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CHAPTER 17

International Conflict Resolution and Avoidance

A. MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

On January 15, 2015, U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN Samantha Power addressed a Security Council debate on the Middle East. Her remarks regarding Middle East peace are excerpted below. Ambassador Power's January 15, 2015 remarks—which also address Syria and Lebanon—are available in full at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/6340>.

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Lastly, let me turn to the Middle East. For decades, the United States ...has worked to try to help achieve a comprehensive end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Immense though the challenges may be, we firmly believe that they can and must be overcome because the status quo is unsustainable. We remain committed to achieving the peace that both Palestinians and Israelis deserve: two states for two peoples, with a sovereign, viable and independent Palestine living side by side, in peace and security, with a Jewish and democratic Israel.

As you know, on December 30th, the United States voted against a Security Council draft resolution. We made our position clear: the resolution, which was hastily put to a vote, would have taken us further from, and not closer to, an atmosphere that makes it possible to achieve two states for two peoples. Since that vote, the United States, represented in particular by Secretary Kerry, has reached out to both parties in an effort to try to reduce tensions and find a path forward. The Quartet Envoys will meet at the end of this month to discuss the way ahead.

We continue to oppose unilateral actions by both sides that we view as detrimental to the cause of peace. Palestinian efforts to join the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and to accede to a number of international treaties are counter-productive and will not advance the aspirations of the Palestinian people for a sovereign and independent state. We urge both

parties to exercise maximum restraint and avoid steps that threaten to push Israeli-Palestinian relations into a cycle of further escalation.

As we continue to work towards Israeli-Palestinian peace, we share the UN's deep concern regarding the situation in Gaza. All sides must work together to accelerate efforts and increase support for rebuilding through the Gaza reconstruction mechanism. The humanitarian needs are considerable, particularly in the harsh winter months. In December, the United States announced an initial \$100 million contribution for UNRWA's 2015 needs, including in Gaza. We encourage other states to make pledges, and to promptly deliver the funds that they have already promised to fully meet those urgent needs.

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The Middle East "Quartet"—the United States Secretary of State, the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, the UN Secretary General, and the EU High Commissioner—met on February 8, 2015 in Munich, Germany and issued a statement, excerpted below and available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/02/237291.htm>.

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Recalling its previous statements, the Quartet discussed the situation in the region. The Quartet underlined the importance of the parties resuming negotiations as soon as possible, with a view to reaching a just, lasting and comprehensive peace on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, the Madrid Principles including land for peace and the agreements previously reached between the parties. A sustainable peace requires the Palestinians' aspirations for statehood and sovereignty and those of Israelis for security to be fulfilled through negotiations based on the two-state solution.

To that end, the Quartet recalled the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative—with its vision for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict—and the vital role of Arab partners. The Quartet will remain actively engaged in preparing for a resumption of the peace process in the coming period, including regular and direct outreach to Arab states.

Pending the resumption of negotiations, the Quartet called on both parties to refrain from actions that undermine trust or prejudge final status issues.

The Quartet underscored the importance of ensuring that the acute fiscal challenges faced by the Palestinians are addressed and of supporting Palestinian institution-building efforts.

The Quartet is deeply concerned over the difficult situation in Gaza where the pace of reconstruction needs to be accelerated to address the basic needs of the Palestinian population and to ensure stability. The Quartet Principals stressed that donor funding is critical. They expressed support for the recent joint letter by Egypt and Norway, as well as the joint statement by the Secretary-Generals of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, urging donors to disburse as soon as possible their financial commitments made at the October 2014 Cairo Conference, including the funding of UN agencies carrying out vital operations in Gaza for both the refugee and non-refugee populations.

The Quartet Principals expressed their warm appreciation for the tireless work of outgoing UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry.

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The Quartet met again in New York on September 30 and issued a statement, excerpted below. The Quartet Principals' Statement of September 30, 2015 is also available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/09/247665.htm>.

* * * *

The Quartet agreed to consult with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, and Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Nabil Elaraby, as part of its regular and direct outreach to key Arab partners. The Quartet also agreed to hear from other stakeholders from the international community. The Quartet emphasized the importance of constructive international contributions to advancing a comprehensive peace and affirmed that it will continue its outreach efforts.

The Quartet reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to achieving a two-state outcome that meets Israeli security needs and Palestinian aspirations for Statehood and sovereignty, ends the occupation that began in 1967 and resolves all permanent status issues in order to end the conflict. It recalled its previous statements and relevant Security Council resolutions and pledged its active support for a just, comprehensive and lasting resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It noted that the intensifying threat of terrorism, sectarian extremism and radicalization in the Middle East reinforces the need to pursue a negotiated two-State solution.

The Quartet noted with deep concern recent violence and escalating tensions surrounding the holy sites in Jerusalem and called upon all parties to exercise restraint, refrain from provocative actions and rhetoric, and preserve unchanged the status quo at the holy sites in both word and practice.

The Quartet expressed its serious concern that current trends on the ground—including continued acts of violence against Palestinians and Israelis, ongoing settlement activity and the high rate of demolitions of Palestinian structures—are dangerously imperiling the viability of a two-State solution. The Quartet condemned in the strongest possible terms violence against Israeli and Palestinian civilians and reiterated that unilateral actions by either party cannot prejudice the outcome of a negotiated solution.

The Quartet underscored that the status quo is not sustainable and stressed the importance of both sides' demonstrating, through policies and actions, a genuine commitment to a two-State solution in order to rebuild trust and avoid a cycle of escalation. The Quartet expressed strong support for concrete and significant steps that will help stabilize the situation, reverse current trends by showing meaningful progress towards creating a two-State reality on the ground and restore hope among Palestinians and Israelis that a negotiated peace is possible.

The Quartet acknowledged Israel's recent steps to ease certain restrictions in the West Bank and Gaza. It noted that positive and significant policy shifts, particularly in Area C, will be critical to increasing the Palestinian Authority's ability to address key economic, security and institutional challenges, and can be advanced while respecting Israel's legitimate security needs. Consistent with the transition to greater Palestinian civil authority contemplated by prior

agreements, progress in the areas of housing, water, energy, communications, agriculture and natural resources will significantly increase economic opportunities, empower Palestinian institutions and enhance stability and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

The Quartet stressed that the Palestinian commitment to building institutions, improving governance and strongly opposing incitement and violence in all forms remains critically important to laying the groundwork for a viable independent Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel. The Quartet expressed support for the Palestinians to achieve genuine national unity on the basis of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) principles. The Quartet noted the importance of ensuring that the governance framework of the West Bank and Gaza is integrated under the single legitimate authority that takes control of the border crossings in Gaza, implements civil service integration and pays public sector salaries. The Quartet urged an immediate focus on accelerating efforts to address the dire situation in Gaza, emphasized the importance of increased access through legal crossings and called on all international partners to expedite the disbursement of their pledges made at the Cairo Conference in October 2014.

The Quartet stands ready to support initiatives to advance these objectives in order to achieve a comprehensive two-State solution. The Quartet stressed the importance of continued support from key stakeholders in the region, and noted the significance and importance of the Arab Peace Initiative with its vision for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the opportunity for building a regional security framework. ...

The Quartet Envoys will engage directly with the parties in order to explore concrete actions both sides can take to demonstrate their genuine commitment to pursuing a two-State solution, including encouraging efforts to agree on significant steps, consistent with prior agreements, that benefit Israelis and Palestinians. The Envoys will also build on their outreach to regional States and international partners to examine how they may contribute to a comprehensive resolution of the conflict and will report back to the Quartet Principals.

excerpts

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Secretary Kerry met with senior Palestinian and Israeli leadership in November to discuss how to advance the goals in the September 30th Quartet statement, Also in November, Prime Minister Netanyahu met with President Obama and Secretary Kerry to discuss how to resume the peace process. See U.S. explanation of vote on UN General Assembly resolutions on Israel, November 24, 2015, available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/7010>. See also discussion in Chapter 7 of U.S. opposition to bias against Israel at the UN.

B. PEACEKEEPING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. Peacekeeping Generally

President Obama convened a summit on peacekeeping for heads of state and government of UN member states in New York on September 28, 2015. Daily Comp. Pres. Docs. 2015 DCPD No. 00660 (Sep. 28, 2015). President Obama's remarks at the

summit are excerpted below. President Obama’s speech references an announcement of enhanced U.S. support for UN peace operations. That support is detailed in a September 28, 2015 Memorandum from the President to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies. Daily Comp. Pres. Docs. 2015 DCPD No. 00663 (Sep. 28, 2015).

* * * *

The word “peacekeeping” does not appear in the Charter of the United Nations. But for the past seven decades, our collective ability to “maintain international peace and security” has often depended on the willingness of courageous U.N. peacekeepers to put their lives on the line in war-torn corners of the world.

Over the years—from El Salvador to Namibia, from Liberia to Timor-Leste—more than 1 million men and women in blue helmets have prevented violence and preserved peace. They have saved lives. They’ve given societies a chance to rebuild. Through bitter experience, in places like Bosnia and Rwanda, we’ve learned painful lessons, and we’ve worked to do better. Right now, as we speak, more than 100,000 troops and police are deployed around the world: training police in Haiti, promoting stability in Lebanon, protecting civilians in South Sudan. And down the decades, more than 3,300 peacekeepers, as well as many police and civilian staff, have made the ultimate sacrifice. The United Nations and the United States salutes them all.

We know that peace operations are not the solution to every problem, but they do remain one of the world’s most important tools to address armed conflict. And I called for this summit because U.N. peacekeeping operations are experiencing unprecedented strains. Old challenges persist: Too few nations bear a disproportionate burden of providing troops, which is unsustainable. Atop this, we’ve seen new challenges: more armed conflicts, more instability driven by terrorism and violent extremism, and more refugees.

As a consequence, peacekeepers head into more difficult and deadlier conflicts. They’re given ambitious mandates and charged with increasingly dangerous and complex missions. Just yesterday, a U.N. peacekeeper was killed in Darfur, and we’ve seen reports today of a tragic incident in the Central African Republic. Put simply, the supply of well-trained, well-equipped peacekeepers can’t keep up with the growing demand.

So we are here today, together, to strengthen and reform U.N. peacekeeping because our common security demands it. This is not something that we do for others, this is something that we do collectively because our collective security depends on it.

As the largest financial contributor to the U.N. peacekeeping operations, the United States intends to continue to do its part. And today I’m issuing new Presidential guidance—the first in more than 20 years—to expand our support for U.N. peace operations. Like the nations participating today, we’ll pledge additional resources. We’ll work to double the number of U.S. military officers serving in peacekeeping operations. We will offer logistical support, including our unrivaled network of air- and sealift. When there’s an urgent need and we’re uniquely positioned to help, we’ll undertake engineering projects like building airfields and base camps for new missions. And we’ll step up our efforts to help build the U.N.’s capacity, from identifying state-of-the-art technology to offering training to protection against IEDs.

And together, there’s much more we need to do together. So let me briefly suggest several key areas where we can focus. First, more nations need to contribute more forces. We are

joined today by countries from every region of the world. And I want to thank those who already do so much, and commend those who have come here prepared to do more. At this summit, more than 50 countries—from Bangladesh to Colombia, from Finland to China—are making commitments totaling more than 30,000 new troops and police. And they're stepping up with critical contributions like medical units, helicopters, and capabilities to counter IEDs, which will help peacekeepers be able to stay safe and succeed in their missions. This all represents significant progress, and over the coming years, I believe more nations can make even more contributions.

Second, we need to improve the protection of civilians. Unlike 20 years ago, today's U.N. peacekeepers have the clear authority to safeguard the innocent, but it is still applied unevenly. That's why the principles and best practices for civilian protection laid out in Kigali are so important. Because for innocent people caught in the crossfire in places like South Sudan, the actions of U.N. peacekeepers can mean the difference between life and death.

At the same time, we have to candidly acknowledge that abuse by peacekeepers has to end. I want to be very clear: The overwhelming number of peacekeepers serve with honor and decency in extraordinarily difficult situations. But we have seen some appalling cases of peacekeepers abusing civilians—including rape and sexual assault—and that is totally unacceptable. It's an affront to human decency. It undermines the core mission because it erodes trust with communities. It has a corrosive effect on global confidence in peacekeeping itself.

So, Mr. Secretary-General, we commend you for leading on this issue and insisting on accountability, and we know you cannot solve this problem alone. As leaders and as an international community, we have to insist on zero tolerance for abuse—zero.

Third, we need to reform and modernize peace operations because today's complex conflicts demand it. And that means putting in place the highest caliber, merit-based leadership teams for every single mission. It means making sure we get more women leaders into critical roles. It means planning the rules for operations in the field and not in conference rooms.

Our goal should be to make every new peace operation more efficient and more effective than the last. Beyond strengthening U.N. peacekeeping, the United States also supports developing new and deeper partnerships between the U.N. and the African Union to provide reliable support for AU peace operations. And we look forward to hearing concrete proposals from our African partners to advance this work.

Finally, we need to increase our support of the full range of U.N. diplomatic tools—including mediation, Envoys, and special political missions—which help us to prevent conflicts in the first place. We cannot expect peacekeeping operations to succeed unless the parties involved are willing and committed to making peace.

Now, if we do all these things, if we provide the support and embrace the reforms that I've described today, I believe we can strengthen peace operations for decades to come. Because we know—we can be certain—that in the years ahead, as conflicts arise, the call will go out to those men and women in blue helmets to restore calm and to keep the peace and to save lives. And when they go, their success and their lives will depend on whether they have the training and the forces and the capabilities and the global support they need to succeed in their mission. The decisions and the commitments we make today can help ensure that they do. I want to thank all of you for your partnership and the commitments that your nations are making here. We will hear some extraordinary commitments from a number of nations. And we are very proud that the international community has responded to this call in such a significant way. Rest assured that, in this critical work, the United States will be a strong partner to all of you.

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The outcome of the summit on peacekeeping was a joint statement by leaders of UN member states declaring their support for the institution of UN peacekeeping on the 70th anniversary of the UN. Daily Comp. Pres. Docs. 2015 DCPD No. 00661 (Sep. 28, 2015). Governments of the following countries joined in the declaration on UN peacekeeping: Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Fiji, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Turkey, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, Ukraine, United States, United Kingdom, Uruguay, and Vietnam. The joint statement follows.

* * * *

As the United Nations marks its seventieth anniversary, we recognize that, for sixty-seven years, its Member States have called and depended upon United Nations peacekeeping operations to help maintain international peace and security around the world. Since 1948, UN peacekeeping has evolved through tragedy and triumph to meet new security threats and challenges as the world itself, and environments in which peacekeepers are deployed, has changed dramatically. We salute the sacrifices of the brave peacekeepers, who deploy to volatile and dangerous locations throughout the world to serve humanity and the cause of peace. Today, we celebrate the essential role that UN peacekeeping plays in bringing security, hope and peace to millions of people, redouble our efforts to ensure that peacekeeping operations succeed in meeting this challenge and underscore our commitment to the highest standards of professionalism and conduct.

We believe that the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations is the responsibility of all Member States and relies particularly on partnerships among the Security Council, Troop and Police Contributing Countries, financial contributors, host countries, the UN Secretariat and regional organizations. We, therefore, welcome the convening of the regional meetings on peacekeeping held in Ethiopia, Indonesia, Rwanda, the Netherlands and Uruguay, with the aim of strengthening cooperation among relevant actors, as well as contributing to improving the UN peacekeeping architecture overall. We underscore the need to enhance consultations between the members of the Security Council and relevant Member States contributing personnel to UN peacekeeping operations to seek a shared understanding of the mandates and a common commitment to their implementation.

Today, we recommit ourselves to modernizing UN peacekeeping operations to ensure their success. We are committed to doing our part to further strengthen peacekeeping, underscored by the additional significant commitments to UN peacekeeping announced today, which will help meet persistent capacity gaps, improve the performance and capabilities of uniformed personnel, support rapid deployment and reinforce and enhance the foundation for future peacekeeping efforts. To achieve this goal, we also call on Member States to join us in making additional commitments to UN peacekeeping.

