedures. OTA will leverage its peer-to-peer model to deliver expert advisory services where requested by partner-country governments. MCC will contribute to DRM improvements in countries where its constraints analysis methodology identifies DRM as a binding limitation on investment and economic growth.

HARMFUL IMPACT OF BUDGET CUTS ON NATIONAL INTERESTS

Question. The President's budget request will leave the Department of Defense without strong U.S. diplomatic or development partners. Given the importance of cultivating institutional development expertise within our civilian workforce, I am deeply concerned about the proposed budget cuts to the State Department and USAID and the ongoing staffing vacancies. Now that the State Department-imposed hiring freeze has been lifted, are you confident that you will be able to put in place

the 21st-century workforce your agency needs and demands? Can you share with the committee your staffing plan?

Answer. On May 15, I lifted the hiring freeze on Foreign Service (FS) and Civil Service (CS) employment in the Department. We are recruiting and hiring to ensure our highest priority mission-critical vacancies are filled with a diverse, well equipped workforce ready to meet 21st-century challenges.

Our staffing plan complies with the direction provided by Congress in our 2018 Appropriation and accompanying statements. It calls for hiring levels well above attrition and when fully executed will bring the Department to staffing levels that are 454 above the December 31, 2017 levels referenced in the Appropriations Act.

Question. Congress recently enacted the Global Food Security Act, the Electrify Africa Act, the Water for the World Act, and the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act—each empowering USAID to deliver development results in a more sustainable, accountable way. How would severe budget cuts to development assistance impact these initiatives, our development objectives, our security, and our strategic partnerships around the world?

Answer. The President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2019 prioritizes foreign assistance in regions, and on programs, that most advance our national interest and support the administration's most critical priorities. These initiatives are prime examples of how we are delivering results in an efficient and effective way. While development needs will always exceed available resources, we are committed to partnering with nations on their journey to self-reliance, maximizing the impact of these initiatives for the American taxpayer, and encouraging other donors to do more.

NSC NON-COOPERATION WITH GAO

Question. The National Security Council (NSC) has implemented a policy of non-cooperation with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and is refusing to respond to any GAO inquiries. As a former congressman, you are aware that these inquiries are meant to help Congress meet our constitutional oversight responsibilities, and are made as a part of the GAO's statutory authority under the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970. The NSC has refused to respond to two GAO inquiries regarding nuclear security and nuclear proliferation, issues which also fall concern State Department equities and are especially critical developments in North Korea and Iran. This lack of cooperation from the NSC hampers the work of Congress and our ability to support the State Department in its efforts on these issues. Will you commit to raising this issue with National Security Advisor Bolton and encourage him to direct the NSC to resume cooperation with GAO?

Answer. As you know, the Department and the GAO have maintained a strong and consistent working-relationship and we look forward to continuing this cooperation. I am happy to convey to the NSC our experience and the benefits of this relationship to the Department and the Congress.

RESPONSES OF HON. MIKE POMPEO TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. The difficult political situation in Iraq, including the fallout from the last election, is being exacerbated by competition among Gulf Arab countries, making the formation of an Iraqi government more difficult and creating an opening for Iran to exploit divisions. This chaos could lead to an Iraqi government that is close to, if not beholden to, Iran. How can we encourage Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf partners to put aside their current differences and work together to move Sunni-dominated coalitions in Iraq to join the governing coalition?

Answer. Our regional partners recognize that, absent U.S., Gulf, and broader international engagement, Iraq risks devolving into an unstable, more sectarian state that Iran and extremist groups like ISIS could exploit. Together with the United States, many Gulf countries are urging Iraqis to form a moderate, reformist government, with meaningful participation by all of Iraq's communities and a commitment to an enduring partnership with the United States, based on the Strategic Framework Agreement. The new government should be willing and able to protect Iraq's sovereignty, preserve its democratic processes, fight corruption, and deliver services to its citizens. This outcome would doubtless serve our partners' interest in regional stability and inhibit Iran's malign influence.

Question. Haiti has become a more attractive transit point for contraband and narcotraffickers. What can the U.S. government do to assist the Government of Haiti to prevent contraband at its border with the Dominican Republic?

Answer. I consider it important that the Haitian government be able to control its borders, and we have several programs in place to achieve that goal. USAID has an ongoing Customs Support Project, a \$4 million initiative helping to modernize Haiti's customs service processes for revenue collection, traveler processing, and contraband interdiction. This program is assisting the Haitian government to better manage its border and increase revenue collection. Additionally, the Partnership Encouragement Act of 2006 (HOPE), the Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (HOPE II), and the Haiti Economic Lift Program of 2010 (HELP) legislation explicitly call for U.S. Customs and Border Protection to provide technical assistance to Haitian customs. The State Department, through the work of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), will continue its longstanding support for the Haitian National Police. INL's support includes training and equipping the Haitian border police and Haitian counternarcotics unit in order to strengthen Haiti's capacity to combat illicit trafficking and transnational organized crime at its land, sea, and air borders.

Question. Anonymous shell companies are too often used for illicit purposes, including laundering money into the United States, human trafficking, financing terrorism, evasion of sanctions, healthcare fraud schemes, transnational corruption, and organized crime. Do you agree that the use of anonymous shell companies is a threat to national security? Does the Trump administration support increasing transparency to crack down on transnational criminal organizations and foreign governments using shell companies to operate unseen throughout the United States?

Answer. I believe keeping our financial system secure is critical to U.S. national security and our efforts to combat corruption and transnational organized crime globally. The Department of the Treasury is the executive branch lead for addressing anonymous entities and their impact on our financial system. In May 2018, the Treasury began enforcing a new Customer Due Diligence Rule that clarifies and strengthens customer due diligence requirements for covered financial institutions and adds a new requirement for financial institutions to verify the identities of the actual people who own, control, and profit from companies - the beneficial owners. Earlier this year, my colleagues in the Department of Justice and the Department of the Treasury testified before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary and the House Committee on Financial Services, respectively, that the collection of this information will generate better law enforcement leads and speed up investigations by improving financial institutions' ability to monitor and report suspicious activity. This will help law enforcement identify assets and accounts of criminals and national security threats. This will also facilitate compliance with sanctions programs and other measures to cut off assets to corrupt actors, terrorists, and criminal networks.

RESPONSES OF HON. MIKE POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

IRAN

On July 22 at 8:24pm, President Trump tweeted: "TO IRANIAN PRESIDENT ROUHANI: NEVER, EVER THREATEN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE. WE ARE NO LONGER A COUNTRY THAT WILL STAND FOR YOUR DEMENTED WORDS OF VIOLENCE & DEATH. BE CAUTIOUS!"

Question. Did the President's all caps tweet signal that the use of force against Iran is imminent?

Answer. No. Our Iran strategy involves placing unprecedented economic and diplomatic pressure on Iran to force it back to the negotiating table to achieve a better, comprehensive deal.

Question. Has the State Department worked with the Department of Defense and the inter-agency to determine casualty estimates in the event of a U.S.-initiated war with Iran?

Answer. No, and I refer you to the Department of Defense on this matter.

Question. [If yes] Walk me through the potential scenarios for war with Iran being contemplated by the administration.

Answer. I refer you to the Department of Defense on this matter. The President's strategy seeks to avoid conflict with Iran.

Question. [If he talks about classification] Why do you believe the American people do not have a right to know the potential ways in which the United States might get entangled in a conflict with Iran? Will you provide an unclassified assessment of potential war scenarios to this committee?

Answer. I refer you to the Department of Defense on matters involving any such scenarios. Our Iran strategy involves placing unprecedented economic and diplomatic pressure on Iran to force it back to the negotiating table to achieve a better, comprehensive deal. The strategy does not envision military conflict with Iran; rather, it seeks to avoid conflict.

Question. Will you pledge to appear again before this committee in a classified setting to discuss these scenarios?

Answer. I intend to continue my close cooperation with Congress.

NORTH KOREA

Last month, before the Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy, Joseph Yun, Senior Advisor at the United States Institute of Peace discussed next steps in U.S. policy towards North Korea. In his testimony, Yun emphasized that a negotiation with North Korea "must produce a clear timeline for the ultimate goal: the disablement and dismantlement of all nuclear and North Korean ICBM facilities, material, and devices," and that only a swift timeline would silence skeptics in DC, Seoul, Tokyo and beyond.

Question. Given North Korea's continued production of material that can be used to make nuclear bombs, do you agree with President Trump's assertion that there is "no rush" to the negotiating process?

Answer. It may take some time to get where we need to go, but all of this will be taking place against the backdrop of continued full implementation of existing sanctions. We want denuclearization that is fully verified and, importantly, final—the President wants to denuclearize North Korea once and for all and not have the nuclear issue resurface again.

Question. Have you and your North Korean counterparts agreed on any working level teams for the follow-up negotiations on key issues? If so, what issues are each of those teams assigned to address? Who is in the lead of each of these working level teams for the U.S. side?

Answer. I have established a post-Singapore Summit working group dedicated to directing my Department's planning, policy, implementation and verification of our efforts to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea consistent with the Singapore Summit's joint statement. The working group is led by Alex Wong, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs; Ben Purser, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation; Mark Lambert, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Korea and includes many other colleagues, drawing upon the expertise of the entire Department. The team supports Ambassador Sung Kim's ongoing negotiation efforts. We will continue to closely collaborate with the interagency.

Question. In the course of your discussions with your NK counterparts, have you reached an agreed understanding of what "denuclearization of the Korean peninsula" entails, and, whether there is agreement or not, please describe your understanding of what denuclearization should cover?

Answer. In my engagements with Chairman Kim and other North Korean officials I have made the U.S. position towards denuclearization abundantly clear. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully-verified denuclearization of the DPRK. This goal was agreed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore.

Question. What are the specific, verifiable steps toward denuclearization that the administration expects North Korea to take in the next 12 to 24 months and how will the administration reciprocate?

Answer. The administration continues to work towards the full implementation of the commitments Chairman Kim made in Singapore, and to plan for the denuclearization of North Korea, including the specific steps necessary to accomplish this.

NICARAGUA

More than 300 people have died in protests across Nicaragua in the past few months. The conflict shows no sign of abating at this time.

Question. What is the United States doing to reduce violence and increase dialogue in Nicaragua?

