

Contents

CHAPTER 17	<u>633</u>
International Conflict Resolution and Avoidance	<u>633</u>
A. MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS	<u>633</u>
B. PEACEKEEPING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	<u>635</u>
1. UN Security Council Resolution on Ceasefire during the COVID-19 Pandemic	<u>635</u>
2. Afghanistan.....	<u>636</u>
3. Syria.....	<u>648</u>
4. Armenia and Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.....	<u>653</u>
5. Sudan.....	<u>655</u>
6. South Sudan	<u>657</u>
7. Libya	<u>661</u>
8. Yemen.....	<u>664</u>
C. CONFLICT AVOIDANCE AND ATROCITIES PREVENTION	<u>664</u>
Congressional Report under the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act	<u>664</u>
Cross References	<u>666</u>

CHAPTER 17

International Conflict Resolution and Avoidance

A. MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

See Chapter 9 for discussion of the agreements to normalize relations with Israel (the Abraham Accords).

In January of 2020, President Trump delivered to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People,” (“Vision for Peace”) an 80-page document which Prime Minister Netanyahu endorsed. See January 28, 2020 joint statements, available at <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-prime-minister-netanyahu-state-israel-joint-statements/>. A White House fact sheet on the Vision for Peace, including a link to the full document, is available at <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trumps-vision-peace-prosperity-brighter-future-israel-palestinian-people/>.

On February 13, 2020, the U.S. Mission to the UN released a statement by Ambassador Craft on the release by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet of a database of companies doing business in Israeli-controlled territories. Ambassador Craft’s statement follows and is available at <https://usun.usmission.gov/statement-by-ambassador-craft-on-the-release-of-a-database-of-companies-doing-business-in-israeli-controlled-territories/>. Secretary Pompeo also condemned the UN High Commissioner’s publication of the database, calling on other UN member states to reject the boycott, divestment, and sanction (“BDS”) campaign, in a press statement, available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/un-office-of-the-high-commissioner-for-human-rights-database-report-release/index.html>. On November 19, 2020, Secretary Pompeo announced the policy of the United States opposing the BDS campaign and directing the identification of organizations engaging in anti-Semitic BDS activities. The press statement, available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/identifying-organizations-engaged-in-anti-semitic-bds-activities/>, further

explains that the State Department will ensure that its funds are not used to support the global BDS campaign and that foreign assistance funding is not provided to organizations engaged in anti-Semitic BDS activities.

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Earlier this week the Security Council met to discuss President Trump’s Vision for Peace, and used that opportunity to speak as one in reinforcing the importance of dialogue and the role of the international community in supporting good-faith engagement between the Palestinians and Israelis. It is thus appalling to me that UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet decided yesterday to release a database of international companies doing business in Israeli-controlled territories. This database was created by the discredited UN Human Rights Council with the intent to fuel economic retaliation against listed companies.

The publication of this database is shameful, and only serves to further divide the very people we are trying to bring together. We expect more from the leadership of the UN to foster reconciliation and communication, while not being a source of division. In releasing this database, the High Commissioner falls prey, by intent or accident, to the very impulses that have impeded the path to peace for seventy years. UN leadership, including the Secretary-General, must make their views and voices heard so there can be no mistaking the UN’s intentions as they pertain to peace in the Middle East.

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On September 14, 2020, Jason Mack, counselor for economic and social affairs for the U.S. Mission to the UN, provided the U.S. explanation of vote on a resolution on the repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of Palestinians. That explanation of vote is excerpted below and available at <https://usun.usmission.gov/explanation-of-vote-on-the-resolution-on-the-economic-and-social-repercussions-of-the-israeli-occupation-on-the-living-conditions-of-the-palestinian/>.

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The United States is disappointed yet again at the presentation of a one-sided and biased resolution, which we cannot support. The resolution before us, during this 2021 ECOSOC session, is virtually identical to those previously considered by ECOSOC—its deficiencies should be well known to this body by now.

We remain very concerned about the decidedly one-sided bias against Israel that still exists within the United Nations’ Economic and Social Council. This resolution, like others before it, as well as the accompanying report, do nothing to advance the aspirations of the Palestinians and Israelis for a more secure, peaceful, and prosperous future. The resolution and the report are unbalanced, and unfairly single out Israel in a forum that is not intended to be politicized.

The only realistic path to end this conflict is through negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace. Biased and counterproductive resolutions and reports like these have no place in our discourse. Rather than perpetuating politicized resolutions and reports such as this, the international community should rally around productive and tangible efforts that improve the situation on the ground.

For example, the historic Abraham Accords breakthrough is the most significant step toward peace in the Middle East in over 25 years. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is the first Arab state to recognize Israel since the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty was signed on October 26, 1994; and just last week, the Kingdom of Bahrain joined the UAE in establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel. The countries have committed to the exchange of embassies and ambassadors, and have begun cooperation in a broad range of fields including education, healthcare, trade, and security. Expanded business and financial ties between these thriving economies will accelerate growth and economic opportunity across the Middle East. The deal provides a foundation for further advances toward regional peace in the future. The Accords will allow further exploration of the U.S. Vision for Peace which lays out a comprehensive, fair, realistic and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians and in the region.

The United States stands ready to help promote economic security. The United States will work with all parties to improve conditions and promote the cause of peace, but resolutions such as this do nothing to improve the situation. As such, we have no choice but to vote against this resolution.

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B. PEACEKEEPING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. UN Security Council Resolution on Ceasefire during the COVID-19 Pandemic

On July 1, 2020, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2532, calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda, responding to the UN Secretary General's call for a worldwide ceasefire to combat the coronavirus pandemic. S.C. Res. 2532 (July 1, 2020). The U.S. explanation of vote on the resolution is excerpted below and available at <https://usun.usmission.gov/explanation-of-vote-on-the-resolution-on-covid-19/>.

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Throughout our engagement in fighting the spread of this pandemic, we have consistently emphasized the need for complete transparency, objectivity, and the timely sharing of public health data and information with the international community. We have also stressed the importance of collecting accurate, science-based data and analyzing the origins, characteristics, and spread of the virus. While the United States generally supports the resolution voted on today, we would like to note that it does not include crucial language to emphasize transparency and data-sharing as critical aspects in fighting this virus. We consistently expressed this concern throughout the consultation process on this resolution.

Additionally, we would like to note that the United States supports the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, while recognizing the imperative for critical counter-terrorism operations to continue the fight against terrorists who seek to exploit this pandemic and that of course nothing in this resolution can or is intended to prejudice actions by States in the exercise of their inherent right of sovereignty and self-defense, consistent with international law. We welcome efforts by parties to armed conflicts to respect existing cease-fire agreements and urge continued efforts to negotiate new humanitarian ceasefires in implementation of the political commitments expressed in this resolution.

The United States continues to lead the world's humanitarian and health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are working directly with governments and authorities, multilateral organizations within their existing mandates, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, faith-based, and other organizations responding on the ground to combat this virus.

That said, the United States remains seriously concerned about terrorist groups posing as humanitarian actors to exploit and benefit from humanitarian assistance, which is why Member States must remain committed to fulfilling their counterterrorism finance-related obligations, including by implementing appropriate domestic legislation in compliance with Security Council Resolution 2462 (2019) and other international obligations. Therefore, we note that nothing in this resolution is meant to call into question the lawful application of domestic laws, as required by and in a manner consistent with international law, to prevent the provision of financing and other material support to terrorists and terrorist groups, or to call into question non-arbitrary restrictions on humanitarian assistance that may be imposed consistent with international humanitarian law.

The United States has already made available more than \$1.3 billion in emergency health, humanitarian, and economic assistance to combat COVID-19, in addition to the funding we already provide to NGOs and international organizations. This assistance is part of more than \$12 billion allocated by agencies and departments across the U.S. government to benefit the global response, including vaccine and therapeutics development, preparedness efforts, and humanitarian assistance.

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2. Afghanistan

Work continued in 2020 toward a peace agreement in Afghanistan. A February 21, 2020 press statement, available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/next-steps-toward-a-u-s-agreement-with-the-taliban/>, looks ahead to the signing of a U.S.-Taliban agreement regarding significantly reducing violence. On February 29, 2020, senior administration officials provided a briefing on next steps in the peace process, which is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/briefing-with-senior-administration-officials-on-next-steps-toward-an-agreement-on-bringing-peace-to-afghanistan/>, and excerpted below. One of the officials continued to answer questions on February 29, see <https://2017-2021.state.gov/senior-administration-official-on-next-steps-toward-an-agreement-on-bringing-peace-to-afghanistan/>.

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...[W]e're five days into a reduction in violence agreement that was announced last Saturday. The United States, the Taliban, and the Afghan Government agreed to this and to hold this in place for seven days in advance of announcing the start of talks to seek a political settlement for the conflict in Afghanistan.

During this reduction in violence period, the Taliban have pledged to not undertake major attacks of any sort, including car bomb attacks, suicide bombings, rocket attacks, IEDs. The United States, for its part, has pledged to hold off on any air strikes and also raids on Taliban facilities, including other major military actions with the exception of the ISIS forces located on the Afghan border. And the Afghan National Army has likewise committed to withhold any major military activities.

