

Press Releases: To Walk the Earth in Safety 17th Edition: U.S. Global Leadership in Landmine Clearance and Conventional Weapons Destruction

Fact Sheet
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 18, 2018

The United States is the world's single largest financial supporter of efforts to address humanitarian hazards from landmines and unexploded ordnance in post-conflict countries and to reduce the availability of excess, loosely-secured, or otherwise at-risk weapons and munitions. Today's release of the 17th edition of *To Walk the Earth in Safety*, the Department of State's annual report summarizing the accomplishments of the U.S. Conventional Weapons Destruction Program, highlights our enduring commitment to making post-conflict communities safer and setting the stage for their recovery and development.

- Since 1993, the United States has invested more than \$3.2 billion for the securing and safe disposal of excess small arms, light weapons, and munitions as well as the safe clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war in more than 100 countries, making the United States the world's single largest financial supporter of conventional weapons destruction.
- The United States has funded programs worldwide aimed at reducing at-risk weapons and munitions and improving stockpile security in order to prevent diversion of arms to terrorists and other destabilizing actors.
- Through the conventional weapons destruction program, the U.S. government has collaborated with partner nations and international organizations since 2003 to destroy more than 39,000 excess or poorly-secured man-portable air-defense systems (MANPADS), shoulder-fired missiles that pose a serious potential threat to global aviation in the hands of terrorists or insurgents.
- Working in close cooperation with the Department of Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development's Leahy War Victims Fund, the Department of State has helped numerous countries to declare themselves mine free.
- Proactive community outreach through our Mine Risk Education programs

have prevented countless injuries while U.S.-funded Survivor Assistance has provided essential medical and rehabilitation services to people injured by landmines and unexploded ordnance.

For additional information or to request a printed copy of *To Walk the Earth in Safety*, please contact the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, at pm-cpa@state.gov, and follow us on Twitter @StateDeptPM. The report is also available on the Department of State website at <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rpt/walkearth/index.htm>.

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Press Releases: Establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine

Press Statement
Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 17, 2018

The United States congratulates Metropolitan Epifaniy on his election as head of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. The establishment of the Church was a historic moment for Ukraine. The United States maintains unwavering support for Ukraine and respects the freedom to worship unhindered by outside interference. The right to religious freedom extends to all Ukrainians, including those choosing to join – or not to join – the new Orthodox Church.

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Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 17, 2018

The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino: □

Secretary Michael R. Pompeo met today with New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters at the Department of State. Secretary Pompeo thanked Foreign Minister Peters for New Zealand's continued support in working towards the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea as agreed to by Chairman Kim Jong Un and for New Zealand's assistance in countering terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan. They discussed the strategic relationship between the United States and New Zealand, our strong trade and commercial ties, cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region in partnership with Pacific Island countries, and joint efforts to strengthen the international rules-based order.

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Press Releases: Run-Up to the 2019 Bolivian Presidential Elections

Press Statement
Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 16, 2018

The United States joins the European Union in stressing that threats against judges from the Supreme Electoral Tribunal are not conducive to creating the conditions required to hold free and fair elections in 2019.

Respect for the independence of the judiciary, political pluralism, and freedom of expression are fundamental rights and essential pillars of democracy and the rule of law.

The United States supports a healthy democracy in Bolivia that respects Bolivia's constitution and the will of the Bolivian people.

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Press Releases: On EU Resolve in Holding Russia Accountable

Press Statement

Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 15, 2018

The United States welcomes recent steps by the EU and its Member States to hold Russia accountable for its aggression against Ukraine. The European Parliament's December 12 resolution reiterates the importance of Ukraine's role in the European energy supply network and condemns the construction of the Kremlin-backed Nord Stream 2 pipeline as a political project. We urge Germany to heed the concerns of the many neighbors whose security will be damaged by this pipeline.

We also welcome the unanimous decision of the European Council to extend economic sanctions against Russia. We support the EU position that Russia's November 25th attack on Ukrainian vessels in the Black Sea constituted a violation of international law and welcome the EU's efforts to provide support to areas of Ukraine negatively affected by Russian aggression in the Sea of Azov.

The United States will continue to hold Russia accountable for its actions, and we will continue to work with European partners and Allies to present a unified front against the Kremlin's aggression.

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