Answer. We are urging the Nicaraguan government to immediately cease all government-sponsored violence. We are calling for early, free, and fair elections with credible domestic and international electoral observation. We continue to help expose and hold accountable those responsible for the violence and intimidation campaign.

The Department has imposed visa restrictions on Nicaraguans responsible for or complicit in human rights abuses or undermining democracy in Nicaragua. On July 5, we placed financial sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Act on three Nicaraguan officials who have been involved in serious human rights abuses or engaged in corruption. The Department is considering a variety of additional options. We worked closely with our regional partners in the Organization of American States to pass a resolution on July 18 condemning ongoing “violence, repression, and human rights violations committed by police, para-police groups, and others” in Nicaragua, and continue to engage with allies at the OAS to ensure effective follow up mechanisms are in place to support OAS engagement regarding Nicaragua. This also includes support for the monitoring and investigative efforts of the independent Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

Question. Are you concerned that an increasingly unstable Nicaragua will destabilize its neighbors and cause national security issues for the United States?

Answer. Yes. We are very concerned with the ongoing political crisis in Nicaragua. We see a secure, stable, and prosperous Nicaragua as essential to promoting a prosperous and secure Central America, which is key to U.S. national security and broader U.S. interests.

We continue to press the Ortega regime to immediately cease all government-supported violence. We support the proposal of many sectors of Nicaragua society for early, free, and fair elections with credible domestic and international electoral observation. And we continue to expose and hold accountable those responsible for the violence and intimidation campaign currently being perpetrated by the Ortega government.

We are working closely with partners and international organizations, including the Organization of American States, to condemn human rights violations and abuses by the Nicaraguan government and its supporters, press for democracy, and urge the government to hold accountable individuals who have committed human rights violations and abuses.

Question. Do you still believe that sending back the thousands of Nicaraguan TPS holders living in the United States makes sense at this time, both from national security and moral perspective?

Answer. The authority to make decisions regarding TPS resides with DHS, after consultation with appropriate agencies, including the Department of State. On November 6, 2017, DHS announced the decision to terminate TPS for Nicaragua, with a delayed effective date of 12 months to allow for an orderly transition. Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries are authorized to remain in the United States through January 5, 2019, at which time they will revert to the immigration status they had before being granted TPS or any other status they subsequently acquired, unless that status has otherwise expired.

Question. Will this administration commit to reconsidering the Nicaragua TPS decision, and other TPS decisions, as factors on the ground change?

Answer. The authority to make decisions regarding TPS resides with DHS, after consultation with appropriate agencies, including the Department of State. The Department of State is prepared to provide relevant country conditions information on Nicaragua to Secretary Nielsen should she initiate a review of conditions in Nicaragua.

NATIONALISM IN EUROPE

Nationalism is on the rise in Europe as evidenced by historic gains by Italy’s League party and Germany’s AfD party in recent elections. The rise of these parties has accompanied an increase in anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic sentiments across the continent. This administration has engaged in outreach to specific far-right po-

litical parties, as evidenced by U.S. Ambassador Richard Grenell's intention to "empower the right" in Germany.

Question. What is the Trump administration's strategy behind its outreach to far right political parties?

Answer. It is not the policy of the United States to endorse political candidates or parties in other countries. We meet with parties across the political spectrum in the course of our regular diplomatic engagement.

Question. Do you agree with Ambassador Grenell and the President's comments in support of right-wing nationalist parties in Europe?

Answer. Ambassador Grenell has clarified his comments were taken out of context, made clear he is not endorsing any particular candidates or political parties, and further confirmed it is not the policy of the United States to endorse political candidates or parties in other countries.

ANTI-IMMIGRANT POLICIES

Question. In his recent visit to the United Kingdom, President Trump stated that Europeans are "losing" their culture, and "allowing millions of people to come into Europe is very, very sad." Do you think supporting such anti-immigrant rhetoric furthers our standing in the world, or reflects the values of the United States?

Answer. Our global humanitarian leadership and robust humanitarian assistance programs reflect the deeply-held values and generosity of the American people. The United States is the largest single-country provider of humanitarian assistance worldwide—more than \$8 billion in humanitarian assistance in FY 2017. Our assistance provides urgent, life-saving services, including child protection programs, women's protection and empowerment activities, food, shelter, healthcare services, and access to clean water for tens of millions of displaced and crisis-affected people worldwide. This commitment to the world's most vulnerable individuals remains a critical component of U.S. national security policy.

ANTI-IMMIGRANT POLICIES

Question. Is the United States better off with New START, and the on-site verification of Russia's nuclear forces that comes with that treaty, or better off without it?

Answer. Through the Treaty's verification regime, which includes short-notice, on-site inspections at New START Treaty-related bases and facilities, the United States is able to verify information about the strategic nuclear arsenal of the Russian Federation. The verification regime provides both countries insight into each other's strategic nuclear delivery systems, warheads, and facilities. Since the Treaty's entry into force, the United States and Russia have exchanged more than 15,800 notifications regarding the location, movement, and status of their strategic nuclear forces, performed 15 data exchanges with a full accounting of exactly where weapons systems are located, and conducted over 260 on-site inspections of strategic nuclear weapons-related facilities. Each side has conducted their full complement of up to 18 such inspections annually. The Treaty's consultative body, the Bilateral Consultative Commission (BCC), has met 15 times since entry into force of the Treaty. The two BCC delegations maintain a pragmatic relationship, working to solve New START Treaty implementation issues to mutual benefit. The Treaty's implementation is also facilitated by the Department of State's Nuclear Risk Reduction Center, which for decades has maintained dedicated resources and infrastructure to support this mission.

Russia is in compliance with the Treaty, and both sides successfully met the Treaty's central limits on February 5, 2018. As noted in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, the United States will continue to implement the New START Treaty, and remains committed to arms control efforts which advanced U.S., allied, and partner security; are verifiable and enforceable; and include partners that comply responsibly with their obligations.

Question. Is there a process in place for deciding whether the United States will support extending the treaty?

Answer. Any decision regarding a potential extension of the New START Treaty will be made at the appropriate time, and will consider whether extending the Treaty is in the national security interest of the United States, as well as our allies and partners. The United States remains committed to fully implementing the Treaty. There has been no decision on extension, and we are in the process of weighing next steps.

HAITI BORDER SECURITY

Question. Is there more that we could be doing to strengthen Haiti's border security, and should the State Department continue and expand its support to programs that address revenue collection?

Answer. I consider it important that the Haitian government be able to control its borders, and we have several programs in place to achieve that goal. USAID has an ongoing Customs Support Project, a \$4 million initiative helping to modernize Haiti's customs service processes for revenue collection, traveler processing, and contraband interdiction. This program is assisting the Haitian government to better manage its border and increase revenue collection. Additionally, the Partnership Encouragement Act of 2006 (HOPE), the Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (HOPE II), and the Haiti Economic Lift Program of 2010 (HELP) legislation explicitly call for U.S. Customs and Border Protection to provide technical assistance to Haitian customs. The State Department continues its longstanding support for the Haitian National Police to strengthen Haiti's readiness to address border security issues. I will pursue additional efforts to improve Haiti's cooperation with the border authorities of the Dominican Republic.

Question. What will the administration do moving forward to encourage and support enhanced border control measures and a crackdown on contraband trade?

Answer. I consider it important that the Haitian government be able to control its borders in order to combat illicit trafficking and transnational organized crime, and we have several programs in place to achieve that goal. USAID has an ongoing Customs Support Project, a \$4 million initiative helping to modernize Haiti's customs service processes for revenue collection, traveler processing, and contraband interdiction. This program is assisting the Haitian government to better manage its border and increase revenue collection. The State Department through the work of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) will continue its longstanding support for the Haitian National Police. INL's support includes training and equipping the Haitian border police and Haitian counternarcotics unit in order to strengthen Haiti's capacity to combat illicit trafficking and transnational organized crime at its land, sea, and air borders. Moving forward, I would support a study proposed by the Center for Strategic and International Studies engaging both the Haitian and Dominican governments and private sectors in designing a comprehensive and lasting solution to these complicated border challenges.

RESPONSES OF HON. MIKE POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. Are you concerned about reports of Russian ties to extremist groups in the United States? We are seeing increased reports of Russian-funded proxies such as the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM) and the far-right political party Rodina supporting extremist groups in the United States. How is the U.S. monitoring the influence of these entities on groups in our own country? What can the U.S. do to track the activities of individuals known to be connected to Russian groups with a history of supporting extremism in Western democracies? Do these Russian organizations pose a threat to Americans' safety and security?

Answer. As the lead foreign policy agency, the Department of State does not monitor activity within the United States. I have made it clear at the highest levels of the Russian government that any efforts to interfere in domestic affairs or undermine stability are unacceptable and will be met with swift and significant consequences.

Question. Secretary Pompeo, when you testified before the Appropriations Committee on June 27th, we discussed your efforts to repatriate the remains of American service members missing in action from the Korean War, which are currently under the control of the North Korean government. What is the status of these transfers and is there a set timeline for these transfers?

Answer. On July 20, the United States provided 55 transfer cases to the DPRK for the return of U.S. service members' remains. We anticipate receiving and repatriating our fallen heroes' remains soon as a tangible step toward the realization of President Trump's and Chairman Kim's commitments in Singapore.

Question. Compared to North Korea's denuclearization, the return of these remains would seem to be a relatively straightforward matter if Kim Jong Un wishes to resolve it. Given that President Trump personally discussed this matter with Kim

Jong Un in Singapore on June 12th, how do you interpret North Korea's foot dragging on this issue in the wider context of your negotiations on denuclearization?

Answer. At his meeting with President Trump, Chairman Kim made a commitment to repatriate the remains of American service member remains. I am pleased he is following through on that commitment. This humanitarian gesture should not be conflated with our goal of achieving the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK. I look forward to continued progress on that front.

Question. Secretary Pompeo, I think you will agree that in order to negotiate in good faith with North Korea and ultimately achieve an agreement that is complete and verifiable, we first need to know the scope of their nuclear weapons program, which means declaration of all of their warheads, nuclear material, facilities and so forth. Have the North Koreans agreed to take this step, and if so, who will be the arbiter of that declaration process? When will it begin?

Answer. A full, verified declaration of all of North Korea's WMDs, delivery systems, and related sites will be an integral part of and critical initial step in our overall denuclearization effort. We will remain focused on securing such a declaration at the earliest possible time.