These contributions must be accompanied by reforms in how UN peacekeeping is organized and supported. We welcome the efforts to advance the cause of reform through the report of the Secretary-General, entitled “The Future of Peace Operations: Implementation of the Recommendations of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations,” and the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (hereinafter, “the Panel”) and look forward to discussing the Secretary-General’s recommendations, where applicable, in an appropriate intergovernmental forum. We underscore the need for a truly integrated mission planning and assessment process that fuses operations and logistics with political goals; strengthened evaluation of operational readiness and performance; improved human resources management and procurement practices that enable missions to deploy more quickly, effectively and flexibly; intelligence capabilities, which identify threats to UN personnel and facilitate the effective implementation of mandates; capable and accountable leadership in peacekeeping operations and merit-based leadership selection, with due consideration for geographical representation; and a more effective peace and security bureaucracy at the UN Headquarters. We stress the need to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in UN peacekeeping.

We affirm that proper conduct by, and discipline over, all personnel deployed in UN peacekeeping operations are vital to their effectiveness. In particular, sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers, including all civilian staff deployed to UN peacekeeping operations, against anyone is unacceptable. We reaffirm our support for the UN “zero tolerance” policy on all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. We call on the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the Organization’s prevention, enforcement and remediation efforts. We are committed to taking serious and concerted action to combat sexual exploitation and abuse, including rigorous vetting and training of uniformed personnel to be deployed to UN peacekeeping operations, as well as swift and thorough investigations, appropriate accountability measures and timely reporting to the United Nations on all incidents.

We underline that the protection of civilians is a solemn responsibility we all share. Failure to protect civilians not only risks lives, but also undermines the credibility and legitimacy of UN peacekeeping. We are committed to ensuring that our uniformed personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations are properly trained on UN policies and guidance on the protection of civilians, including on the use of force consistent with the operation’s mandate and rules of engagement. We underline our commitment to investigate and, as appropriate, discipline uniformed personnel if they fail to fulfill their mandate to protect civilians. In this regard, we take note of the initiative by Member States to develop, as relevant, the best practices set out in the Kigali Principles.

We express our firm commitment to the safety and security of UN peacekeepers. We note with concern the evolving threats they face working in dangerous environments. We underscore the critical importance of strengthening casualty response. We call on all Member States and the UN to prioritize the generation of capabilities in these areas, to work to ensure the availability and appropriate control over aviation assets to improve medical evacuation and to strengthen UN standards of emergency care. We underscore the importance of respect for the freedom of movement of UN peacekeepers. We call on host countries to cooperate fully with, and provide unhindered access to, UN peacekeepers to enable them to carry out their duties, in accordance with their mandates.

We acknowledge the critical role played by subregional and regional organizations in confronting some of the world’s most difficult stabilization challenges, and underscore our

commitment to supporting deeper partnerships and cooperation between the UN and such regional organizations to address threats to international peace and security. We underscore that UN peacekeeping operations are a means to support sustainable political solutions to armed conflicts and to contribute to the conditions for durable peace. We highlight that UN peacekeeping operations are most effective when they support an end to violent conflicts, shore up the confidence of all parties to pursue the peaceful resolution of disputes and aid in advancing the cause of peace. We affirm the primary importance of efforts to mitigate and prevent conflict, including through the use of UN mediation, good offices and special political missions.

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On November 5, 2015, Ambassador David Pressman, Alternate Representative to the UN for Special Political Affairs, addressed the UN General Assembly Fourth Committee's comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations. His remarks are excerpted below and available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/6961>.

* * * *

The Secretary-General has laid before us a detailed and comprehensive plan for enabling UN peacekeepers to carry out their mandates in dangerous and difficult environments.

The United States sees several key priorities: preventing atrocities and protecting civilians; empowering and enabling those in the field to respond rapidly and flexibly to changing situations; firmly establishing the rule of law; and preventing and ensuring accountability for serious misconduct, in particular, sexual exploitation and abuse.

The protection of civilians remains the central task of today's peacekeeping missions, and we recognize the importance of the Kigali Principles, as President Obama said in September. In addition, we are very conscious of the critical work being done in UN peace operations by specialized protection advisors, who focus on the special needs and vulnerabilities of children and the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence, and we must ensure that these issues receive the continuing attention they deserve.

We welcome the 10th annual gathering next week of all of the Police Commissioners from UN peacekeeping operations to consult in New York City, and we also welcome and value the Commissioners' briefing to the UN Security Council and hope that becomes an annual tradition as well. This year's 'Police Week' will take place in the context of the Secretary-General's instruction for a full external review of police functions, structure and capacity, as well as the Police Division's continuing work to develop a strategic guidance framework for UN policing and to establish common standards for training and performance for the 110 nations that contribute policing support. As we learned in South Sudan, not all Formed Police Units have the training to manage de facto IDP camps. Having a strategic guidance framework for UN policing and establishing common standards for training and performance ensures that all Police Contributing Countries will have a common police operational background and leadership skills needed to systematically manage the variety of tasks needed to protect civilians.

As with the development of clear, shared standards for military specialties common to peacekeeping, a common standard for UN policing ensures consistency, particularly with regard to cooperating with and developing the capacity of host country police. We may recall the

example of Timor-Leste back in the early 2000s, where a number of Police Contributing Countries provided both UN and bilateral trainers, operating from equally good but incompatible police traditions. And unfortunately, this undercut and slowed efforts to develop the Timorese police.

These are ambitious undertakings, particularly given the relatively limited resources for both police and rule of law activities. Police operations, in conjunction with the development of credible rule of law institutions, are essential to building a solid foundation for durable peace that allows peacekeeping operations to make a smooth transition from post-conflict peacekeeping. We see a particular need to integrate police planning from the beginning and at every stage of peace operations, with a clear understanding of the distinctions between police and military responsibilities, and when there should be a nimble shift between the primacy of police and military functions, as was recently demonstrated in the Central African Republic. After the recent outbreak of violence in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA chose to have military contingents take the lead in Bangui. And this change in response is an important way to address the changing dynamics in fluid peacekeeping situations. We know that over time the way to prevent the resumption of violence is to get civilian police operations up and running, identify gaps and needs and address them. Otherwise, peacekeeping missions can get bogged down longer than necessary in simply providing security.

We have also had, sadly, many shocking reports over the past year on the sexual exploitation and abuse of vulnerable people by those who should protect them. The stories about extortion of sex from children are appalling. Leaders of UN missions must take seriously their responsibility to enforce the UN's own regulations. The UN is having grave difficulty enforcing prohibitions against transactional sex and exploitative sexual relationships with local residents. The persistent disregard by a few for the welfare of the local community stands in stark contradiction of the UN Charter's basic principle of respect for the dignity and worth of the human person, and the equal rights of men and women. The Secretary-General has been very clear about how he plans to prevent and respond to misconduct in the future and he has our full support.

There are almost 125,000 people serving in 16 UN peacekeeping missions around the world. So far this year, there have been 85 fatalities, 23 of them from malicious acts, and we mourn the loss of these courageous peacekeepers. The UN's member states have shown repeatedly a great willingness to participate in and to support UN peacekeeping operations. And we have a collective responsibility to ensure that these operations are as well run as possible—beginning with planning and analysis, ensuring that missions have the resources they need when they need them, building in the flexibility to respond quickly and appropriately to changing circumstances, and that we, collectively, maintain a continuing commitment to stay engaged, supporting the political steps necessary for peace after conflicts have stepped off center stage in the world's attention.

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On December 9, 2015, Ambassador Power provided testimony on UN peacekeeping before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Her testimony is excerpted below and available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/7028>.

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UN Peacekeepers play a vital role in the international community's efforts to address war, violence, and instability. As President Obama said in September, "We know that peace operations are not the solution to every problem, but they do remain one of the world's most important tools to address armed conflict." Peacekeepers can help resolve conflict, shore up stability, deny safe harbor to extremists, and protect civilians from atrocities—all of which serve core American interests and reflect deep American values, while ensuring greater burden-sharing by the international community.

This Administration has consequently been working aggressively to ensure that UN peacekeeping operations are better able to meet the demands of international peace and security, which as has been noted by both the Chairman and the Ranking Member, those requirements have changed considerably over just the last 20 years. Peacekeepers today are undertaking more missions; the number of uniformed personnel has risen from fewer than 20,000 fifteen years ago to over 100,000 today. They're assuming greater risk; two-thirds of peacekeepers are operating in active conflicts, the highest percentage in history. And they're assigned broad and increasingly complex responsibilities—ranging from disarming armed groups to facilitating the safe delivery of humanitarian aid to protecting civilians from those who wish them harm. Today, 98 percent of uniformed personnel in UN missions around the world are under orders to protect civilians as part of their mandate. ...

While peacekeeping has never been more important to American interests, it has also never been more demanding. And that is why in September President Obama issued the first presidential memorandum on multilateral peace operations in more than 20 years, directing a wide range of actions to strengthen and modernize UN operations—including by building partner capacity, providing U.S. support, and leading reform of UN peacekeeping. I just want to briefly, Mr. Chairman, touch on a few key lines of effort that we have pursued. These are described in greater detail in my written submission.

First, we are working to ensure that countries with the will to perform 21st century peacekeeping, that they have the capacity to do so. One way we are doing this is through the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, or APRRP, which President Obama announced in August 2014. Through APRRP, the United States is investing in the capacity of six African countries that have proven themselves leaders in peacekeeping; in exchange, these countries have committed to maintain the forces and equipment necessary to deploy rapidly. This initiative builds upon the Global Peace Operations Initiative launched under President George W. Bush—which is our primary tool for building partner nation peacekeeping capacity—and it will help ensure that more soldiers deployed for peacekeeping missions will be fully prepared. I hope that the Senate and House will fully fund this important initiative in future years.

Second, we are expanding the pool of troop- and police-contributing countries, and bringing advanced militaries back into peacekeeping. In September, President Obama convened a historic high-level summit—the first of its kind—at the UN to rally new commitments to peacekeeping, marking the culmination of a year-long effort initiated by Vice President Biden at the previous UN General Assembly. Forty-nine countries participated and pledged nearly 50,000 additional troops and police. ...[M]ore of these troops will now come from advanced militaries, who bring with them equipment and expertise that is critically needed on the ground. We saw this in Mali in January this year, when Dutch attack helicopters helped Bangladeshi infantry repel rebels who had opened fire on their camp, where civilians were taking refuge. The United

States is making contributions in this respect as well—as one part of our unrivaled contribution to global peace and security—looking specifically for ways to leverage our military’s unique capabilities to support peacekeeping operations, including by enabling faster deployment by others.

Third, we are working to ensure a higher standard of performance and conduct once peacekeeping contingents are deployed, specifically in two critical areas: the complete fulfillment of their mandates, and the combatting of sexual exploitation and abuse. The additional troops generated by the President’s September summit will prove invaluable to both goals, by allowing the UN to be more selective as to which troops it deploys, and now giving it the leverage to repatriate poorly performing troops and police when necessary, and especially of course in instances where there are credible allegations of sexual abuse.

With respect to mandate, when peacekeepers deploy in volatile situations, they have to be prepared to use force to defend themselves, to protect civilians, and to otherwise carry out their mandated tasks. Too often in the past, peacekeepers have shied away, even when atrocities are being perpetrated. A report by the UN’s internal oversight office in March last year found that in 507 attacks against civilians from 2010 to 2013, peacekeepers virtually never used force to protect those coming under attack. Thousands of civilians likely lost their lives as a result. This cannot continue. And a growing number of leading troop contributors agree; the 50,000 additional troops and police should enable more capable, more willing troops and police to staff these missions.

The same is true on sexual exploitation and violence. And let me just state the obvious here: we share the outrage of everyone on this committee, all of the American people who are focused on this issue, peacekeepers must not abuse civilians. Sexual abuse and exploitation have no place ... in any society. It is especially abhorrent when committed by those who take advantage of the trust that communities are placing in the United Nations, and those responsible must be held accountable. Addressing this scourge will require continuing the important efforts begun by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to strengthen the implementation of a zero-tolerance policy—including bolstering reporting and accountability measures, and pledging to set up an immediate response team to investigate certain cases. It will also require more vigilance and follow-through from troop-contributing countries. There must also be far more transparency in these investigations, to track cases and ensure that justice is served. The UN should be able to take advantage now of this newly expanded pool of soldiers and police by suspending from peacekeeping any country that does not take seriously the responsibility to investigate and, if necessary, prosecute credible allegations.

The fourth and final priority, Mr. Chairman, is to press for bold institutional reforms within the UN itself. We have seen the UN secretariat make profound changes to peacekeeping, from improved logistics and sustainment, to a more comprehensive approach to crisis situations that integrates military, police, and civilian tools. But much, much more needs to be done, and we have spearheaded efforts to enact further reforms, including longer troop rotations to preserve institutional memory, penalties for troops who show up without the necessary equipment to perform their duties. And we will continue to work aggressively to cut costs. The UN has already—thanks to U.S. leadership—cut the per-peacekeeper costs by roughly 17 percent since 2008. We are also working to advance the reforms proposed by the Secretary-General’s High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations, which are intended to address inadequate planning, slow troop deployment, uneven mission leadership, breakdowns in command-and-

control, and a current set of rules around human resources and procurement designed for the conference rooms of New York, and not the streets of Bangui.

Let me conclude. In all of the areas I've just described, we've seen improvements, and the United States has played an instrumental role in making them possible. But there is much more to be done. We are not satisfied with peacekeepers fulfilling only parts, but not all, of their mandates; with peacekeepers standing up to protect civilians in some, but not all, situations; or with soldiers being held accountable for crimes or misconduct some, but not all, of the time. The role played by peacekeepers today is too important. For the sake of our own interests and security, as well as the millions of innocent people around the world whose lives may depend on peacekeepers, we will continue working to strengthen peacekeeping so that it is tailored for the 21st century threats peacekeepers face. We appreciate your interest and support and continued dialogue on these matters.

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2. Syria

a. Security Council

On December 18, 2015, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2254 on Syria.* Secretary Kerry's remarks upon adoption of the resolution are excerpted below and available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/12/250800.htm>.

* * * *

By approving Resolution 2254 today, this council is sending a clear message to all concerned that the time is now to stop the killing in Syria and lay the groundwork for a government that the long-suffering people of that battered land can support. After four and a half years of war, this is the first time we have been able to come together at the United Nations in the Security Council to embrace a road forward. During that time, one Syrian in 20 has been killed or wounded; one in five is a refugee; one in two has been displaced. The average life expectancy in Syria has dropped by 20 years.

We need to reverse the course, and that is the council's goal here this afternoon: to put an end to the indiscriminate bombing, the acts of terror, the torture, and the bloodshed. And our shared task is to find a way to make that happen.

In support of this objective, President Obama has set for my country three interrelated goals. The first is to support our friends and to ensure that the instability created by the civil war in Syria does not spread further beyond its borders. And that is why we're providing a record amount of humanitarian assistance, and it's why we're doing more to help Syria's neighbors, to strengthen their capacity to safeguard their territory and to defend against external threats.

* Editor's note: UN Security Council Resolutions 2209 and 2235 on Syria's use of chemical weapons are discussed in Chapter 19.

Second, we are determined, with our coalitional partners, to degrade and defeat the terrorist organization known as Daesh. In the past half year, the coalition and its partners have worked with Iraqi forces in liberating Tikrit, freeing Sinjar, removing terrorist commanders from the battlefield, cutting off terrorist supply lines, hitting their oil facilities, and depriving Daesh of more and more of the territory that it once controlled.

Now we are intensifying the pressure, helping our Iraqi partners retake most of Ramadi to squeeze supply routes into Mosul. And we are pushing ahead into northern Syria, assisting our partners along the Iraqi-Syrian border and on the recruiting and propaganda efforts. Further, as evidenced by the finance ministerial that was held right here in this very chamber yesterday, we are multiplying our efforts to cut Daesh off from the revenue sources that support its depravity, its criminality.

But the truth is that nothing would do more to bolster the fight against the terrorists than a broadly supported diplomatic process that gives the Syrian people a real choice—not a choice between Assad or Daesh, but between war and peace, between the violent extremes and a newly empowered political center. That is why we have joined with so many of you in support of an urgent diplomatic initiative. Again and again, countries not just around this dais today, but countless meetings in various parts of the world have reaffirmed the notion that there has to be a political settlement.

Well, this is the test. This is why we've joined here in a broader, more action-oriented effort than ever before attempted regarding Syria: to isolate the terrorists and to put Syria on the road to a political transition, envisioned by the Geneva communique, now embraced by the international community and the United Nations Security Council resolution.