Over the five—soon to be six—days in Afghanistan, if you are going by their time, we have seen a substantial reduction in violence. In addition to the substantial reduction of violence, we've also seen a level of commitment by all the parties, including the Taliban, to enforce the reduction in violence upon their various constituencies. We have established a communications channel between us and the Taliban that works in Doha for notifications, or questions, or concerns, and we have seen that used not only ...for us to raise concerns, but also for us to receive information from Taliban officials regarding their efforts or disavowing some of the acts of violence that we still have seen happen in Afghanistan.

So generally, it's a level of both ability and political will that we hoped to have seen from the Taliban, and as we progress towards Saturday, we are expecting at this point that we will be able to confirm that it met our expectations to get us to the signing that will happen on that day. ...On Saturday, Secretary of State Pompeo will be in Doha to sign an agreement that will commit the United States and the Taliban to the launch of a ... negotiation towards a political solution, political settlement, to the war in Afghanistan. At the same time in Kabul, Secretary of Defense Esper will be releasing a joint statement with the Afghan president likewise committing the Afghan Government to this process and welcoming the start of these negotiations towards what will hopefully be a permanent end to the conflict in Afghanistan.

As part of that kickoff, the United States will be committed to make an initial reduction in our forces in Afghanistan to a level that General Miller has identified as necessary to fulfill his mission. I think many of you have heard General Scott Miller on this issue, but he has spoken of 8,600 troops as being the necessary contingent to meet his mission, although he is much less focused on numbers and more focused on achieving the mission that the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs have given him here as well as with ...our coalition partners in the fight.

That will then be in place during the course of this negotiations, and the reduction in violence will continue, and also it will be our very early objective to try to gain a complete ceasefire in Afghanistan once all the parties are at the table.

The parties will be meeting in Oslo. That negotiation will kick off as soon as each of the various components of that can get their negotiators to Oslo. Our estimate is ...the first half of March. ...Throughout this period, the reduction in violence remains in place, so it will give us a good opportunity to test the durability of the reduction in violence and also perhaps set a better stage for us to move towards a permanent ceasefire once all the parties are at the table.

The parties at the table will be, of course, the Afghan Government and opposition; it will be the Taliban; it will be Afghan civil society, and especially and including women's groups will

all be parties for this negotiation at the table. The United States will be present, but this will be an intra-Afghan negotiation.

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On February 29, 2020, Secretary Pompeo announced that the United States had secured separate commitments from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban to hold negotiations for peace. His remarks after the signing ceremony are available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/at-a-press-availability-after-the-afghanistan-signing-ceremony/>. His remarks at the signing ceremony are excerpted below and available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-at-afghanistan-signing-ceremony/>.

* * * *

Here's our take on what steps by the Taliban will make this agreement a success.

First, keep your promises to cut ties with al-Qaida and other terrorists. Keep up the fight to defeat ISIS. Welcome the profound relief of all Afghan citizens—men and women, urban and rural—as a result of this past week's massive reduction in violence and dedicate yourselves to continued reductions. It is this significant de-escalation of violence that will create the conditions for peace, and the absence of it, the conditions and cause for failure. All Afghans deserve to live and prosper without fear.

Sit down with the Afghan Government, other Afghan political leaders, and civil society, and start the difficult conversations on a political roadmap for your country. Exercise patience, even when there is frustration. Honor the rich diversity of your country and make room for all views. Afghan governments have failed because they weren't sufficiently inclusive. The Afghan Government of 2020, and indeed the Afghanistan of 2020, is not the same as in 2001. Embrace the historic progress obtained for women and girls and build on it for the benefit of all Afghans. The future of Afghanistan ought to draw on the God-given potential of every single person.

If you take these steps, if you stay the course and remain committed to negotiations with the Afghan Government and other Afghan partners, we and the rest of the international community assembled here today stand ready to reciprocate.

I know there will be a temptation to declare victory. But victory ... for Afghans ... will only be achieved when they can live in peace and prosper. Victory for the United States will only be achieved when Americans and our allies no longer have to fear a terrorist threat from Afghanistan, and we will do whatever it takes to protect our people. The United States will press all sides to stay focused on the goal of a peaceful, prosperous, and sovereign Afghanistan and an Afghanistan free of malign foreign interference where all voices and communities are heard and are represented. This is the only way ... a sustainable peace can be achieved. And for all of us here, and most importantly for the security of the American and Afghan people, this must happen.

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In remarks to the press on March 5, 2020, available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/secretary-pompeos-remarks-to-the-press/>, Secretary Pompeo referenced the agreement with the Taliban signed in Doha along with the U.S.-Afghan joint declaration as opening a door for lasting peace in Afghanistan and urged both sides “to stop posturing, start a practical discussion about prisoner releases, knuckle down and prepare for the upcoming intra-Afghan negotiations.”

On March 9, 2020, the State Department issued a media note conveying the text of a statement agreed by representatives of the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, the United Kingdom, the United Nations and the United States of America after the signing of the U.S.-Taliban Agreement at a meeting on March 1, 2020 in Doha, Qatar. The statement follows and the media note is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/joint-statement-on-the-signing-of-the-u-s-taliban-agreement-2/>.

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1. [The representatives] Welcomed the important steps, enabled by the United States-Taliban agreement and the United States-Afghanistan joint declaration of February 29, towards ending the war and opening the door to intra-Afghan negotiations scheduled for March 10.
2. Expressed their readiness to work towards a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement that ends the war, contributes to regional stability and global security, respects the internationally-recognized rights of all Afghans also reflected in the Afghan Constitution, and is honored by all Afghans, including the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, political leaders, civil society and the Taliban.
3. Reiterated that a comprehensive and sustainable peace can be achieved only through an inclusive negotiated political settlement among Afghans, in which, notably, women participate meaningfully, and by respecting Afghanistan’s integrity and sovereignty.
4. Reaffirmed that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is not recognized by the international community, and furthermore, the international community will not accept or support the restoration of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.
5. Welcomed the Taliban committing to join a political process and their prospective role in a new post-settlement Afghan Islamic government as determined by the intra-Afghan negotiations.
6. Appreciated the February 22-28 reduction of violence and urged all sides to further decrease violence in order to create an environment conducive to intra-Afghan negotiations.
7. Called on the Taliban and other Afghan armed groups to take concrete steps to ensure that the territory of Afghanistan should not be used by either them or al-Qa-ida, Daesh, or other international terrorist groups to threaten or attack other countries.
8. Stated their expectations that all sides will observe a ceasefire for the duration of intra-Afghan negotiations to enable participants to reach agreement on a political roadmap for Afghanistan’s future and the modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire.
9. Called on all Afghans to begin discussions immediately on issues of mutual concern, such as prisoner releases and a ceasefire.

10. Reaffirmed existing commitments to provide political support and economic and development assistance to a future Afghan government, provided that it preserves and respects the internationally-recognized rights of all Afghans also reflected in the Afghan Constitution, including for women, youth and minorities, and responds to the desire of Afghans to build on the gains achieved since 2001.

11. Reaffirmed existing commitments to continue assistance to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces on a sustainable basis.

12. Took note of the readiness of the United States upon the commencement of the intra-Afghan negotiations to engage with other members of the United Nations Security Council and Afghanistan to review the status of sanctions designations in order to support the peace process, noting that Taliban action to further reduce violence, make sustained efforts to advance intra-Afghan negotiations, and otherwise cease to engage in or support activities that threaten the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan or other countries will affect the review.

13. Encouraged all countries to support the Afghan people and contribute to a lasting peace settlement in the interest of all.

14. Welcomed all international efforts that support the Afghan peace process.

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On March 9, 2020, the day of President Ghani's inauguration, Secretary Pompeo expressed U.S. opposition to the use of force and any action to establish a parallel government in Afghanistan and encouraged reaching an agreement on an inclusive government that will work toward peace. The March 9, 2020 press statement is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/statement-on-presidential-inaugurations-in-afghanistan/index.html>.

In a March 10, 2020 press statement, available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/on-intra-afghan-negotiations-and-the-road-to-peace/>, the State Department spokesperson explained that the presidential election crisis in Afghanistan had delayed the start of intra-Afghan negotiations, which had been planned for March 10, 2020. The statement further conveys:

President Ghani has told us he is consulting with Dr. Abdullah and other Afghan leaders and will announce an inclusive [government negotiating] team in the coming few days.

Other challenges remain. The current high level of violence by the Taliban is unacceptable. We acknowledge the Taliban have taken steps to stop attacks against the Coalition and in cities. But they are killing too many Afghans in the countryside. This must change. Violence at these levels risks drawing both sides into a vicious cycle, serves no one, and undermines peace.

Also on March 10, 2020, Acting Deputy Permanent U.S. Representative to the UN Cherith Norman Chalet provided the U.S. explanation of vote on the UN Security Council resolution regarding the February 29 U.S.-Taliban agreement and U.S.-Afghanistan joint declaration. Ambassador Chalet's statement is excerpted below and available at

<https://usun.usmission.gov/explanation-of-vote-on-the-un-security-council-adoption-of-a-u-s-draft-resolution-on-the-u-s-taliban-agreement/>.