Question. Secretary Pompeo, does the President have the appropriate constitutional and legislative authority to withdraw from treaties without the expressed consent of Congress?

Answer. The President has the constitutional authority to terminate or withdraw from treaties without need for separate action by the Congress. Previous presidents have exercised this well-established authority on dozens of occasions in the past century. Questions of legal authority aside, the Department welcomes engagement with the Senate on questions related to our treaty relationships.

RESPONSES OF HON. MIKE POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

RUSSIAN THREAT

Question. At the recent Aspen Summit, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dunford, reaffirmed his assessment that because of its nuclear capability, cyber capabilities, actions in Georgia, Crimea and Ukraine, Russia is the greatest threat America faces from a state actor. Do you agree with General Dunford's assessment that Russia is the greatest threat the U.S. faces from a state actor? Why or why not?

Answer. President Trump and I are well aware of the challenges that Russia poses to the United States and our partners and allies. Russia has shown through its aggressive actions that it rejects the post-Cold War order and seeks to undermine stability, democracy, and core Western institutions. Russia's ongoing military modernization program, nuclear and cyber capabilities, invasions of Ukraine and Georgia, and willingness to use hybrid threats and tools against the United States and its allies and partners are clear threats to our national security.

To counter, expose, and respond to Russia's destabilizing and malign influence activities, the National Defense Strategy and the Russia Integrated Strategy outline an approach to steadily raise the costs of Russia's aggression until President Putin chooses a less confrontational foreign policy. We must be clear-eyed about Russia's transgressions, frank in our dialogue with Russia, and resolute in raising the costs of their behavior, including the use of military, diplomatic, and law-enforcement tools. We must also continue to build the resilience of the countries on Russia's periphery with a whole-of-government approach that includes working with Allies, partners, and institutions such as NATO and the EU.

We remain deeply concerned about Russia's failure to fulfill its arms control and other international commitments.

RUSSIA IN AFGHANISTAN

Question. Senior U.S. military officials have accused Russia of trying to destabilize Afghanistan by supporting the Taliban, to include smuggling Russia weapons across the Tajik border to arm the group. There are also indications that in addition to supporting the Taliban's military efforts, Russia has begun providing financial backing to anti-American politicians in Afghanistan. What do you assess to be Russia's current level of support to the Taliban and what are Russia's goals in increasing this support despite being historic foes? How about to other anti-American groups

or factions in Afghanistan? Does the Department believe Russia is trying to undermine a continued U.S. troop presence?

Answer. We are aware of reports that the Russians continue to provide weapons and other support to the Taliban. Russia has shown an increased willingness to publicly acknowledge its diplomatic engagement with the Taliban.

Regional states like Russia should instead take steps to significantly increase their contributions to support the Afghan government and an Afghan peace process that includes direct negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government. These formal negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government are the only way to end the conflict, and the Taliban's leaders are standing in the way of progress. The Taliban must understand that they have no viable alternative but to enter into direct talks with the Afghan government.

At this time, we do not assess that Russia is supporting other anti-American groups in Afghanistan.

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS IN SYRIA

Question. In your testimony on the substance of the President's one-on-one meeting with President Putin, you said there has been no policy change on "deconfliction with Russia" regarding the U.S. troop presence and activities in Syria. With regards to State Department personnel serving in Syria, whether traveling to Syria for temporary duty or permanently stationed there, have there been any instances in which State Department personnel have been in harm's way due to Russian military activity, and what was the impact of existing deconfliction mechanisms? What mechanisms are in place to ensure their safety going forward?

Answer. There have been no incidents between Russian personnel and USAID and State Department personnel on the ground in Syria. The United States and Russia continue to utilize the de-confliction channel, which has been effective in enabling stakeholders to safely conduct operations in Syria against ISIS. Syria Transition and Response Team (START) Forward personnel are co-located with DoD assets on the ground and are protected by the Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security as well as DoD. This relationship has enabled State and USAID to continue to invest in communities across the region to remove explosive remnants of war; get electricity and water turned back on; and repair and refurbish medical facilities, schools, and basic infrastructure in order to enable families to safely and voluntarily return home and strengthen community resilience.

U.S.-ISRAEL COOPERATION ON IRAN

Question. Press has alleged that the U.S. and Israel have formed a joint working group to support internal efforts to encourage protests within Iran and put pressure on the Iranian government, saying this was part of a U.S.-Israeli framework document on countering Iran. Is the U.S. collaborating with Israel on such an initiative? If so, please provide us with specific details or a copy of this agreement.

Answer. The United States, our allies, and our partners around the world recognize the threat Iran's malign activity poses to nations in the region and particularly to Israel. We are committed to working with Israel to help maintain its security and continue close collaboration on a range of issues, including Iran.

RESPONSES OF HON. MIKE POMPEO TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

LGBTI

Question. Over the last year, in a number of places around the globe, LGBTQ people have been targeted, rounded up, tortured and even killed, just for being who they are. I was therefore pleased to see your statement last month marking the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia that the U.S. "opposes criminalization, violence and serious acts of discrimination" against LGBTI persons. What will you specifically commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Chechnya, Egypt and other places to ensure they are not targeted for abuse? What will you do to hold Russia and Chechnya accountable for these crimes?

Answer. As I confirmed in my statement on the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, "the United States stands with people around the world in affirming the dignity and equality of all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics. Human rights are universal, and LGBTI people are entitled to the same respect, freedoms, and protections as everyone else." The Department uses public and private actions

to counter violence and severe discrimination by offering emergency assistance to LGBTI persons and organizations at risk and by imposing visa restrictions and economic sanctions, as appropriate, against those who violate their human rights.

In relation to Chechnya, we have been consistent in condemning abuses targeting the LGBTI community through bilateral channels, including a personal letter to Foreign Minister Lavrov. We have insisted at the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe that the Russian Federation end impunity for human rights violations in Chechnya. In addition, we sanctioned Ramzan Kadyrov and police official Ayub Katayev under the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012 (Russia Magnitsky Act) in December 2017 for their role in perpetrating abuses.

Question. For over a year, the State Department has not had a Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI persons. I was pleased that, in your answers on the record to the Senate during your confirmation process, you also committed to appoint a Special Envoy, but that has not happened yet. Do you have a timeline for making that appointment? When can we expect that to happen?

Answers. Consistent with the administration's prior commitment, I intend to retain the position of Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons. The Department is working to fill the position. Filling vacant leadership positions is a top priority of mine, and I am working closely with the White House to do so.

Question. I am pleased to see that you have begun to name senior level staff to fill key positions, vacancies that had been backlogged under your predecessor. However, I am concerned about a number of these nominees' records on women's rights, refugees, and LGBTQ human rights. What are you doing to ensure that all nominees understand the broad range of human rights issues in their portfolios and that they must take into account the very real persecution that women, LGBTQ people and other groups face around the globe?

Answer. Nominees for positions across the Department of State are extensively briefed on the foreign policy priorities of the administration, including the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Promoting human rights and defending the dignity of all persons is in the best interests of the United States.

SINGAPORE/NORTH KOREA

Question. The statement issued by President Trump and Chairman Kim says the United States and North Korea "join their efforts to build a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula . . . and the DPRK commits to work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." Have the North Koreans agreed to a common understanding of what "denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" covers?

Answer. I have been very clear with my North Korean counterparts on what final, fully-verified denuclearization means, and they understand and acknowledge that it will require verification.

Question. Has North Korea agreed to suspend the production of fissile material and suspend the production of ballistic missiles? Is there any verifiable evidence of significant progress toward denuclearization?

Answer. The administration is pursuing steps to fully denuclearize North Korea—which would include eliminating all of the DPRK's illicit and threatening WMDs as well as its delivery systems—at the earliest opportunity.

In Pyongyang, North Korea reaffirmed the commitment it made in Singapore to destroy its missile engine test site, which, if completed and verified, will constitute positive movement. We continue to work to secure the necessary action on the part of the DPRK to accomplish the final, fully-verified denuclearization of North Korea.

Question. What is preventing the United States from agreeing to Japan's request to compel North Korea to sign the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and make its nuclear test moratorium legally-binding and verifiable?

Answer. Verification is an essential part of complete denuclearization, and President Trump and Chairman Kim both committed to this in Singapore. The U.S. government is committed to the robust monitoring and verification measures that will be required to achieve complete denuclearization and to not have the nuclear issue resurface again.

Question. Secretary Pompeo, have you and your North Korean counterparts agreed on any working level teams for the follow-up negotiations on key issues? If so, what issues are each of those teams assigned to address?

Answer. I have established a post-Singapore Summit working group dedicated to directing my Department's planning, policy, implementation and verification of our efforts to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea consistent with the Singapore Summit's joint statement. The working group is led by Alex Wong, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs; Ben Purser, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation; Mark Lambert, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Korea and includes many other colleagues, drawing upon the expertise of the entire Department. The team supports Ambassador Sung Kim's ongoing negotiation efforts. We will continue to closely collaborate with the interagency.

We are moving together for further negotiations, and the United States seeks to move quickly. There is much work to be done, and my team looks forward to working with the DPRK to develop a clear, shared timeline to accomplish the final, fully-verified denuclearization of North Korea, as agreed to by Chairman Kim.

Question. South Korean President Moon has recently reiterated that, by the end of 2018, he would like the United States, the DPRK, and the RoK to make a political declaration on the end of the Korean War. This is a concept that President Trump has said might be helpful and that North Korea would presumably see as a step in the direction of building a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. Could such a political declaration, in your view, contribute to that goal? And could it potentially help move North Korea toward more meaningful and irreversible steps on denuclearization?

Answer. We are committed to building a peace mechanism with the goal of replacing the Armistice agreement when North Korea has denuclearized. The administration firmly believes any warming in relations between Pyongyang and Seoul must happen in tandem with the denuclearization of the DPRK. Right now, our primary focus is the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK.

HELSINKI/U.S.-RUSSIAN NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL MATTERS

Question. Following the July 16 meeting with President Trump in Helsinki, President Putin expressed Russia's willingness to begin discussions about an extension of the New START Treaty and warned that the treaty will expire in a year and a half unless work on an extension begins soon. Did Presidents Trump and Putin discuss New START and a possible extension during their private meeting and if so how did President Trump respond to President Putin's willingness to begin talks on doing so? What is the administration's timeline for the completing its review of whether to extend New START?