As the council's action today reflects, we have made important progress in recent weeks, and progress that should give us all fresh grounds for encouragement. Last month in Vienna, the United States and other members of the International Syria Support Group agreed on a series of steps to stop the bleeding in Syria, to advance a political transition, to isolate the terrorists, and to help the Syrian people to be able to begin to rebuild their country. Last week in Riyadh, with the support of His Majesty King Salman and his government, a broad cross-section of Syrian opposition representatives came together to form a high committee for negotiation.

Under the resolution approved today, the purpose of those negotiations between the responsible opposition and the government is to facilitate a transition within Syria to a credible, inclusive, nonsectarian governance within six months. The process would lead to the drafting of a new constitution and arrangements for internationally supervised election within 18 months. I might add Geneva never had those dates. It is the Vienna process and the Vienna communique that has produced a six-month and 18-month time horizon, and it is the Vienna process that also has embraced the ceasefire concept as well as embraced a set of principles and values about the shape that a new Syria might be able to take as directed by Syrians for Syrians. It's our hope that a nationwide ceasefire can go into effect, excluding only Daesh and al-Nusra and any other group that we might decide at some time to designate.

So I would close by saying we're under no illusions about the obstacles that exist. There obviously remain sharp differences within the international community, especially about the future of President Assad. We have emphasized from the beginning that for this to work, the process has to be led and shaped and decided and implemented by the men and women of Syria. It cannot be imposed from the outside and we are not seeking to do so. But we've also seen in recent weeks—in Vienna, in Paris, and in other capitals, and then today here in New York—an

unprecedented degree of unity on the need to negotiate this political transition to defeat Daesh, and then, indeed, to end the war.

The resolution that we just approved is a milestone because it sets out specific concepts with specific timeframes. Accordingly, we need to work hard together to help these political talks to go forward, to prepare for a ceasefire, and to encourage all the parties in Syria to participate in good faith.

In closing, let me just underscore the urgency of our task. Like many of you, I've met with refugees in and out of refugee camps. I've met with survivors, as you have; met with caregivers, as you have; met with many of the people who have been on the front lines of this conflict. I've talked to women who have struggled to hold their families together despite constant danger, bitter cold, shortages of food, and great danger. I've heard the blood-chilling stories of doctors and relief workers who have been dealing with humanitarian trauma on a daily basis, month after month, year after year—now into the fifth year.

I am aware, as everybody in this chamber is, of the atrocities that have been committed and are being committed even as we sit here this afternoon, and being committed too often against innocent civilians.

Looking ahead, we know that Daesh can never be allowed to gain control in Syria. So we have a global imperative here to deal with a terrorist entity, but also to end the civil war and to bring legitimacy back to the governance of Syria. President Assad, in our judgment—and not everybody shares this—but the majority of the people in the ISSG believe that President Assad has lost the ability, the credibility, to be able to unite the country and to provide the moral credibility to be able to govern it into the future.

So I'd just say, not as a matter of ideology, not as a matter of choice, but purely as a matter of reality, as a matter of fact given the situation on the ground, that if the war is to end, it is imperative that the Syrian people agree on an alternative in terms of their governance. That logic is compelling and it provides a unifying principle for most people in our efforts going forward.

We have a lot of distance to travel—some would say miles to go. But the truth is that in the past two months, we have started from a standstill, from a nonexistent process, to have three separate meetings of the ISSG and now a United Nations Security Council embrace of a process. We have agreed on a plan of action, and the council's vote today is an important boost on the road to a political settlement. It is a particularly important step because it reaffirms this body's endorsement of the Geneva communique about the transitional governing body with full executive authority, and it also endorses the progress and the statements that we made in Vienna to set a timeline—a timeline for transition, a timeline for election, and standards for that election—the highest standards under the supervision of the United Nations for a free, fair, transparent, and accountable election. It also brings fundamental values and principles that can guide the shaping of Syria by Syrians for Syrians.

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Secretary Kerry, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, and UN Special Envoy Steffan de Mistura delivered remarks and answered questions after the resolution was adopted. Secretary Kerry's remarks are excerpted below and available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/7066>.

* * * *

...First of all, I want to express again my appreciation and the appreciation of all of the P5 members of the International Syria Support Group who worked through the day, and I appreciate Foreign Minister Lavrov's engagement and his commitment to trying to get to a place that everybody could be comfortable.

What we've achieved today is to pass a resolution in the United Nations Security Council for the first time since this war started that embraces a roadmap for actually trying to end it—a roadmap to try to bring about a peaceful resolution through the political process, obviously. For years now, country after country and at meeting after meeting, we have reinforced the notion that there's no military solution; there has to be a political solution. The only problem is the only thing playing out was the military track, and there was no political track.

So now, finally, after two meetings in Vienna and the meeting here, and today's unanimous vote in the Security Council, there is a clear United Nations-embraced, Security Council-endorsed political track that reflects the hard work of the International Syria Support Group, which, for the first time, is a group that contains all of the parties engaged in support or in opposition to the Assad regime.

So we have Iran, Russia, the Organization of Islamic Communities, the—some 20 entities, 20 states altogether, all of the immediate neighbors, all of the stakeholders—and all of them are committed to a set of principles for how to move forward—not just principles, actually, but for very specific timelines and framework—specifically, a embrace of the Geneva communique, which specifically talks about a transitional governing body by—arrived at by mutual consent, with full executive authority, that begins a transition in Syria and that also embraces the beginning of a constitutional reform process.

When I was in Moscow with President Putin, he reiterated to me that President Assad agreed with him to engage in this political process, to engage in the constitutional reform process, to embrace an election. And so we begin with a clarity about the steps that need to be taken. We also have a timeframe that that transitional process needs to try to be achieved within the target time of six months. In addition, the election needs to take place within 18 months, same starting time. So after nine—six months of the transition, you're about a year away, hopefully—or less—from an election.

It also embraced a ceasefire, and a ceasefire is critical to the capacity of the parties to come together and be able to negotiate and to begin to deal with the problem of refugees, displaced people, the humanitarian crisis of Syria. I think all of us—and I speak for the United States, which is the largest donor, I think \$4.5-plus billion to refugees—it doesn't do any good just to keep writing the check and replenishing the pool that keeps growing. We have to start to end the supply of refugees and begin to provide people with a life that is built on this political process.

That's our goal. No one is sitting here today suggesting to anybody that the road ahead is a gilded path. It's complicated. It will remain complicated. But this at least demands that the parties come to the table. And importantly, the opposition has begun its own meetings. The Saudi Arabians in Riyadh held an important gathering. Staffan de Mistura, to everybody's agreement, will be the convener and the person who melds the appropriate entities to be—to create the dynamic necessary to create a negotiation that has the potential of being successful.

So we are in a place where we also are calling on the parties to provide for the capacity for humanitarian assistance to reach the people who need it. We call on people to cease the use

of certain kinds of weapons—barrel bombs, other weapons—and to stop, obviously, immediately, attacks against civilians. And obviously, with the ceasefire, that becomes more broad and more broadly enforceable, and that is critical.

In addition, we are very hopeful that this process will result in the people of Syria being able to reclaim their future. One of the guiding principles of this agreement is that Syrians must ultimately decide the future of Syria. And we have jealously guarded that principle in the context of the lead-up to these negotiations. The International Syria Support Group will continue to do exactly what its name implies. We will support the process. We will support Staffan de Mistura, support the United Nations, support the parties in helping them to come to the table.

So again, I thank my co-convenor in this endeavor, Sergey Lavrov, who has helped to bring disparate parties to the table in an effort to try to build a base structure here that we have not had in all of the years of meetings and all of the years of the war.

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... [E]verybody understands that in January, we hope and expect to be at the table and be able to implement a full ceasefire. And that means all the barrel bombs would stop, all the bombing, all the shooting, all the attacks on either side. And the modalities of that ceasefire are being worked on by the United Nations and will be set out over the course of these next weeks. So that's why we believe this has greater gravamen—because of the fact that it may, in fact, be part of the context of a real ceasefire.

Finally, with respect to ... the assistance to the parties. There was an agreement reached actually before we came here in the discussions in Paris that everybody will be better served by honoring one or two or three countries' perceptions of a group as a terrorist group. And if some other country or party is knowingly funding that entity in the context of a negotiation—if we get to the negotiation in the context of a ceasefire, countries will cease support for those groups even if they are not designated as a terrorist entity. And that's a pretty far-reaching step. The enforcement of it will be the magic of it, but it is a significant thing that all parties agreed to, in fact, do that if indeed the negotiations open and a ceasefire takes hold.

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b. *International cooperation outside of the Security Council*

As Secretary Kerry mentioned after the Syria plan was agreed in December, the groundwork was laid for the plan in previous meetings of the International Syria Support Group. After the Group met in Vienna in October, Secretary Kerry, Sergey Lavrov, and Steffan de Mistura made themselves available to the press for remarks and questions. Secretary Kerry's remarks on the outcome in Vienna are excerpted below. A transcript of the joint press availability is available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/10/249019.htm>. See also October 30, 2015 statement on the Group meeting in Vienna, available at <http://damascus.usembassy.gov/statedept103015en1.html>.

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...[T]he foreign ministers ... came here today ... with the conviction that the fighting and the killing absolutely has to end. And it's up to us to try to find a way to do that.

Our shared task is to find a way to use the tools of diplomacy in order to make that happen. This is a relatively large diplomatic group that met today because there are a lot of people who are stakeholders because there are a lot of neighbors, and there are a lot of people who are supporting, one way or the other, one side or another. And so it will take pressure from many different directions to reverse the escalation of conflict and to lay a credible groundwork for peace.

Daesh and other terrorist organizations, we all believe, can never be allowed to unite or govern Syria. The United States position regarding Syria, I emphasize, has not changed. Sergey Lavrov and Prime Minister Zarif and I and others agree to disagree. The United States position is there is no way that President Assad can unite and govern Syria. And we believe that Syrians deserve a different choice, and our goal is to work with Syrians from many factions to develop that choice.

But we can't allow that difference to get in the way of the possibility of diplomacy to end the killing and to find the solution. And that is a significance of the decision that was really made here today was that even though we acknowledge the difference, we know it is urgent to get to the table and to begin the process of real negotiations. So we're employing a two-pronged approach. Speaking for the United States, we are intensifying our counter-Daesh campaign and we are intensifying our diplomatic efforts in order to end the conflict. And we believe these steps are mutually reinforcing. And that is why today President Obama made an announcement about stepping up the fight against Daesh. He authorized a small complement of U.S. Special Operations Forces to deploy to northern Syria where they will help to coordinate local ground forces and coalition efforts in order to counter Daesh.

But at the end of the day, the United States and our coalition partners believe that there is absolutely nothing that would do more to fight Daesh than to achieve a political transition that strengthens the governance capacity of Syria, sidelines the person that we believe attracts so many foreign fighters and so much terror, and unite the country against extremism. Make no mistake, the answer to the Syrian civil war is not found in a military alliance with Assad, from our point of view. But I am convinced that it can be found through a broadly supported diplomatic initiative aimed at a negotiated political transition, consistent with the Geneva communique.

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The participants agreed today that Syria's unity, independence, territorial integrity, and secular character are fundamental. We agreed that Syria's state institutions will remain intact. We agreed that the rights of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religious denomination, must be protected. We agreed that it is imperative to accelerate all diplomatic efforts to end the war. We agreed that humanitarian access must be assured throughout the territory of Syria, and the participants will increase support for internally displaced persons, refugees, and their host countries.

We agreed that Daesh and other terrorist groups as designated by the UN Security Council and as agreed by the participants must be defeated. Pursuant to the 2012 Geneva

communiqué and UN Security Council Resolution 2118, we invited the UN to convene representatives of the Government of Syria and the Syrian opposition for a political process leading to a credible, inclusive, non-sectarian governance followed by a new constitution and elections. We agreed that these elections must be administered under UN supervision to the satisfaction of the government and to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability, free and fair, with all Syrians, including the diaspora, eligible to participate. We agreed that this political process will be Syrian-led and Syrian-owned and that the Syrian people will decide the future of Syria. And we agreed together with the United Nations to explore modalities for and implementation of a nationwide ceasefire to be initiated on a date certain and in parallel with this renewed political process.

We will spend the coming days working to narrow remaining areas of disagreement and to build on the areas of agreement, and we will reconvene within two weeks to continue these discussions.

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The International Syria Support Group met in Vienna on November 14, 2015. The State Department released a media note summarizing the meeting, which is available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/11/249511.htm>, and excerpted below.

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Meeting in Vienna on November 14, 2015 as the International Syria Support Group (ISSG), the Arab League, China, Egypt, the EU, France, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United Nations, and the United States to discuss how to accelerate an end to the Syrian conflict. ...

...[T]he participants engaged in a constructive dialogue to build upon the progress made in the October 30 gathering. The members of the ISSG expressed a unanimous sense of urgency to end the suffering of the Syrian people, the physical destruction of Syria, the destabilization of the region, and the resulting increase in terrorists drawn to the fighting in Syria.

The ISSG acknowledged the close linkage between a ceasefire and a parallel political process pursuant to the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, and that both initiatives should move ahead expeditiously. They stated their commitment to ensure a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition based on the Geneva Communiqué in its entirety. The group reached a common understanding on several key issues.

The group agreed to support and work to implement a nationwide ceasefire in Syria to come into effect as soon as the representatives of the Syrian government and the opposition have begun initial steps towards the transition under UN auspices on the basis of the Geneva Communiqué. The five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council pledged to support a UNSC resolution to empower a UN-endorsed ceasefire monitoring mission in those parts of the country where monitors would not come under threat of attacks from terrorists, and to support a political transition process in accordance with the Geneva Communiqué.

All members of the ISSG also pledged as individual countries and supporters of various belligerents to take all possible steps to require adherence to the ceasefire by these groups or individuals they support, supply or influence. The ceasefire would not apply to offensive or defensive actions against Da'esh or Nusra or any other group the ISSG agrees to deem terrorist.

The participants welcomed UN Secretary General Ban's statement that he has ordered the UN to accelerate planning for supporting the implementation of a nationwide ceasefire. The group agreed that the UN should lead the effort, in consultation with interested parties, to determine the requirements and modalities of a ceasefire.

The ISSG expressed willingness to take immediate steps to encourage confidence-building measures that would contribute to the viability of the political process and to pave the way for the nationwide ceasefire. In this context, and pursuant to clause 5 of the Vienna Communiqué, the ISSG discussed the need to take steps to ensure expeditious humanitarian access throughout the territory of Syria pursuant to UNSCR 2165 and called for the granting of the UN's pending requests for humanitarian deliveries. The ISSG expressed concern for the plight of refugees and internally displaced persons and the imperative of building conditions for their safe return in accordance with the norms of international humanitarian law and taking into account the interests of host countries. The resolution of the refugee issue is important to the final settlement of the Syrian conflict. The ISSG also reaffirmed the devastating effects of the use of indiscriminate weapons on the civilian population and humanitarian access, as stated in UNSCR 2139. The ISSG agreed to press the parties to end immediately any use of such indiscriminate weapons.

The ISSG reaffirmed the importance of abiding by all relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including UNSCR 2199 on stopping the illegal trade in oil, antiquities and hostages, from which terrorists benefit.

Pursuant to the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, incorporated by reference in the Vienna statement of October 30, and in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2118, the ISSG agreed on the need to convene Syrian government and opposition representatives in formal negotiations under UN auspices, as soon as possible, with a target date of January 1. The group welcomed efforts, working with United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura and others, to bring together the broadest possible spectrum of the opposition, chosen by Syrians, who will decide their negotiating representatives and define their negotiating positions, so as to enable the political process to begin. All the parties to the political process should adhere to the guiding principles identified at the October 30 meeting, including a commitment to Syria's unity, independence, territorial integrity, and non-sectarian character; to ensuring that State institutions remain intact; and to protecting the rights of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religious denomination. ISSG members agreed that these principles are fundamental.

The ISSG members reaffirmed their support for the transition process contained in the 2012 Geneva Communiqué. In this respect they affirmed their support for a ceasefire as described above and for a Syrian-led process that will, within a target of six months, establish credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance, and set a schedule and process for drafting a new constitution. Free and fair elections would be held pursuant to the new constitution within 18 months. These elections must be administered under UN supervision to the satisfaction of the governance and to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability, with all Syrians, including the diaspora, eligible to participate.

