

Press Releases: Launching of Operations To Liberate Final ISIS Strongholds in Syria

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 1, 2018

The United States, the Global Coalition, and local partners, including the Syrian Democratic Forces, are launching operations to liberate the final ISIS strongholds in Syria. The fighting will be difficult, but we and our partners will prevail. We will defend United States, Coalition, and partner forces if attacked. The days of ISIS controlling territory and terrorizing the people of Syria are coming to an end.

We will work with our NATO ally Turkey and our partners Israel, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon to secure their borders from ISIS. We will seek further fair share contributions in forces, material, and resources from regional partners and allies to stabilize liberated territories. As the President said in remarks with President Emmanuel Macron of France, we will ensure that there is a strong and lasting footprint in Syria such that ISIS cannot return and populations liberated from ISIS are not exploited by the Assad regime or its Iranian supporters.

We will reinvigorate the Geneva process under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, and mobilize international resources to address Syria's urgent humanitarian and stabilization needs. The United States is committed to ensuring a future political settlement that honors the will of all Syrians, including Sunni Arabs, Kurds, Christians, Turkmen, and other minorities.

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Press Releases: Proposed Constitutional Amendments in Burundi

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 1, 2018

The United States is concerned with the May 17, referendum aimed at amending the constitution of Burundi through a non-transparent process. We are especially concerned that the amendments to the constitution will be interpreted as resetting presidential term limits and run counter to the Arusha Agreement. Such efforts by incumbents to enact constitutional changes to remain in power beyond term limits weaken democratic institutions.

We denounce the numerous instances of violence, intimidation, and harassment committed against perceived opponents of the referendum. We call on the government to respect Burundi's international legal obligations regarding the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. Free and fair participation in the process is an essential component of a credible referendum.

The United States recognizes the formidable challenges that the Burundian people have faced throughout their history, and we remain committed to continuing our partnership with Burundi in support of the country's sustainable peace and development.

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Press Releases: Iran Atomic Archive

Press Statement
Mike Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
April 30, 2018

For many years, the Iranian regime has insisted to the world that its nuclear program was peaceful. The documents obtained by Israel from inside of Iran show beyond any doubt that the Iranian regime was not telling the truth. I have personally reviewed many of the Iranian files. Our nonproliferation and intelligence officials have been analyzing tens of thousands of pages and translating them from Farsi. This analytical work will continue for many months. We assess that the documents we have reviewed are authentic.

The documents show that Iran had a secret nuclear weapons program for years. Iran sought to develop nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems. Iran hid a vast atomic archive from the world and from the IAEA – until today.

Among the flaws of the Iran nuclear deal was the whitewashing of Iran's illicit activities related to its military nuclear program. Iran had many opportunities over the years to turn over its files to international inspectors from the IAEA and admit its nuclear weapons work. Instead, they lied to the IAEA repeatedly. They also lied about their program to the six nations who negotiated the Iran nuclear deal. What this means is the deal was not constructed on a foundation of good faith or transparency. It was built on Iran's lies. Iran's nuclear deception is inconsistent with Iran's pledge in the nuclear deal "that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop, or acquire any nuclear weapons."

We are therefore assessing what the discovery of Iran's secret nuclear files means for the future of the JCPOA. Allowing restrictions on Iran's nuclear program to sunset was a mistake. One has to ask: Why exactly was Iran hiding half a ton of nuclear weaponization files while implementing the Iran deal? It is worth recalling that from 2006-2015, Iran was prohibited by Security Council resolutions from enriching any nuclear material. Now that the world knows Iran has lied and is still lying, it is time to revisit the question of whether Iran can be trusted to enrich or control any nuclear material. As the President's May 12 deadline to fix the Iran deal approaches, I will be

consulting with our European allies and other nations on the best way forward in light of what we now know about Iran's past pursuit of nuclear weapons and its systematic deception of the world.

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[Press Releases: Remarks on Iran Atomic Archive](#)

Remarks
Mike Pompeo

Secretary of State

On Aircraft ert Joint Base Andrews
April 30, 2018

SECRETARY POMPEO: Everybody ready to get home?

QUESTION: Very much so.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, me too. Well, look, you all had a chance to see what the prime minister said today. You've seen the statement that I've released with some of the President – what was said in our response to the question at the joint press conference he held. I'm happy to ask any – answer any questions to clarify anything about this new material that the prime minister released today.

QUESTION: How long have you known about that?

QUESTION: Did you go over it when you were with him in their meeting? I mean, how much of the meeting was that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So we have – we've known about this material for a while.

And yes, we certainly discussed the material yesterday when we were together.

QUESTION: Thank you.

SECRETARY POMPEO: But it's been something that's been in the works for a while. I know there are people talking about these documents not being authentic. I can confirm for you that these documents are real; they're authentic.