Answer. The administration does not have a specific timeline for reviewing a potential extension of the new START treaty. The United States remains committed to fully implementing the treaty. The interagency has made no decision on extension, and we will weigh next steps at the appropriate time. This decision will be taken in the context of the international security environment, and will holistically weigh whether extending the treaty benefits the national security of the United States, our allies, and our partners.

EXPORT CONTROLS FOR 3-D-PRINTED GUNS

In 2015, Defense Distributed and the Second Amendment Foundation sued the State Department, challenging the State Department's determination that Defense Distributed violated federal export controls and its demand that Defense Distributed remove from the internet its blueprints for 3-D printable firearms. Throughout the course of the lawsuit, the government maintained that its position was well-supported under the Arms Export Control Act and the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR).

Despite the court's twice siding with the government's position, in a stunning reversal of course last month, DOJ settled the suit and agreed to allow for the public release of Defense Distributed's 3-D firearm printing blueprints in any form. Specifically, the State Department has agreed to allow Defense Distributed to publish its blueprints by July 27, 2018—by making a "temporary modification" of the United States Munitions List (USML) and granting Defense Distributed an "exemption" from ITAR regulations.

Anyone—including criminals and terrorists—will now have access to blueprints for making deadly weapons, including semi-automatic firearms like the AR-15 used in the Parkland, Florida shooting.

Question. In your testimony before our committee, you committed to reviewing the decision to allow Defense Distributed to publish its blueprints online. Would you

please confirm for this committee that you will not allow the publication of blueprints online while you undertake this review?

Answer. As I committed in my testimony, I will review the Department's next steps on this issue and have my staff provide a briefing on the complexities of this matter.

TAIWAN/TAIPEI

Question. Bloomberg news reported July 26 that U.S. airlines are altering their website displays for Taiwan, meeting a deadline set by the Chinese government for such references to reflect China's claim on the island. I understand that that the U.S. government has expressed concern on behalf of U.S. air carriers to the Chinese government and consulted with the airlines. What messages have you delivered to the Chinese? Now that U.S. air carriers have elected to conform to the Chinese government request, what other steps is the State Department contemplating to advocate on behalf of U.S. companies, given the likelihood of further economic coercion in the future?

Answer. I am very concerned by Beijing's coercive actions. We have consistently told China that the United States strongly objects to the Chinese government's attempts to compel private firms, including airlines, to publicly employ specific language of a political nature.

We will continue to call on China to stop threatening and coercing American companies and citizens. I will work with partner governments and authorities to promote market-based economics; support good governance and liberty; and insulate them from external pressure.

RESPONSES OF HON. MIKE POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

AFGHANISTAN

I had the opportunity to go to Afghanistan in May and met with General Nicholson and Ambassador Bass. We have been in Afghanistan for nearly two decades and I heard the word "stalemate" again and again to describe the state of play there.

Question. Do you believe there is a military solution to this conflict?

Answer. There is no military solution this to this conflict. As President Trump said last August, "Military power alone will not bring peace to Afghanistan or stop the terrorist threat arising in that country." The administration's overall goal for Afghanistan is to support a negotiated political settlement between the government and the Taliban. To this end, we are using all tools, including military and diplomatic tools, in concert, to support Afghan efforts to secure peace.

Question. I was glad to see reports last week that stated the U.S. will seek to directly engage the Taliban in negotiations. Do you support directly negotiating with the Taliban?

Answer. There is no military solution this to this conflict. As President Trump said last August, "Military power alone will not bring peace to Afghanistan or stop the terrorist threat arising in that country." The administration's overall goal for Afghanistan is to support a negotiated political settlement between the government and the Taliban. To this end, we are using all tools, including military and diplomatic tools, in concert, to support Afghan efforts to secure peace.

Question. If no, why not? Do you support the indefinite deployment of U.S. and NATO troops in the country?

Answer. I do not support the indefinite deployment of U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan. When President Trump described our strategy last August, he noted that the United States would have a conditions-based approach to our presence in Afghanistan, focused on enabling a peaceful Afghanistan that can prevent the resurgence of terrorist safe havens that threaten America. We will not allow the Taliban a military victory in Afghanistan and are prepared to stay until the conditions are met that secure our core national security interest. The Taliban will not be able to wait out the United States and its allies.

Question. What is the United States' strategy to leverage direct negotiations with the Taliban to jumpstart an inclusive Afghan peace process?

Answer. The core goal of the United States in Afghanistan is a peace agreement that brings stability to Afghanistan and prevents the resurgence of terrorist safe-havens that threaten the United States. The only way to reach this goal is through

an inclusive political settlement between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The United States cannot be a substitute for the Afghan government in negotiations with the Taliban. However, as I said in June, the United States is ready to support, facilitate, and participate in negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government. The United States is using all tools, including military and diplomatic ones, to press the Taliban to begin formal negotiations with the Afghan government.

Question. Would you support appointing and fully supporting a senior official mandated to focus on negotiating a settlement of the conflict at the Embassy?

Answer. As the Senior Bureau Official of the South Asia Bureau, Ambassador Alice Wells is focused on pursuing a negotiated settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan. She has a dedicated team that focuses exclusively on initiating and supporting a peace process and coordinates with other regional and functional experts across the Department. Because of her broader responsibilities relating to other countries in the region, she is well positioned to ensure that U.S. engagement in South and Central Asia is both coherent and synchronized among decision-makers in Washington. Ambassador Wells works closely with Ambassador Bass and General Nicholson, who have established an interagency Peace and Reconciliation Action Group (PRAG) to ensure unity of effort in the field and with Washington.

SYRIA

Senators Cardin, Kaine and I sent a letter to President Trump sharing our concerns about the halt in stabilization funding to Syria. The answer that I received from Assistant Secretary Waters was incomplete and frankly an insult to our ability to conduct oversight.

The letter we received did not answer our questions or concerns about when this funding would be restored, the effect of the funding freeze on Iranian and Russian influence, or the input that was provided from the State Department, USAID, and Defense Department before stabilization funding was frozen.

Question. When will the stabilization funding for Syria be restored?

Answer. In line with President Trump's request to review all foreign assistance, the administration is evaluating all bilateral foreign assistance for Syria to identify appropriate assistance levels and determine how those funds might best be utilized. Approximately \$6.6 million has been released to fulfill U.S. funding commitments to the White Helmets and the International Impartial Investigative Mechanism. While the stabilization review is ongoing, we are encouraging the Global Coalition and our regional partners to contribute more of their resources and take a greater role in stabilizing liberated areas of Syria. To that end, the Department has raised approximately \$300 million in Coalition funds for stabilization efforts in northeastern Syria. While details are being finalized, we expect some of these funds will support stabilization assistance programs implemented by the U.S. Government through the Department and USAID.

Question. Were you, Administrator Green, and Secretary Mattis consulted before the stabilization funding was halted and were you part of the decision to halt the funding?

Answer. I fully support the administration's decision to evaluate Syria stabilization assistance levels and how best these funds might be used. Moreover, in line with the President's call for international partners to assume more of a share in Syria stabilization efforts, we have secured approximately \$300 million in Coalition contributions for stabilization programming in northeastern Syria and will continue to engage our partners to support our ongoing stabilization efforts.

Question. What do you believe will be the effect on Iranian and Russian influence in Syria if the U.S. is not part of the stabilization of Syria?

Answer. Russia and Iran lack sufficient material resources to stabilize and eventually reconstruct Syria. Russia has approached the United States and international partners about providing that assistance, but the United States and our allies and partners will not provide international reconstruction assistance absent a credible political process in Geneva that leads unalterably to constitutional reform, U.N. supervised elections, and a political transition that reflects the will of the Syrian people. In the meantime, the United States will continue to work with our partners in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS to support immediate stabilization and early recovery efforts in areas liberated from ISIS control, including Explosive Remnants of War removal, the restoration of essential services, and building local capacity to support longer-term sustainability. Both Iran and Russia provide military and diplomatic support to the Syrian regime and will continue to do so for the foreseeable

future. The United States is actively using all available tools to counter malign Iranian influence in Syria and throughout the region.

Question. Do you believe we risk losing gains we have made in Syria by withdrawing stabilization efforts?

Answer. The administration has repeatedly emphasized that we are committed to completing the fight against ISIS, rooting out its remaining havens, and ensuring ISIS cannot return. The United States works with our partners in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS to support immediate stabilization and early recovery efforts in areas liberated from ISIS control, including Explosive Remnants of War removal, the restoration of essential services, and building local capacity to support longer-term sustainability. To this end, the members of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS have pledged approximately \$300 million since April to support the continuation of stabilization and early recovery efforts in northeast Syria implemented by the USG through the Department and USAID.

Question. Were you briefed on the entirety of what the President and Putin discussed during their two-hour one on one conversation in Helsinki?

Answer. As mentioned in my testimony, I have spoken with President Trump multiple times about the subject matter of the Helsinki meetings, and I was present when Presidents Trump and Putin gave us a sense of what they discussed immediately afterwards.

Question. Were General Dunford, General Votel, Secretary Mattis, or Director Coats briefed on the conversation?

Answer. As mentioned in my testimony, I had multiple discussions with the President about the subject matter of the Helsinki meetings, and I was present when Presidents Trump and Putin gave us a sense immediately afterwards of what they discussed.

I refer you to the Department of Defense and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence for specifics on any briefings by the White House with General Dunford, General Votel, Secretary Mattis, or Director Coats.

Question. What discussion if any was there about increased U.S.-Russian cooperation in Syria during the discussion between President Trump and President Putin?

Answer. There were no agreements made in Helsinki between the United States and Russia. We continue to speak to the Russians about the range of issues, including those the Presidents discussed. Continued U.S. engagement with like-minded partners and with Russia will be a necessary component of any lasting solution in Syria. The U.S. policy in Syria continues to prioritize the enduring defeat of ISIS, as well as the removal of all Iranian forces from the country and deescalating the violence to create the conditions for an U.N.-led political solution that reflects the will of the Syrian people and brings the conflict to an end.

Question. Was there a discussion of a joint U.S.-Russian military effort to facilitate the return of Syrian refugees during the discussion between President Trump and President Putin? Do you agree that you would have to come back to Congress to get the necessary authorities before doing so?

