

# Press Releases: Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Palmieri Travels to California and Tijuana, Mexico

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
October 30, 2017

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Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Francisco L. Palmieri will travel to San Diego, Los Angeles, and Tijuana, Mexico, on October 30-November 1. He will promote U.S. economic and security objectives with key partners on both sides of the border, including: local government officials, the private sector, higher education institutions, and think tanks.

During remarks at the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' 31st Annual Conference, he will highlight how the State Department prepares students in the United States and the hemisphere to compete in today's job market through educational programs including the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund, a public-private partnership that fosters economic prosperity through educational exchange and training opportunities.

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# [Press Releases: The Capture of Mustafa al-Imam](#)

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
October 30, 2017

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I am deeply grateful to the U.S. military, law enforcement, and intelligence community for their efforts to bring to justice the perpetrators of the September 11, 2012 terrorist attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya. The Department of State family continues to mourn the loss of Ambassador Chris Stevens, Glen Doherty, Sean Smith, and Tyrone Woods, and we will spare no effort to ensure that justice is served for these dedicated Americans and public servants. I spoke with some of their family members to underscore the U.S. government's unwavering support.

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# [Press Releases: Opening Remarks Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Authorizations for the Use of Military Force: Administration](#)

# Perspective

Remarks

Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC

October 30, 2017

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**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, distinguished members. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today. I know the Senate's desire to understand the United States' legal basis for military action is grounded in your constitutional role related to foreign policy and national security matters. I understand your sense of obligation to the American people well in this regard.

In the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, or AUMF, Congress authorized the President to "to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons." Congress granted the President this statutory authority "in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations, or persons."

The 2001 AUMF provides statutory authority for ongoing U.S. military operations against al-Qaida, the Taliban, and associated forces, including against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or ISIS.

The administration relies on the 2001 AUMF as a domestic legal authority for our own military actions against these entities, as well as the military actions we take in conjunction with our partners in the Coalition to Defeat ISIS.

The 2001 AUMF provides a domestic legal basis for our detention operations at Guantanamo Bay, where the United States currently detains members of al-Qaida, the Taliban, and associated forces.

The 2001 AUMF also authorizes the use of necessary and appropriate force to defend U.S., Coalition, and partner forces engaged in the campaign to defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria. In Syria, the efforts of the U.S.-led Coalition are aimed at the defeat of ISIS; the United States does not seek to fight the Syrian Government or pro-Syrian-Government forces. However, the United States will not hesitate to use necessary and proportionate force to defend U.S.,

Coalition, or partner forces engaged in the campaign against ISIS.

The President's authority to use force against ISIS is further reinforced by the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq, or, in more plain terms, the "2002 AUMF."

In addition to authorities granted to the President by statute, the President has the power under Article II of the Constitution to use military force in certain circumstances to advance important U.S. national interests, including to defend the United States against terrorist attacks. As an example, President Reagan relied on his authority as Commander-in-Chief in 1986 when he ordered airstrikes against terrorist facilities and military installations in Libya following a terrorist attack by Libya in West Berlin which killed and wounded both civilians and U.S. military personnel.

The United States has the legal authority to prosecute campaigns against the Taliban, al-Qaida, and associated forces, including ISIS, and is not currently seeking any new or additional congressional authorization for the use of force. The 2001 AUMF remains a cornerstone for ongoing U.S. military operations and continues to provide legal authority relied upon to defeat this threat.

However, should Congress decide to write new AUMF legislation, I submit to you several recommendations that the administration would consider necessary to a new AUMF:

First, new AUMF authorities must be in place prior to or simultaneous with the repeal of old ones. Failure to do so could cause operational paralysis and confusion in our military operations. Diplomatically speaking, it could cause our allies in the Global Coalition to question our commitment to defeating ISIS. And potential repeal of the 2001 AUMF without an immediate and appropriate replacement could raise question about the domestic legal basis for the United States' full range of military activities against the Taliban, al-Qaida, and associated forces, including against ISIS, as well as our detention operations at Guantanamo Bay.