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On February 29th, the United States took a decisive step toward a negotiated peace in Afghanistan with the announcement of a joint declaration with the Afghan government and an agreement with the Taliban. We were pleased to introduce this resolution endorsing the U.S.-Taliban agreement and the U.S.-Afghanistan joint declaration, and we appreciate the Security Council's support for this resolution and the constructive engagement of all of our colleagues during negotiations. The support and engagement of the international community will continue to be critical in the next steps of the peace process. We are especially grateful to His Highness Sheikh Tamim for Qatar's support, and the critical role it played in hosting the talks that led to this momentous occasion.

We are eagerly looking forward to the next steps of the peace process, though unfortunately, the presidential electoral process and unacceptably high levels of violence by the Taliban in Afghanistan have not permitted intra-Afghan negotiations to start on time. Prioritizing an inclusive government and unified Afghanistan is paramount for the future of the country and especially for the cause of peace. To that end, we welcome President Ghani's statement at his inauguration on March 9th that discussions and negotiations will continue for the next two weeks to reach an agreement on an inclusive government—one which unifies the country and prioritizes peace. We also appreciate Dr. Abdullah's March 9th statement underscoring similar commitments to peace and inclusivity. We hope that all parties will resolve their political differences without resorting to violence and come together to focus on peace. Similarly, President Ghani's March 10th decree on a Taliban prisoner release in exchange for prisoners held by the Taliban is a significant measure that brings Afghans one step closer to intra-Afghan negotiations. Significantly, the decree means that technical talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government representatives in Doha—as well as actual releases—can start immediately.

All of this brings Afghans closer to the opportunity to chart a political roadmap for their country's future. For Afghanistan to enjoy international standing, support, and investment, fundamental rights must be safeguarded and championed. We hope the people of Afghanistan seize the opportunity to achieve an historic peace settlement that ends the conflict in Afghanistan; preserves the gains of the last two decades in human rights, basic freedoms, and the meaningful participation of women in political and civil institutions; and ensures that the territory of the Afghan people will never again be used by international terrorists to threaten the world. As part of the agreement endorsed by today's Security Council resolution, the Taliban has made strong commitments to end its relationships with international terrorists and to prevent any group or individual, including al-Qaida, from using Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and our allies. We will be carefully monitoring and tracking Taliban progress and we will continually assess whether the Taliban is living up to its side of the bargain.

Other challenges remain. The current high level of violence by the Taliban is not conducive to advancing the peace process. We acknowledge the Taliban have taken steps to stop attacks in cities and against major bases. But more needs to be done and we urge them to also reduce violence against Afghan forces in the countryside to give intra-Afghan negotiations and peace the opportunity to succeed. Violence at these levels risks drawing both sides into a vicious cycle, serves no one, and undermines peace. As Secretary Pompeo has stated, we expect the

Taliban and all Afghans to embrace the progress that has been made for women and girls, and to build on it. A brighter future for Afghanistan needs to honor the dignity and potential of all Afghans, taking care to respect the rights of women and those on the margins of society. With that in mind, the text of today's Resolution makes clear that the Security Council does not support the restoration of the Islamic Emirate—and most especially its oppressive policies against women, girls, and minorities. We urge the Taliban to learn the negative lessons of the past and be prepared to respect the contributions of all Afghan citizens to the country's development.

Mr. President, as illustrated by our Joint Declaration with the Government of Afghanistan, the United States will continue to steadfastly support Afghanistan. This occasion does not mark the end of the close U.S. partnership with the government and people of Afghanistan, but a new beginning. After almost two decades and more than a trillion dollars in investment in Afghanistan's security and development, the United States is not walking away. We will continue to invest in a durable relationship with the Afghan government, including through development and security assistance. We will maintain our engagement with the Afghans to help them achieve a sovereign, unified Afghanistan at peace with itself and its neighbors.

The developments endorsed by this resolution are the product of more than a year of unprecedented U.S. diplomatic engagement with the Taliban, in coordination with our partners in Afghanistan, the region, and around the world. They were made possible by 19 years of military, diplomatic, and economic engagement by NATO and our other coalition partners. We are proud of our achievements. The Afghanistan of today is not the Afghanistan of 2001 and that is because of the sincere efforts of Afghans working hand in hand with their friends in the international community. This is a hopeful moment, but it is only the beginning. The United States is conscious of the long-held desire of the Afghan people for peace. And as we have in the past, we will continue to support the goal of a lasting peace in Afghanistan. We hope that you will join us in doing so as well.

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On March 23, 2020, the State Department issued a press statement from Secretary Pompeo after he traveled to Kabul to urge the leaders of Afghanistan to compromise and agree on an inclusive government. The press statement is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/on-the-political-impasse-in-afghanistan/> and announces a reduction in U.S. assistance to Afghanistan by \$1 billion in 2020 in response to the "leadership failure," as elaborated below.

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The United States remains convinced that a political settlement is the only solution to the conflict. We note that Afghan leaders are acting inconsistently with their commitments under the Joint Declaration, chiefly failing to establish an inclusive national team to participate in intra-Afghan negotiations or take practical steps to facilitate prisoner releases by both sides as a confidence-building measure to reach a political settlement and achieve a permanent and

comprehensive ceasefire. We are proceeding with the conditions-based withdrawal of our forces in accordance with the U.S.-Taliban agreement.

Should Afghan leaders choose to form an inclusive government that can provide security and participate in the peace process, the United States is prepared to support these efforts and revisit the reviews initiated today.

The United States is not abandoning our partnership with Afghanistan, nor our commitment to support the Afghan security forces, but reviewing the scope of our cooperation given the irresponsible actions of Afghan leaders. To illustrate America's steadfast commitment to the Afghan people, the United States will be providing \$15 million in assistance to help combat the spread of the coronavirus in Afghanistan.

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On September 10, 2020, the United States welcomed the announcement that Afghanistan peace negotiations would begin on September 12. See September 10, 2020 State Department press statement, available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/welcoming-the-launch-of-afghanistan-peace-negotiations/>. The statement includes the following:

Immense sacrifice and investment by the United States, our partners, and the people of Afghanistan have made this moment of hope possible. ...The people of Afghanistan and the international community will be watching closely. The United States is prepared to support as requested.

The United States recalls the commitment by the Afghan government and the Taliban that terrorists can never again use Afghan soil to threaten the United States or its allies. ...

On September 11, 2020, Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad held a special briefing on the peace negotiations set to begin on September 12. The transcript of the briefing is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/special-representative-for-afghanistan-reconciliation-ambassador-zalmay-khalilzad-on-the-afghanistan-peace-negotiations/> and excerpted below.

* * * *

For the first time in 40 years, Afghans will sit together, the government delegation that includes people who are not part of the government as well as four very distinguished women, civil society, political groups will be sitting with an authoritative Taliban delegation to discuss and hopefully come to an agreement on a political roadmap to end the protracted war that Afghanistan has had. The people of Afghanistan demand an end to the war. We support them in that effort. And this meeting tomorrow is one of the key requirements, a product of the U.S.-Taliban agreement which was signed on February 29th.

That agreement had three other elements, one which is a timetable for phased and condition-based U.S. withdrawal of forces; two, a commitment by the Taliban that they will not allow terrorist groups, including al-Qaida, to threaten the United States, U.S. allies from the territories that they control and if they became part of a future government that commitment will continue; and the other key part was a comprehensive formal ceasefire. That will be one of the subjects of the negotiations between the two sides.

On that day we also had a ... joint declaration with the Afghan Government where the Afghan Government supported these elements that I described, meaning that Afghanistan, the territory that the government controls and a post-peace Afghanistan, would not allow terrorists such as al-Qaida to threaten the United States, ... and our allies, and that we expect to have a good and enduring relationship with Afghanistan.

We also would like to clarify that these negotiations are an important achievement but that there are difficulties, significant challenges on the way to reaching agreement. This is a test for both sides, for the Taliban and the government. Can they reach an agreement despite differences, in terms of their visions for the future of Afghanistan? We are prepared to assist if our assistance is needed, but this is a new phase in the diplomacy for peace in Afghanistan. Now we are entering a process that is Afghan-owned and Afghan-led. There will be no mediator and no facilitator when Afghans meet with each other. They will be talking to each other. The secretariat of the conference will also be carried out, that function, by the Afghans from the two sides.

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Secretary Pompeo delivered a statement at the opening ceremony for the Intra-Afghan Negotiations in Doha, Qatar on September 12, 2020. His remarks are excerpted below and available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-at-intra-afghan-negotiations-opening-ceremony/>.

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... We welcome the Taliban commitment not to host international terrorist groups, including al-Qaida, nor to allow them to use Afghan territory to train, recruit, or to fundraise.

We welcome the same commitments by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan that they should never permit their nation to serve as a base for international terrorists to threaten other countries.

* * * *

On our part ..., the United States is a proponent of a sovereign, unified, and representative Afghanistan that is at peace with itself and with its neighbors.

I want to elaborate on each of those three words. What do we mean when we say “sovereign, unified, and representative?”

First, sovereign: We know that Afghans yearn to determine their own affairs. It’s why you all are here. Free from outside interference. We hope you will enjoy cooperation and mutual respectful relations with your neighbors and other international partners and that you will indeed become self-reliant, liberated from the shackles of dependence on others.