Answer. There were no agreements made in Helsinki between the United States and Russia—beyond agreement for our two sides to continue talking about the entire range of issues the Presidents discussed. Contrary to press reports, and to Russian officials' public statements, the United States has not agreed to any proposal related to refugee returns to Syria. The United States strongly supports the position of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that the situation in Syria is not yet conducive to large-scale facilitated or assisted returns, and that any refugee returns should be voluntary, safe, and dignified. In addition, it is our policy that there will be no U.S. reconstruction assistance to regime-held areas in Syria absent a credible political process in Geneva that leads unalterably to constitutional reform, U.N. supervised elections, and a political transition that reflects the will of the Syrian people. The administration values input from Congress and will continue to consult with the committee.

Question. Has your Russian counterpart, Sergie Lavrov, come to you about implementing any agreements coming out of the discussion between President Trump and President Putin?

Answer. There were no "agreements" reached in Helsinki—beyond agreement for our two sides to keep talking on the entire range of issues the Presidents discussed and we continue to do so.

NORTH KOREA

Question. Did President Trump consult with President Moon or Secretary Mattis about canceling military exercises with South Korea? Why not why not?

Answer. As the Pentagon stated in a June 18 press statement, the suspension of select combined military exercises with the Republic of Korea was coordinated with our Republic of Korea ally and additional decisions will depend upon the DPRK continuing to have productive negotiations in good faith. This decision is consistent with President Trump's commitment to make every effort to create space for diplomatic engagement with the DPRK. There is absolutely no change to our ironclad commitment to the defense of the Republic of Korea.

Question. Has there been any effort to tie suspension in exercises to missile testing moratorium?

Answer. The Alliance decision to pause our combined military exercises was made independent of any missile testing moratorium. This is a good faith gesture on the part of the United States and Republic of Korea to further productive discussions aimed at the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK.

Question. If not, what have we actually gotten in return for the suspension of military exercises?

Answer. We did not seek any quid pro quo for our pause in combined military exercises with the Republic of Korea. This decision was made in good faith to provide space for diplomatic engagement as we move towards our ultimate goal of final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK.

Question. In the course of your talks with North Korean officials, have you reached an agreed and detailed understanding of what "denuclearization of the Korean peninsula" entails?

Answer. In my engagements with Chairman Kim and other North Korean officials I have made the U.S. position on denuclearization abundantly clear. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully-verified denuclearization of the DPRK. This goal was agreed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore.

North and South Korea concluded a denuclearization agreement in January 1992 by which they declared: 1. The South and the North shall not test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons. 2. The South and the North shall use nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes. 3. The South and the North shall not possess nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities.

Question. Would you say that declaration provides a good working definition of the "denuclearization" of the Korean peninsula? Yes, or no?

Answer. Denuclearization includes the elimination of all of North Korea's threatening WMDs, their delivery systems, and all associated facilities and infrastructure. North Korea's implementation of its 1992 agreement with South Korea would be a welcome development.

On July 1, National Security Advisor Bolton said experts have devised a program for North Korea to dismantle all of their WMD and ballistic missile programs in a year.

Question. Given that, as Bolton admitted in that same interview, North Korea has yet to fully disclose the details of its program, do you think the one year timeline is feasible? When would that one year go into effect?

Answer. We continue to work towards the implementation of Chairman Kim's commitments to President Trump in Singapore at the earliest possible time. Given the opportunity, we are prepared to help North Korea denuclearize as soon as possible.

Question. Is there a meeting scheduled between North Korean and American technical experts to begin the process of documenting all the elements and facilities of the North Korean nuclear program? If not, why not?

Answer. U.S. experts are fully prepared to begin discussions with DPRK counterparts on steps to accomplish the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea, pursuant to Chairman Kim's commitments in Singapore.

Question. Given that you said at the hearing that North Korea continues producing fissile material, how can we say we are making progress on denuclearization?

Answer. North Korea has taken some steps that indicate it intends to move towards the implementation of Chairman Kim's commitments at Singapore. We con-

tinue to work to secure the action necessary on the part of the DPRK to accomplish the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea.

RUSSIA/NORTH KOREA

In the Helsinki press conference on July 16, President Trump said: “I am very sure that President Putin and Russia want very much to end that problem” regarding North Korea’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Russian oil tankers reportedly supplied fuel to North Korea via sea transfers on several occasions in 2017, which, if accurate, would be in violation of U.N. sanctions. President Trump himself said in January that “Russia is not helping us at all with North Korea. What China is helping us with, Russia is denting.” Russia’s envoy to the U.N. recently said we should raise the question of easing sanctions on the North Korea.

Question. Does the administration consider Russia to be a reliable partner in challenging North Korea?

Answer. U.S. policy remains to maintain economic and diplomatic pressure on North Korea to support our objective of achieving the final, fully-verified denuclearization of North Korea, as agreed to by Chairman Kim. As I stated in my testimony, Russia’s commitment to help us achieve denuclearization of North Korea did come up in Helsinki. We will continue to press Russia to comply fully with all required U.N. Security Council Resolutions, maintain economic pressure on North Korea, avoid expanding any economic ties with the country, and repatriate the DPRK laborers now working in Russia. The President and I raised the topic of North Korea with President Putin in Helsinki, and our discussions on these and other key international issues will continue as we engage with Russia in the future.

Question. If so, what concrete changes have occurred to provoke a change in assessing that Russia is helping, rather than hurting, on North Korea?

Answer. On July 17, President Trump stated his firm conviction that “diplomacy and engagement are preferable to conflict and hostility.” These principles have guided our actions on North Korea. President Trump’s diplomacy de-escalated a situation in which the prospect for conflict was rising daily. Americans are safer because of his actions.

Until North Korea eliminates its weapons of mass destruction, our sanctions, and those at the United Nations will remain in effect. Multiple resolutions of the U.N. Security Council, which includes Russia, require North Korea to eliminate all of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. Those resolutions were passed unanimously and they remain binding. We urge every single nation, including Russia, to maintain the enforcement of those sanctions. The path ahead is not easy, but our hopes for a safer world and a brighter future for North Korea endure.

NORTH KOREA

In your testimony, you said “our objective remains the final, fully-verifiable denuclearization of North Korea.” At a speech on May 2 at the State Department, you said, “We are committed to the permanent, verifiable, irreversible dismantling of North Korea’s weapons of mass destruction program, and to do so without delay.” And yet, your testimony doesn’t include the words “permanent” or “irreversible.”

Furthermore, in an interview with George Stephanopoulos, you said the following: “We’re going to require those steps—we use the word irreversible with great intention. We’re going to require those steps that demonstrate that denuclearization is going to be achieved.”

Question. Have your expectations of what denuclearization means changed over the past couple months?

Answer. No. The President remains committed to fully and finally resolving the issue of DPRK’s illicit and threatening WMDs and their delivery systems.

Question. Was it now your intention to remove “irreversible” from your definition of denuclearization?

Answer. The President remains committed to fully and finally resolving the issue of DPRK’s illicit and threatening WMDs and their delivery systems.

RUSSIA

Question. President Trump met one-on-one with Russian President Putin on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Hamburg in July last year. Were staff, advisors, or

a note taker present during that one-on-one meeting between President Trump and President Putin?

Answer. No notetaker, staff, or advisers participated in the one-on-one meeting between President Trump and President Putin.

Question. Were you or other members of President Trump's national security staff briefed on the discussions of that conversation after the meeting?

Answer. As mentioned in my testimony, I have spoken with President Trump multiple times about the subject matter of the Helsinki meetings, and I was present when Presidents Trump and Putin gave us a sense of what they discussed immediately afterwards.

U.S. AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL DAVID FRIEDMAN

Last month, at a conference on the news media, U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman accused the press—expressly including American news outlets—of major bias against Israel in its coverage of violence at the Gaza fence-line, telling reporters to “keep your mouths shut until you figure it out.”

More than an inappropriate degradation of the free press by a sitting U.S. ambassador, Ambassador Friedman's egregious attack dangerously echoes efforts to discredit and intimidate the press in the United States, Israel and around the world.

Question. Do you think these were appropriate comments for a U.S. Ambassador to make?

Answer. Ambassador Friedman's remarks were taken out of context. Speaking by invitation at an event on media coverage of Israel, Ambassador Friedman emphasized the importance of a free press to a functioning democracy. He noted that he expects and appreciates criticism of the U.S. government. Ambassador Friedman stated that facts matter and called for objectivity in reporting on Israel. He noted many press critiques of Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) rules of engagement during recent demonstrations on the Gaza fence-line failed to cite military or security experts on the challenges IDF faced in deterring arson and other violent attacks from Gaza into Israel. He called for reporters to eschew political bias in favor of objective analysis.

Question. What steps did you take to address these comments with him?

Answer. The Department Spokesperson clarified from the podium that Ambassador Friedman's remarks were taken out of context. The Ambassador's speech to an event on media coverage of Israel focused on the importance of a free press to a functioning democracy. He also cited certain press critiques of Israeli Defense Forces' (IDF) rules of engagement during recent demonstrations on the Gaza fence-line as an example of the need for reporters to consult with subject-matter experts and eschew political bias in favor of objective analysis.

NIGER

In response to terrorist threats in the broader Sahel-Maghreb, the United States military has deployed more than 800 U.S. troops to conduct train and equip missions, and to construct an airfield in Agadez to provide additional Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance coverage. However, this deep security cooperation has coincided with significantly eroded progress toward democratic governance. An example of this disturbing trend involves the arrest of several dozen civil society leaders between March and April of this year, in connection with demonstrations against the country's new finance law.

Question. How is the State Department communicating to Niger's leaders that they should not interpret our counterterrorism cooperation as license for shirking their responsibilities for good governance?

Answer. The United States is committed to promoting the peace and prosperity of Niger. We work towards this outcome by supporting Niger's democratic institutions and civil society organizations; promoting human rights, fundamental freedoms, and good governance; strengthening country-led development; and training and equipping Niger's security forces. For example, Niger is an exemplary partner in the Security Governance Initiative, a program designed to improve the governance of security and justice sector institutions. As part of the initiative, the Nigerien Ministry of Defense has made meaningful improvements in how it manages human and financial resources, as well as how it communicates with the Nigerien public.

