

# [Press Releases: Deputy Secretary Sullivan's Meeting With Chinese Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress Wang Chen](#)

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 15, 2018

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The below is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:□

Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan met on June 14 with Chinese Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress Wang Chen at the State Department. They discussed a wide range of issues related to the U.S.-China relationship, including North Korea, trade, and counternarcotics cooperation.

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# [Press Releases: WiSci Girls STEAM Camp in Namibia Begins June 17](#)

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 15, 2018

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The fourth [WiSci \(Women in Science\) Girls STEAM Camp](#) will take place in Namibia, June 17-29, 2018. WiSci is a public-private partnership designed to impart skills to and create opportunities for high school girls in science, technology, engineering, arts and design, and mathematics (STEAM). The 2018 camp in Namibia brings together 100 students from Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), and the United States.

The camp will focus on enhancing participants' STEAM skills, crafting their leadership potential, and building camaraderie and networks that will propel them to new opportunities. Campers will have the opportunity to learn coding skills, how to develop mobile applications, and more. WiSci Namibia is led by partners the U.S. Department of State, Girl Up, the Intel Corporation, and Google. Additional programmatic support is provided by NASA and World Learning.

The WiSci Girls STEAM camp is part of the U.S. government's efforts to empower the next generation of female leaders, especially in the STEAM fields. Previous WiSci Camps took place in Rwanda, Peru, and Malawi. Another WiSci Camp will take place August 12-25, 2018, in Tbilisi, bringing together 100 high school girls from Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the United States.

For more information on the WiSci Girls STEAM Camp, visit [girlup.org/wisci](http://girlup.org/wisci), follow [#WiSci2018](#) and [#WiSciNamibia](#) on social media, or contact Anita Ostrovsky, [Ostrovskya@state.gov](mailto:Ostrovskya@state.gov).

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## **[Press Releases: Preserving the Southwest De-escalation Zone in Syria](#)**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 14, 2018

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The United States remains concerned by reports of impending Syrian government operations in southwest Syria within the boundaries of the de-escalation zone negotiated between the United States, Jordan, and the Russian Federation last year and reaffirmed between Presidents Trump and Putin in Da Nang, Vietnam in November. The United States remains committed to maintaining the stability of the southwest de-escalation zone and to the ceasefire underpinning it.

We reiterate that any Syrian government military actions against the southwest de-escalation zone risk broadening the conflict. We affirm again that the United States will take firm and appropriate measures in response to Syrian government violations in this area.

The ceasefire arrangement and southwest de-escalation zone were initiatives by Presidents Trump and Putin to de-escalate the Syrian conflict, save lives, and create conditions for the displaced to safely and voluntarily return to their homes. A military offensive by the Syrian regime into this ceasefire zone would defy these initiatives, which have been a success to date. It is vitally important that the three nations supporting the southwest de-escalation zone do everything they can to enforce and implement the understandings reached last year. Existing diplomatic channels have successfully monitored and de-escalated the situation in the southwest, avoiding any resumption of fighting for nearly a year. The ceasefire must continue to be enforced and respected.

Russia is duly responsible as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to use its diplomatic and military influence over the Syrian government to stop attacks and compel the government to cease further military offensives. We request that Russia fulfill its commitments in accordance with UNSCR 2254 and the southwest ceasefire arrangement.

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# Press Releases: Conviction of Maldives Supreme Court Justices and Former President

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 14, 2018

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The United States is deeply dismayed by reports that former Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, Supreme Court Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed, and Supreme Court Justice Ali Hameed have been sentenced to prison without being afforded necessary procedural protections, including a fair trial with the opportunity to call defense witnesses and have defense counsel. This outcome casts serious doubt on the commitment of the Government of Maldives to the rule of law and calls into question its willingness to permit a free and fair presidential election in September that reflects the will of the Maldivian people.

The United States joins other members of the international community in calling on President Yameen and the Government of Maldives to uphold the rule of law, respect the constitutionally-guaranteed legal protections and rights of all Maldivians, permit the full and proper functioning of the Parliament and judiciary, and abide by Maldives' international human rights obligations and commitments. We further call on the government to release political prisoners, ensure that parties and candidates are able to campaign freely, and take other necessary measures to restore the credibility of the electoral process and create conditions that ensure the right and opportunity for all citizens to participate in genuinely free and fair presidential elections.

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## [Press Releases: Deputy Secretary Sullivan's Meeting With Costa Rican President Alvarado](#)

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 13, 2018

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The below is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:□

Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan met with Costa Rican President Carlos Alvarado today. Deputy Secretary Sullivan congratulated President Alvarado on his April 1 election and praised Costa Rica's democratic processes as a model for the region. The leaders discussed the value of the two countries' strong security and environmental partnership. Deputy Secretary Sullivan thanked President Alvarado for Costa Rica's advocacy of a peaceful, transparent, and democratic resolution to the crisis in Venezuela, and urged continued strong engagement on the issue in the Lima Group.

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