

[Press Releases: Ukrainian Presidential Elections](#)

Press Statement
Morgan Ortagus

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 22, 2019

The United States congratulates President-elect Volodymyr Zelenskyy on his victory in the Ukrainian presidential elections. We also congratulate the Ukrainian people on holding elections that reflect Ukraine's vibrant democracy five years after the 2014 Revolution of Dignity and after five years of unrelenting Russian aggression. The elections were peaceful, competitive, and the outcome represented the will of the people. We welcome the OSCE's preliminary report on the elections.

The United States maintains steadfast support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its international borders and will continue to stand with Ukraine as it undertakes essential reforms. We look forward to working with President-elect Volodymyr Zelenskyy to advance our two nations' shared goal of a secure, prosperous, democratic, and free Ukraine.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[Press Releases: Special Representative](#)

for Iran Brian Hook And Assistant Secretary for Energy Resources Francis R. Fannon

Special Briefing
Brian Hook

Senior Policy Advisor to the Secretary of State and Special Representative
for Iran
Francis R. Fannon

Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Energy Resources

Washington, DC
April 22, 2019

QUESTION: Hey guys. Thanks very much for doing this. Nick from PBS NewsHour here.

A couple of follow-ups: One, the Secretary was almost getting there at the end, but just specifically, is there a wind-down period? What kind of wind-down period will there be?

And as you know, with China and Turkey, you're in the middle of huge strategic conversations with them. Turkey, obviously S-400, F-35. China, the entire trade talks. Do you have – do you believe that this announcement, this move, will impact those larger strategic talks? Thanks.

MR HOOK: You want to do the first one?

MR FANNON: Sure, I'll speak to the wind-down period. Hi. Yeah, I would say that we've – the wind-down period, if we look at it, was – will be a year in terms of going to zero. We've been very clear from the outset when the administration initiated its withdrawal from the JCPOA. So that continues. We've already taken a million and a half barrels off the market and are finalizing our path to zero, which will end on 2nd May.

We're doing this purposefully. The Secretary made the announcement today to provide the ability for markets to be managed prior to the expiration. And we're doing this in close cooperation and consultation with some of the largest producers in the world alongside of the U.S. production. So we feel

very confident in terms of – the global oil markets will remain well supplied.

QUESTION: Sorry, one year from May 2nd, you're saying, or one year from the JCPOA?

MR FANNON: We started this last May, right?

QUESTION: Right.

MR FANNON: Well, if we hit that one year this May, so we say the wind-down period was – began then. We've been very clear in terms of our path to zero, and we're pleased to see that global market conditions and cooperation from other partners allow us to close out this year to zero.

QUESTION: No further wind-down period after May 2nd?

MR HOOK: There will be no additional SREs granted. That is the policy.

With respect to the impact, the point of this is not to negatively impact other countries. We have – we are doing everything we can to ensure a well-supplied oil market and that there aren't any supply interruptions. We have a very well supplied oil market right now. We have always said from the time – this has been a year now, we've said this repeatedly, Frank and I have, and the Secretary, the President – we are not looking to grant any exceptions or waivers to our campaign of maximum economic pressure. And this is the only way – this is the biggest leverage we have on the Islamic Republic of Iran, is their oil exports. And if you want to seek a change in behavior, you have to show seriousness of purpose on the oil.

And we're seeing – I was here a week or two ago giving a briefing on the impact that we are seeing. With this decision today, we expect to see more positive impacts to deny Iran the revenue it needs to conduct its foreign policy, to fund its proxies and satellites around the region, to fund its missile program. And that's a very positive thing. And so we think that this sort of move pays a lot of benefits for the Middle East broadly to promote peace and stability. It is very hard to imagine a peaceful and stable Middle East if you accept the status quo of Iran's expansionist foreign policy.

QUESTION: Can I just try –

QUESTION: Can you talk about the –

MR HOOK: Michele.

QUESTION: – the sanctions that these countries could face? I mean, are you talking about targeted sanctions? Are you talking about sanctions that could affect the U.S. trade relationship with countries like India and China?

MR HOOK: I don't have anything to add beyond what the Secretary said. We will sanction any sanctionable behavior. We have given countries – after the President announced he was leaving the deal, countries were given a six-month pre-wind-down before the sanctions were re-imposed in November. And then

because we had a very tight and fragile oil market in November, the President decided to grant a handful of waivers. We have always wanted to get to zero as quickly as market conditions will permit. We just face a much better oil picture globally than we did six months ago, and it will only improve from here.

MS ORTAGUS: Matt.

QUESTION: Yeah.

MR HOOK: And so that's why we're in a better place.