In light of recent concerning events suggesting the deterioration of the freedoms of expression and assembly as well as the rule of law, our Ambassador and his team

have repeatedly delivered messages stressing the importance of protecting the freedoms of expression and assembly to high-level members of the government and to the people of Niger. Our messages underscore the importance that the U.S. government attaches to the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights, support for effective and accountable government, and the maintenance of open political space with freedom to peacefully express dissent, including views critical of the government.

Question. Will the State Department to speak out in support of Nigerien civil society leaders jailed for exercising their freedom of expression, association, and assembly, which are protected under the Nigerien constitution and international human rights norms?

Answer. Although a verdict in the case of several activists arrested for organizing a banned protest was rendered on July 24, providing for the immediate release of the majority of those charged, we continue to express our concerns to the Government of Niger, and will continue to do so as long as merited. Our conversations with the Government of Niger included concerns about the more than four months these individuals spent in pre-trial detention, harsh sentences for some of those charged, and a number of due process violations raised by lawyers for the defense. We continue to monitor the cases of those who still await trial as well as actions taken by the Government of Niger that signal the further restriction of the fundamental freedoms of assembly, association, and expression.

Our messaging has not fallen on deaf ears: the Government of Niger has made it clear that it values its partnership with the United States and takes U.S. criticism very seriously.

RUSSIA

News reports indicate Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel have sought out Trump administration officials at various points aimed at improving the U.S.-Russia relationship as a way to gain leverage over Iran. One reportedly proposed deal would have the United States lift sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Crimea in exchange for Russia pushing Iran out of Syria.

Question. Is the State Department reviewing any U.S.-Russia deals being proposed/brokered by the Saudis, Emiratis, or Israelis, or any combination thereof?

Answer. The Department continues to consult closely on issues related to Syria with key regional allies, including Israel. While we cannot comment on the content of those discussions in this format, we remain strongly committed to the Defeat ISIS Campaign, the removal of Iranian and proxy forces from Syria, and an end to the Syrian conflict through a political solution.

IRAN

Question. The Iranians have indicated that they will restart elements of their nuclear program that were frozen under the JCPOA if Europe can't ensure European business will continue to flow into Iran amid renewed American sanctions. What is the Trump administration's plan should Iran take this course of action?

Answer. President Trump has been clear about the serious consequences if Iran continues its nuclear aspirations. Our strategy is intended to impose maximum pressure on Iran to address the totality of its malign behavior, including non-proliferation issues and other concerns.

BUZZFEED NEWS ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

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These Emails Show What Happens When The White House Keeps The Pentagon Out Of The Loop

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NEWS

These Emails Show What Happens When The White House Keeps The Pentagon Out Of The Loop

"The White House gets to do whatever it wants when it wants how it wants."

By Vera Bergengruen

Reporting From
Washington, DC

Posted on July 25, 2018, at 9:01 a.m. ET

Trump's announcement that he will end U.S.-S Korea drills catches Pentagon off guard

Pentagon and Seoul Surprised by Trump Pledge to Halt Military Exercises

Pentagon caught off guard by 'Space Force' announcement

Trump signals withdrawal 'very soon' of US troops from Syria surprising Pentagon and State Department

Pentagon, caught by surprise by Trump's travel ban, pushes for some Iraqis to get special consideration

US Joint Chiefs blindsided by Trump's transgender ban

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NORTHCOM Caught Off Guard As Trump Orders Troops To US-Mexico Border

BuzzFeed News

"The Pentagon was caught off guard" stories have become a staple of news coverage of the Trump administration.

It's no secret that time and time again, officials in the Defense Department have been blindsided by sudden, often significant announcements and policy changes involving the US military coming out of the White House.

Trump administration officials have excused those moments as overblown, affecting news reports more than creating any real government dysfunction.

Now, however, internal emails released through the Freedom of Information Act offer an inside look at how chaotic it can be for Pentagon officials when they face an unexpected onslaught of questions in the wake of an alarming public statement from the White House. The confusion resonates not only in Washington but around the world, according to the emails, which were sought by a left-leaning watchdog group, [Democracy Forward](#), and shared with BuzzFeed News.

The emails document two days of the aftermath of an unusual, and seemingly sudden, [statement released](#) by the White House late on the night of June 26 last year. It warned Syrian President Bashar al-Assad that he and his military would "pay a heavy price" if they carried out another chemical weapons attack.



<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>

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The guided-missile destroyer USS *Porter* launching a Tomahawk missile in the Mediterranean Sea, April 7, 2017.
 Ford Williams / AP

Just two months earlier, the US had retaliated for such an attack by launching 59 Tomahawk missiles at a Syrian airfield, an event still fresh on people's minds. In the statement on June 26, then-White House press secretary Sean Spicer said the US had "identified potential preparations for another chemical weapons attack by the Assad regime that would likely result in the mass murder of civilians."

But the channels at the Pentagon that usually would have coordinated such a release were in the dark. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and his top spokesperson, Dana White, were on a plane to Germany to attend an event commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Marshall Plan. Five US defense officials reached by BuzzFeed News that night said they did not know where the potential chemical attack would come from and that they had "no idea" what prompted the White House statement.

The New York Times similarly noted that "several military officials were caught off guard by the statement." State Department officials were also "caught completely off guard," the Associated Press reported 10 paragraphs into its story.

With no clarification, journalists, analysts, and pundits around the world speculated whether Trump had drawn a new "red line" in Syria.

"I have nothing," Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesperson, responded to emails from several US and international reporters that night, the documents show. In an email to Pentagon press officers, he said, "I suppose we send queries back to the White House." The press officer assigned to work that night apologized to reporters off the record and said he could only refer them to the statement.

The communications black hole that resulted from the White House moving without coordinating its plans with the Defense Department would become a familiar pattern.

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President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis in the Cabinet Room of the White House.
Pablo Martinez Monsivais / AP

A month later, it happened again with Trump's unexpected announcement on Twitter that transgender troops would be banned from serving in the military — announced while Mattis was on vacation. It happened with the sudden announcement that the US would end joint military drills with South Korea. And when the president said he was pulling US troops out of Syria "very soon." And when he announced the creation of the "Space Force," a new military branch. And when he ordered troops to the US–Mexico border.

"We woke up to the statement. WH did not coord with us or JS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] or State from what I can tell," White, the Pentagon's chief spokesperson, responded to Mattis's chief of staff Kevin Sweeney, when he forwarded her the BuzzFeed story about officials saying they had "no idea" about the Syria announcement, with two question marks.

"Was there any coord traffic on this?" someone from the office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whose name is redacted, asked in an email to White and Davis. "This is the first I'm seeing about it. Any [talking points] would be appreciated. I'm getting calls from folks in DC."

"Surprised us all," Davis answered.

According to the emails, Mattis's top spokesperson heard about the statement only as it was being posted on the White House website.

"No. White House is putting this out? Do you have the statement? I am on the [Defense secretary's] plane," White answered to an email from National Security Council spokesperson Tara Rigler, who'd asked if she was tracking "a Syrian statement on chemical weapons."

This confusion was apparent to military reporters, who started adding an obvious question to their queries that night — had the Pentagon been aware that the White House had planned to release a statement warning Assad about another chemical weapons attack?

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answer.

There was one exception.



PENTAGON: LEAKS ALLEGING IT WAS UNAWARE OF WHITE HOUSE SYRIA STATEMENT ARE 'FALSE'



A Breitbart story from June 27, 2017.

"DOD knew about the White House statement and provided edits in advance of its release. Anonymous leaks to the contrary are false or misinformed," White emailed a Breitbart reporter.

The site immediately ran with it, [posting a piece](#) headlined "Pentagon: Leaks Alleging It Was Unaware of White House Syria Statement Are 'False,'" denouncing the reports by BuzzFeed News and the New York Times.

Later that day, then-deputy White House press secretary Sarah Sanders told reporters that "the military chain of command was also fully aware of the statement as it was being prepared and later released."

"We want to clarify that all relevant agencies — including State, DoD, CIA and ODNI — were involved in

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indications that it hadn't been discussed in advance with other national security agencies. "Anonymous leaks to the contrary are false."

Democracy Forward, which filed the FOIA request for the documents, told BuzzFeed News it sees the emails as proof that the White House was lying in those statements, and that the Pentagon had to resort to "verbal acrobatics" to pretend they had been in the loop.

"These new documents reveal what the administration has actively denied all along: the White House failed to consult military officials before issuing a statement on a potential Syrian chemical attack last year," said Democracy Forward's director Anne Harkavy. "Worse yet, administration officials lied when questioned by reporters. How can we trust an administration that lies about the potential use of chemical weapons?"

The emails show that Pentagon officials workshoped a statement between Germany and Washington that evolved from no comment to "As usual, we monitor these situations and are prepared for any outcomes" to an official statement more than 12 hours after the release.

In an email to several Pentagon press officers the following day, White said that "just because everyone didn't know" it didn't mean that nobody knew within the agencies, and that the statement had been "coordinated between the principals," which would include Mattis.

"The WH gets to do whatever it wants when it wants how it wants," she said in the partly redacted email.

Former Pentagon officials and spokespeople told BuzzFeed News that this is more serious than a communications problem, since the rest of the world looks to the US media to get context on such sensitive statements in a time of uncertainty. The White House's pattern of leaving military officials unprepared or unable to provide information to the media and the public on such announcements, combined with decreased press access to Mattis and dwindling formal briefings, is unprecedented, they say.

"There's just a shocking lack of professionalism and interagency coordination," a former senior Pentagon spokesperson said. "It's fair to say that it's never been more opaque."

Trump administration officials counter that the repeated cycle is just another way the president has "upended the usual bureaucratic decision-making processes of Washington."

"President Trump has a different way of doing things," a US administration official told BuzzFeed News. "He is a dynamic president who is not afraid to take bold, decisive action quickly. The rest of us just have to get used to it and keep up."



Vera Bergengruen is a Pentagon reporter for BuzzFeed News and is based in Washington, DC.

Contact Vera Bergengruen at vera.bergengruen@buzzfeed.com.