Second, unified: We know the tremendously negative and divisive impact that four decades of violence have had on Afghanistan and on the Afghan people. Through an inclusive negotiation process, ... you each have an opportunity ... to overcome your divisions and reach agreement on a peaceful future for the benefit of all Afghans, and if ... Afghans embrace their common interest in a united Afghanistan while respecting the rich diversity of the country's people, we believe with all our hearts that a durable peace is in fact possible.

I would urge each of you to engage the representatives of all Afghan communities, including women, ethnic and religious minorities, and the victims of your country's long war. These historic negotiations should produce a political arrangement that accommodates competing views and rejects the use of violence to achieve political aims.

Third, representative: Look, the choice of your political system is of course yours to make. In the United States, we've found that democracy—notably the principle of peaceful resolution and rotation of political power—works best. Democratic systems reflect the choices of the majority while protecting the human rights of everyone as they are made in the image of God. This model ... has yielded great peace and prosperity for us and for other democratic nations. And while it is indeed the case that no one size fits all solution, the United States doesn't seek to impose its system on others. We believe firmly that protecting the rights of all Afghans is indeed the best way for you to break the cycle of violence.

... We urge you to make decisions that move away from the violence and the corruption and towards peace and development and prosperity.

I urge you to preserve and to build upon the advancement of the social, economic, and political gains that Afghanistan has achieved in the past 20 years.

To cite one bright example, the expansion of women's participation in public life, as illustrated by the presence here today of four prominent woman negotiators on the Islamic Republic team—a landmark achievement. A landmark achievement of the U.S.-Taliban agreement was setting the stage for these negotiations. We welcome your responsibility, your assumption of that responsibility.

I would urge you—as you make your decisions you should keep in mind that your choices and conduct will affect both the size and scope of United States future assistance. Our hope ... is that you will reach a sustainable peace and our goal is an enduring partnership with Afghanistan.

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On November 27, 2020, the State Department published as a media note the joint communiqué issued by the participants in the 2020 Afghanistan Conference. The communiqué follows and the media note is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/communique-on-the-2020-conference-on-afghanistan/>.

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The 2020 Afghanistan Conference took place at the Palais des Nations in Geneva with participants from 66 countries and 32 international organizations. The Conference was held in a virtual format and it was co-hosted by the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the

Government of Finland and the United Nations. The event took place under extraordinary circumstances, at the beginning of the final four-year cycle of the Transformation Decade, shortly after the start of the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations and during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Conference, the participants renewed their long-term commitment to support Afghanistan in seizing this historic opportunity on its path towards peace, prosperity and self-reliance and to continue efforts for the benefit of all Afghans. The participants committed to reconvene to review progress and pledges at a Senior Officials Meeting in 2021 and in a Ministerial Meeting in 2022.

1. We, the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (hereafter called the Afghan Government) and the international community along with other partners underline our commitment to establish a renewed partnership to strengthen a sovereign, unified, democratic and peaceful Afghanistan that is on a path towards prosperity and self-reliance for the benefit of all Afghans. Under this partnership, we welcome the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework II and the Afghanistan Partnership Framework and undertake to be mutually accountable in supporting the efforts of the Afghan people to achieve tangible results in the field of peace-building, state-building, and market-building.

2. We acknowledge the widespread and sincere demand of the Afghan people for lasting peace and an end to the war, and recognize that a sustainable peace can be achieved only through an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process that is internationally supported. We call for earnest efforts by all to realize lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

3. In keeping with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2513, we welcome the start of the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations on September 12, 2020, aiming for an inclusive political settlement and a permanent and comprehensive peace. We further welcome the efforts of all regional and international partners of Afghanistan in this regard and recognize the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan and of all other Afghan actors, including the two negotiating teams in facilitating the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations. We acknowledge that significant progress in the peace negotiations in the spirit of the United Nations Security Council resolution 2513 is a key factor for the delisting within the United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988(2011).

4. We call for an inclusive and meaningful peace process with the participation of women, youth and ethnic, religious and other minorities. We affirm that any political settlement must protect the rights of all Afghans, including women, youth and minorities. It should respect the strong desire of Afghans to achieve durable peace and prosperity, and must respond to the strong desire of Afghans to sustain and build on the economic, social, political and development gains achieved since 2001, including adherence to the rule of law, respect for Afghanistan's international obligations, and improving inclusive and accountable governance.

5. We underscore the importance of the Afghan Government's efforts, which the international community is committed to support, to fulfill its commitment to a unified, sovereign, peaceful and democratic Afghanistan. We emphasize the need for a meaningful role for civil society, including the independent media, in this process. While respecting the sovereign right of the Afghan people to decide on the nature of the future political settlement, we underscore that the outcome, as outlined in paragraph four, above, will shape the future of international support and assistance.

6. We highlight that international development assistance and South-South cooperation bear great importance to Afghanistan's economic and social development. We call

on the international community to continue their financial support to Afghanistan, with the aim of helping Afghan people to achieve peace, reconstruction and development at an early date.

7. We acknowledge that security and stability are vital to sustainable development. We express deep concern about the continuing high level of violence and the security situation in Afghanistan, especially the number of civilian casualties and call for an immediate permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, and full respect of International Humanitarian Law.

8. We further express deep concern about the threat posed by terrorism to Afghanistan and the region, express serious concern over the continuing presence of ISIL, Al-Qaida as well as other international terrorist organizations and their affiliated groups in Afghanistan. We condemn in the strongest terms all terrorist activity and all terrorist attacks and reaffirm the importance of ensuring that the territory of Afghanistan should not be used by ISIL, Al-Qaida or other international terrorist groups to threaten or attack any other country, and that neither the Taliban nor any other Afghan entity, group or individual should support terrorists operating on the territory of any country.

9. We emphasize the importance of supporting the Afghan Government in capacity building, in particular of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) including the Afghan National Police (ANP) in securing their country and in their fight against terrorism.

10. We stress the important role and long-term commitment of the United Nations in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan and welcome UNAMA's ongoing efforts in the implementation of mandated tasks.

11. In the spirit of mutual accountability, we underscore the importance of the Afghan Government's actions and the commitment from the international community to support the efforts of the Government in fulfilling its commitments to improve governance and the rule of law, including transitional justice as an essential component of the ongoing peace process, budget execution and the fight against corruption throughout the country.

12. We highlight the importance of regional cooperation, with a view to promoting stability and peace, as well as assisting Afghanistan in utilizing its unique geopolitical and geographical position as a land bridge to promote regional cooperation and connectivity, based on transparency, openness and inclusiveness with the aim of enhancing dialogue and collaboration to advance shared goals of economic development across the region.

13. We express concern over the cultivation, production, trade and trafficking of illicit drugs in Afghanistan which continue to pose a threat to peace and stability in the region and beyond, and call upon the Afghan Government and the international community to strengthen efforts to counter this threat through international, regional and sub-regional cooperation.

14. We acknowledge the economic development achieved by Afghanistan with the support of the international community in the past years, notably through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and recall the critical role the private sector, revenue generation and a conducive business climate, that includes the participation of women, will continue to play in this regard. We highlight the need for renewed vigor in implementing economic reforms and undertake to renew our long-term support and assistance to the Afghan people in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

15. We call for all relevant parties to work closely to facilitate the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return, rehabilitation and reintegration of the Afghan refugees and express appreciation to those regional countries, in particular Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, that continue to host them.

16. We further call for continued cooperation between the Afghan Government, international partners, and neighboring countries to stem irregular migration through enhanced collaborative efforts to fight migrants smuggling and human trafficking networks.

17. We note that humanitarian aid will continue to be needed for the foreseeable future and access of humanitarian actors must be ensured throughout the country in full abidance to humanitarian principles.

18. We recognize the profound challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, and their impact on Afghanistan and the well-being of its citizens, notably women, and express continued readiness to support the Afghan people towards a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable recovery.

19. We look forward to a Senior Officials Meeting in 2021 and a biennial ministerial meeting in 2022 to review progress as Afghanistan is approaching the end of its Transformation Decade.

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On December 2, 2020, the United States welcomed the agreement announced on that day by the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban, the culmination of the efforts described, *supra*. The press statement from Secretary Pompeo on the agreement is excerpted below and available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/the-united-states-welcomes-major-milestone-in-afghanistan-peace-negotiations/>.

The Agreement codifies the rules and procedures the two sides have been negotiating since the start of talks. The teams made a number of important decisions that will guide their negotiations on a political roadmap and a comprehensive ceasefire.

...What has been achieved provides hope they will succeed in reaching a political settlement to this more than forty-year-old conflict. The United States thanks Qatar for its role as host and facilitator of the talks.

...The United States, along with most of the international community, will continue to support the peace process in pursuit of this goal. As negotiations on a political roadmap and permanent ceasefire begin, we will also work hard with all sides in pursuit of a serious reduction of violence and ceasefire.

3. Syria

On January 10, 2020, Ambassador Kelly Craft, U.S. permanent representative to the UN, delivered the U.S. explanation of vote on the UN Security Council resolution on the Syria humanitarian cross-border mandate renewal. Ambassador Craft's statement is excerpted below and available at <https://usun.usmission.gov/explanation-of-vote-on-the-un-security-council-resolution-on-the-syria-humanitarian-cross-border-mandate-renewal-2/>

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The United States abstained from this evening's vote for one reason, and for one reason only: after months of negotiations, this text was the only path forward that would reasonably allow for the delivery of any aid at all to the Syrian people. We could not veto such a measure, as we are committed to supporting innocent Syrians to the greatest extent possible. In abstaining, we are lending a voice to four million Syrians whose welfare has been overlooked for far too long. But I want to be inescapably clear about what just happened.

