

Press Releases: Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Andrea L Thompson Travels to Brussels, Belgium, and the United Kingdom

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 22, 2019

The Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, Andrea L Thompson, will travel to NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, and to the United Kingdom April 23-24, 2019.

In Brussels, Under Secretary Thompson will have meetings with Allies at the NATO Headquarters.

In London, Under Secretary Thompson will have briefings at the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) with the Director General for Consular and Security of the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and the Deputy Director of Operations of the NCSC. She will also meet with the FCO Director General for Economics and Global Issues.

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Press Releases: Houthi Detention of Baha'i Leader Hamed bin Haydara

Press Statement
Morgan Ortagus

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 22, 2019

We are deeply concerned about credible reports that the Houthis continue to severely mistreat, arbitrarily detain, and torture Baha'is in Yemen. Imprisoned since 2013, prominent Baha'i leader Hamed bin Haydara was sentenced to death on unconfirmed charges of alleged espionage and apostasy in January 2018. The Houthis have refused to provide the evidence against him or release him, and most recently refused to rule on an appeal in his case. While detained, Hamed bin Haydara has reportedly endured physical and psychological torture. The Houthis have targeted dozens of Baha'is with charges similar to those imposed on Hamed bin Haydara and other unfounded charges related to religious affiliation. This persistent pattern of vilification, oppression, and mistreatment by the Houthis of Baha'is in Yemen must end.

Baha'is face daily discrimination and persecution as they seek to practice their faith in Yemen and elsewhere around the world. Freedom of religion is a fundamental human right and a source of stability for all countries. Every person around the world should be free to practice their religion without fear of intimidation or reprisals.

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Press Releases: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Celebrates Earth Day With LEED® Gold Certification of the New U.S. Embassy in The Hague, Netherlands

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 22, 2019

In honor of its commitment to resiliency and environmental stewardship, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) announced today that the new U.S. Embassy in The Hague, Netherlands has earned Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Gold Certification under the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED® for New Construction green building rating system.

The Embassy in The Hague joins 45 U.S. diplomatic missions worldwide that have achieved LEED® certification, including one prestigious Platinum certification for the Innovation Center in Helsinki, 14 Gold certifications, and 30 Silver or LEED®-certified missions. In addition, OBO has 48 projects in design or under construction anticipated to earn a minimum of LEED® Silver certification.

Along with its LEED® certified facilities, OBO celebrates its contributions to sustainable building operations at U.S. diplomatic missions with its achievements in photovoltaic (PV) solar panel installations. Since 2005, OBO has deployed 37 PV array installations totaling over 7,000 kilowatts (kW) that are projected to save over \$22 million over the life of the systems. Currently, OBO has eight deployments in design or under construction totaling over 3,000 kW that are projected to save more than \$27 million over the life of the systems.

By reducing diplomatic facilities demand on energy and diversifying energy sources, OBO is enhancing both the efficiency and resiliency of the Department's operations.

OBO provides safe, secure, functional, and resilient facilities that represent the U.S. government to the host nation and support our staff in the

achievement of U.S. foreign policy objectives. These facilities represent American values and the best in American architecture, design, engineering, technology, sustainability, art, culture, and construction execution.

For further information please contact Christine Foushee at FousheeCT@state.gov, or visit www.state.gov/obo.

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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.

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[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.

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