Got a confidential tip? [Submit it here.](#)

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Kathy Baylis

After all this time in office, drumpf still doesn't understand that he can't just indulge his random whims whenever he wants—that what he does now must go through channels and be vetted before being carefully planned and announced in just the right way. The White House ain't Trump Tower or his personal kingdom (thank goodness that hasn't happened...yet)

Like · Reply · 9 · 7h



Ginmar Rienne

He doesn't care. He only cares about Trump.

Like · Reply · 7 · 6h



Rosa Carone-Prendergast

He's a spoiled 5 year old and thinks he can do whatever he wants whenever he wants. He's an asshole! The only reason he became president was so he can make himself, his family and his rich buddies even richer! And the Trumppanzees eat it all up like good little cult followers!

Like · Reply · 2 · 2h



Amanda Johnston

Keeping the military heads in the dark is an ominous sign in my opinion from this wanna be authoritarian.

Like · Reply · 13 · 6h



Jason Cranford

Okay, this is a serious issue but shouldn't everyone have been caught off guard by the space force announcement?

Like · Reply · 4 · 5h



Katorah Thomas

yeah, but then i imagined us all in zenon: girl of the 21st century attire and literally considered re-enlisting, sorry.

Like · Reply · 1 · 2h



Leslie Smyth

You can see why his businesses were so successful.

Like · Reply · 6 · 4h



Cat Mare

Did you forget to add /s? Because his businesses weren't as successful as Trump likes us to believe.

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Cat Mare That's one of the reasons he won't release his taxes...he knows it would show that he's not as rich and powerful as he pretends to be. The idiot has gone bankrupt like 5 or 6 times!

Like · Reply · 3 · 2h



Cindy Staton

Just one more fucking thing to prove he has absolutely no clue how government works!

Like · Reply · 5 · 3h



Cat Mare

Or that he's endangering people's lives.

Like · Reply · 3 · 2h



Desiree Valenzuela

Maybe the Pentagon could "forget" to supply soldiers vehicles etc for that useless goddamn ego-boost of a parade.

Like · Reply · 2 · 1h



Idanna Ott

The johnalds actions can be called "different", or "insane", your choice.

Like · Reply · 1 · 1h



Jay Shemwell

The guy is a looney toon.

Like · Reply · 44m

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Why Iran's malign behavior must be confronted — not appeased | Arab News

Why Iran's malign behavior must be confronted — not appeased



PRINCE KHALID BIN SALMAN
July 23, 2018 20:00

I was born just three decades ago, long after the “The Greatest Generation” endured the darkest chapter in human history. I can only think their survival and ultimate triumph over the forces of evil were meant to impart lessons to us all, so that such horror never befalls the world again. It is encouraging to hear US President Donald Trump make clear that we will not approach Iran with the sort of appeasement policies that failed so miserably to halt Nazi Germany’s rise to power, or avert the costliest war ever waged. Now, we all need to unite on a broader strategy to address the Iranian regime’s destabilizing behavior.

At a time of thunderous echoes of the 1930s — the sustained fallout from an economic crisis, extreme polarization of the political spectrum from the far right to the hard left, inaction from the global community and malignant actors determined to fill a void in leadership by spreading their ideology of hate and violence — it is incumbent on the global community to act with resolve. As the philosopher George Santayana famously declared: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” In the appeasement of Iran, we are clearly seeing something we have seen before. It is equally obvious that the strategy has already failed.

Despite the best intentions of its architects, the 2015 nuclear deal and subsequent easing of financial restrictions on Tehran did nothing to stem the regime’s expansionist ambitions or eliminate its support for the Middle East’s most destabilizing extremists — in Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and elsewhere. Instead, it served only to grant the world’s most egregious sponsor of global terrorism rewards for temporarily suspending its apocalyptic pursuit of nuclear weapons.

The deal was but part of a worrying pattern of appeasement. As Iran threw more and more economic and military muscle behind the murderous government of Syrian President Bashar Assad, it was not punished. Instead,

governments responded by offering Tehran a seat at successive Syrian peace tables. The result was predictable: No peace, and nothing that resembled a more accommodating Iran, which to this day stands by Assad, one chemical weapons attack after the next.

President Trump has declared that his administration “will be working with our allies to find a real, comprehensive, and lasting solution to the Iranian nuclear threat. This will include efforts to eliminate the threat of Iran’s ballistic missile program, to stop its terrorist activities worldwide, and to block its menacing activity across the Middle East.”

Saudi Arabia is committed to doing everything we can to help the United States. There is still time for a determined international response that stops Iran from spreading its tentacles of mischief to every corner of the region — from the Hezbollah terrorist organization that has put a stranglehold on Lebanon’s future, to the Houthi militia that has wrought misery on Yemen and tried, unsuccessfully, to intimidate my country by firing Iranian-provided missiles into Saudi Arabian territory.

Whatever your position on the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal, we all should now answer a higher calling: Deterring Iran and its minions from their campaign of chaos. Even leaders who sought to salvage the nuclear deal recognize the importance of combating Iran now. As the French President Emmanuel Macron said after the US withdrew from the agreement: “We will work collectively on a broader framework, covering nuclear activity, the post-2025 period, ballistic activity, and stability in the Middle-East, notably Syria, Yemen, and Iraq.”

As other nations and their peoples weigh the matter, it is worth considering the abundant and disturbing parallels between 2018 and 1938.

Eighty years ago, the guardians of global order looked on powerlessly as expansionist forces in Europe, Asia and Africa pierced what faith remained in the ideal of international law or in the League of Nations. A similar danger presents itself now as Iran runs roughshod over the international order, stoking conflict beyond its borders and arming the extremists who do its bidding in pursuit of regional domination.

// Tehran promotes sectarianism to divide communities. That leads to weakened or failed nations, which Iran then controls through proxy organizations. //

Iranian expansionism fuels and foments most of the Middle East's crises — the sectarian strife that pits neighbor against neighbor, the militant movements that shatter legitimate state institutions, and the terrorist forces that kill innocent men, women and children. "Everywhere you look, if there is trouble in the region, you find Iran." Note, it was not a Saudi leader who said that — it was the US secretary of defense, Jim Mattis.

The pernicious threat posed by Iran is at the core of its regime. The Iranian constitution calls for spreading "the ideological mission of jihad" throughout the world. And from its first days, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini exhorted his followers to conquer Muslim and non-Muslim land alike. In 2015, Maj. Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), proclaimed: "The Islamic Republic of Iran is at its best. The Iranian revolution is quickly spreading beyond the republic's borders; with the same speed it opens the front lines of revolution, achieving [Khomeini's] goals." This statement was made while the JCPOA was being concluded and during the Iran-backed Houthi takeover of Yemen.

The Iranian state ideology is based on the concept of Wilayat Al-Faqih, a guardianship-based political system in which the people owe their allegiance to a supreme religious jurist (who also becomes the Supreme Leader) regardless of their nationality, geography or form of government. This supra-national doctrine aims to undermine the influence of legitimate state government by theocratic rule, and does not recognize the legitimate international order of governments. But is religion really at the heart of Iran's interpretation of Wilayat Al-Faqih? If it were, then why wouldn't a Supreme Leader emerge from Iraq's religious centers, and under Wilayat Al-Faqih the people of Iran would pledge allegiance to him?



An Iranian nuclear-capable intercontinental Shahab-3 missile is seen during a military exhibition in Tehran. (AP file)

After almost four decades of malfeasance, we know the Iranian playbook. Tehran promotes sectarianism to divide communities. That leads to weakened or failed nations, which Iran then controls through proxy organizations.

The Iranian politician Alireza Zakani, who is close to Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei, has bragged that Sanaa in Yemen is now in Iran's grasp, joining "the three Arab capitals that are already a subsidiary of the Iranian Islamic revolution" and part of "the greater jihad." The other Arab capitals to which he referred are Beirut, Baghdad and Damascus. That statement was made immediately after the Houthi militia, with the help of Iran, slaughtered their way to Sanaa, before the Saudi-led coalition intervened to restore the legitimate government of Yemen.

Zakani has also said: "The Yemeni revolution will not be confined to Yemen alone. It will extend, following its success, into Saudi territories. The vast Yemeni-Saudi borders will help accelerate its reach into the depths of Saudi land."

Too often, Iran has not paid the price for its brutal behavior. Twenty-five years ago, it preyed on a civil war in Lebanon to install its forces and drive out American peacekeepers, killing 241 US servicemen at a Marine barracks. In 1996, Iran blew up the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, killing 19 US Air Force

personnel — one of a series of terrorist acts that were not confined to our region, whether it was assassinating opposition leaders in Germany in 1992, bombing a building in Argentina in 1994, or plotting to assassinate my predecessor in Washington, DC, in 2011.

Iran went on to kill hundreds more Americans by supplying the roadside bombs and explosives used by militants in the Iraq War. In its findings, the Iraq Study Group reported: "Iran has supplied improvised explosive devices to groups ... that attack US forces. These types of weapons were responsible for almost 40 percent of all US casualties." In concert with Iran, Bashar Assad released hundreds of terrorists from Syrian prisons and moved them into Iraq for the purpose of attacking US interests there. In recent years, Iran has insidiously expanded its control or influence in Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon. It has also filled voids created by the US withdrawal from Iraq. Everywhere Iran has gone, its methods of terrorism and assassination have followed.

// Today, Saudis live within minutes of new Iranian ballistic missiles pointed at them by the Houthis in Yemen. //

The lack of concrete reactions to these activities, and the fading of "red lines" in Syria, made the Iranian view clear: The US — and the world — was handcuffed and had only words of condemnation in response. That message is changing now and we believe President Trump when he says: "The United States no longer makes empty threats."

Saudi Arabia has always believed the international community cannot address Iran's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, while ignoring the mass destruction Iran is inflicting daily on its neighbors. Any future deal must address Iran's ballistic missile program, its increasing financial and military support for terrorism, and its interference in the internal affairs of countries in the region.

Today, Saudis live within minutes of new Iranian ballistic missiles pointed at them by the Houthis in Yemen. More than 160 Iranian missiles have been fired into Saudi Arabia. It is an intolerable situation and one, thankfully, Americans

do not have to endure from a drug cartel or terrorist state shooting at Washington, DC, from just across the US border.