What we have seen today from the Russian Federation is shocking, comprehensive indifference to human suffering. We are left with a watered-down resolution, wholly inadequate to the needs of the Syrian people, because of the unwillingness of our Russian colleagues to maintain current levels of aid flows. This resolution needlessly places the immediate futures of over one million Syrians in jeopardy. It would be easy to say we were forced into an impossible choice today—a choice between vetoing this measure in a principled stand for aid to all who need it, or sacrificing the principle to secure a small measure of aid for millions of Syrians entering the heart of winter. But this framing lets Russia off the hook far too easily, for it suggests the Council really had no other options.

In truth, we do not find ourselves in this situation because the conditions on the ground no longer allow for aid delivery; as we have heard over and over again from the UN officials, the existing cross-border aid mechanism is working. Nor are we here because of lack of willingness among the other Council members to find a way forward: my Elected-10 colleagues went to great lengths to find a solution that could provide more food and medicine to people. We find ourselves in this situation because the Russian Federation has decided to use deprivation as a weapon against the Syrian people. This is a crisis of Russia's making. It is theirs to own.

Though we are profoundly disappointed by the intransigence of our Russian colleagues, the United States is not willing to play politics with the lives of innocent Syrians. It is the unambiguous conclusion of the UN officials that the humanitarian situation in Syria is steadily worsening. This is why the United States sought to renew all four of the crossings currently authorized by Resolution 2449, and to add a fifth crossing at Tel Abyad in northeast Syria. It is why we did not obstruct a measure to provide at least some aid to the Syrian people.

The record should reflect that any attempts to characterize the humanitarian situation as improving are gross distortions of the truth. I wish to make it clear, that consent by the Syrian authorities is not required in order for humanitarian assistance to be provided through the border crossings, as in all other prior Syria humanitarian resolutions of the Security Council.

Though we are proud of our principled stand to help every Syrian, we are bitterly disappointed at the Council's inability to deliver what the Syrian people so plainly need. It is never right to leave even a single life hanging in the balance, but today, we have handed down this fate to one million people. Today's action is body blow not only to the Council's credibility, but also to its moral authority. And remember: the UN asked for—and the United States strongly supported—a 12-month extension. Tragically, in six months, we will now be here again. Will Russia try one more time to hold this Council hostage? Will we be faced, once again, with Russian attempts to further erode principled humanitarian action?

Moving forward, the United States will do everything in its power to recover the Council's moral authority; we will not fail to remind this body of its obligation to maintain peace and security; we will not tire in our defense of humanitarian principles; and we will not cease in

our work to provide every last Syrian woman, man, and child with the resources they need to survive.

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On March 15, 2020, the State Department released as a media note the text of a joint statement by the governments of France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States on the ninth anniversary of the uprising in Syria. The joint statement is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/joint-statement-on-the-ninth-anniversary-of-the-syrian-uprising/> and excerpted below.

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Nine years ago today, tens of thousands of Syrians peacefully took to the streets calling for respect for human rights and the end of government corruption. Instead of heeding the Syrian people's legitimate demands, the Assad regime responded with a ruthless campaign of arbitrary arrests, detentions, torture, enforced disappearances, and violence. As the Syrian conflict enters its 10th year, the Assad regime's brutal pursuit of a military victory has displaced over 11 million people—nearly half of Syria's pre-war population—and killed more than 500,000 Syrians.

The Assad regime must accept the will of the Syrian people who demand and deserve to live in peace and free of shelling, chemical weapons attacks, barrel bombs, airstrikes, arbitrary detention, torture, and starvation.

We express our satisfaction at the liberation by the Global Coalition and the Syrian Democratic Forces of all territory once held by Daesh. However, the threat from Daesh remains, and we are resolved to continue our joint effort through the Coalition to ensure their lasting defeat. We are fighting terrorism with determination and are on the front lines of the fight.

But fighting terrorism cannot and must not justify massive violations of international humanitarian law or continued violence. The reckless military offensive by Assad, Russia, and Iran in Idlib only causes further suffering and an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, as medical and humanitarian infrastructures and workers, as well as civilians, are killed. In its latest bloody assault on Idlib, the Assad regime, backed by Russia and Iran, has displaced nearly one million civilians since December alone, the fastest displacement since the start of the conflict. For the latest ceasefire in northwest Syria to endure, a nationwide ceasefire must be established as called for in UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254.

Despite significant efforts by the international community, life-saving assistance is still not reaching large numbers of those in desperate need. As major donors since the beginning of the war, we will continue to support humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, including through cross-border assistance which is a vital necessity, and we demand that all parties, particularly the Syrian regime and its allies, allow safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access to all people in need in Syria. Yet, we will not consider providing or supporting any reconstruction assistance until a credible, substantive, and genuine political process is irreversibly underway. Absent such a process, reconstruction assistance for Syria would only entrench a deeply flawed and abusive government, increase corruption, reinforce the war economy and further aggravate the root causes of the conflict.

We encourage the international community to continue to provide assistance to Syria's neighbors to share the costs of Syria's refugee crisis. Displaced Syrians must be allowed to return voluntarily and safely to their homes, without fear of arbitrary detention, violation of rights and forced conscription. Yet, the Syrian regime continues to prevent them from doing so.

We will continue to demand accountability for the atrocities committed by the Assad regime and we will continue our efforts to make sure that those who are responsible for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other violations and abuses are identified and held accountable. The international community must come together to support the collection and release of documentation of violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including the critical work of the UN Commission of Inquiry; the UN International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism for Syria; and the UN Secretary General's Board of Inquiry.

The military solution the Syrian regime hopes to achieve, with backing from Russia and Iran, will not bring peace. We reiterate our strong support for the UN-led process in Geneva and UNSCR 2254 to bring about a peaceful and stable Syria.

We—France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States—demand that the Assad regime stop the ruthless killing and engage meaningfully in all aspects of UNSCR 2254, including a nationwide ceasefire, a reformed constitution, release of arbitrarily detained persons, as well as free and fair elections. A credible political process cannot be limited to attempts at convening a constitutional committee. All Syrian citizens, including citizens who are displaced persons and refugees, should be allowed to participate in free and fair elections, under UN supervision.

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On June 23, 2020, the State Department spokesperson expressed sympathy for the families of civilians killed and those wounded in a terrorist attack in Tel Halaf and an airstrike in Kobane. The statement is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/attacks-in-syria/> and also calls for:

sustained focus by all on the critical need for a lasting political resolution to the conflict in Syria, as called for by United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254 (2015). A continued spiral of violence impedes the hope for any such resolution. We reiterate our strong support for UN Secretary General Guterres' and Special Envoy Pedersen's calls for an immediate nationwide ceasefire and efforts by Special Envoy Pedersen to facilitate a political resolution to the conflict under UNSCR 2254.

On July 11, 2020, Ambassador Craft delivered the U.S. explanation of vote on the UN Security Council resolution on the Syria humanitarian cross-border mandate renewal. Ambassador Craft's statement is excerpted below and available at <https://usun.usmission.gov/explanation-of-vote-on-the-adoption-of-un-security-council-resolution-2533-on-syria-cross-border-humanitarian-aid-deliveries/>.

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For weeks this Council has struggled to come to terms with the efforts of two of its members to end cross-border humanitarian aid to the Syrian people. Good faith negotiations were met with intransigence and contempt, and resolutions repeatedly faced inexplicable veto. But today, the Council showed that resolve and unity is a powerful combination.

Today, the UN Security Council worked on behalf of the very people the Charter set out to protect. The United States thanks co-penholders Belgium and Germany for their responsible stewardship of this negotiation, and once again thanks all of those Council members who stood up for what was right. Today, we saved lives.

Let's not be mistaken, this resolution is not what the United States and a majority of this Council fought for over the course of the past six weeks – and indeed, for the past six months. This resolution is also not what the United Nations, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and dozens of NGOs operating in Syria have repeatedly urged this Council to do.

But the United States and the majority of this Council remained determined through nine rounds of voting this week to ensure that UN aid convoys will continue to cross into Syria from Turkey filled with food, vaccines, and other humanitarian items for another year. We have given reassurance and hope to millions of Syrian civilians who have relied on the UN aid mechanism since cross-border operations started in 2014.

To be clear, today's outcome leaves us sickened and outraged at the loss of the Bab al-Salaam and al-Yaroubia border crossings. Behind those locked gates are millions of women, children, and men who believed that the world had heard their pleas. Their health and welfare are now at great risk.

Yet there is no question that the Council's authorization of cross-border humanitarian access through Bab al-Hawa for 12 months is a victory in light of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China's willingness to use their veto to compel a dramatic reduction in humanitarian assistance. This solemn victory must not end our struggle to address the mounting human needs in Syria – that fight is far from over. ...

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The following is the text of a Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of the Small Group on Syria made on October 22, 2020 and available as a State Department media note at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/joint-statement-by-the-foreign-ministers-of-the-small-group-on-syria-4/>.