Regarding the fight against terrorism, and pursuant to clause 6 of the Vienna Communiqué, the ISSG reiterated that Da'esh, Nusra, and other terrorist groups, as designated by the UN Security Council, and further, as agreed by the participants and endorsed by the UN Security Council, must be defeated. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan agreed to help develop among intelligence and military community representatives a common understanding of groups

and individuals for possible determination as terrorists, with a target of completion by the beginning of the political process under UN auspices.

The participants expect to meet in approximately one month in order to review progress towards implementation of a ceasefire and the beginning of the political process.

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Syrian opposition groups met in Riyadh in December to discuss a political settlement to end the conflict in Syria and establish a representative negotiating body to participate in negotiations on a transition to a democratic Syria. The United States welcomed the outcome of the Riyadh conference in a December 10, 2015 press statement by Secretary Kerry, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/12/250530.htm>. Secretary Kerry's press statement includes the following:

As I conveyed to Foreign Minister Al-Jubeir today, we appreciate Saudi Arabia's leadership in convening this broad and representative group of 116 participants, who agreed today on the structure of their negotiating body to represent them in the political process. We appreciate that this extremely diverse group of Syrians put aside differences in the interest of building a new Syria.

With the progress made in both Vienna and now in Riyadh, the International Syria Support Group continues to build a foundation for constructive negotiations in January under UN auspices, regarding a political transition in accordance with the Geneva Communique of 2012. While this important step forward brings us closer to starting negotiations between the Syrian parties, we recognize the difficult work ahead, and remain determined to continue toward a political settlement that brings an end the conflict.

3. Burundi

The United States repeatedly urged the Government of Burundi to abide by the Arusha Accords and preserve peace in that country. On June 2, 2015, the State Department issued a press statement reiterating U.S. opposition to President Nkurunziza's decision to disregard the term limit provision of the Arusha Agreement. The June 2, 2015 press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/06/243100.htm>, also condemns other actions taken by the government:

The government's troubling actions to severely restrict political space and press freedoms, violently disrupt political protests, pressure the Constitutional Court and Electoral Commission, and reported use of an armed ruling-party youth militia to intimidate protestors and political opponents contradicts the basic principles of democratic governance and starkly contradicts President

Nkurunziza's claim that he is dedicated to respecting the Arusha Agreement and the rule of law.

On October 28, 2015, the UN Security Council issued a presidential statement on Burundi. The United States welcomed the Security Council's statement on Burundi in a State Department press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/10/248940.htm>, below.

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Like the African Union's communiqué of October 17, the Security Council statement put particular stress on the urgency of convening an inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue, among the government and peaceful stakeholders within and outside the country. As such, the Security Council reemphasized the importance of the mediation efforts led by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on behalf of the East African Community and as endorsed by the African Union (AU).

The United States stresses the Security Council's call for any dialogue to be inclusive and represent the voices of the citizens of Burundi. We also welcome the Security Council's strong condemnation of all violations and abuses of human rights and acts of unlawful violence committed in Burundi, both by security forces as well as by militias and other illegal armed groups, and its expressed determination to seek accountability for the perpetrators of such acts.

We are encouraged by the leadership of the United Nations in addressing the ongoing crisis in Burundi, particularly through Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon's public offer in his October 27 statement of "any support necessary to advance the implementation of the measures agreed upon by the members of the AU Peace and Security Council."

The United States stands ready to support the AU, the East African Community (EAC) and its designated mediator, President Museveni, and the citizens of Burundi to urgently conduct such a dialogue, which represents the best path forward to resolving the insecurity which has plagued Burundi since President Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third-term in contravention of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement.

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On November 12, 2015, Ambassador Power delivered remarks at the Security Council after the adoption of Resolution 2248 on Burundi. Her remarks are excerpted below and available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/6973>.

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... I want to stress internationally facilitated dialogue among Burundi's stakeholders is absolutely critical. It is not enough for us to do what we have been doing, which is to support the EAC-led political process—we do support it, the Security Council most definitely supports it—

but there must be a robust political process and that process must be invigorated. So I think that's a very important message out of the Council today.

The other piece of this important resolution, I think, is as the situation has deteriorated in recent months, the UN presence has been getting smaller and smaller. So at just the time that we need more eyes and ears on the ground, we have had fewer and fewer UN personnel. And indeed that presence is slated to wind down entirely by January. So what this does is halt that trend ...and indeed put the UN in a position now where it can assess what the best form a UN presence should take. So that's, I think, the second important feature of this resolution.

And then the third is, because of Burundi's history, but also because of some of the very divisive rhetoric and the sheer number of people who have been killed here in recent days, it is clear that contingency planning is needed; it is needed in the sub-region, it is needed in the region, and it is needed here at the UN. And so I think this resolution sets that contingency planning in motion and is very important for that reason.

I think Council unity today is also a very important signal and we will continue to shine a spotlight on what is happening in Burundi, and again look forward as a Council—but also as the United States, working bilaterally to do everything we can again to push political dialogue, to make sure we're prepared for contingencies, and to stand up for the rights of Burundians who are living in great fear right now.

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See Chapter 16 for a discussion of sanctions relating to the crisis in Burundi. In a December 18, 2015 announcement of additional sanctions, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/12/250797.htm>, the Department of State also urged peace talks:

The United States is gravely concerned about the ongoing crisis in Burundi and the potential for additional violence ...

Our senior officials remain engaged at the highest levels with regional leaders to support immediate, internationally-mediated peace talks. The United States continues to call upon Burundian President Nkurunziza, his government, and the opposition to de-escalate tensions, refrain from further violence, and fully participate in talks. We stand ready to support the African Union and the region in taking all necessary steps—including possible deployment of an intervention force—to prevent further violence and achieve a consensual, political resolution to this crisis.

On December 19, 2015, the UN Security Council, with the United States serving as President, issued a press statement on the situation in Burundi. The press statement is excerpted below and available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/7064>.

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The members of the Security Council reiterated their deep concern about the continuing escalation of violence in Burundi, as well as the increased cases of human rights violations and abuses, the persisting political impasse and the attendant serious humanitarian consequences. They condemned all acts of violence, whomever perpetrates it, and the persistence of impunity, as well as of the inflammatory statements made by Burundian political leaders. They strongly condemned the attacks carried out against military barracks in Bujumbura and in Bujumbura Rural, as well as the alleged summary executions perpetrated in the aftermath of the attacks, and underscored the importance of holding those responsible for such acts accountable.

They recalled the adoption, on December 17, of the Human Rights Council resolution condemning human rights violations and abuses in Burundi by all actors and deciding to organize and dispatch an expert mission to Burundi to swiftly investigate violations and abuses of human rights.

The members of the Security Council welcomed the meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) of 17 December where the communique on the situation in Burundi (PSC/PR/COMM. (DLXV)) was adopted.

They called for urgent acceleration of the mediation efforts led by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda on behalf of the East African Community (EAC) and as endorsed by the African Union (AU) and urged all parties of Burundi to fully cooperate with the mediator, and given the urgency of the situation, should mediation efforts not restart immediately alternative options might be considered by the AU and UN. The members of the Security Council recalled their conviction that only a genuine and inclusive dialogue, based on respect for the Constitution and Arusha Agreement, would best enable the Burundian stakeholders to find a consensual solution to the crisis facing their country. They highlighted the importance of the decision by the AU PSC to hold such dialogue outside Burundi, in a venue to be determined by the Mediation, and in the required conditions of security, highlighted the need to facilitate the participation and effective representation of all Burundian stakeholders and their viewpoints on issues on which they disagree.

The members of the Security Council took note with interest of the decision by the AU PSC to authorize the deployment of an African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU) to address the situation in Burundi and urged all Burundian stakeholders to fully cooperate with the mission in support of the effective implementation of its mandate. The members of the Security Council underlined the importance for African Members States to pledge troops and police and stressed the importance for the AU to take the necessary steps for the urgent development of the concept of operation of MAPROBU and other planning level documents. They also stressed the importance of dialogue and coordination between the AU and the UN.

As requested by the Security Council resolution 2248 (2015), they recalled the utmost importance of United Nations contingency planning to develop options for the international community to respond to any further deterioration of the situation and underscored the importance of urgently deploying the UN team in Burundi under the leadership of the Special Adviser to Conflict Prevention, including Burundi, M. Jamal Benomar, to coordinate and work with the Government of Burundi, African Union and other partners to assess the situation and develop options to address political and security concerns.

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4. Central African Republic

a. *Accord on disarmament*

On May 11, 2015, the United States congratulated the people of the Central African Republic on successfully completing the Bangui Forum, and the conclusion of an accord on disarmament, signed by armed groups and the transitional government that came in response to the desires for peace expressed at the Forum. The May 11, 2015 State Department press statement on the situation in the Central African Republic is available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/05/242137.htm>, and includes the following additional U.S. responses to developments in the Central African Republic:

We further welcome the signature by armed groups of an agreement to halt the recruitment of child soldiers and to release all child soldiers currently in their ranks and children associated with the conflict. This agreement is a hopeful sign for the children of the Central African Republic, who have too long suffered terribly in this conflict. The United States calls on all armed groups to follow through on these commitments without delay.

The United States will continue to stand with the people and transitional leadership of the Central African Republic as they advance this vibrant national conversation and translate into action the recommendations of the Bangui Forum for a better future for the country and its people.

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On September 28, 2015, the Department of State issued a press statement condemning violence in the Central African Republic that began on September 25, 2015 and calling for perpetrators to be held accountable. The press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/09/247412.htm>, includes the following:

We call upon those who engaged in violence, or are considering further violence, to lay down their weapons and return home. Those guilty of committing or inciting violence, including leaders of anti-Balaka militias and ex-Seleka groups, must be held accountable for their actions. We fully support the efforts of the Central African and international forces to reestablish order and bring these perpetrators to justice. The era during which such individuals have been able to carry out their malevolent actions with impunity must come to an end.

We express our full support for President Catherine Samba-Panza and her transitional government. We further support the ongoing transition process, including efforts to ensure that all eligible Central Africans have the right to vote in upcoming elections, and pledge continued U.S. assistance in support of the ongoing transition.

The United States remains committed to helping the Central African Republic establish the peace and stability its citizens deserve. It is only with peace and stability that job creation, economic development, and prosperity will ultimately be possible for current and future generations of Central Africans.

b. *Sexual exploitation and abuse by international soldiers*

The United States fully supported the UN investigation into reports of sexual exploitation and abuse of children by international soldiers in the Central African Republic. On June 5, 2015, when the UN Secretary General announced the establishment of an external independent review of the allegations, Ambassador Power issued a statement, available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/6558>, in which she welcomed the external independent review:

The Secretary General's establishment of this review is an opportunity for the UN to learn how it and member states can best safeguard the dignity and welfare of vulnerable people; ensure swift action to make certain potential abuses are investigated and halted; protect those who expose abuses; and provide appropriate privacy and other protection for witnesses who come forward with allegations of abuse. There are many questions that need to be answered, and we view this as an important opportunity for member states—and the people of the Central African Republic—to learn what went wrong at every point in this process.

Alongside this independent review, it is essential that all countries whose soldiers are alleged to have been involved in such abuses fully, urgently, and transparently investigate all claims to ensure that justice is served. Any individual found to have committed such heinous abuses must be held accountable.

President Obama's September 28, 2015 Memorandum to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies regarding peacekeeping also expresses U.S. support for UN actions to address sexual exploitation and abuse. Daily Comp. Pres. Docs. 2015 DCPD No. 00663 (Sep. 28, 2015). The statement on the subject from the September 28 Memorandum follows. The Memorandum is also discussed in Section B.1, *supra*.

Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). The United States fully supports the UN's zero tolerance policy against SEA by UN personnel and supports aggressive action by the Secretary General to root it out of peacekeeping, including by strengthening mechanisms for investigating SEA allegations. The Departments of State and Defense will ensure that any U.S.-provided peacekeeping training includes a component on the prevention of SEA. They will condition peacekeeping training or related assistance on the commitment of the [Troop-Contributing Countries ("TCCs") and Police-Contributing Countries ("PCCs")] to ensure that adequate disciplinary measures for SEA violations exist.

In cases in which TCCs and PCCs lack the capacity either to investigate credible allegations or hold those responsible to account for alleged SEA by their own nationals, the United States Government will explore means to assist them in doing so, including through capacity building. The Departments of State and Defense will engage the UN and TCCs and PCCs at senior levels to stress the imperative of investigating allegations thoroughly and prosecuting where appropriate. The Department of State will discourage the UN from deploying uniformed personnel from those TCCs and PCCs that routinely block investigations or fail to hold those responsible for SEA to account and will identify such TCCs and PCCs in its annual country reports on human rights.

On December 17, 2015, when the independent review panel submitted its report on abuse in CAR, Ambassador Power released another statement, noting that the panel's report documents "a woefully inadequate response by the UN to credible allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse." Ambassador Power's December 17 statement is available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/7060>, and further states:

We are horrified by the Panel's findings of inaction around these crimes. It is chilling to read the Panel's detailing of poor judgment and "gross institutional failure," including by the very parts of the UN entrusted with defending human rights and protecting children. These actions—and decisions not to act—undermine the UN's legitimacy and betray its most sacred principles. Also alarming is the Panel's finding of several cases of abuse of authority.

We are troubled by the Panel's conclusion that the independence of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)—whose impartiality is critically important to ensuring a culture of accountability and transparency at the UN—was compromised. We encourage the new head of OIOS to institute structural changes to address the systematic failures documented in the report.

... Now the world is looking to the UN to take urgent and comprehensive steps to make sure this never happens again. All UN Member States must throw their weight behind significant reforms at the UN to ensure that the grave abuses alleged are swiftly and effectively investigated and prosecuted, and that those found responsible are held accountable.

5. Mali

The United States condemned violence in Mali and called on the parties to comply with previous ceasefire commitments while striving for a durable peace agreement. In an April 29, 2015 State Department press statement, for example, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/04/241328.htm>, the United States condemned recent violence in Menaka, Timbuktu, and Goundam. The April 29, 2015 press statement goes on to say:

...We recall that in statement by the President of the United Nation's Security Council on February 6, 2015, the Council expressed its readiness to consider appropriate measures, including targeted sanctions, against those who resume hostilities and violate the ceasefire.

The United States urges the parties to seize the opportunity offered by the peace process, in which all relevant regional and international partners are involved, to build a lasting peace in Mali. We reiterate our strong support for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Recognizing the legitimate aspiration of all Malians to enjoy lasting peace and development, the United States emphasizes that all parties have a responsibility to all of the communities in Mali and to the international community to reach a durable peace agreement.

On May 15, 2015, the State Department issued a press statement welcoming formal commitments made in Algiers and Bamako to reach a peace accord in Mali. The press statement is available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/05/242484.htm>, and includes the following:

... We urge all Malian parties to sign the Accord to underscore their concrete commitment to peace and to continue to engage constructively to implement the Accord.

We commend the Government of Mali for its commitment to the peace process and its openness to dialogue. We also thank the Government of Algeria for the leading mediation role it has played in the peace process as well as the efforts made by the International Mediation Team.

We are deeply concerned by ongoing reports of fighting, and we call on all parties to respect the existing cease-fire agreements and commit to resolving differences through dialogue.

The United States remains committed to helping the Malian people as they work to achieve a durable peace. We reiterate our support to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and its efforts to assist the Malian people to consolidate peace.

On June 20, 2015, the Accord for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali was signed in Bamako, Mali. The U.S. Department of State issued a press statement on June 21, 2015 praising the peace deal. The press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/06/244061.htm>, congratulates the people of Mali, commends the parties for their willingness to compromise and use dialogue to resolve their differences, and thanks the Algerian government for mediating negotiations.

6. Democratic Republic of the Congo

On January 29, 2015, the U.S. Department of State issued a press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/01/236968.htm>, welcoming the start of military operations against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (“FDLR”). Excerpts follow from the press statement.