Saudi Arabia's policy is to confront evil wherever it may be found and in whatever form it takes. We are aggressively fighting Daesh and Al-Qaeda, and the extremist ideologies that underpin them. (Both terror organizations see Saudi Arabia and the United States as their primary enemies. In fact, Osama bin Laden's first declaration of war in 1996 was on just those two countries.) Our war on terror is not limited to those groups, but is waged against all who inflict or condone violent extremism. Those who adhere to terrorism and violent extremism are but a small minority in both Saudi Arabia and Iran. The difference is that in Saudi Arabia these terrorists are on the run, while in Iran they are running the country.

At home, we are pushing ahead with implementing a positive vision of a modern and engaging partner to the world. It is an agenda that stands in sharp contrast to the Iranian menace that aspires to pull everyone back against the tide of modernity. This is the real conflict at the heart of the Middle East, not the Sunni vs. Shiite divide that Iran wants you to see. It is a clash of two very different visions of the future.

Saudi Arabia's vision is inclusive, guided by the rule of law and international order, and promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity for all. That means supporting legitimate state institutions throughout the region, irrespective of sect. For example, in Iraq, Saudi Arabia supports the legitimate government against (Sunni) Daesh, and in Yemen we support the legitimate government against the (Shiite) Houthis.

Iran's vision is the opposite, shaped by its nature as an expansionist power that propagates sectarianism, hatred and violence as a means to expand its influence on Arab countries and impose its will on them. At home, our paths could not be more divergent. Compare them since Iran's 1979 revolution. On almost every measure of national development and quality of life, Saudi Arabia has surged forward while Iran has slid back.



US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley briefs the media in front of remains of Iranian 'Qiam' ballistic missile in December 2017. (Reuters)

Saudi Arabia's per capita income has increased almost tenfold, from just over \$2,300 in 1978 to more than \$22,000 today. Iran's has fallen by more than half, to barely more than \$4,000.

Four decades ago, the Saudi and Iranian economies were roughly the same size: About \$80 billion. Saudi GDP has since expanded to almost \$700 billion, double that of Iran.

If your home is in Saudi Arabia instead of Iran, you would earn 2½ times more money; be 34.3 percent more likely to be employed and 45 percent less likely to be in prison; and likely to live four years longer.

In Iran, you cannot use Twitter, Facebook and other platforms that are regularly banned, while in Saudi Arabia social media is open for Saudis to engage with the world and for the world to engage with them.

Sure, Iran's leaders blame everyone but themselves for their miserable record. It is all because of Western sanctions, they cry, or the lingering effects of the Iran-Iraq war. When these excuses are disproved, they readily come up with

others.

But this gap in achievement is real and pervasive, and only likely to accelerate as Saudi Arabia speeds up transformation, reform, and economic and social change, while the Iranian regime remains obsessed with inflicting as much death and destruction as possible.

Iran's theocratic rulers won't have it any other way. With his English-language tweets and Facebook postings, the Iranian regime's foreign minister Javad Zarif desperately attempts to present a moderate face outside his country. He doesn't even try at home, where such networks are banned, demonstrating that what he says is mere lip service to the West.

President Hassan Rouhani similarly seeks to beguile the world with talk of reformers who might one day replace the "hardliners" holding the levers of Iranian power. It is an elaborate ruse from leaders who are part of, and benefit from, the same system of repression. From 1989 to 2005, Rouhani was secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, in which post he helped oversee Iran's campaign of assassinations and embassy bombings. And in 2013, as he ran for president, Rouhani sang a similar tune. "We need to express 'Death to America' with action," he exhorted his fellow Iranians in a speech in the city of Karaj.

I even have heard directly from a former US government official that Zarif whispers privately that the Supreme Leader is "disconnected from reality" and that the United States needs to back Iran so the moderates can take over when he passes. This is not reality; it is a deceptive strategy meant to lull America into inaction.

And should you look at the jockey or the horse? The true "jockeys" in Iran's leadership today are not the Zarifs. They are individuals such as Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani, who has commanded the Quds Force for 15 years and, according to Time magazine, is "responsible for exporting Iran's revolution, supporting terrorists, subverting pro-Western governments and waging Iran's foreign wars. Soleimani is also a master of propaganda, posting selfies from battlefields across the region to convince one and all that he is the master of the Middle Eastern chessboard." This is the real face of Iran's leadership.

Five years into Rouhani's presidency, the West's policy of appeasement to "empower" him clearly has not done much good for ordinary Iranians.

The nuclear deal provided Iran with more than \$100 billion in concessions. But look at Iran's budget the following year. That money did not go into schools, or roads or hospitals. No wonder Iranian citizens took to the streets this year crying out for improvements in their country, wondering into whose pockets the benefits of the nuclear deal disappeared. Following the agreement, the Iranian budget showed significant funding increases for the IRGC and the Quds Force. The available data on Iran's official fiscal budgets show that between 2014 and 2017, the defense budget grew by 71 percent, from \$9.29 billion to \$15.9 billion. Available information also shows the budget rose even further last year to \$19 billion.

The Iranians are a civilized people and want the same things that we all want, a better quality of life and a better future for themselves and their children. But as the Kingdom's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman pointed out, the Iranian regime has not invested in a single road or major civil project since the nuclear agreement was signed.

// Five years into Rouhani's presidency, the West's policy of appeasement to "empower" him clearly has not done much good for ordinary Iranians. //

Should we be surprised? When a regime's motto is "Death to America," is it any wonder that it cannot be appeased with more relaxed trading or banking regulations?

It is simplistic to say history repeats itself. And yet, looking at the recent past, I cannot escape the feeling that we have been here before. We share with those who lived through 1938 the overwhelming sense of frustration, anxiety, desperation and fear of the unknown. I cannot help but wonder what future historians will make of 2018 if we do not alter the course of history.

As at Munich eight decades ago, when Western concessions failed to satisfy Nazi Germany's desires for a bigger, more powerful "Reich," the world is again faced with the twin options of offering treasure and territory to placate a murderous

regime, or confronting evil head-on.

In today's example, those who have not learnt history's lessons counsel us to let the Iranians subvert the entire Middle East while granting them as many financial enticements as possible. The rationale has been to preserve a nuclear deal that has done nothing to resolve the region's troubles, and appeal to the Iranian regime's better angels. A wiser and ultimately more moral approach is to pressure Iran to correct its awful behavior immediately.

As Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has emphasized repeatedly, standing up to the forces of aggression may entail more cost in the short term. But it is the only real strategy for preventing already grave threats to snowball into wider, and potentially far deadlier, conflicts. "We will not repeat an agreement that was reached in 1938 and that led later to the Second World War," the crown prince said in Paris this year at a conference with President Macron.

Following the path of appeasement will lead countries in the region to lose faith in international law. They will see that proxy militias can be tools of foreign policy, unchecked by the world community. They will change and adapt to this new reality — and not for the better, I fear. We cannot pass the buck and hope things get better. Committing to a firm policy of containing Iran, and all its mischievous activity, will solve more problems than just saying: "Something must be done."

The world must join us to confront Iran with seriousness and intent. Iran needs to know it will pay a price if it continues to violate international law and interfere in the affairs of its neighbors. Iran must be punished economically and diplomatically, with all options kept on the table to ensure the strength and integrity of diplomacy. And the Middle East's legitimate state institutions — in Yemen, Iraq and elsewhere — need to be supported as they fight Iran's proxies of chaos.

Only such a course of action will allow the seeds of modernization, growth, and innovation to flourish across the Middle East. Saudi Arabia will do its part. We need as many partners as possible.

- *Prince Khalid bin Salman was appointed ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United States of America on April 22, 2017, by King Salman. He presented his credentials to US President Donald J. Trump and officially assumed his position on July 21, 2017.*

Before that, Prince Khalid was an adviser at the Saudi Embassy in Washington and at the Ministry of Defense in Riyadh.

Previously, he was an F-15 pilot and tactical intelligence officer in the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF). Before a back injury ended his flying career, Prince Khalid flew more than 50 combat missions as part of the international coalition campaign against Daesh in Syria and as part of Operations Decisive Storm and Renewal of Hope in Yemen.

Prince Khalid graduated from the King Faisal Air Academy in Riyadh and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the RSAF. He received his initial pilot training at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, and advanced training at Columbus Air Force Base in Columbus, Mississippi. He also studied advanced electronic warfare in France.

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STATEMENT OF PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER



STATEMENTS & RELEASES

**Statement by President Donald J. Trump on Signing
the “Countering America’s Adversaries Through
Sanctions Act”**

— FOREIGN POLICY

Issued on: August 2, 2017



Today, I signed into law the “Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act,” which enacts new sanctions on Iran, North Korea, and Russia. I favor tough measures to punish and deter bad behavior by the rogue regimes in Tehran and Pyongyang. I also support making clear that America will not tolerate interference in our democratic process, and that we will side with our allies and friends against Russian subversion and destabilization.

That is why, since taking office, I have enacted tough new sanctions on Iran and North Korea, and shored up existing sanctions on Russia.

Since this bill was first introduced, I have expressed my concerns to Congress about the many ways it improperly encroaches on Executive power, disadvantages American companies, and hurts the interests of our European allies.

My Administration has attempted to work with Congress to make this bill better. We have made progress and improved the language to give the Treasury Department greater flexibility in granting routine licenses to American businesses, people, and companies. The improved language also reflects feedback from our European allies – who have been steadfast partners on Russia sanctions – regarding the energy sanctions provided for in the legislation. The new language also ensures our

agencies can delay sanctions on the intelligence and defense sectors, because those sanctions could negatively affect American companies and those of our allies.

Still, the bill remains seriously flawed – particularly because it encroaches on the executive branch's authority to negotiate. Congress could not even negotiate a healthcare bill after seven years of talking. By limiting the Executive's flexibility, this bill makes it harder for the United States to strike good deals for the American people, and will drive China, Russia, and North Korea much closer together. The Framers of our Constitution put foreign affairs in the hands of the President. This bill will prove the wisdom of that choice.

Yet despite its problems, I am signing this bill for the sake of national unity. It represents the will of the American people to see Russia take steps to improve relations with the United States. We hope there will be cooperation between our two countries on major global issues so that these sanctions will no longer be necessary.

Further, the bill sends a clear message to Iran and North Korea that the American people will not tolerate their dangerous and destabilizing behavior. America will continue to work closely with our friends and allies to check those countries' malignant activities.

I built a truly great company worth many billions of dollars. That is a big part of the reason I was elected. As President, I can make far better deals with foreign countries than Congress.