QUESTION: I just want to – I understand you, the Secretary, and the White House also have all said there will be no more SREs granted, the waivers granted. But does that mean – will all of these countries whose waivers are expiring on the 2nd get hit with sanctions on May 3 if they haven't cut all of their purchases, or is there some kind of leeway in there for them to, let's say, continue to take delivery of pre – of oil that they purchased before May 2nd before the waivers expire, or will they be able to use money after May 2nd that's already been set aside for these purchases? I mean, forget about whether the waivers will be continued – are they going to get hit with sanctions starting May 3?

MR FANNON: I think the Secretary spoke to that.

MR HOOK: Yeah, he already spoke to it. We don't have anything to add beyond what he said.

QUESTION: Well, I – well, he didn't, actually –

MR FANNON: No, he did.

QUESTION: – because you keep saying that SREs won't be – look, I'm not accusing you, I just don't want this to be, like, you're playing cute here. Will India, Turkey, Japan, South Korea, all the – China, get hit with sanctions on May 3rd if they do not stop between now and then taking delivery of Iranian oil?

MR HOOK: It's a hypothetical that the Secretary's already addressed.

MS ORTAGUS: Kylie, another question.

QUESTION: Can you talk a little bit about the numbers? You said that – excuse me – 1.5 million barrels have been taken off the market. So how many was Iran exporting last year at this time? How many are they exporting now? And the five countries that are still largely importing Iranian oil, how much are they importing?

MR FANNON: Well, we can get – with respect to some of the specific numbers and the 1.5, that's been – made that – those numbers available publicly in the past. In terms of the specific countries, that's subject – some of those are subject to ongoing – the diplomatic discussions. There's plenty of published reporting on – in terms of estimates on what different countries

are importing, and we just – we haven't any further – anything further to comment on those specifically.

I think what – the other point the Secretary underscored was just the tremendous increase in continued uptick in production in the United States, and how EIA continues to have to revise upward almost on a couple-month basis in terms of what U.S. production – what the U.S. production is. Just last year, adding 1.6 million barrels to the market is significant. We're on trend to – projected to do something along similar this year, so we're very confident in terms of the overall supply.

I think the other point is global oil stocks are at five-year averages. That's important. And we're in a very positive position relative to some of the other producers the Secretary alluded to that are working with us in partnership.

QUESTION: Those prices went up significant today, though. Can you speak to that? Do you expect them to level out later this week?

MR FANNON: We saw some increase, so it's hard to conflate our announcements – what was made versus other things. I think just a few hours prior you could look at other reporting as to the OPEC curtailment. There's lots of reasons in terms of what affects oil markets. What we're here to say also, though, and as the Secretary alluded, we're having to do it – we're doing this in coordination with other major producers, and we would refer you to their actions as well. We're doing this to ensure – in a coordinated way to ensure that the global oil market is well supplied.

MS ORTAGUS: Great. Thanks, guys.

MR HOOK: Thanks.

QUESTION: Thank you.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[Press Releases: Rewards for Justice –](#)

Reward Offer for Information on Hizballah's Financial Networks

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 22, 2019

The U.S. Department of State's Rewards for Justice Program is offering a reward of up to \$10 million for information leading to the disruption of the financial mechanisms of the global terrorist organization Lebanese Hizballah. This announcement marks the first time that the Department has offered a reward for information on Hizballah's global financial networks.

Rewards can be provided for information leading to the identification and disruption of:

- a source of revenue for Hizballah or its key financial facilitation mechanisms;
- major Hizballah donors or financial facilitators;
- financial institutions or exchange houses facilitating Hizballah transactions;
- businesses or investments owned or controlled by Hizballah or its financiers;
- front companies engaged in international procurement of dual-use technology on behalf of Hizballah; and
- criminal schemes involving Hizballah members and supporters which financially benefit the organization.

Hizballah is a Lebanon-based terrorist organization that receives weapons, training, and funding from Iran, which the Secretary of State designated as a state sponsor of terrorism in 1984. Hizballah generates about a billion dollars a year from a combination of direct financial support from Iran, international businesses and investments, donor networks, and money laundering activities. The State Department designated Hizballah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in October 1997 under the Immigration and Nationality Act, and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) in October 2001 under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224.

In addition to Hizballah's global financial networks, the State Department is highlighting the following three individuals as examples of the type of key Hizballah financiers or facilitators about whom it seeks information. All

three have been designated by the U.S. Department of the Treasury as SDGTs:

Adham Tabaja is a Hizballah member who maintains direct ties to senior Hizballah organizational elements, including the group's operational component, Islamic Jihad. Tabaja also holds properties in Lebanon on behalf of the group and conducts business throughout the Middle East and West Africa. He is majority owner of the Lebanon-based real estate development and construction firm Al-Inmaa Group for Tourism Works. The Treasury Department designated Tabaja, Al-Inmaa Group for Tourism Works, and its subsidiaries as SDGTs in June 2015.