QUESTION: Senator Corker says you've known about this for years.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, that's partly true. The existence of the AMAD program that ended roughly December of 2003, January of 2004, it is accurate to say that the knowledge of that has been known for – the fact of that had been known for quite some time. But there are thousands of new documents and new information. We're still going through it. There's still a lot of work to do to figure out precisely the scope and scale of it. But it is the case – it – there is new information about that program.

QUESTION: Does it matter for the Iran nuclear deal, I mean, given that it looks like they abandoned the program some time ago?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, this is – this will, I think, spell out the scope and scale of the program that they undertook there, and I think makes – I think makes very clear that, at the very least, the Iranians have continued to lie to their own people. So while you say everyone knew, the Iranians have consistently taken the position that they've never had a program like this. This will – this will belie any notion that there wasn't a program like this.

QUESTION: Is there anything in there that suggests there's an actual violation of the 2016 agreement?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We'll leave that to lawyers. I'll leave that to lawyers to sort of make – and the President will ultimately have to make a determination about that too. You should remember there are still many, many documents that we've not had the opportunity to go through yet. It's complex, a lot of translation work. There's just a – it's just a significant undertaking.

QUESTION: Does this suggest that the IAEA was wrong when it closed the book on the PMDs as part of the – part of the JCPOA?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I don't know the answer to that.

QUESTION: Well, do these documents – are they contemporaneous with the negotiations that were going on or the (inaudible)?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We haven't gone through all the documents yet. We're still scratching the surface of what we're going through.

QUESTION: Did the prime minister choose to release this now in order to influence the President's decision or to support it?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I don't know. I don't know why they chose that timing.

QUESTION: It sounds like you have not drawn any conclusions on it yet.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, yes and no. I mean, it depends what you mean. Yes, we've drawn conclusions. We know more about the AMAD program than we knew before, and we have a whole lot more material to go through. We now know that they continued to store this material in an orderly fashion for some purpose – right? They kept the documents for a reason, and one can speculate as to why. If you said you were never – right? – the JCPOA says you'll never, ever have a nuclear weapons program – right? Or maybe not with a not a never ever. You won't ever have a nuclear weapons program. But you chose to store in secret and hide these documents?

QUESTION: Historical record? You're not willing to give them the benefit of the doubt that they don't want to destroy their history or –

SECRETARY POMPEO: The world can decide if this was for the Iranian museum that they – that they decided to hang onto it. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: How much have you guys (inaudible)?

QUESTION: Secretary, what happens now? Do you (inaudible) urgent meeting of the E3? What happens now?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So the Israelis will now, I think – I think the prime minister said publicly they are going to go provide expert briefings to the Germans and the French (inaudible). They'll do the same thing for the Brits as well, and I think he indicated he was going to do it for the other members of the P5 also. And I think that's important. I don't think the Israelis – the Israelis haven't asked us to take their word for it; they provided us the material to review. I am confident they will do the same for the other partners of the P5.

QUESTION: If you –

MODERATOR: Okay, guys. The Secretary has to go.

QUESTION: How much will it damage European relations? I mean, they obviously want to stay very much in the deal. If you pull out, are you afraid that relations with Europe will be damaged?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'd say two things. One, we're working diligently to fix this thing. I mean, on the plane we've been working to try and get language right that will address President Trump's concerns. So we're still working our way there.

And then a second thing I'd say is we've had lots of conversations with the Europeans. We know what it is they're hoping to achieve. We share the same end goal to keep the Iranians from ever having a nuclear weapon. I am confident that we will continue to have good relations with our European partners should the President choose to pull out of this. This will be one issue among many of the important, critical issues that we all work on together.

MODERATOR: All right. Thanks, you guys.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you all.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

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Press Releases: Terrorist Attack in Kabul

Press Statement
Mike Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
April 30, 2018

The United States strongly condemns today's senseless and barbaric attack in Kabul that killed 29 people and wounded dozens more, including several brave journalists and media professionals. We extend our deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims who were injured and killed, and we mourn all those who lost their lives.

The independent media is a cornerstone of democracy. Despite today's attack, the vibrant media landscape that has developed in Afghanistan will endure, in large part due to those journalists and media professionals who tragically died in today's attack, but whose courageous and steadfast work helped lay the foundation for Afghanistan's thriving and resilient independent media. The international community's commitment to the Afghan people and a lasting peace in Afghanistan will not be shaken by such attacks.

The United States, along with our Afghan and international partners, is

committed to defeating ISIS in Afghanistan, which has claimed responsibility for this attack. We stand with the people, the independent media, and government of Afghanistan and remain committed to supporting the Afghan people's efforts to achieve peace, security, and democracy for their country.

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