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We, the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, and the United States continue to strongly support a political resolution of the Syrian crisis on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

We support the efforts of United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen to move forward with the political process. A political solution as set out in UNSCR 2254 is the only way to bring a sustainable peace, stability, and security to the Syrian people, and would facilitate

the withdrawal of all foreign forces that came into Syria after 2011. Such a solution must preserve the territorial integrity, unity, and sovereignty of Syria.

We took note of the Constitutional Committee's launch in 2019. We urge continued engagement with the committee to ensure substantial progress on the discussion of the constitution in line with the committee's mandate and procedures. We stand behind Special Envoy Pedersen's efforts to convene the fourth round of meetings, which must discuss substantial issues in order to achieve meaningful progress. Steps should be made to advance all of the other dimensions of the political process, including towards the convening of UN-supervised free and fair elections in a safe and neutral environment as outlined in UNSCR 2254, in which internally displaced persons, refugees, and the diaspora must be able to participate.

After almost 10 years of conflict, the people of Syria have suffered deeply. Hundreds of thousands have been killed and millions forcibly displaced. Now facing COVID-19 and continued economic difficulties, we want to highlight again the importance of providing safe and unhindered humanitarian access for all Syrians currently in need of it, including areas where conditions are noticeably deteriorating, as in Idlib province and South Syria. We would also like to urge the international community to continue supporting Syrian refugees and their hosting countries and communities until Syrians can voluntarily return home in safety, dignity, and security. We also oppose forced demographic change and commit to disburse no assistance for any resettlement of Syrian refugees that is not in line with UNHCR standards.

Additionally, we want to reinforce that efforts toward a political solution in line with UNSCR 2254 must result in progress toward facilitating the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of IDPs and refugees, the release of Syrian detainees, and holding all those responsible for atrocities accountable. We stress the importance of sufficient international support to assist host countries of refugees to help them in their efforts to fulfill the needs of refugees and maintain the resilience of host communities.

There is no military solution that will bring peace, security, and stability to Syria. Progress on the political process as outlined in UNSCR 2254, in addition to the establishment of a nationwide ceasefire also as outlined in UNSCR 2254, remains the only path forward towards a better future for all Syrians.

We reiterate our commitment to the enduring defeat of ISIS and other UN-recognized terrorist groups throughout Syria including in the Northwest and the South, including al-Qaeda and HTS. We express our deep concern regarding the terrorist threat in the South of Syria and commit to supporting humanitarian efforts there. We deplore the possible further internalization of the Syrian conflict by the transfer of combatants, including militants, and equipment by various parties to other areas of conflict.

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4. Armenia and Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh

On July 13, 2020, the State Department issued a strong condemnation on behalf of the United States of the violence along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. See July 13, 2020 State Department press statement from the spokesperson, available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/violence-along-the-armenia-azerbaijan-international-border/>. The statement includes the following:

We urge the sides to stop using force immediately, use the existing direct communication links between them to avoid further escalation, and strictly adhere to the ceasefire.

As a Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States remains strongly committed to helping the sides achieve a lasting, peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We will remain actively engaged in efforts to accomplish that goal.

The United States joins the Minsk Group Co-Chairs in calling for the sides to resume substantive negotiations as soon as possible and in emphasizing the importance of returning OSCE monitors to the region as soon as circumstances allow.

On September 27, 2020, the State Department issued a press statement expressing concern about renewed violence between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces along the Line of Contact in Nagorno-Karabakh, resulting in significant casualties, including civilians. The statement is excerpted below and available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/escalation-of-violence-between-armenia-and-azerbaijan/>.

The United States condemns in the strongest terms this escalation of violence. Deputy Secretary Biegun called the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov, and the Foreign Minister of Armenia, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, to urge both sides to cease hostilities immediately, to use the existing direct communication links between them to avoid further escalation, and to avoid unhelpful rhetoric and actions that further raise tensions on the ground.

The United States believes participation in the escalating violence by external parties would be deeply unhelpful and only exacerbate regional tensions. We urge the sides to work with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to return to substantive negotiations as soon as possible. As a Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States remains committed to helping the sides achieve a peaceful and sustainable settlement to the conflict.

On October 5, 2020, the State Department released as a media note the text of a statement by the OSCE Minsk Group countries (the United States, the Russian Federation, and France), calling for a ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh. The media note is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/joint-statement-calling-for-a-ceasefire-in-nagorno-karabakh/>.

The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group issued another joint statement regarding Nagorno-Karabakh on October 25, 2020, which is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/osce-minsk-group-co-chair-statement/>, and excerpted below.

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The Co-Chairs met in Washington D.C. on October 24 with Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov, and also participated in a joint meeting with the Foreign Ministers and U.S. Deputy Foreign Minister Stephen Biegun. The Personal Representative of the OSCE's Chairman in Office, Andrzej Kasprzyk, also participated in the meetings.

The Co-Chairs urged the sides to take immediate steps to implement all aspects of the October 10 Moscow Joint Statement in accordance with their commitments, noting that they had reaffirmed these commitments with Paris on October 18. The Co-Chairs also reminded the sides of the October 1, 2020 joint statement of United States President Donald J. Trump, French President Emmanuel Macron, and Russian President Vladimir Putin, as well as the October 5 joint statement of Secretary of State of the United States of America Michael R. Pompeo, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France Jean-Yves Le Drian, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, calling on the sides to cease hostilities immediately and to resume substantive negotiations to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

During their intensive discussions, the Co-Chairs and Foreign Ministers discussed implementing an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, possible parameters for monitoring the ceasefire, and initiating discussion of core substantive elements of a comprehensive solution, in accordance with the October 10 Joint Statement. The Co-Chairs and Foreign Ministers agreed to meet again in Geneva on October 29 to discuss, reach agreement on, and begin implementation, in accordance with a timeline to be agreed upon, of all steps necessary to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in accordance with the basic principles accepted by the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

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5. Sudan

On August 31, 2020, the Troika (the United States, Norway, and the United Kingdom) issued a joint statement on the August 28, 2020 peace agreement in Sudan between the Sudan Revolutionary Front ("SRF") and the Civilian-led Transitional Government of Sudan. The State Department published the joint statement as a media note, available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/troika-statement-on-the-peace-agreement-between-sudan-armed-opposition-groups/index.html>. Excerpts follow from the August 31, 2020 Troika statement.

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...The peace agreement lays a foundation for sustainable peace and stability in Darfur and other conflict-affected areas that is critical for Sudan's democratic transition.

We recognize the concessions all have made to conclude these negotiations and call on all parties to implement the agreement in good faith, with the same spirit of partnership and

compromise, and in a way that complements the ongoing talks with other groups. The agreement demonstrates the commitment of the parties to prioritize peace as called for in the August 2019 Constitutional Decree. It is an important step in restoring security, dignity, and development to the population of Sudan's conflict-affected and marginalized areas. We believe the formal agreement must be followed up with local peace and reconciliation efforts in the conflict-affected areas.

The Troika urges the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North-Abdelaziz al-Hilu and the Sudan Liberation Movement-Abdulwahid Al Nur to build on this achievement and to engage in serious negotiations with the Government of Sudan in order to achieve the promise of a comprehensive peace called for by the Sudanese people in the revolution of December 2018. All Sudanese have the right to live in peace and enjoy the same privileges and responsibilities. Only a fully inclusive national process can address fundamental questions relating to the identity of the state.

The non-violent December 2018 Revolution provided a once-in-a generation opportunity to transform Sudan into an inclusive, peaceful, and just state. The recent increase in violence in in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, and Port Sudan highlights the challenges to achieving sustainable peace. We urge the government and its partners to establish the Peace Commission and the Transitional Legislative Council and begin to bring accountable administration and justice to all of Sudan. A just Sudan requires neutral and professional security services that protect and safeguard all Sudanese equally. We urge the SRF, other opposition groups, and political parties to put aside differences and personal ambitions for the good of their entire country. The Troika urges Sudan's diverse communities to overcome old enmities and to unite to support this singular opportunity for lasting peace.

We commend the Government of South Sudan for its role in mediating the peace negotiations, and recognize the valuable support provided by the United Nations and regional and bilateral partners that helped make the peace agreement possible.

The Troika will continue to support the Sudanese people in their quest for freedom, peace, and justice.

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On October 3, 2020, a more comprehensive peace agreement was signed by the Government of Sudan and Sudanese opposition groups. The Troika statement on the October 3 agreement follows and is available, as an October 4, 2020 press release from the U.S. Embassy in Juba, at <https://ss.usembassy.gov/troika-statement-on-the-peace-agreement-between-the-government-of-sudan-and-sudanese-opposition-groups/>.

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The United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway (the Troika) welcome the signing of the peace agreement between the Civilian-led Transitional Government, the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), Sudan Liberation Movement-Minni Minawi and Sudanese Alliance on October 3, 2020. The peace agreement marks an important step toward meeting the calls of the Sudanese

people for freedom, peace, and justice, especially for those affected by conflict in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, and other parts of Sudan.

The agreement includes a ceasefire and an increase in participation from the opposition movements and conflict affected communities in the transitional government, as well as mechanisms and commitments for reconciliation, justice and resource sharing. We commend the parties for engaging in the good faith negotiations needed for this comprehensive agreement and thank the Government of South Sudan for its mediation efforts leading to today's signing. We also recognize the role played by the UN and other regional and bilateral partners.