Mohammad Ibrahim Bazzi is a key Hizballah financier who has provided millions of dollars to Hizballah generated from his business activities in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. He owns or controls Global Trading Group NV, Euro African Group LTD, Africa Middle East Investment Holding SAL, Premier Investment Group SAL Offshore, and Car Escort Services S.A.L. Off Shore. The Treasury Department designated Bazzi and his affiliated companies as SDGTs in May 2018.

Ali Youssef Charara is a key Hizballah financier as well as Chairman and General Manager of Lebanon-based telecommunications company Spectrum Investment Group Holding SAL, and has extensive business interests in the telecommunications industry in West Africa. Charara has received millions of dollars from Hizballah to invest in commercial projects that financially support the terrorist group. The Treasury Department designated Charara and Spectrum Investment Group as SDGTs in January 2016.

More information about these reward offers is located on the Rewards for Justice website at www.rewardsforjustice.net. We encourage anyone with information on Hizballah financial networks to contact the Rewards for Justice office via the website, e-mail (LH@rewardsforjustice.net), phone (1-800-877-3927 in North America), or mail (Rewards for Justice, Washington, D.C., 20520-0303, USA). Individuals may also contact the Regional Security Officer at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

The Rewards for Justice Program is an effective law enforcement tool and is administered by the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service. Since its inception in 1984, the program has paid in excess of \$150 million to more than 100 people who provided actionable information that helped bring terrorists to justice or prevented acts of international terrorism worldwide. Follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/Rewards4Justice>.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Call With President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 21, 2019

The below is attributable to Spokesperson Morgan Ortagus:

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo spoke on April 20th with President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan. The Secretary condemned the Taliban's recent announcement of a spring offensive and underscored the United States' solidarity with the Afghan people's pursuit of a comprehensive peace agreement that would end the suffering and destruction. He also expressed the United States' disappointment that the intra-Afghan dialogue, planned for Doha, Qatar, had been postponed. The Secretary and President Ghani agreed that the Doha conference presents an important opportunity to advance peace. The Secretary encouraged all sides to seize the moment and reach an understanding on participants, so that an inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue can be convened in Doha as soon as possible.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

Press Releases: U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee 2019 Fact Sheet

Fact Sheet
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 19, 2019

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo, Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan, Foreign Minister Taro Kono, and Defense Minister Takeshi Iwaya met in Washington, DC on April 19, 2019. Building upon their joint statement, the Ministers discussed the following shared priorities and initiatives through which the people of the United States and Japan will work together to strengthen the U.S.-Japan Alliance and build a free and open Indo-Pacific:

I. Bilateral Security and Defense Cooperation

Cooperation for Cross-Domain Operations

- Emphasizing the integral role of space in full spectrum cross-domain operations, the Ministers stressed the importance of deepening cooperation on space capabilities to strengthen mission assurance, interoperability, and operational cooperation. Both sides recognized the benefits of cooperation on space situational awareness (SSA) and highlighted Japan's development of a Deep Space Radar and the opportunity to host U.S.-provided SSA payloads on Japan's Quasi Zenith Satellite System planned for launch in 2023. The Ministers also underscored their interest in identifying ways to support alliance needs by leveraging emerging, innovative space concepts.
- The Ministers determined to bolster capability and enhance their respective integrated defense for both air and missile threats, including through the timely and smooth deployment of Japan's Aegis Ashore. The Ministers also shared their concerns about the proliferation of intermediate-range missiles worldwide and committed to working together to address this growing threat.

Enhancing the Alliance's Capabilities

- The Ministers reiterated the importance of modernizing and adapting the Alliance's capabilities to meet both current and future needs, including through the introduction of advanced weapon systems to Japan such as F-35, E-2D, V-22, stand-off missiles, and Aegis Ashore. The United States welcomed Japan's decision to utilize a multi-year budgeting

process to purchase nine E-2D aircraft. The Ministers recognized the importance of utilizing multi-year budgeting, and ensuring cost transparency as well as early and effective case closures to further streamline the foreign military sales process.

- To enhance interoperability, the Ministers reaffirmed the intent to promote the standardization of defense equipment, sharing of defense networks, and cooperation on emerging technologies. The Ministers welcomed progress on the SM-3 Block IIA and its anticipated shift to the production phase, as well as the expedited cooperative research process for amphibious operational technologies.
- Cognizant of the fact that the Alliance's technological advantage must be safeguarded from our adversaries at all times, the Ministers committed to strengthen and enhance information security practices across the whole of government to protect classified information, maintain technological superiority, and preserve our shared economic and defense advantages in the face of evolving threats to the Japan-U.S. Alliance. The Ministers emphasized the need for greater supply chain security, noting threats to the defense industrial base, national networks, and critical infrastructure required for mission assurance.