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The United States welcomes the announcement by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) of the start of military operations against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), an armed group that has inflicted immeasurable suffering on the civilian population of eastern DRC and Rwanda for over 20 years. The UN Security Council has mandated the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) to protect civilians and, in support of the DRC authorities, to neutralize armed groups including the FDLR. Last July, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) gave the FDLR, including its leadership, a clear deadline of January 2, 2015 to surrender fully and unconditionally or face military consequences. However, the FDLR failed to deliver on its promise to surrender and instead used this period to continue to commit human rights abuses, recruit new combatants, and pursue its illegitimate political agenda.

In October, the ICGLR and SADC heads of state reaffirmed that military action should take place in the absence of a full surrender of the FDLR, and on January 8, the UN Security Council reiterated the need to neutralize the FDLR through immediate military operations.

The United States fully supports DRC military operations with MONUSCO against those members of the FDLR who have failed to surrender. We encourage the DRC and MONUSCO to continue their coordination and joint planning and to take immediate steps to end the threat from the FDLR.

We stress the importance of these military operations being conducted in a way that protects and minimizes the impact on civilians, in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, and in line with the UN’s human rights due diligence policy. The neutralization of the FDLR will contribute to long-term peace and stability for the people of the Great Lakes region.

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7. Sudan

On May 8, 2015, the U.S. Department of State issued a press statement expressing its grave concern about ongoing fighting in Sudan’s Darfur region and Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states. The May 8 press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/05/242039.htm>, goes on to say:

Actions by the Sudanese government and armed opposition groups, especially following the return of some elements of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), have displaced countless civilians this year and exacerbated an already serious humanitarian crisis.

We urge the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), all other armed groups, and the Government of Sudan to cease hostilities, to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians, and to ensure safe, timely, and unhindered access for aid organizations as called for by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

...

We condemn the recent attacks against the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) peacekeepers in Kass, South Darfur state. The UNSC has made clear that UNAMID is authorized to defend itself against attacks, as occurred in this incident. We call on the Government of Sudan to bring the perpetrators of such violence to account and to take all necessary action to prevent future attacks. The Government of Sudan has the responsibility to defuse tensions in the area and prevent future attacks on UNAMID personnel.

On October 20, 2015, the United States welcomed the Sudan Revolutionary Front's declaration of a six-month cessation of hostilities in a State Department press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/10/248404.htm>. The State Department press statement is excerpted below.

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The United States welcomes the Sudan Revolutionary Front's October 18, 2015 declaration of a six-month unilateral cessation of hostilities beginning at midnight on October 21 in Darfur and the states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile.

We urge the Government of Sudan to build on its own stated commitment by also declaring a unilateral cessation of hostilities for the same time period and covering the same areas. We encourage both the Government of Sudan and the SRF to work under the auspices of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel to translate their cessation of hostilities declarations into a sustainable end to Sudan's conflicts, initially by ensuring a cessation of hostilities is properly monitored by a neutral third party. If respected by all parties to the conflict, a cessation of hostilities will help facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Sudanese citizens affected by the conflicts in Darfur, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile. To that end, we call on both parties in conjunction with the UN to finalize the modalities by which humanitarian assistance will be delivered to people in need.

A true cessation of hostilities will contribute to a genuine dialogue to address the underlying causes of the armed conflicts that have plagued Sudan for far too long. There is no military solution to Sudan's conflicts. Further fighting only increases the suffering of the Sudanese people. The United States calls on all parties to the conflicts in Sudan to seize this opportunity to end the wars and begin a path towards lasting peace.

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8. South Sudan

On January 23, 2015, the State Department issued, as a media note, the joint statement of the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway (the “Troika”) on South Sudan peace negotiations. The media note containing the joint statement is available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/01/236238.htm>. The January 23, 2015 Joint Statement of the Troika follows.

* * * *

The members of the Troika (the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway) are gravely concerned with the continued lack of progress in the South Sudan peace negotiations.

We commend the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the IGAD Special Envoys for their steadfast commitment to the peace process, and welcome the strong message from People’s Republic of China Foreign Minister Wang Yi calling on the parties to make peace. We recall IGAD’s determination, as articulated in its summit communiqué of January 31, 2014, to inclusive negotiations toward an agreement that addresses necessary reforms to the security sector and economic governance, creates institutions for justice and accountability, catalyzes a revived permanent constitutional process, and forms a transitional government leading to credible elections.

IGAD has made every effort to realize these goals despite obstruction from both the government of South Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement – In Opposition (SPLM-IO). We are deeply disappointed in the continued unwillingness of either party to make the compromises needed to achieve a viable peace agreement. Over the past two months, statements by both parties have suggested they have distanced themselves from previous commitments, and violations of the cessation of hostilities agreement have continued. We call on both parties to recommit to negotiate with a spirit of urgency and compromise, refrain from all further military action immediately and form a Transitional Government of National Unity.

We look forward to guidance from the African Union Peace and Security Council, convened on the margins of the African Union Summit in January, on how the report of the AU Commission of Inquiry will be used to support the peace process and inform the development of mechanisms for accountability and reconciliation in South Sudan.

Furthermore, we reiterate our determination to address the grave humanitarian situation in South Sudan. Today, over a year after the beginning of the conflict, nearly 2 million South Sudanese have been displaced, over 100,000 are under the direct protection of the UN Mission in South Sudan, and the country remains at risk of a food security crisis. Along with other international donors, we will continue to stand with the people of South Sudan who are needlessly suffering as a result of this conflict.

We recognize the recent agreement in Arusha, Tanzania to reconcile the SPLM and encourage the parties to use the upcoming IGAD summit of 29 January to secure peace for the people of South Sudan. In the face of this deplorable humanitarian crisis, there can be no excuse for further delay in negotiations or for continued violence.

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The Troika issued a joint statement on February 6, 2015, expressing disappointment at the failure of the leaders of South Sudan to reach a peace agreement at their talks. The February 6, 2015 State Department media note containing the joint statement is available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/02/237262.htm>. Excerpts follow from the February 6 joint statement.

* * * *

After the last round of Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-led peace talks ended in only a partial agreement, the Troika expresses its disappointment that South Sudan's leaders failed to achieve significant progress toward a peace agreement.

Over a year since the conflict began millions remain displaced, thousands are dead and the country is in ruins despite the commendable efforts of IGAD and its mediation team to achieve a peace agreement. Ignoring the untold suffering of their people, South Sudan's leaders have refused to make the necessary compromises to reach a peace agreement for the people of South Sudan who deserve and expect nothing less. We call on the parties to fully respect the Cessation of Hostilities agreement of January 23, 2014, and avoid all further violence. We urge the parties return to negotiations on February 19, 2015 prepared to compromise to achieve a peace agreement by March 5, 2015 and form a transitional government by July 1, 2015.

The Troika believes that the publication of the Commission of Inquiry's findings and its recommendations on accountability are necessary to ensure that such violence against civilians cannot be undertaken with impunity. The people of South Sudan and in particular the victims deserve no less and it will in the long run enable greater accountability and give rise to more robust political stability.

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On May 20, 2015, continuing violence in South Sudan, including attacks on civilians and the UN Mission, prompted press statements by the State Department and the U.S. Mission to the UN. In the State Department press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/05/242671.htm>, the United States condemned "the intensified fighting and violence in Unity, Upper Nile, and Jonglei states in South Sudan by the Sudan People's Liberation Army, the armed opposition, and forces led by General Johnson Olony that have led to massive new displacements and had a devastating effect on civilians." Ambassador Power's statement for the U.S. Mission to the UN, available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/6463>, "mortar attacks on the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) compound in Melut, South Sudan, that resulted in the death of four people, including one child, and severely injured eight others." Both statements called on all armed groups and the Government of South

Sudan to abide by the terms of the January 2015 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. See *Digest 2014* at 694-95. The State Department press statement goes on to say:

Violations of international humanitarian norms, including the outright targeting of civilians already vulnerable to greater harm, especially women and children, and grave human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law by all sides are unacceptable. The international community will hold those who perpetrate such abuses and violations to account. We call on all sides to silence the guns immediately, permit the UN Mission in South Sudan to investigate the sites of all alleged human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, and allow all humanitarian workers immediate, free and unobstructed access to conflicted-affected communities regardless of their locations.

Additional excerpts follow from Ambassador Power's statement on the violence in South Sudan.

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Today's attacks are only the latest in a series of brutally violent acts against civilians, including the raping and murder of children, resulting from increased fighting between the Government of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition, and their respective affiliated militias and other armed groups, in Unity and Upper Nile States over the last two weeks. As this most recent incident underscores, the renewed fighting in South Sudan puts at risk UNMISS bases and protection of civilian sites; and it does so at a time when across the country more than 3 million people are lacking sufficient food and more than 2 million are internally displaced.

The international community is footing the bill for President Salva Kiir's and opposition leader Riek Machar's shameful disregard for the devastating humanitarian crisis facing the people of South Sudan. Political and military leaders on all sides of this conflict must put aside their self-serving ambitions, bring an end to the fighting, implement the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement to which both have already agreed, and engage in negotiations for a comprehensive and inclusive peace agreement to establish a transitional government and bring about a reform process that addresses the root causes of this conflict.

South Sudan's political leaders continue to refuse to prioritize the well-being of their own people, necessitating an increase in international pressure on the South Sudanese parties so that they accept and implement a credible peace agreement. In this vein, we will continue our work with the UN Security Council's South Sudan Sanctions Committee to gather and review evidence that might be useful for sanctions listings that target political spoilers and those who violate and abuse human rights and violate international humanitarian law.

We regret that South Sudan's political leaders repeatedly fail to heed international humanitarian law's prohibition on intentionally targeting civilians. Additionally, all parties should regard UNMISS sites as inviolable and the work of UNMISS personnel should be respected, supported and protected as they endeavor to protect the more than 120,000 internally

displaced people sheltering at UNMISS bases and the many others outside these bases who are displaced by the ongoing fighting.

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On June 2, 2015, the United States Department of State issued a press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/06/243112.htm>, in which it condemned the Government of South Sudan for expelling UN Deputy Special Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator for the UN Mission in South Sudan (“UNMISS”) Toby Lanzer. The press statement further explains:

... The expulsion of Mr. Lanzer is an affront to the international community working to bring peace and stability to South Sudan, and demonstrates a callous disregard for the suffering of the South Sudanese people. The government’s priority should be bringing an end to the violence that has already displaced more than 2 million of its citizens—half a million of whom are now refugees in neighbouring countries—and left 4.6 million facing extreme, life-threatening hunger.

The United States has contributed more than \$1.1 billion in emergency aid to house, feed, provide medical services and improve water, sanitation, and hygiene services for the people of South Sudan. We strongly support the work of the UN Mission in South Sudan and that of Mr. Lanzer who has been instrumental in addressing the dire humanitarian needs of conflict-affected communities and has been a strong partner and advocate for vulnerable populations in South Sudan.

We join UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other governments in calling on the Government of South Sudan to reverse its decision and to cooperate fully with all United Nations entities present in South Sudan, as well as other international organizations working on behalf of the South Sudanese people.

On August 26, 2015, President Salva Kiir of South Sudan signed a peace agreement, which had been signed on August 17 by rebel leader Riek Machar. The United States had threatened enhanced international sanctions if President Kiir did not sign the agreement. White House National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice issued the following statement (available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/08/26/statement-national-security-advisor-susan-e-rice-south-sudan-peace>) on August 26, 2015 on President Kiir’s decision to sign the agreement.

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The United States welcomes President Kiir’s decision to accept the terms of peace and sign the regionally-sponsored peace agreement today in South Sudan. However, we do not recognize any reservations or addendums to that agreement. The United States believes this is the necessary first step toward ending the conflict and rebuilding the country. Now the hard work begins.

Implementing this agreement will require commitment and resolve from all parties to the conflict as well as South Sudan's regional and international partners. The United States will support the people of South Sudan as they begin the implementation process, but it is imperative that the parties remain committed to peace. We will work with our international partners to sideline those who stand in the way of peace, drawing upon the full range of our multilateral and bilateral tools.

The United States is grateful for the constructive role played by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union to secure an agreement. Together, we must help South Sudan implement the agreement, to stave off famine, to stand steadfast and united against those who block the path to peace, and to hold accountable those who have committed atrocities. At this moment of opportunity, the United States stands in solidarity with the people of South Sudan, and with all those working to build the peaceful future that they so deserve.

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The Troika issued a further joint statement on South Sudan on October 6, 2015. The joint statement appears below and is available as a State Department media note at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/10/247949.htm>.

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The Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States) express serious concern about President Salva Kiir Mayardit's October 2 announcement that he plans to replace South Sudan's 10 states with 28 new states. This announcement directly contradicts the Government of South Sudan's commitment to implement the peace agreement it signed on August 26. One of the primary tasks of the soon to be formed Transitional Government of National Unity is to initiate and oversee a process to complete a permanent constitution that will address such fundamental issues as the structure of the state.

We recognize that the people of South Sudan have long been interested in the issues of federalism and decentralization. However, we strongly urge President Kiir to defer action on this fundamental matter until the Transitional Government of National Unity is formed and a national constitutional dialogue can take place.

We strongly condemn the current resumption of fighting in Unity State. This underscores the urgent need for all South Sudanese stakeholders and members of the IGAD Plus to move forward with the full and timely implementation of the peace agreement, especially the prompt establishment of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and mandated security arrangements. We also call on the Opposition to resolve outstanding security-related issues and both to allow for full and unfettered humanitarian access.

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The United States Department of State issued a press statement on October 20, 2015 welcoming the appointment of former President of Botswana Festus Mogae to

chair oversight of the South Sudan peace agreement. The press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/10/248403.htm>, includes the following:

The Department of State commends the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for selecting former Botswanan President Festus Mogae as the Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) for South Sudan. A prominent leader of accomplishment and moral authority, President Mogae will lead a group of international experts responsible for overseeing and supporting the implementation of all aspects of the agreement. The United States welcomes his appointment and will work closely with him and other international partners to help the South Sudanese people revitalize their dream of achieving peace and building a new nation.

The United States for decades has been one of the closest partners and friends to the people of South Sudan. The U.S. Special Envoy Donald Booth has been deeply involved in the peace process and will continue to work with all the partners, including President Mogae and the JMEC, in the implementation of the August peace agreement. Through successful implementation, we seek to restore the spirit of hope and promise shared by South Sudanese people upon independence in 2011. We look forward to receiving President Mogae in Washington, D.C. in the coming weeks to coordinate our efforts to accomplish this goal.

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On November 25, 2015, the Troika issued another joint statement on South Sudan, urging South Sudan's leaders to abide by the peace agreement by forming a transitional government within the established 90-day timeline. The State Department media note containing the joint statement is available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/11/250012.htm>. The November 25, 2015 joint statement also commends President Mogae and JMEC for their efforts:

We commend Festus Mogae, the Chairman of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), for beginning to implement the agreement by announcing this week that he will host the JMEC's first meeting in Juba on 27 November. It is vital that all parties participate fully. We call on the Opposition and former detainees to attend the JMEC launch and on all South Sudanese parties to work with President Mogae. Those who decide not to participate will be further delaying the implementation of the peace agreement, which will only deepen an already grave humanitarian crisis and prolong the suffering of the South Sudanese people.

On December 22, 2015, the United States welcomed the return of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement In Opposition to Juba to cooperate with the Government of Sudan via the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission ("JMEC"). The December

22, 2015 State Department press statement called the return an “important milestone in the implementation of the peace agreement.” The press statement is available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/12/250847.htm>. The United States also called on the parties to work together “in the spirit of unity and compromise to solidify the reforms outlined in the peace agreement and to establish the Transitional Government of National Unity in full cooperation with JMEC Chairperson, President Festus Mogae.”

9. Burma

On October 15, 2015, the United States Department of State issued a statement welcoming the signing of a nationwide ceasefire agreement in Burma. The statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/10/248222.htm>, appears below.

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The United States commends all sides for their ongoing efforts to bring an end to the longest-running civil conflict in the world. The signing of the text of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) by the government and eight ethnic armed groups is a critical first step in a long process of building a sustainable and just peace in Burma. We recognize that some groups were not able to sign today, and we understand and respect their concerns.. We welcome their commitment to continue discussions within their communities and with the government about the necessary conditions for signing at a future date, and we urge the government to engage constructively in a dialogue with these groups to pursue a more inclusive peace.

We call on all NCA signatories to adhere to the spirit and letter of the agreement they have signed today. Military action undertaken by or against any signatory or non-signatory to this agreement undermines the trust-building necessary for lasting peace, stability, and security for all.