The Troika also welcomes the recent dialogue between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North/Abdelaziz al-Hilu and encourages both sides to begin wider negotiations on ending their conflict so all Sudanese can play a part in the transitional process. We call on the Sudan Liberation Movement/Abdulwahid Al Nur and the Government of Sudan to begin talks to achieve a comprehensive peace involving all the major armed movements.

A lasting peace will require dedicated and Sudanese-led efforts to implement this agreement in the spirit of cooperation and compromise. The Troika looks forward to continuing our support for the parties and all Sudanese in the realization of a lasting peace.

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6. South Sudan

The Troika (the governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and the Kingdom of Norway) issued a joint statement on February 11, 2020, urging compromise in order to form a transitional government in accordance with the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan ("R-ARCSS"). The February 11 Joint Statement is excerpted below and available as a State Department media note at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/troika-statement-compromise-essential-to-timely-formation-of-south-sudans-revitalized-transitional-government-of-national-unity/>.

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On February 8, Intergovernmental Authority on Development leaders met during the African Union summit to discuss the peace process in South Sudan. The Troika recognizes the serious efforts that the region has taken to unblock the current impasse and shares its frustration at the lack of progress.

With few days remaining until a power-sharing government is due to form, time has almost run out. We encourage all parties to exercise the spirit of political compromise at the heart of the ...R-ARCSS in these final days.

We urge the government of South Sudan and all opposition parties to work together to resolve issues blocking the formation of an inclusive national unity government by the February 22 deadline. A credible unity government needs to be inclusive as specified in the R-ARCSS and cannot be formed on the basis of unilateral action. Specifically, we encourage all sides, including

the government, to reach consensus on a way forward on the number of states. Refusing to compromise and move forward undermines the agreement, risks the ceasefire, and erodes the trust of the public and the confidence of partners.

During this critical time, we urge all parties to continue to uphold and publicly commit to the permanent ceasefire, to instruct their forces to exercise restraint, and to avoid inflammatory statements. It is of fundamental importance to avoid a return to armed conflict with devastating consequences for the people of South Sudan and for the region as a whole.

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On February 26, 2020, a senior State Department official provided a special briefing on developments in South Sudan's peace process. The briefing is transcribed at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/senior-state-department-official-on-developments-in-south-sudans-peace-process/> and excerpted below.

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But the big development that's just happened is this last Saturday a new unity government as called for in the peace agreement came into being, and that kicked the country into the next phase, which is the transition phase. That's supposed to last three years, and then the country's first national election since its independence. ... [T]he peace agreement is really a fulsome agreement. They call it the revitalized peace agreement, because—the 2015 agreement that failed, they took that as the starting point for the new agreement. And it has a good, healthy reform agenda built into it. And this transition period is when they're supposed to start getting to some of those reforms.

...[A] collaborative approach is what we're looking for. ...The parties had to compromise to get here, but they've done that.

So now the work continues, and starts in some cases. A lot of the obligations for the pre-transition period haven't, in fact, been completed. There's still a lot of work to be done on the security sector.

... So this new government will have to continue that process in the security sector. They'll have to kind of reinvent how they do governance. ...And then the other parts of the peace agreement that should kick in are a recovery program that includes returns of refugees and displaced people; improvements in public financial management and transparency and counter-corruption; transitional justice is a big chapter, so reconciliation and transitional justice. And then there's also a chapter in the peace agreement on a constitutional process that will kick in leading to the elections. And that's where they will have these big national dialogues about federalism and the shape of the country and the shape of the future government that comes after the transition period.

So it's a big agenda, a very big agenda. And this is where we're at right now. A lot of people will be looking to see what the international community's role in this process will be. The key players are the neighbors of South Sudan, the IGAD countries, which were the guarantors of this process. Sudan is the new chairman of the IGAD, but Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda are all very

key players here. And then if you look at concentric circles, the AU also has a lot of roles to play here in the peace process, and the United Nations. The UNMISS mission is one of the biggest – the biggest by some parameters – peacekeeping mission in the world right now. And we have the pen on the resolutions up in New York on the Security Council, so we and other internationals are paying a lot of attention to this as well.

But the nature of that partnership ... will depend on the nature of this new government. Are they taking responsible decisions that are focused on the needs of their people, or are they taking self-interested decisions based on their own kind of political needs or their needs for power or corrupt finances? And so this is, again, a watchful situation, but it's also more hopeful than it's been in a long time.

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... There's five major parties to this peace agreement, and some of those are umbrellas that include many more parties. So that – the first thing about keeping the ceasefire going is that these parties have confidence in each other, but the citizens' confidence in their government will be a little harder to come by, and we'll be – we won't jump into changing the way we do assistance right away either, so we're very watchful. We don't – for instance, none of our assistance goes to or through the government. We do it – we're the biggest donors there because of the humanitarian emergencies, but our assistance does not go to or through the government because we can't be sure that it will be well spent that way. ...

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... [T]his is not an agreement that we signed. In 2015 we signed that one. This one we've participated in in the sense of putting pressure on, and we have been watchful, and we have been commenting on it and pushing the parties along, but this is not our agreement in that sense. ... We will be watchful, we will ... have healthy skepticism, and we will hopefully see some positive things that we can encourage and enable as well, but we'll also be calling them if they're ... making some of the same mistakes.

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... [W]e reserve the right to use all our diplomatic tools, including more sanctions, if necessary. We have ... all the same authorities in place, and I've made sure that that's clear. ...

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But also, some of the mechanisms that are to be built into the reform efforts, chapter 5 of the peace agreement is on transitional justice. So there's a Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing Commission. There is supposed to be a hybrid court – it's an AU-South Sudan hybrid court for, one would think, the worst perpetrators of human rights atrocities during the war. So that has to be constituted. And all these tools together – there's also other international mechanisms. There's the UN Commission for Human Rights in South Sudan that's established in Geneva. We used to have the pen on that when we were still on the council. And a report just came out from them that covered a whole range of human rights issues, including starvation as a crime, which is

a kind of interesting take, but some of the gender-based violence reporting that's come out of the UN system and our own reporting, it's been just – it's so difficult to deal with. I have to say it's probably one of the most difficult things to kind of comprehend the magnitude of it when I got there, and I've worked in places like Taliban, Afghanistan, and I found South Sudan shocking at the level of sexual violence there.

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The Troika issued a June 9, 2020 joint statement calling on the Government of South Sudan to appoint governors. The June 9 statement is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/the-troika-calls-on-the-government-of-south-sudan-to-appoint-governors/index.html> and excerpted below.

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The formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity in February was a major step forward in South Sudan's peace process. Since then, a new challenge has emerged, not just for South Sudan, but for all of us. COVID-19 is a truly global challenge that will have far-reaching political and economic impacts. The Troika will continue to support South Sudan in its response.

We are deeply concerned at the increased levels of violence across South Sudan. This causes immense suffering for the people of South Sudan, puts in jeopardy any gains that have been made, and has implications across the region. In Jonglei, the vacuum created by the lack of governance has exacerbated cycles of intercommunal violence. In Central Equatoria, the ceasefire signed in January between the government and non-signatory groups has broken down and we have seen heavy fighting between forces in recent weeks, with villages destroyed and their communities displaced. Shocking reports of sexual violence against women and girls continue. We are concerned with the impact of the fighting on humanitarian access.

Now is the moment for the President and Vice Presidents, supported by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the guarantors of the peace agreement, to agree on the selection of governors and to move forward to govern together for the benefit of the people of South Sudan. Any further delay creates uncertainty that undermines the transition process, slows the fight against COVID-19, and holds back efforts to end the violence that now threatens the hard-won peace.

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On September 12, 2020, the Troika issued a statement on the second anniversary of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan ("R-ARCSS"). The statement follows and is available at <https://ss.usembassy.gov/statement-of-the-troika-special-envoys-on-the-2nd-anniversary-of-the-revitalized-agreement-on-the-resolution-of-the-conflict-in-the-republic-of-south/>.

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The Troika (Norway, the United States and the United Kingdom) reconfirms its support for the people of South Sudan and shares their desire to see a permanent end to conflict and fear of a return to violence. As we mark the two-year anniversary of the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) we commend progress to date, but express concern at delay. This week, during the first visit of all Troika Envoys to South Sudan since 2017, we urged all sides to demonstrate the leadership needed to deliver progress and maintain peace.

We applaud President Salva Kiir, First Vice President Riek Machar, and all parties to the R-ARCSS for the leadership demonstrated in February through the forming of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU). Despite this, we remain concerned by the violence that has killed hundreds in recent months, further disrupting livelihoods and humanitarian access, with more than 50% of the population facing severe acute food insecurity. Regardless of the causes of this violence all sides must accelerate efforts to deliver the R-ARCSS in full and see that the national ceasefire is maintained. We also urge those groups who remain outside the R-ARCSS to demonstrate their clear commitment to peace through effective dialogue and honor their commitment in the Rome Declaration to end violence.

Leadership and clear action is needed to address outstanding tasks, such as the finalization of governance structures and the building of a national security apparatus capable of addressing violence across the country regardless of political or ethnic affiliation. Humanitarian access must also be allowed across the country, without impediment. And as partners delivering support to South Sudan we urge the RTGoNU to deliver its commitment on economic reforms, inclusivity and transparency of public finances: these will help increase the confidence of the international community to provide further support and to build a relationship for the development of the country. Participation of women at all levels of government is a key element of the Peace Agreement.

