

Press Releases: Acting Secretary of State John J. Sullivan With Traveling Press

Special Briefing
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QUESTION: We'll just ask you a couple questions, seriously. I don't think – on the record, though?

MS NAUERT: Have you seen the communique yet?

QUESTION: I have not.

MS NAUERT: Okay. So you haven't –

QUESTION: I just got WiFi back.

MS NAUERT: Got it. Okay.

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: Oh, that's the – I'm sorry, I was going to say –

QUESTION: Yeah, yeah.

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: – is that your WiFi indicator? No, that's fine.

QUESTION: Yeah, no, that's – (laughter) –

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: This is the final draft?

QUESTION: Yeah. I think (inaudible) the best part.

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: This is the final final?

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: Okay. It's still marked "draft" by the way –

QUESTION: Oh, okay.

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: The final's out.

QUESTION: All right, good. Well, we want to ask you about all the disinformation, the steps you agreed to take, and the G7 agreed to take to

combat Russian propaganda and disinformation. It sounds like you have this real – a real concrete plan for it.

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: There was a lot of discussion about disinformation, propaganda. I think we settled on “disinformation,” which is the word –

QUESTION: Okay.

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: – that’s used in the communique. The communique, as I recall, does not specifically cite Russia, but Russia was the principal object of the discussion. And the way forward is that we’ve tasked experts within our governments, respective governments, to work between now and the G7 summit to come up with a proposal for the G7 leaders to address this problem that we’re unanimous is a threat to our political systems.

QUESTION: Were you hearing that everybody is experiencing it to some degree?

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: Everybody’s concerned about it to some degree. Others – some – I spoke to Italian Government officials when I was in Rome before their most recent elections. They were concerned about it. They didn’t think that they had been hit as hard as some other governments might have been, so –

QUESTION: This is on the record, just to be –

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: Yeah. No, I’ve said this at our – in our press in Rome that they are concerned. They were concerned about particularly Russia interfering in their elections. Other countries, such as ours, the United States, has clearly experienced information and disinformation targeted by Russia. But it’s important that the – to note that the communique – we’re not focused exclusively on Russia. Russia’s the problem that we have identified, but there are other potential sources as well.

Having said that, the discussion focused on Russia.

QUESTION: What were those other sources?

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: Potentially North Korea, or other potential malign actors, and nonstate actors.

QUESTION: This may well be the last trip for you –

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: I hope so.

QUESTION: – as Secretary of State.

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: I hope so. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Well, what do you – what about – just for the record, what are you most proud of in your tenure? Any advice for the new guy?

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: What am I most proud of? Not anything I did, but

what the department did, just keeping things going. We've done this G7 ministerial, we did the Summit of the Americas without a secretary of state, with an acting secretary of state. And I think having things go running – I won't say well, but we kept things together, and we'll present the new secretary, when he's confirmed, with an outstanding group of women and men in the Foreign Service and Civil Service. So I'm looking forward to continuing their work for the United States under his leadership as secretary of state.

QUESTION: That's wonderful. Thank you so much.

QUESTION: Okay. Thank you so much for having us, sir. Appreciate it.

QUESTION: Appreciate it, thanks for having us.

ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: Thank you.

QUESTION: Best of luck to you.

QUESTION: Thank you, nice to meet you.

QUESTION: See you around Foggy Bottom.

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