Dialogue among all parties will be essential to ensuring continued progress toward national trust-building and lasting peace. We urge all parties to continue to engage with each other and civil society representatives in the spirit of unity and compromise, particularly in the process to finalize a political dialogue framework and the conduct of the political dialogue itself. We expect all groups that continue to pursue peace through dialogue to be allowed to do so without exception or threat of penalty. We remain concerned by reports of continued military offensives in Kachin and Shan States and the lack of humanitarian access to many of the more than 100,000 internally displaced persons in those areas. We strongly urge all parties to honor their commitment to ensure unfettered access for humanitarian assistance to all those in need, without exception or delay.

The United States will watch closely and support full implementation of all agreements, the NCA, existing bilateral ceasefires, and the political dialogue that follows. We remain committed to the historic process of peace building and national reconciliation in Burma in the months and years to come.

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10. Ukraine

See Chapter 9 for U.S. statements on Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, with internationally recognized borders inclusive of Crimea and eastern Ukraine.

On February 12, 2015, the United States welcomed the agreement reached by the OSCE-led Trilateral Contact Group on a cease-fire and heavy weapons withdrawal in eastern Ukraine. The February 12 package of commitments was intended to amplify and implement the September 2014 Minsk Agreements. See *Digest 2014* at 348-49 for discussion of the Minsk Agreements. Secretary Kerry's February 12, 2015 press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/02/237439.htm>, credited Chancellor Merkel and President Hollande and their diplomatic teams for facilitating the agreement. Secretary Kerry's statement expresses U.S. readiness to assist the process toward peace:

The parties have a long road ahead before achieving peace and the full restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty. The United States stands ready to assist in coordination with our European Allies and partners. We will judge the commitment of Russia and the separatists by their actions, not their words. As we have long said, the United States is prepared to consider rolling back sanctions on Russia when the Minsk agreements of September 2014, and now this agreement, are fully implemented. That includes a full cease-fire, the withdrawal of all foreign troops and equipment from Ukraine, the full restoration of Ukrainian control of the international border, and the release of all hostages.

On February 16, 2015, the United States called on Russia and Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine to abide by the cease-fire and implement the commitments agreed to in Minsk in 2014. See February 16, 2015 State Department press statement, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/02/237525.htm>. The U.S. statement expressed grave concern at the violence in Dabaltseve and its surrounding area; Sieverodonetsk; Luhansk; and Donetsk city. An OSCE Special Monitoring Mission ("SMM") facilitates the cease-fire in Ukraine but Russian-backed separatists refused to implement the cease-fire and the OSCE monitors were not given security guarantees for access in Debaltseve.

On February 17, 2015, Ambassador Power provided the U.S. explanation of vote on a Security Council resolution proposed by Russia. Ambassador Power's statement, available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/6372>, is excerpted below.

* * * *

...the idea that Russia—which manufactured and continues to escalate the violence in Ukraine—has tabled a resolution today calling for the conflict’s peaceful solution, is ironic, to say the least. Bitterly ironic, given that this Council has dedicated some thirty meetings to calling on Russia to stop escalating the very same conflict, and given the human consequences that are growing daily.

Even as Russia puts forward this resolution, separatists that Russia has trained, armed and that it fights alongside are laying ruthless and deadly siege to the Ukrainian-held city of Debaltseve, approximately 30 to 40 kilometers beyond lines established by the September Minsk agreements. Throughout the day, we’ve heard conflicting reports as to whether Debaltseve has fallen. According to press reports, the so-called “road of life” leading out of Debaltseve has become a “road of death,” littered with the bodies of Ukrainian soldiers. At just the time this Council is calling for the cease-fire that was supposed to take effect Saturday night at midnight, Russia is backing an all-out assault.

... Russia and the separatists it supports have refused to guarantee the safety of impartial OSCE monitors who have been trying for days to enter the area – a commitment that ...Russia and the separatists made on February 12th at Minsk.

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...[T]he United States has maintained the same position across thirty meetings before this Council with respect to Ukraine. Let me reiterate that position. We are for peace in Ukraine. We are for Ukraine’s sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity. We are for ending the violence in eastern Ukraine that has taken more than 5,600 lives since last April, and displaced already approximately one million people. We are for all of the signatories to the agreements signed in Minsk in September 2014—particularly Russia and the separatists they back—fulfilling the commitments that they have made. And we are for the “Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements” of September 5 and September 19th, the package of measures endorsed last week by the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France. To be clear, the February 12th implementation package is a roadmap to fulfilling commitments made by these same signatories in the September Minsk Agreements.

President Hollande, President Poroschenko, Chancellor Merkel, and President Putin each made this clear when they endorsed the implementation package on February 12th and issued their joint declaration that they “remain committed to the implementation of the Minsk Agreements.” The “Minsk Agreements” ... refer to those signed on September 5 and September 19 by the same signatories, while the “measures for implementation” in the title make clear that the February 12th package was designed to begin carrying out the September agreements, and not to supplant them, as Russia has now begun to argue.

The United States rejects any interpretation of this resolution that would abrogate the parties’ earlier commitments. All parties must implement all of the commitments made in the September Minsk agreements. The implementation steps agreed upon in the February 12th package include a comprehensive cease-fire; the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the September line of contact; the release of all hostages; and the eventual restoration of Ukraine’s territorial sovereignty and control of its international border.

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But we call on Russia to translate hope into real action; to translate hope into real results, and to do so urgently.

Today's Council session is an effort to throw the Council's weight behind an agreement already jeopardized by statements by the separatists dismissing the full cease-fire, by their continued attacks on Debaltseve, and by the separatists' refusal—together with Russia's—to allow access to the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission. We are looking to Russia, which manufactured and fueled this conflict, to ... honor the resolution it tabled today supporting efforts to end it.

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On June 5, 2015, Ambassador Power again condemned Russian-backed separatists for violations of the cease-fire and Minsk commitments at a Security Council meeting on Ukraine. Ambassador Power's remarks are available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/6556>, and excerpted below.

* * * *

On June 3rd, combined Russian-separatist forces launched multiple, coordinated attacks west of the Minsk line of contact in Donetsk. The attacks were concentrated on the towns of Marinka and Krasnohorivka.

The Russian Federation and its separatist allies have offered multiple—often conflicting—explanations for these attacks.

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... Russia has argued that the attacks were justified because the areas that are actually part of the separatist-controlled territory under the Minsk agreements are these areas. They are not. This was the case Russia made about Marinka and Krasnohorivka yesterday, at a meeting of the OSCE. We've seen this tactic before; when combined Russian-separatist forces encircled and attacked Debaltseve immediately after signing the package of measures at Minsk on February 12th, 2015. As a separatist commander Eduard Basurin told *Reuters* on February 15th, "Of course we can open fire [on Debaltseve]...The territory is internal: ours. And internal is internal. But along the line of confrontation there is no shooting."

The problem with this line of argument is, quite simply, that it is false. At no point did the Minsk Agreements recognize Marinka and Krasnohorivka as separatist-controlled territory. Nor did they grant the separatists control over Debaltseve or other areas combined Russian-separatist forces have seized, or tried to seize. Yet for Russia and the separatists, it seems the contact line can shift to include the territories that they feel they deserve.

The Kyiv-born surrealist master Mikhail Bulgakov put this problem a different way: "The tongue can conceal the truth, but the eyes, never!" In this case, the objective eyes in eastern Ukraine belong to the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission, the SMM. And what they tell us is that, on the evening of June 2nd and early morning of June 3rd, "SMM observed the movement of

a large amount of heavy weapons in DPR-controlled areas—generally in a westerly direction toward the contact line—close to Marinka, preceding and during the fighting.” So, to repeat: according to the SMM, heavy weapons from the Russian-backed separatist side moved westward “*preceding* as well as *during* the fighting.”

The SMM tried to contact high-ranking DPR personnel over an hour-and-a-half period on the morning of June 3rd, but reported, “Either they were unavailable or did not wish to speak to the SMM.” The eyes do not conceal the truth. And the truth here is that the recent violence was rooted in a combined Russian-separatist assault.

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The Ukrainian government has made good faith efforts to honor that consensus— notwithstanding the seemingly endless violations by Russia and the separatists—and deliver on the commitments made at Minsk. Ukraine is holding direct dialogue with the separatists, a bitter pill to swallow, but one they have swallowed for the sake of peace and for the sake of the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. At the same time, Ukraine has undertaken critical efforts, with the participation of Ukrainian civil society, to address pervasive problems it inherited from its predecessors, like widespread corruption, as well as to pursue crucial reforms such as decentralization. Ukraine cooperates with the international monitors and bodies, and has committed to address identified areas of concern. The United States will continue to raise tough issues and these areas of concern, including some raised here today by the briefers, with the Government of Ukraine, and we will support the government and Ukrainian people as they continue their efforts toward meaningful reform.

Yet Russia—and the separatists it trains, arms, fights alongside, and with whom it shares command and control systems in eastern Ukraine—continues to ignore this consensus, flouting the commitments it made at Minsk. It goes right on applying its playbook in new territories—as though this Council and the world are too blind, or too easily deceived to notice.

We must not let ourselves be deceived. The consequences of Russia’s contempt for Minsk and the rules undergirding our international peace and security are too great—both for the integrity of the international system, and for the rights and welfare of the Ukrainian people. We cannot fail to see and fail to act. We must not stop applying pressure until Ukrainians get the stable democracy, the territorial integrity, and sovereignty they yearn for and deserve. Thank you.

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The United States also called on the Russian government and Russian-backed separatists to allow humanitarian access to all areas of eastern Ukraine. See, *e.g.*, October 29, 2015 statement by U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE Daniel B. Baer to the Permanent Council in Vienna, available at <http://ukraine.usembassy.gov/statements/osce-10292015.html>. Ambassador Baer stated:

The United States calls on the Russian government to unequivocally condemn restrictions on humanitarian aid in Ukraine, and to get the separatists it backs to lift all restrictions without delay. In addition, we call for an end to the

uninspected Russian so-called “humanitarian convoys.” Ukraine has entered into negotiations with Russia on a possible regime for inspecting assistance coming into Ukraine from Russia via rail or road, which we urge be concluded as soon as possible. Lingering doubts about what Russia is actually sending in these convoys can be cleared up instantly, and such inspections can help to build confidence for further bilateral negotiations on more difficult questions related to Minsk implementation.

On December 11, 2015, Ambassador Power again addressed the Security Council at a meeting on Ukraine. She called for full implementation of the September 2014 and February 2015 Minsk agreements. Her remarks, excerpted below, are available in full at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/7037>.

* * * *

As we’ve heard today, the present situation in Ukraine looks different than it did when we last met in June, just a few days then after a combined Russian-separatist force offensive that coordinated attacks west of the ceasefire line in Donetsk.

But the horrific situation back in June cannot become the baseline for our assessments or our actions. While major combat is down since the September 1st ceasefire—and that’s extremely important for all of the lives affected—this crisis remains no less real, no less urgent, and no less troubling. There are still, as we’ve heard, daily ceasefire violations. And as has been described in great detail today, the citizens of Ukraine—all of Ukraine—continue to suffer enormously.

Let us be clear about why we are gathered again and what continues to drive this crisis.

We are here because Russia continues to occupy Ukraine’s autonomous region of Crimea, in defiance of international law, in defiance of its treaty obligations, the Helsinki Final Act, and the resolution passed by 100 members of the UN General Assembly that rejected the phony Crimea referendum and that called for Ukraine’s territorial integrity to be respected. Its authorities there have opened criminal cases against critics of the occupation and specifically targeted the Tatar community, subjecting them to beatings, arbitrary detentions, and police raids.

We are here because even today Moscow continues to arm, train, support, and fight alongside separatists in eastern Ukraine. On Wednesday, the OHCHR confirmed the continued “inflow of ammunition, weaponry and fighters from the Russian Federation into the territories controlled by the armed groups.” A robust combined Russian-separatist military force, led by Russian officers, continues to operate in Ukrainian territory.

We are here because Moscow and the separatists continue to obstruct international monitoring efforts, undermining the ceasefire and the prospects for peace. OSCE monitors face obstruction on a daily basis. And just this past weekend, OSCE monitors on patrol were threatened by separatists with automatic rifles.

We are here because—in blatant disregard for the commitments that have been made—the Russian-backed separatists continue to attack Ukrainian positions along the line of contact almost every day, at times with mortars banned under weapons withdrawal agreements.

Ukrainian soldiers and civilians continue to be killed or wounded in these attacks. And we cannot afford to get used to that.

The cumulative impact of Moscow's aggression remains the widespread and unnecessary suffering of Ukrainian civilians. Almost 1.5 million people are unable to return to their homes, their schools, and their daily lives. Winter has arrived, and as many as 300,000 people residing along the contact line are in need of blankets, fuel, and clothes to get them through the cold.

Yet despite the urgent need, few relief organizations are able to work in the separatist-controlled areas because, as we heard from John Ging, the separatists suspended and expelled UN and international humanitarian organizations in July. Only a fraction of the aid required by the two million people in need in these areas is getting through. We heard earlier a very moving account by the Ambassador from the Russian Federation on the plight of people living in Donbas, yet it is Russia's separatists that expelled humanitarian organizations and by-and-large haven't let them resume their function. We urge Moscow to finally honor the commitments that it made when it signed the Minsk Agreements and ensure that separatists lift restrictions and allow the immediate resumption of critically needed aid. We also encourage the Government of Ukraine to accelerate efforts to facilitate the movement of civilians and cargo across the contact line, and continue the provision of social, education, and economic benefits to internally displaced people and others in need.

There has also been a deeply concerning deterioration in the human rights situation in Donbas, as described in depth by the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission. Their report this week notes "new allegations of killings, torture and ill-treatment, illegal detention, and forced labor" in separatist controlled areas. The self-appointed authorities in the east have systematically failed to stop, investigate, or hold to account those believed responsible for abuses and ill-treatment. The Mission also reported incidents in areas controlled by the Ukrainian government, and we urge the government to immediately investigate all serious and credible allegations.

Just as we know who is driving this conflict, we know what must be done to end it. The September 2014 and February 2015 Minsk agreements are the best and only way to achieve peace in eastern Ukraine. Over the six months since we last met, we have seen how even incomplete steps toward implementation of Minsk—like the September 1st ceasefire—can reduce casualties and provide space for progress on other fronts.

What is needed now—what is long overdue—is full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

All sides must seize the opportunity to bring this conflict to a peaceful end. This year has seen some progress in this direction, with fewer casualties and some limited weapons withdrawals, and now is the time to implement Minsk and settle this conflict. This would allow the people of Ukraine to resume normal life and focus on building the democratic, European society that Ukrainians have fought and in many cases died for.

Let me be specific about the path to peace laid out by the Minsk agreements. Most immediately, the daily violations of the ceasefire line must come to an end; heavy weapons must be withdrawn from the frontline, and the OSCE must be allowed full access all the way to the border. Legitimate local elections must then be held in Donbas. Minsk is crystal clear on the requirements for these elections: they must be held according to Ukrainian law and OSCE standards, and they must be held under OSCE's observation. In October, President Putin recommitted to these Minsk-required standards and agreed on the urgent need for the sides to agree on election mechanics that conform to these standards. But since then, Russia and the

separatists have rejected proposals by Ukraine and the OSCE because they included elements like free media access and the right of Ukrainian political parties to participate. While the rest of Ukraine held local elections on October 25th and November 15th, residents in the Donbas continue to be deprived of legitimately elected representatives, and Russia and its surrogates continue to stonewall the work of the Trilateral Contact Group.

Holding legitimate elections is the key to unlocking the remaining steps of Minsk and enabling the separatist-held territories to be peacefully reintegrated back into the Ukrainian political and legal system. As agreed in Paris in October, the elections must be followed by implementation of Ukraine's special status law and entry into force of the amnesty legislation. Constitutional reform must also occur, and Ukraine has been working toward this for many months—its draft amendments on decentralization were endorsed by the Venice Commission's international legal experts and in August received the first of two required approvals by Parliament. And finally, Russia and the separatists must fulfil other outstanding Minsk obligations, which include withdrawing all foreign fighters and military equipment, releasing all hostages and unlawfully detained persons – including Nadia Savchenko and Oleh Sentsov – and turning over control of the international border back to the sovereign Government of Ukraine.

