

Press Releases: Progress toward Strengthening and Expanding Central America's Regional Electricity Market

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 18, 2018

The State Department applauds the regional institutions that govern Central America's regional electricity market (the Mercado Electrico Regional, or MER) for their accomplishments and new commitments to further develop the MER and expand the Central American Electrical Interconnection System (SIEPAC) announced at the High-Level Meeting at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Washington, D.C. on April 17. The Department of State was represented by Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Diplomacy Sandra Oudkirk and Deputy Assistant Secretary John Creamer of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the meeting, which was a commitment from the June 2017 Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America.

Progress highlighted at the IDB meeting included plans to complete national transmission investments to upgrade regional electricity transmission capacity, finalize negotiations on amending the SIEPAC treaty, foster dialogue with private sector energy companies, and continue working with the Mexican government on a framework to enable power trade between Central America and Mexico.

Strengthening and expanding Central America's regional electricity market is a key part of the U.S. Strategy for Central America to help the region have secure, reliable, and affordable energy that enhances regional prosperity and competitiveness. The U.S. government is committed to helping Central America achieve its energy goals to promote a strong and prosperous Central America that also strengthens U.S. national security.

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Press Releases: Holding Russia Accountable for Chemical Weapons Use in Salisbury, UK

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Washington, DC
April 18, 2018

Today, the UN Security Council and the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) met to discuss the OPCW's recent findings related to the March 4 use of a military-grade nerve agent in Salisbury, UK.

The OPCW's independent report, released last week, confirms the UK lab analysis regarding the identity of the chemical used in Salisbury. We applaud the OPCW's expeditious support and technical efforts to uncover the facts.

We fully support the UK and the need for today's special meetings of the OPCW Executive Council and the UN Security Council to discuss the chemical weapons attack in Salisbury and the OPCW's detailed independent analysis.

As we have made clear, the United States agrees with the UK's assessment that Russia is responsible for this use of chemical weapons on UK soil— either through deliberate use or through its failure to declare and secure its stocks of this nerve agent.

Only the Government of Russia has the motive, means, and record to conduct such an attack. Russia developed the type of military-grade nerve agent used in Salisbury and has a record of conducting state-sponsored assassinations.

Rather than changing its harmful and destructive behavior, the Russian government offers only denials and counteraccusations to deflect attention

from its culpability.

The United States condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere, anytime, by anyone, under any circumstances. We urge our colleagues on the UN Security Council and the OPCW Executive Council to join us, as they have before, to create a unified front against the use of chemical weapons. We cannot allow the normalization of chemical weapons use.

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Press Releases: Acting Assistant Secretary Susan Thornton Travels to Seoul and Tokyo

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 18, 2018

Acting Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Susan Thornton will travel to Seoul, Republic of Korea, April 22-24, followed by Tokyo, Japan, April 24-27. During her visits to our treaty allies in Northeast Asia she will reaffirm U.S. alliance commitments and coordinate on issues of importance for the maintenance of security and prosperity in the region. She will also discuss cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and the continued close coordination on the DPRK.

Follow the Acting Assistant Secretary's travel via @USAsiaPacific on Twitter.

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Press Releases: Zimbabwe National Day

Press Statement
John J. Sullivan

Acting Secretary of State

Washington, DC
April 18, 2018

On behalf of the Government of the United States of America, I offer congratulations to the people of Zimbabwe on your country's 38 years of independence.

As national elections approach, Zimbabwe has an opportunity to set itself on a new path of political and economic reforms for a promising future. The United States joins the Zimbabwean people in the hope for achieving a more open society, a stable democracy, and a strong economy. We look forward to continuing to develop our friendship with the people of Zimbabwe in the years to come.

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Press Releases: Statement on the Trial of Pastor Andrew Brunson

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 16, 2018

The entire U.S. government is following Mr. Brunson's case closely. We have seen no credible evidence that Mr. Brunson is guilty of a crime and are convinced that he is innocent. We believe that Turkey is a state bound by the rule of law, and we have faith in the Turkish people's commitment to justice. We hope that the judicial system in Turkey will resolve his case in a timely, fair, and transparent manner.

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