South Sudan's leaders have a real opportunity to deliver the foundation of a stable and prosperous nation for all, and to demonstrate their commitment to peace. We urge them to demonstrate this as a matter of urgency and will work with South Sudan to support progress.

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7. Libya

On February 12, 2020, Acting Deputy Permanent U.S. Representative to the UN Cherith Norman Chalet provided the U.S. explanation of vote on the UN Security Council resolution on a Libya ceasefire. S.C. Res. 2510 (Feb. 12, 2020). The statement is excerpted below and available at <https://usun.usmission.gov/explanation-of-vote-on-the-un-security-council-resolution-on-libya-ceasefire/>.

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[W]e are disappointed that today's vote did not garner unanimous support among the Council members, despite commitments ... by leaders in Berlin, including the Russian Federation.

It's also very unfortunate that foreign mercenaries, including from the Kremlin-linked Wagner Group, are making an inclusive political solution harder to achieve. These actions undermine achieving a political solution facilitated by the UN, and [do] not help the Libyan parties come together, as was stated was necessary. However, through the resolution just adopted, the UN Security Council answers the call of the Libyan people for the international community to stop using their country to wage conflict, to stop driving Libyans from their homes, to help foster respect for international humanitarian law and the need for unhindered, life-saving humanitarian access, and to support their desire for democratic governance; to let schools re-open and health centers restock.

In voting to adopt this resolution, the United States emphasizes the need for additional accountability for those member states that continue to violate the arms embargo, in spite of the explicit commitments made in Berlin—violations that continued immediately following the Berlin Conference. External actors must stop fueling the conflict. Countries that participated in the Berlin conference committed to respect the arms embargo—promises made by the highest level of government. This resolution makes clear that now is the time for all member states to comply with the UN arms embargo.

The United States also reiterates its call for de-escalation and the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces, including foreign mercenaries and fighters. It is deeply regrettable that despite commitments made at the Berlin Conference, again, some countries, including from around this table, and others mentioned in the Panel of Experts report, continue to send military equipment and personnel to Libya. We remain concerned about reports that forces affiliated with both the Libyan National Army and the Government of the National Accord, are contemplating significant military action in the near future. This resolution clearly supports UNSMIL's important steps to have both the LNA and GNA agree to deescalate and take active steps to establish a lasting ceasefire through ongoing 5+5 Joint Military Commission talks. These talks should continue unimpeded.

The United States also condemns the grave threat to Libya's unity and to the wellbeing of the Libyan people posed by the shutdown of Libyan oil and gas facilities by the Libyan National Army. Libya's energy resources belong to its people, and underly Libya's economic wellbeing. This Council has previously made clear that no party should use these resources as a political bargaining chip. These facilities must be reopened without preconditions. Economic issues are core drivers of the ongoing conflict, and Libya's resources and revenues must also be distributed transparently and equitably for the benefit of all Libyan people.

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On March 21, 2020, the State Department issued a press statement expressing U.S. support for the cessation of hostilities endorsed by the prime minister of Libya. The statement is available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/the-united-states-calls-on-lna-to-observe-cessation-of-hostilities-in-libya/> and follows:

The United States joins the UN Support Mission in Libya in welcoming the decision of Libyan Prime Minister al-Sarraj to endorse an immediate humanitarian cessation of hostilities to allow local authorities to come together

in response to the unprecedented public health challenge posed by COVID-19. Libyan leaders must urgently prioritize the health of the Libyan people; it is the only responsible thing to do. Now is the time for all actors, including LNA Commander Haftar, to suspend military operations, reject toxic foreign interference, and enable health authorities to fight this global pandemic. The United States has consistently opposed all military escalation and the ongoing transfer of foreign military equipment and personnel into Libya; in that spirit, we support UN-facilitated dialogue among Libyan actors in order to achieve a lasting ceasefire and create the conditions for all actors to halt their military activities and return to meaningful negotiations.

On June 24, 2020, representatives of the U.S. Government and the Libyan Ministry of the Interior (“MOI”) met virtually to resume discussions on militia demobilization. See June 26, 2020 State Department media note, available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/u-s-gna-discussions-on-militia-demobilization/>. The media note further explains:

The end of the siege of Tripoli has created a renewed opportunity and an imperative to address militias, in the west and in the east of Libya. As part of continued U.S. engagement with all sides, the U.S. delegation will convene a similar conversation with LNA representatives.

The two parties affirmed that all Libyan citizens should enjoy the protection of capable and accountable security forces, free from the dangers posed by militias, armed groups, and foreign fighters. The MOI delegation briefed the U.S. side on its efforts to promote security and a program for militia disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), as well as ongoing work to neutralize unexploded ordnance in the Tripoli region. The delegations reaffirmed that armed groups that attempt to spoil the political process or engage in criminal acts do so at a significant risk of international sanctions.

The U.S. delegation stressed opposition to all foreign intervention in Libya and discussed the imperative of an immediate ceasefire and return to UN-facilitated security and political negotiations.

On July 16, 2020, the United States joined other governments in releasing a joint statement on hostilities in Tripoli, excerpted below, and available as a State Department media note at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/joint-statement-on-hostilities-in-tripoli/index.html>.

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The governments of Egypt, France, Italy, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States reiterate their deep concern about ongoing hostilities in Tripoli, call for an immediate de-escalation and halt to the current fighting, and urge the prompt return to the UN-

mediated political process. There can be no military solution in Libya. Persistent violence has claimed nearly 1,100 lives, displaced more than 100,000, and fueled a growing humanitarian emergency. The ongoing confrontation has threatened to destabilize Libya's energy sector and exacerbated the tragedy of human migration in the Mediterranean.

We note our deep concerns about the ongoing attempts by terrorist groups to exploit the security vacuum in the country, call on all parties to the Tripoli conflict to dissociate themselves from all such terrorists and individuals designated by the UN Sanctions Committee, and renew our commitment to see those responsible for further instability held accountable.

We fully support the leadership of UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ghassan Salamé as he works to stabilize the situation in Tripoli, restore confidence in order to achieve a cessation of hostilities, expand his engagement throughout Libya, promote inclusive dialogue, and create the conditions for the resumption of the UN political process. We need to re-energize UN mediation, which aims to promote a transitional government representing all Libyans, prepare for credible parliamentary and presidential elections, enable a fair allocation of resources, and advance the reunification of the Central Bank of Libya and other Libyan sovereign institutions. We also call on all UN member states to fully respect their obligations to contribute to Libya's peace and stability, prevent destabilizing arms shipments, and safeguard Libya's oil resources in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2259 (2015), 2278 (2016), 2362 (2017), and 2473 (2019). Finally, we remind all Libyan parties and institutions of their responsibility to protect civilians, safeguard civilian infrastructure, and facilitate access to humanitarian supplies.

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8. Yemen

On January 28, 2020, the State Department released a press statement expressing alarm at the escalation of violence in Yemen. The statement, available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/escalation-of-violence-in-yemen/>, calls on

all parties to put the needs of the Yemeni people first and immediately return to restraint. The Houthis must cease attacks on Saudi territory. De-escalation is a vital steppingstone for UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths' efforts to bring the parties in Yemen to a political settlement. The United States will continue to work with our international partners to bring peace, prosperity, and security to Yemen.

C. CONFLICT AVOIDANCE AND ATROCITIES PREVENTION

Congressional Report under the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act

On August 4, 2020, Secretary Pompeo announced that the second annual report under the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-441, Section 5 ("the Elie Wiesel Act") had been submitted to Congress. The press statement

making the announcement is available at <https://2017-2019.state.gov/submission-of-the-second-congressional-report-pursuant-to-the-elie-wiesel-genocide-and-atrocities-prevention-act-of-2018/>. As discussed in *Digest 2019* at 607, the Elie Wiesel Act took effect in January 2019.

[T]he U.S. Government has made significant progress in preventing, mitigating, and responding to atrocities globally. We have enhanced early warning, strengthened civil society and multilateral engagement, and increased the capacity of U.S. government personnel to coordinate, integrate, and institutionalize atrocity prevention across our foreign policy. The Elie Wiesel Act and the U.S. government's atrocity prevention efforts serve as a model to the world.

Preventing atrocities is critical to promote U.S. values, including respect for human rights, the sacred value of life, and fundamental freedoms. The 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy states, "No nation can unilaterally alleviate all human suffering, but just because we cannot help everyone does not mean that we should stop trying to help anyone." We will not ignore the suffering of those who experience atrocities. We will continue to promote accountability for perpetrators of genocide and other atrocities.

Cross References

Accountability proceedings and mechanisms, **Ch. 3.C.3**

Claims against the Palestinian Authority and PLO under the Promoting Security and Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act of 2019, **Chapter 8.A**

South Sudan, **Ch. 9.A.3**

Libya, **Ch. 9.A.4**

Israel, **Ch. 9.B.8**

Israel-Lebanon maritime boundary, **Ch. 12.A.3**

Syria sanctions, **Ch. 16.A.3**

Chemical weapons in Syria, **Ch. 19.D.1**