Second, any new authorization should not be time-constrained. Legislation which would arbitrarily terminate the authorization to use force would be inconsistent with a conditions-based approach and could unintentionally embolden our enemies with the goal of outlasting us. Any oversight mechanism in a new AUMF also would have to allow the United States the freedom to quickly move against our enemies without being constrained by a feedback loop.

Third, a new AUMF must not be geographically restricted. As is the case under the current AUMF, the administration would need to retain the statutory authority to use military force against an enemy that does not respect or limit itself based on geographic boundaries. As ISIS's fraudulent caliphate in Iraq and Syria has crumbled, it has tried to gain footholds in new locations.

As was discussed with the Senate during a closed defeat-ISIS briefing in

July, the United States has a limited military presence in the Lake Chad Basin to support partners, including France, in their counterterrorism operations in the region. This information has also been conveyed to you in multiple periodic reports submitted to Congress consistent with the War Power Resolution. The collapse of ISIS's so-called caliphate in Iraq and Syria means it will attempt to burrow into new countries and find new safe havens. Our legal authorities for heading off a transnational threat like ISIS cannot be constrained by geographic boundaries. Otherwise, ISIS may re-establish itself and gain strength in vulnerable spaces.

The United States must retain the proper legal authorities to ensure that nothing restricts or delays our ability to respond effectively and rapidly to terrorist threats to the United States. Secretary Mattis and I, along with the rest of the administration, are completely aligned on this issue. We fully recognize the need for transparency with you as we respond to what will be a dynamic regional and global issue. We will contend to – continue to regularly update Congress and to make sure you and the American people understand our foreign policy goals, military operations, and national security objectives.

I thank the Committee for supporting our efforts and look forward to your questions.

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## **[Press Releases: Political Transition in Iraqi Kurdistan Region](#)**

Press Statement  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
October 30, 2017

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The United States commends the decision of Masoud Barzani not to seek an additional term as President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and the vote of the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament to distribute presidential authorities to other Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) institutions. President Barzani is a historic figure and courageous leader of his people, most recently in our common fight to destroy ISIS. This decision represents an act of statesmanship during a difficult period.

The United States now looks forward to engaging actively with the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Nechirvan Barzani, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Qubad Talabani. A strong KRG within a unified and federal Iraq is essential to its long-term stability and to the enduring defeat of ISIS. We call on all Kurdish parties to support the KRG as it works to resolve pending issues over the remainder of its term and prepare for elections in 2018.

We call on the Government of Iraq and the KRG under its new leadership to work urgently to resolve pending issues under the Iraqi constitution. We have been encouraged by the security dialogue that has taken place in recent days, and call for an end to all confrontations and clashes.

We also continue to support the strong leadership of Prime Minister Abadi as he works to ensure the total, and enduring defeat, of ISIS and a stable Iraq after ISIS. We welcome the recent decision from Prime Minister Abadi to begin a new dialogue with the KRG, under the Iraqi constitution, and avoid further confrontations.

We will continue to work with all parties as they address these issues for the benefit of all Iraqis. It is time for all parties to look to the future and focus on peaceful resolution of disputes under the Iraqi constitution.

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## **[Press Releases: On the Occasion of Turkey's National Day](#)**

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
October 29, 2017

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Please accept my best wishes and those of the Government of the United States as you celebrate the 94<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Turkey.

Turkey has been a close American ally for more than 60 years. We are strategic partners in addressing the causes of instability throughout the world, including the Syrian civil war and our mutual fight against terrorism and violent extremism. We continue our steadfast efforts to enhance border security, increase trade and investment, and promote peace and prosperity across the globe.

As Turkey marks this anniversary, we reaffirm the strong and resilient ties that unite us, and are confident the close relationship between the Turkish and American people will continue to grow.

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