

Press Releases: Seventh Meeting of the Law Enforcement Coordination Group Focused on Countering Hizballah's Terrorist Activities

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 19, 2018

On December 17-18, the United States and Europol convened the seventh meeting of the Law Enforcement Coordination Group (LECG) on countering Hizballah's terrorist and illicit activities in Europe. Governments from the Middle East, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America participated in this session, along with Europol and INTERPOL.

Hizballah continues to plot terrorism and raise money around the world, and countering the threat of Iran-backed terrorist groups is a top priority for the Administration. The LECG remains a crucial vehicle to improve international cooperation on combating Hizballah's terrorist and criminal schemes.

Officials from the U.S. Departments of State, Justice, and Treasury, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Counterterrorism Center, and Drug Enforcement Agency also participated in this meeting. The LECG will convene again in Europe in 2019.

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[Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Soreide](#)

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 19, 2018

The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:□

Secretary Michael R. Pompeo met today in Washington, DC, with Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Soreide. They reaffirmed the close and enduring transatlantic partnership between the United States and Norway. Secretary Pompeo expressed appreciation for Norway's role as a steadfast NATO Ally, including hosting the Trident Juncture NATO exercise. They discussed a range of issues of mutual interest, including Russia, Syria, Iran, and Ukraine.

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[Press Releases: Deputy Secretary John Sullivan's Meetings in Poland](#)

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 19, 2018

The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:□

On Wednesday in Warsaw, Deputy Secretary John Sullivan reaffirmed to Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz the United States' ironclad commitment to the NATO Alliance and celebrated the centennial of Poland's reclaimed independence. He applauded the continued strengthening of our bilateral relationship and commended Poland for the country's commitment to spend 2.5% of GDP on defense by 2030. He also witnessed the signing of an agreement between the Polish Oil and Natural Gas Company (PGNiG) and Sempra Energy, which will assist in energy diversification for Poland.

While in Poland, he also met with President Duda's Chief of Staff, Minister Szczerki, as well as representatives from civil society and the business community.

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[Press Releases: Deputy Secretary Sullivan's Meeting With Macedonian President Ivanov](#)

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 19, 2018

The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:□

On December 18 in Skopje, Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan reaffirmed with President Gjorge Ivanov the United States' continued support of the landmark Prespa Agreement. The two also agreed on the need to implement key reforms required by NATO and the EU, including crucial judiciary reforms.

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Press Releases: Bulgaria's Defense Modernization

Press Statement
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
December 19, 2018

The United States welcomes Bulgaria's defense modernization plans and looks forward to the country's imminent selection of a new multirole fighter aircraft.

As I emphasized during my phone call with Prime Minister Boyko Borissov on December 18, and as Deputy Secretary Sullivan underlined during his visit to Sofia last weekend, the United States is committed to working with the Bulgarian government to tailor the final scope of a potential F-16 sale to fit its budgetary and operational requirements, while still offering superior capabilities.

The United States has provided more than \$200 million in security assistance to Bulgaria over the last 25 years to increase military professionalization and NATO interoperability. The United States has also invested more than \$100

million in upgrades to the Novo Selo Training Center and Graf Ignatievo air base as part of the European Deterrence Initiative, and plans to continue such upgrades in the future. The United States will continue to prioritize investments with Bulgaria that build NATO interoperability.

The United States looks forward to completing final negotiations with the Bulgarian government.

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