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11. Yemen

Ambassador Power delivered remarks at a UN Security Council briefing on Yemen on December 22, 2015. She urged all parties to commit to a ceasefire, abide by international humanitarian law, and allow for a political transition in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the outcomes of the National Dialogue, and relevant Security Council resolutions. Her remarks are excerpted below and available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/7072>.

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...[L]istening to the remarks here this morning, one thing is clear: that the Security Council is united on Yemen.

We are united, to begin with, in our support for the work undertaken by the Special Envoy and his team over the last week in Switzerland and well beyond. You negotiated critical confidence-building measures, a mechanism to seek to de-escalate military tensions, and improved humanitarian access to all governorates—these are important steps forward, and we commend you for your work. As others have noted, after nearly nine months of fighting and more than 2,700 civilian deaths, such steps are long overdue and the United States stands ready to work with the rest of the Council to hold all sides to their commitments in advance of the resumption of talks next month.

Today has also shown that this Council has a common vision of what must happen next. As the negotiators are returning home from Switzerland, let me highlight three of the most important messages we have sent as a Council today.

First, all sides must do more to facilitate access for life-saving humanitarian assistance and shipments of the most basic commercial goods. ...

This has to stop. Recent events have shown that access can be improved even in the absence of a lasting political agreement. ...

Secondly, the Council today reaffirmed its conviction that the crisis will be solved not through military action, but—as we’ve all heard again and again—through political dialogue, like the one that the Special Envoy has managed to restart in Switzerland. This progress reinforces the message the Council previously sent through resolution 2216, which called unequivocally for a consensus-based political solution to the conflict based on dialogue.

Such dialogue will lead to peace only if all parties fully commit to its success and are willing to make hard compromises. The lack of trust among the parties after everything is understandable, particularly after the Houthis violate one agreement after another in their military push southward—the events that precipitated the current phase of the conflict. But for the sake of the Yemeni people, the warring parties must now come together to engage in good faith. They must be prepared to show flexibility and adhere to compromises once the talks conclude. Even when there may be provocations on the ground, everyone must be resolute in their commitment to return to a political transition based on the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the outcomes of the National Dialogue, and relevant Security Council resolutions.

As the transition takes shape—and I realize we’re not there yet—it will be critical that it incorporate not only armed groups, but also Yemeni women and members of Yemeni civil society. And we commend you, Special Envoy, for your dedicated effort to this end. Such representatives must have the freedom to leave Yemen to take part in peace talks, and we hope that they are also able to leave Yemen to provide this Council with firsthand perspectives of conditions on the ground.

Third and finally, the Council made clear today that all sides must commit to a de-escalation of the hostilities and a lasting ceasefire. The ceasefire that began last week was imperfect, but it was a step. The United States joins others in welcoming President Hadi’s commitment to extending it, and we urge forces on the ground to respect this halt in attacks. To bolster this ceasefire, we hope that all parties will send empowered representatives to the UN’s proposed Coordination and De-escalation Committee without delay.

While urging all sides to respect this ceasefire, I also want to reiterate that all parties must fully abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law—which, as High Commissioner Zeid reported, has been violated repeatedly during this conflict with horrific consequences. Militias loyal to the Houthis and former President Ali Abdullah Saleh must stop any and all indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas, including in Taiz, and they must stop their cross-border attacks. We will also continue to urge the Saudi-led coalition to ensure lawful and discriminate targeting and to thoroughly investigate all credible allegations of civilian casualties, and make adjustments as needed to avoid such incidents.

Today’s Council session has sent a single, unified message about what must be done in Yemen. We stand behind the Special Envoy’s efforts and we urge all sides to continue moving toward a political transition. In the interim, we call on them to improve access, to de-escalate hostilities, and to commit to a lasting ceasefire.

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On December 23, 2015, the United States, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, issued a Security Council press statement on the situation in Yemen. The press statement follows and is available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/7083>.

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The members of the Security Council welcomed the participation of Yemeni parties in peace consultations from 15 to 20 December 2015, held under the auspices of the United Nations. They expressed their appreciation and reiterated their full support for the efforts of the United Nations and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen.

The members of the Security Council recalled Security Council resolutions 2014 (2011), 2051 (2012), 2140 (2014), 2201 (2015) and 2216 (2015), emphasizing the need for a peaceful, orderly, inclusive and Yemeni-led transition process. The members of the Security Council reiterated their demand for the full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, and reiterated their call from resolution 2216 (2015) on all Yemeni parties to resume and accelerate United Nations-brokered inclusive political consultations.

The members of the Security Council commended the parties and the Special Envoy for a productive round of talks, which provided a foundation for the next phases of the peace process. They welcomed the agreement of the parties to a cessation of hostilities, expressed deep concern at the number of violations of the cessation of hostilities committed during the talks, and emphasised that the cessation of hostilities and compliance with related Security Council resolutions should lead to a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire. In this regard, the members of the Security Council welcomed the commitment of the parties to continue the work of the Coordination and De-escalation Committee established at the talks in order to proactively reduce the number of violations, and urged all parties to adhere to the cessation of hostilities and to exercise maximum restraint if violations or reports of violations emerge.

The members of the Security Council welcomed the commitment of the parties at the talks to ensure safe, rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian aid delivery to all affected governorates, including in particular Taiz, and called on the parties to respect this commitment in the future. They encouraged the parties to urgently finalize agreements on the release of all non-combatant and arbitrary detainees, and to finalize agreement on a package of confidence-building measures.

The members of the Security Council noted with appreciation the progress made during the talks towards a framework for negotiations based firmly on resolution 2216 (2015) and other relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, capable of leading to an end to the conflict. In this respect, the members of the Security Council called on all Member States to support the commitment of the Yemeni parties to the political dialogue.

The members of the Security Council urged the Yemeni parties to fulfill commitments made during the talks and welcomed their commitment to a new round of talks in mid-January 2016, building on the progress that has been achieved so far. They reaffirmed their call on Yemeni parties to engage without preconditions and in good faith, including by resolving their differences through dialogue and consultations, rejecting acts of violence to achieve political goals, and refraining from provocation and all unilateral actions to undermine the political transition. The members of the Security Council strongly condemned all violence,

attempts or threats to use violence to intimidate those participating in United Nations-brokered consultations and emphasized that such action is unacceptable.

The members of the Security Council emphasized that the United Nations-brokered inclusive political dialogue must be a Yemeni-led process, with the intention of brokering a consensus-based political solution to Yemen's crisis, in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and relevant Security Council resolutions.

The members of the Security Council expressed their support and appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, who will continue to engage with all Yemeni stakeholders to take steps towards a durable ceasefire and a mechanism for the withdrawal of forces, relinquishment of all additional arms seized from military and security institutions, release of political prisoners and the resumption of an inclusive political transition process in accordance with Security Council resolution 2216 (2015). The members of the Council recognized the importance of United Nations ceasefire monitoring capacity to support the process.

The members of the Security Council expressed deep concern about the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen, which continues to worsen. The members of the Security Council recognized that over 80 per cent of the population—21 million people—require some form of humanitarian assistance and emphasized that the civilian impact of the conflict has been devastating, particularly for children and the 2.5 million internally displaced persons. The members of the Security Council expressed particular concern at the food security situation, with over 7 million people suffering severe food insecurity and a doubling in the number of children under five who are acutely malnourished. They recognized that functioning markets inside Yemen are essential to address the situation, as humanitarian assistance alone cannot overcome a humanitarian crisis of this scale.

The members of the Security Council noted that the humanitarian appeal for 2015 has been 52 per cent funded and urged the international community to contribute to the humanitarian appeal for 2016.

The members of the Security Council urged all parties to fulfill their commitments to facilitate the delivery of commercial goods, humanitarian assistance and fuel for civilian purposes to all parts of Yemen, as well as urgent measures to further ensure rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access. They also stressed the urgent need for commercially shipped food, medicine, fuel and other vital supplies to continue to enter Yemen through all of Yemen's ports without delay as a humanitarian imperative because of the heavy dependence of Yemen and its people on imported food and fuel. In that regard, they urged all parties to work with the new United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism. The members of the Security Council called upon all sides to comply with international humanitarian law, including to take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects, to end the recruitment and use of children in violation of applicable international law, and to urgently work with the United Nations and humanitarian aid organizations to bring assistance to those in need throughout the country.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their strong commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen.

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12. Protecting Civilians During Peacekeeping Operations

On February 12, 2014, Ambassador Jeffrey DeLaurentis, U.S. Alternate Representative to the United Nations, addressed the Security Council at a debate on the protection of civilians during UN peacekeeping operations. His remarks, available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/5942>, are excerpted below.

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...[A]rmed conflicts today are rarely fought between opposing military forces lined up against each other on an isolated battlefield. Instead, they tend to involve, on one side or perhaps both, irregular forces that live in close proximity to civilian populations. The result is that, when fighting takes place, civilians are often at grave risk either because they are intentionally targeted, or because they otherwise find themselves in the line of fire. Even when civilians do survive, the conflict may quickly drive them from their homes, exposing them to a new set of risks. The responsibility for protecting civilians in conflict, therefore, is both an important and a highly complicated one—a job we are still learning how to do effectively.

In recent years, this Council has regularly directed UN peace missions to protect civilians under imminent threat. Establishing a mandate, however, is a profoundly simple task compared to fulfilling one. The challenge we face goes beyond establishing goals to actually save and secure the lives of civilians in conflict. This challenge can be broken down into three core elements: prioritization, planning, and prevention.

The first of these elements is straightforward. The protection of civilians must be identified as a key priority in any peacekeeping mission from the very earliest stages. No one is helped, and the credibility of the UN is seriously damaged, when UN troops stand by while civilians are wounded or killed.

A second imperative is planning, a process that should begin as soon as the evidence of a potential crisis comes to the Council's attention. The best way to protect civilians is to act in time to keep conflicts from breaking out. With effective and early planning, peacekeeping missions can be designed with civilian protection uppermost in mind, with the right equipment and the best mix of military, police, and civilian personnel pre-positioned to respond to potential crises.

Part of planning is to learn from the past while acknowledging that no two situations are exactly alike. In Haiti, civilian protection has centered on efforts to return displaced families to their homes and to train an effective national police. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we are finally seeing the benefits of a mission that has emphasized civilian protection and that is backed by a strong political and diplomatic strategy. It is worth noting in this context that the UN mission in the DRC has developed a comprehensive plan for protecting civilians, which includes mapping specific threats and integrating that information into overall planning. Making such data available to mission commanders can spell the difference between success and failure.

All elements of the UN hierarchy have a role to play in planning for civilian protection. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations can facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices across missions, helping to disseminate lessons learned. But mission-specific planning remains critical and DPKO has a duty to assist each mission in developing a plan that fits the

unique circumstances it will face. Meanwhile, the members of this Council have a responsibility, through the questions we ask and the wording of the resolutions we adopt, to make clear the importance we attach to this issue.

This brings me to the third element in our discussion today—prevention. While we can make civilian protection a priority and devote ample resources to planning, we can still find ourselves trying to save lives in ways that were not foreseen. In Cote d’Ivoire in 2010, a political crisis required rapid adjustments to enable a democratic transition and contain civilian violence. Just recently, in South Sudan, UN Mission outposts served as emergency gathering points for more than 80,000 internally-displaced persons. Inside those overcrowded compounds, desperate families received security, food, water, and health care—babies were born, children studied, and the sick and wounded were treated.

Nothing is more predictable in international peacekeeping than the likelihood that unpredictable events will occur. The more flexibility we build into our preparations and deployments, the better off we will be. We have made progress, but we can do more to pre-position equipment and to consider in advance how we might transport peacekeepers to remote locations with relatively little notice and shift resources from one area to another. And we must do the best job we can in integrating information about changing political dynamics into our peacekeeping strategies. We cannot do everything; but we can at least act with wisdom and determination in response to what we have learned.

We should also continue to explore the promise of new technology. The deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles in MONUSCO has been useful in identifying hostile troop movements and locating civilian populations in need, helping better protect civilians and peacekeepers. Early warning networks should be part of any plan for protecting civilians, and the UN should strive to be connected, where appropriate, to all such networks.

Madam President, the protection of civilians is an integral part of the UN peacekeeping mission, and must therefore be given a top priority in the planning we do, the preparations we make, and the operations we implement on the ground. We must keep learning, and continually review our efforts to identify what we should be doing better. In the UN, the DPKO Best Practices Unit is driving this effort. We all have a responsibility to do our part—as UN officials, Security Council members, troop contributing nations, and members of the world community. Our credibility is at stake, but far more important, so are the lives of our neighbors. ...

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C. CONFLICT AVOIDANCE

1. Atrocities Prevention

On March 27, 2015, at the 28th session of the Human Rights Council, the United States delegation provided an explanation of its vote in favor of a resolution on the prevention of genocide but in opposition to proposed amendments to the resolution. The resolution was adopted on March 27, 2015. U.N. Doc. A/HRC/RES/28/34. The U.S. explanation of vote, available at <https://geneva.usmission.gov/2015/03/27/eov-on-item-3-resolution-entitled-prevention-of-genocide/>, states:

The United States strongly supports this important resolution on the prevention of genocide, and we urge Member States to vote NO on the amendments. We also call States to vote yes in favor of all paragraphs. We appreciate the comprehensive negotiation process on this resolution and are dismayed at the tabling of unclear and unhelpful amendments by some states at a very late stage and in a politicized fashion. Consequently, we view these amendments as hostile.

On April 24, 2015, Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall addressed the Chicago Council on Global Affairs on the third anniversary of the Atrocities Prevention Board on the subject of U.S. efforts at preventing mass atrocities. Under Secretary Sewall's remarks are excerpted below and available at <http://www.state.gov/j/remarks/241222.htm>.

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Three years ago yesterday, President Obama announced that mass atrocities prevention is both a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility. The President committed the United States to becoming a global leader in preventing large-scale violence against civilians worldwide, but he made clear that the U.S. cannot and should not intervene militarily every time there is an injustice or an imminent atrocities threat. Instead he called for the U.S. government to use its full arsenal of tools—diplomatic, political, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement—to prevent these terrible crimes.

As one such tool, the President established the Atrocities Prevention Board, referred to in government-speak as the APB, to put this prevention approach into practice. This interagency forum serves a horizon-scanning function by identifying atrocity risks by looking at early warning indicators and bringing together senior officials from across the executive branch to develop coordinated, whole-of-government responses to mitigate them.

The Atrocities Prevention Board speeds up the cogs of our government's bureaucracy by bringing attention to at-risk cases within the interagency policy process. To be clear, the APB was never envisioned as the singular solution to mass killings, nor is it meant to replace the work we are already engaged in to address atrocities. Rather, its role is to prompt coordination among the larger U.S. national security apparatus to better address these problems early on by recognizing warning signs. The APB's comparative advantage, then, is focusing on potential or ongoing violence that might escape attention in existing policy fora rather than expending its energy focusing on cases where threats to civilians—such as Assad's brutalities against the Syrian people—are well-recognized and are the subject of extensive work in regionally-focused policy discussions. This early warning, preventive approach gives the U.S. government additional reaction time to plan and implement appropriate de-escalation interventions. Another benefit of this whole-of-government approach is that when threats emerge, the APB can marshal attention, technical expertise, and occasionally financial resources from across the government to better support our embassy-led responses on the ground.

On this third anniversary of the APB, we are invigorated by the U.S. government's progress in further highlighting atrocities prevention into the foreign policy process and institutionalizing the capabilities, analysis, and expertise that is needed to do prevention work.

Since becoming Under Secretary for Civilian Security, I've worked to strengthen the State Department's internal response to the threat of mass atrocities and to build a closer relationship with our prevention partner, the U.S. Agency for International Development. I have also redirected the focus of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO), to provide dedicated expertise and a formal analysis, planning, and coordinating role in support of APB priorities. As the new hub for State's atrocities prevention work, the bureau works with USAID to produce assessments of the drivers of conflict in a targeted set of countries as well as corresponding risk assessments. This new analytical atrocities assessment framework allows CSO to work with the Department's regional bureaus to develop evidence-based, civilian-focused intervention options, including diplomatic, programmatic, multilateral, and economic efforts. CSO is also developing a growing collection of best practices that are informing more targeted, effective government responses.