Operational Readiness and Cooperation

- The Ministers committed to deepen operational cooperation as a means to improve Alliance readiness, interoperability, and deterrence, which are critical components for both peacetime and contingency operations. As a result, the Ministers welcomed the steady implementation of mutual asset protection; bilateral presence and joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance operations; increased scope of logistical support under the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement; and ongoing exchange of liaison officers.
- The Ministers also reaffirmed that the two Governments would promote joint/shared use of the facilities of the Self-Defense Forces of Japan and U.S. Forces, in addition to operational training areas, to enhance interoperability, deterrence, and response capability, and to build a stronger relationship with local communities. The Ministers welcomed steady progress in both bilateral planning and cooperation on non-combatant evacuation operations.

II. U.S. Forces in Japan

- The Ministers reaffirmed the two Governments' commitment to steadily implement the realignment of U.S. forces in order to improve operational readiness and deterrent capabilities, while continuing efforts to mitigate the impact on local communities. The Ministers welcomed initiatives to build and strengthen U.S. forces' community relations programs.
- The Ministers welcomed the progress on facility improvements of Nyutabaru Air Base and Tsuiki Air Base of the Air Self-Defense Force for contingency use of aircraft.
- The Ministers welcomed the relocation of the carrier air wing squadrons from Atsugi Air Facility to MCAS Iwakuni last year. The United States also expressed appreciation for the Government of Japan's continued

efforts to acquire Mageshima for a new SDF facility. This facility will support operations such as large-scale disaster response as well as regular exercises and other activities, including as a permanent field carrier landing practice (FCLP) site for use by U.S. forces. The United States reiterated that a permanent FCLP facility will greatly contribute to the safe operation and training of U.S. forces. The Ministers expressed their intention to work closely in order to complete the development of the permanent facility at the earliest possible date.

- The Ministers welcomed progress in the steady implementation of the Guam International Agreement, and the planned relocation of approximately 9,000 U.S. Marine Corps personnel from Okinawa to locations outside of Japan. They reconfirmed the plan to begin the relocation to Guam in the first half of the 2020s.
- The Ministers recognized the importance of aviation safety and addressing public concerns related to this issue. The Ministers committed to facilitate prompt exchanges of information, and to continue a regular bilateral dialogue regarding aviation safety. Both sides recognized the necessity of all training, including aviation training, to maintain the highest levels of readiness and capabilities for the Alliance.

III. Working with Partners for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific

- The Ministers reiterated their support for ASEAN centrality and unity and their commitment to multilateral cooperation in Southeast Asia, including through joint training and exercises, capacity building, defense equipment and technology cooperation, and support for ASEAN-related architecture, including the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting Plus. To support the autonomous and sustainable development of countries in the Mekong region, the Ministers committed to work closely in support of regional countries to address shared transboundary challenges, including transnational crime and trafficking, regional connectivity, energy security, and enhanced energy system integration.
- The Ministers welcomed continued cooperation and high-level consultation among the United States, Japan, and Australia, including through the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue, and noted the importance of trilateral joint exercises and capacity building in Southeast Asian and Pacific island countries. The Ministers also noted with satisfaction the first Japan-U.S.-India trilateral summit meeting in 2018 and highlighted significant joint exercises, such as Malabar 2018 and Cope India 2018. Building upon these various trilateral efforts, the Ministers welcomed the regularization of quadrilateral engagement among Japan, the United States, Australia, and India. The Ministers also welcomed the increasing regional presence of the United Kingdom and France, and called for further cooperation in areas including activities in support of freedom of navigation, port calls, and countering illicit ship-to-ship transfers.
- The Ministers called for full respect for freedoms of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea, and reiterated the importance of activities that support those principles. The Ministers

urged all parties to pursue demilitarization of disputed features in the SCS, resolve all maritime disputes peacefully without resorting to the threat or use of force, clarify their maritime claims in accordance with the international law of the sea as reflected in the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, and fully respect legal and diplomatic processes.

- The Ministers underscored the importance of the July 2016 Philippines-China Arbitral Tribunal's Award for the two parties. The Ministers also emphasized the importance of a Code of Conduct in the SCS that is in full accordance with international law and upholds the right of ASEAN member states to partner with countries and foreign entities of their choosing, including with respect to hydrocarbon development and military exercises.

IV. Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games

- The Ministers confirmed that the two Governments intend to continue to work closely together through a whole-of-government effort toward a successful Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department.

External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.