

Press Releases: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Announces the Construction Award for the New U.S. Consulate General in Erbil, Iraq

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
July 6, 2017

The Department of State has awarded the construction contract for the new U.S. Consulate General in Erbil, Iraq to B.L. Harbert International of Birmingham, Alabama.

The new Consulate General will include a Chancery, Marine residence, housing, support facilities and facilities for the community. The architect for the project is EYP of Albany, New York.

As part of the Department's Capital Security Construction Program, since 1999, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) has completed 137 new diplomatic facilities and has an additional 48 projects in design or under construction.

OBO's mission is to provide safe, secure, and functional facilities that represent the U.S. government to host nations and support our staff in achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives. These facilities represent U.S. values and the best in U.S. architecture, engineering, technology, sustainability, art, culture, and construction execution.

For further information, please contact Christine Foushee at FousheeCT@state.gov, or visit www.state.gov/obo.

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Press Releases: Comoros National Day

Press Statement
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
July 6, 2017

Best wishes to the people of Comoros as you celebrate Independence Day on July 6.

The American people value our long and warm relationship with Comoros and its people. We reaffirm our commitment to continuing our joint efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, advance regional peace and security, and promote economic opportunity.

We look forward to further cooperation and friendship over the coming years.

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President Trump Hosts Chibok Schoolgirls at the White House

On the night of April 14, 2014, Boko Haram terrorists attacked the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Nigeria. They broke in disguised as guards, and forced the girls to leave the school and come with them. According to several reports, the terrorists kidnapped between 200 and 300 girls.

Tragically, it is widely believed that Boko Haram sold many of the girls into human trafficking rings across Africa.

But approximately 50 of the girls have escaped, including Joy Bishara and Lydia Pogu, who visited President Donald J. Trump, and his daughter, Ivanka Trump, at the White House last Tuesday. The girls are recent graduates of Canyonville Christian Academy in Oregon, and they were accompanied by the school President, Doug Wead.

The President and Ivanka were both deeply moved by the girls' visit.



Combatting human trafficking is one of the Trump Administration's top priorities.

This week, the U.S. State Department released its annual Trafficking in Persons Report, the government's principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking. It is also the world's most comprehensive resource of governmental anti-human trafficking efforts and reflects the U.S. Government's commitment to global leadership on this key human rights and law enforcement issue.

This year's report estimates that there are a stunning 20 million victims of human trafficking around the world.

"As we mark the release of this year's report, let us remember the victims saved from the unimaginable horrors of human trafficking," Ivanka Trump said during recent remarks at the State Department. "Let us recommit ourselves to finding those still in the shadows of exploitation, and let us celebrate the heroes who continue to shine a light on the darkness of human trafficking."

In the wake of the report, the two Chibok schoolgirls' visit to the White House was a reminder that the survivors of the scourge of human trafficking are heroes whose courage can inspire us all.



During their visit, Joy and Lyida read the President a letter about their experience. An excerpt of the letter is below.

"Mr. President, we urge you to keep America safe and strong.

We know that some people are trying to discourage you.

Do not be discouraged. You are right to keep American safe and strong.

Not only for America. But for the world.

If American is not safe and strong, where can people like us look for hope, when there is danger?

Finally, we urge you to keep making America prosperous."

President Trump in Poland

On Wednesday, President Donald J. Trump began his second trip abroad by traveling to Warsaw, Poland for bilateral meetings and to deliver an address to the people of Poland. President Trump also spoke about energy security with European leaders attending the Three Seas Initiative Summit.

President Trump met first with the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda. The two affirmed the enduring friendship and alliance between Poland and the United States, as demonstrated by the close partnership and cooperation between our two countries in many different spheres, particularly within NATO on security issues.



President Trump and President Duda then held a joint press conference in the Royal Castle Courtyard. President Trump thanked the Polish people and President Duda for the warm welcome he received in Warsaw. The President praised the vital military relationship between the United States and Poland and applauded Poland for meeting NATO spending benchmarks. President Trump also congratulated President Duda for Poland's recent election to the U.N. Security Council beginning in January and highlighted the importance of healthy economic relations between the two countries.

"Our strong alliance with Poland and NATO remains critical to deterring conflict and ensuring that war between great powers never again ravages Europe, and that the world will be a safer and better place. America is committed to maintaining peace and security in Central and Eastern Europe," President Trump emphasized.