The APB has also formalized and increased our coordination efforts. At the State Department, we've established an Anti-Atrocities Coordination Group to help facilitate State's work in at-risk countries, engage with regional experts who know the political, regional, and sub-national dynamics best, and help chart the course for institutionalizing the necessary atrocity prevention tools within the normal State processes. Finally, we continue to coordinate with our embassies on atrocity prevention work. Frontline officers are often the first to detect and report on emerging atrocity risks, and chiefs of mission can request that the APB conduct risk analysis of their host countries as well as identify appropriate interventions to mitigate the risk.

Let me provide some examples to illustrate how the U.S. Government identifies and responds to risks of extreme violence. When the Department's atrocities watchers grew concerned about escalating tensions in Burundi, they sounded the alarm. This concern immediately initiated the APB process, elevating the level of attention on the threat. The State Department and USAID put together an interagency team from both the regional and functional parts of the government to conduct a thorough analysis of risks for violence, which led to a broad diplomatic engagement and programmatic strategy that was operationalized by our embassy in Bujumbura. The APB process also galvanized over \$7 million in State and USAID funds to address the risks identified in the assessment through creative programming. For instance, the USG-financed projects provide conflict resolution training for community leaders, support a saving and lending program to improve economic opportunities for vulnerable youth, and empower civil society partners to monitor hate speech. With this additional funding, the Department was also able to deploy a prevention advisor to support the embassy in advance of Burundi's upcoming national elections beginning in May. By sounding the alarm early and laying the groundwork two years ago, we are now in a much better position to monitor and respond to the worrying signs of political tension that are coming to the surface in Burundi. Let me be clear, we remain deeply concerned about the rising tensions, and the international community and the region must be vigilant as we urge President Nkurunziza to respect of the two term limit provision the Arusha Accords and continue to press for credible, peaceful elections. We continue to call on all parties in Burundi to play a peaceful role in this electoral process and refrain from violence. We have warned anyone who might be considering violence that they will not be welcome in the United States and that, as appropriate, we will deny visas to anyone who orders, plans, or participates in [widespread or systematic] acts of violence [against

the civilian population based on political belief]. We will continue to monitor the situation in Burundi closely in the coming days and weeks and take steps to prevent, mitigate, and address violence.

Let's also look at the Central African Republic. When violence quickly escalated in that African nation in December 2013, the Board's atrocity prevention experts worked hand in hand with our regional bureaus as senior leaders from across government identified key interventions, including from DOD, USAID, and State. Together, over the last two years, we provided over \$100 million in peacekeeping and security assistance and over \$30 million in funding for conflict mitigation, reconciliation, justice and accountability, and governance. This has funded everything from community and grassroots peace and reconciliation programs to the purchase of vehicles and other equipment desperately needed by peacekeeping forces. This is in addition to the \$452 million we have provided in assessed funds to the UN for the UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSCA). With 2.5 million people—over half the country's population—in dire need of humanitarian assistance, we have also provided almost \$200 million in critical aid, saving thousands of lives. And we have married funding with increased diplomatic and public engagement, including naming a Special Representative and transmitting a peace message recorded by President Obama on local radio stations throughout the country at the height of the crisis.

Another example of this Administration's commitment to atrocity prevention is U.S. support for the counter-Lord's Resistance Army mission in the central Africa region that has led to dramatic results in protecting civilians from LRA atrocities. Over the past three years, the Ugandan-led African Union Regional Task Force—with Defense Department logistics and support from U.S. Special Operations Forces and State civilian liaisons—has removed three of the LRA's top five most senior and notorious commanders from the battlefield. The United States worked with leaders from the Task Force's member countries to ensure that LRA number-two commander Dominic Ongwen, who was transferred to the International Criminal Court in January, faced justice, and we continue to offer up to \$5 million in rewards for information leading to the arrest, transfer, or conviction of LRA leader Joseph Kony. During that time, defections and releases from the LRA have significantly increased, with more than 250 individuals putting down their arms and leaving the LRA, and the number of people killed by the LRA has dropped by over 75 percent. According to the U.N., the number of people displaced by the LRA decreased from approximately 400,000 one year ago to roughly 160,000 in 2014, the lowest number in a decade.

Obviously, the U.S. [government] has been focused on countering the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) by building a strong multilateral coalition to address the spreading threat as it grew in Syria and then Iraq. In this case, the APB did not need to play a role in raising awareness of ISIL's atrocities; instead, it was able to play a value-added role by focusing attention on particular cases, helping to prompt swift action. For example, when ISIL drove tens of thousands of members of the Iraqi Yazidi religious minority from their homes last year, the APB again helped ensure a swift USG response by working with our Embassy and consulates in Iraq along with the State Department's Religious Freedom Office to collect credible information. This information helped inform the U.S. decision to launch strikes that degraded ISIL's capabilities and gave the local Kurdish military forces enough momentum to break the siege and free the Yazidis from Mount Sinjar.

We recently registered another achievement in advancing a preventive approach to mass atrocities—this time in Nigeria, which conducted a largely peaceful election last month. The

U.S. government has long been focused on preventing violence in Nigeria, and the APB worked to complement that focus by spurring contingency planning and advocating for more of an atrocity prevention focus into the normal interagency policy processes. To prevent the violence that left over 800 dead after the 2011 national vote, the APB provided support for the implementation of the USG's election assistance strategy for Nigeria, contributing to and enhancing multiple USG agencies' efforts to prevent violence and ensure transparency and credibility more than a year in advance of the election. And while there were dozens killed during this election, which is too many still, there was a dramatic decrease in violence—a decrease many attribute to increased transparency, credibility, and a democratic transfer of power. The APB also helped galvanize the interagency to more effectively address the horrific atrocities being committed by the violent extremist group, Boko Haram, identifying gaps in the regional governments' security approach, finding some new resources, and developing programs to strengthen the region's and local communities' capacity to respond. For example, the APB has contributed to ongoing efforts by the USG to work with the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Benin to support their cooperative efforts to take on Boko Haram, which may eventually include a Multinational Joint Task Force to better coordinate these efforts, while at the same time supporting local communities and law enforcement efforts that address the root causes of the insurgency. In northeast Nigeria, USAID has launched an initiative to improve stability and strengthen democratic institutions. The program focuses on strengthening links between local government, civil society, and communities to mitigate and prevent conflict, increasing access to credible information, and reducing youth vulnerability to violent extremist influences. We are encouraged by the commitment of Nigeria's President-elect, Muhammadu Buhari, to tackle the Boko Haram threat.

In addition to amplify our prevention efforts, we are also seeking to encourage like-minded partners to adopt a similar approach. I recently led a group of State and USAID officials to meet with UN interlocutors who oversee issues of atrocity prevention, which resulted in a collaborative dialogue that I intend to regularize. We are also further highlighting mass atrocities prevention in ongoing bilateral and multilateral diplomatic discussions, such as the U.S.-EU Civilian Security and Development Dialogue.

Despite its important achievements and the President's commitment to elevating atrocity prevention as a U.S. foreign policy priority, challenges remain. Chief among these are resource constraints. While APB meetings do not require funding, effective prevention tools do depend on resources, particularly sources of funding that can be accessed and mobilized swiftly. While we have sometimes succeeded in marshaling funding to respond to an escalating crisis, in this constrained budget environment, we often see prevention needs that we are unable to meet before the crisis escalates. In a world of proliferating crises and limited resources, prevention work is more critical than ever.

Some observers have expressed dissatisfaction with the Obama Administration's commitment to preventing mass atrocities across the globe. I understand their perspective. The APB has not halted violence worldwide; in its three years of existence, it has not protected every civilian from governments, insurgents and terrorists. As imperfect as our current efforts are, they represent undeniable progress—both in further prioritizing atrocity prevention and in delivering concrete results. On the APB's third anniversary, we are certainly closer to realizing the President's intent that the United States government embraces the mission of preventing mass atrocities. It is my hope that three years from now, the United States will have made its tools, resources, and actions even more effective in preventing mass violence against civilians.

President Obama took a bold step by elevating concern about mass atrocities as a foreign policy priority. Atrocity prevention, he said, is not just a matter of values and a moral responsibility but also a core national security interest. The President acknowledged that “It can be tempting to throw up our hands and resign ourselves to man’s endless capacity for cruelty,” but he reminded us that Elie Wiesel and other holocaust survivors chose never to give up. Nor can the United States of America.

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On October 1, 2015, Ambassador Pressman delivered remarks at a high-level ministerial event on Security Council action against mass atrocities. Ambassador Pressman discussed the importance of acting to prevent or respond to mass atrocities. His remarks are excerpted below and available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/6851>.

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The President of the United States has stated that the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and also a core moral responsibility of the United States ...

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There is difference of course between pledging and doing.

Doing the hard work of responding to and preventing mass atrocities means organizing governments to be proactive and responsive to the earliest indicators of potential atrocities before they metastasize into actual ones. That is why President Obama established the Atrocities Prevention Board in our government to focus our government on the risk of mass atrocities, guide resources and programming to address those risks, and help to develop tools and options that can boost our chances for effective prevention before wide-spread violence breaks out and the costs of intervention become much greater.

Doing the hard work of preventing mass atrocities and genocide can mean many things.

It can mean supporting credible and impartial fact-finding and national and international justice mechanisms that are often our best defense against the danger of collective blame and thereby our best defense against collective revenge that can generate cycle upon cycle of mass atrocity. It’s why the United States has supported the establishment of the Central African Republic’s Special Criminal Court and is seeking to ensure the establishment of a credible accountability mechanism for South Sudan. It is why the United States fully supported the establishment of the ICTY and the ICTR and its residual mechanism, to ensure accountability for the atrocities committed in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. And it is why, most recently, the United States also facilitated the surrender or transfer of two accused to the International Criminal Court.

Doing the hard work of preventing and responding to mass atrocities also means advocating for the Security Council’s action and engagement on crimes of unspeakable proportions. That is why the United States has supported robust Security Council action to respond to mass atrocities that were occurring in Central African Republic and in South Sudan

and it is why we supported, and continue to support, Security Council action to address the mass atrocities being perpetrated in Syria.

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Doing the hard work of preventing and responding to mass atrocities fundamentally means working together. Because no nation, no matter how strong, how powerful, how rich, can solve the world's problems—particularly problems as troubling as these—alone.

That is why the United States has supported robust protection of civilian mandates in peacekeeping missions authorized by the Security Council and has invested enormous energy into ensuring that UN peacekeeping can perform critical protection tasks by training tens of thousands of peacekeepers around the globe.

In short, the United States is committed to identifying, responding to, and preventing mass atrocities. This is what the United States already does. This is how the United States already conducts itself. This is what the United States will continue to do in the Security Council.

Unfortunately, the irresponsible use of the veto by Security Council members can deprive the United Nations of some of its most effective tools for preventing and responding to mass atrocities. In Syria, the Assad regime has committed widespread and systematic atrocities against its own people. Yet, four vetoes by members of the Security Council stood in the way of the Security Council taking timely and decisive action to end mass atrocities and prevent further atrocities from occurring.

The Security Council has the authority to play a critical role in stopping mass atrocities. With that authority comes great responsibility. All five permanent members—indeed, all members of the UN Security Council—have a responsibility to respond urgently when faced with mass atrocities that threaten international peace and security. The United States embraces this responsibility, and urges fellow Council members to do the same. ...

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2. Responsibility to Protect

Ambassador Pressman delivered remarks at the UN General Assembly interactive dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect (“R2P”) in New York on September 8, 2015. His remarks are excerpted below and available at <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/6821>.

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Thank you very much for organizing this important dialogue, and thank you for your commitment to stand up in the face of atrocity crimes and to efforts to prevent such violence.

As we look at the challenges we confront today, the critical importance of fulfilling the responsibility to protect is clear. All of our states have undertaken this responsibility, which has been recognized repeatedly, including through Security Council resolutions emphasizing that governments bear the primary responsibility to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Ten years ago, we collectively took a step together. Ten years on from our initial commitment to the concept of the responsibility to protect, our resolve must remain not only intact, but stronger than ever.

The 70th anniversary of the United Nations offers an important opportunity to reaffirm our support for, and to strengthen our ability to implement our commitments, including our commitment to take collective action to protect populations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, if a state is manifestly failing to do so. While we may not always agree on a specific course of action in a specific case, particularly when national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their own populations, we must all continue to be guided by the principles we agreed upon ten years ago.

While today we can salute the unity reached ten years ago and hail our continued commitment to principles like those enshrined in the concept of the Responsibility to Protect – those achievements, without more, will mean little. They will mean little to the people of Syria who continue to suffer from atrocities. Those achievements, without more, will mean little to the people of Darfur who, ten years ago, were at the top of the international peace and security agenda and now, ten years later, as attention has faded, have confronted violence that has caused more displacement in the last year than at any point since the start of the conflict some ten years ago. Those achievements, without more, will mean little to the people who are supposed to benefit, the people who are supposed to be protected if our diplomatic consensus does not translate into political commitment and action. That means that we cannot tolerate status quo in places like Darfur; we cannot respond idly to failures to respect ceasefires in South Sudan; we must support the commencement of meaningful dialogue and end the dangerous brinksmanship in Burundi; and we must address head-on the politics of hate and discrimination in places like Burma. Fundamentally, it means consensus on the fundamentals of the concept must also lead to political commitments to act upon it.

Just as states have the primary responsibility to protect their populations, the international community also has a responsibility to encourage and help states in fulfilling those responsibilities. This year, let us look hard at how we can translate these commitments into meaningful actions; words into real tools of conflict and atrocity prevention.

We can and should make better use of existing research to help identify conditions that increase the risk of or susceptibility to atrocities. Indeed, the United Nations has published a Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes. And this framework can assist both Member States and the UN Secretariat in looking more closely at situations of risk, and taking action. These tools, when used proactively, can help mitigate threats and save lives. Let us make sure we are using the best analysis and the best early warning.

We know that United Nations peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and special political missions are often on the front lines, mediating between parties to conflict, addressing factors that undermine stability, and protecting civilians directly, when necessary and mandated. Over the years, the United Nations and Member States have improved the peacekeeping tool kit to prevent and deter violence against civilians. ...

Colleagues, let us not forget that justice is a part of protection. Accountability is an essential element in the battle to deter and prevent the recurrence of atrocities. It is incumbent upon the international community to help governments create, maintain, and operate credible and effective national courts where possible, or to support international and other mechanisms where necessary and appropriate.

We should focus our attention on how the United Nations exercises its good offices, conducts mediation, and undertakes peacebuilding, and work with our partners here today to better support prevention efforts, and to halt a return to violence where once it has occurred.

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Cross References

Burundi, **Chapter 1.B.3.b.**

Temporary Protected Status for Syria and Yemen, **Chapter 1.C.1.**

Countering violent extremism, **Chapter 3.B.1.e.**

International tribunals, **Chapter 3.C.**

Palestinian Authority efforts to accede to treaties, **Chapter 4.A.1.**

Actions at the Human Rights Council regarding Syria, **Chapter 6.A.4.c.**

Sexual violence in conflict, **Chapter 6.B.2.**

Israel's participation at the UN, **Chapter 7.A.4.**

Palestinian membership in international organizations, **Chapter 7.B.**

Status of Ukraine in IAEA report, **Chapter 9.B.1.**

Libya, **Chapter 9.B.7.**

Recording Israel as place of birth on passport (Zivotofsky), **Chapter 9.C.**

Airline discrimination against Israeli passport holders, **Chapter 11.A.4.**

Termination of Burundi as beneficiary under AGOA, **Chapter 11.D.2.b.**

Syria-related sanctions, **Chapter 16.A.2.**

Sanctions relating to Sudan, **Chapter 16.A.4.**

Sanctions relating to Burundi, **Chapter 16.A.8.a**

Sanctions relating to Burma, **Chapter 16.A.8.c**

Sanctions relating to South Sudan, **Chapter 16.A.8.f.**

Sanctions relating to Central African Republic, **Chapter 16.A.8.g.**

Sanctions relating to Yemen, **Chapter 16.A.8.k**

Syria, **Chapter 18.A.2.**

Middle East nuclear weapon-free zone, **Chapter 19.B.4.d.**

Syria chemical weapons, **Chapter 19.D.2.**