The President then joined European Heads of State attending the Three Seas Initiative Summit, where he expressed the United States' support of the Three Seas Business Council, an effort to boost the initiative's ability to better connect and thereby transform the region. He expressed hope that the summit would open a new energy frontier, improving countless lives across the region and throughout the world

"With the expanded trade and new infrastructure, we will unleash incredible energy innovation that is safe, responsible, and environmentally friendly. The United States supports a commonsense approach to protecting natural resources – one that responsibly balances economic growth, job creation, and energy security," President Trump said.

The President also emphasized the importance of diversifying energy sources, supplies, and routes to ensuring Europe's energy security. Noting that the United States can contribute to this diversification, President Trump noted that the United States will never use its energy to coerce and will work to keep others from doing so as well.



President Trump also met with President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic of Croatia

to discuss issues of mutual interest and ways to deepen already strong United States-Croatia relations. President Trump welcomed Croatia's efforts to promote energy security and diversification, and expressed support for timely completion of the Krk Island liquefied natural gas facility.

After his meeting with the President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, President Trump gave remarks to the people of Poland in Krasiński Square. He welcomed stronger ties of trade and commerce with the growing Polish economy, hailed the rich people-to-people ties between our Nations, reaffirmed the United States' ironclad commitment to Article 5, and called for a strong and united Europe, which, together with the United States, forms the greatest "community of nations" the world has ever known.

"Our two countries share a special bond forged by unique histories and national characters. It's a fellowship that exists only among people who have fought and bled and died for freedom."



President Trump then departed Poland for Hamburg, Germany, where he will attend the G20 summit.

Press Releases: Statement From Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson on the Current Situation in Syria

Press Statement
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
July 5, 2017

Before I depart for the G20 summit in Hamburg, I would like to comment on the current situation in Syria, which is a topic the President will raise in his meeting with Russian President Putin.

First, parties in Syria must ensure stability on the ground. If we do not achieve stability in Syria, our progress in defeating ISIS may be undone. Secondly, parties must work through a political process to achieve a

settlement that charts a way forward for the Syrian people. Lastly, Russia has a special responsibility to assist in these efforts.

As organized military efforts to defeat ISIS on the ground in Syria continue, the United States and our partners in the Coalition to Defeat ISIS are committed to ensuring that civilians from recently liberated areas can begin the process of returning home and rebuilding their lives. Actors in Syria must remember that our fight is with ISIS. We call upon all parties, including the Syrian government and its allies, Syrian opposition forces, and Coalition forces carrying out the battle to defeat ISIS, to avoid conflict with one another and adhere to agreed geographical boundaries for military de-confliction and protocols for de-escalation.

While there are no perfect options for guaranteeing stability, we must explore all possibilities for holding the line against the resurgence of ISIS or other terrorist groups. The United States and Russia certainly have unresolved differences on a number of issues, but we have the potential to appropriately coordinate in Syria in order to produce stability and serve our mutual security interests. The United States believes Russia, as a guarantor of the Assad regime and an early entrant into the Syrian conflict, has a responsibility to ensure that the needs of the Syrian people are met and that no faction in Syria illegitimately re-takes or occupies areas liberated from ISIS' or other terrorist groups' control. Russia also has an obligation to prevent any further use of chemical weapons of any kind by the Assad regime.

The United States and Russia have already achieved progress in establishing de-confliction zones in Syria that have prevented mutual collateral damage. Our military leaders have communicated clearly with one another to make sure no accidents occur between our two countries in the Syrian theater. Where there have been minor incidents, they have been resolved quickly and peacefully. This cooperation over de-confliction zones process is evidence that our two nations are capable of further progress. The United States is prepared to explore the possibility of establishing with Russia joint mechanisms for ensuring stability, including no-fly zones, on the ground ceasefire observers, and coordinated delivery of humanitarian assistance. If our two countries work together to establish stability on the ground, it will lay a foundation for progress on the settlement of Syria's political future.

With the liberation of Raqqa now underway, ISIS has been badly wounded, and is could be on the brink of complete defeat in Syria if all parties focus on this objective. In order to complete the mission, the international community, and especially Russia, must remove obstacles to the defeat of ISIS and help provide stability that prevents ISIS from rising anew from the ashes of their failed and fraudulent caliphate.

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