

# [Press Releases: Ceasefire in Southwest Syria](#)

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 17, 2017

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We understand that a 48 hour ceasefire went into effect at 12 noon Syria time in southwest Syria. We welcome any initiative to reduce tensions and violence in southern Syria and thereby call on the Syrian regime to live up to its own stated commitments during this ceasefire initiative.

We will judge this initiative by the results not the words. The opposition should similarly halt attacks to allow the ceasefire to endure – and hopefully be extended – and humanitarian aid to reach those in need. The United States will continue to support constructive efforts to de-escalate the violence in Syria and ensure humanitarian aid reaches those in need, while continuing the fight against ISIS and al Qaida.

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# [Press Releases: On the Passing of Helmut Kohl](#)

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
June 17, 2017

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I join the world today in mourning the death of a true statesman, former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. My heartfelt condolences go to his wife, Maike, extended family and friends, and the German people.

Chancellor Kohl was a friend to the United States during a transformative period for Germany and Europe as a whole. Known as the "Chancellor of Unity," Chancellor Kohl led West Germany through reunification and became the first chancellor of a unified Germany.

His work helped advance our shared vision of building a peaceful and democratic Europe.

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## **[Press Releases: United States Key Deliverables for the June 15-16, 2017 Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America](#)**

Fact Sheet  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 16, 2017

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U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly, and Secretary of Treasury Steven Mnuchin co-hosted the Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America in Miami, Florida on June 15-16, 2017 with Mexican Foreign Secretary Videgaray Caso, Interior Secretary Osorio Chong, and Secretary of Finance José Antonio Meade Kuribeña, and attended by President Jimmy Morales of Guatemala, President Juan Orlando Hernández of Honduras, and Vice President Oscar Ortiz of El Salvador. Other meeting participants included U.S. and Latin American private sector leaders, senior government representatives from Belize, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the European Union, Nicaragua, Panama, and Spain, and leaders from the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank.

Conference participants discussed policies to promote investment in the region, facilitate sustainable growth, and improve conditions for U.S. and other companies. They also discussed tangible ways to combat organized crime and promote regional security cooperation, improve citizen security, and enhance the rule of law. In addition, conference participants reaffirmed their support for the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity, an initiative led by the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

A secure and stable Central America contributes to a safer and more prosperous United States by helping to secure U.S. borders, protect U.S. citizens, and increase opportunities for U.S. businesses. U.S. engagement in Central America aims to destroy transnational criminal organizations, combat drug trafficking and deter illegal migration, and increase private sector investment to create employment and economic opportunity in the region. The United States also recognizes its responsibility to address the demand for illegal drugs which creates the market for transnational criminal organizations.

Throughout the conference, the United States highlighted its support for the Alliance for Prosperity and its efforts to address the economic, security, and governance challenges in the region. Since the launch of the Alliance for Prosperity in 2014, the United States has allocated \$1.3 billion to Central America. The U.S. Congress included \$655 million in Fiscal Year 2017 to continue U.S. support for the region. The U.S. Administration's FY 2018 budget request includes \$460 million to further advance these goals. The United States is committed to continue to improve the delivery of U.S. foreign assistance to the region. The United States also recognizes the efforts of the Northern Triangle countries to mobilize their domestic resources to implement the Alliance for Prosperity.

### **Promoting Investment, Economic Growth, and Job Creation**

Northern Triangle governments committed to enact reforms to improve their business climates, including eliminating red tape, improving transparency, and streamlining business formalization processes.

Northern Triangle governments agreed to macroeconomic stability and fund their development, including ongoing efforts to raise revenues efficiently while improving the investment environment. These changes will help companies, including U.S. firms, expand their businesses in the Northern Triangle markets.

The United States, Mexican, and Northern Triangle governments reaffirmed the importance of trade between our countries and identified obstacles preventing the facilitation of trade and the ease of doing business. Northern Triangle governments committed to further develop the roadmap to enhance economic integration and streamline import and export systems and procedures employed by government agencies. They also agreed to continue to work on improving the flow of commercial traffic at border crossings to strengthen customs and other trade-related procedures, reducing the time and cost of trade, and boosting overall economic competitiveness of the Northern Triangle countries.

To further integrate energy markets, participating governments, which require national transmission upgrades, confirmed financing for upgrades that will maximize use of the Central American Electrical Interconnection System (SIEPAC) transmission line. The IDB also announced it will organize a Ministerial meeting by April 2018 and encourage members of Mexico's SIEPAC Interconnection Commission to present legal, technical, regulatory, and infrastructure proposals to develop a general market design between Mexico and Central America's regional electricity market and transmission infrastructure to connect Mexico and SIEPAC. In addition, the United States announced technical assistance to support integration and investment in Central America.

Representatives of the private sector and international financial institutions identified solutions to simplify and improve transparency in trade and customs procedures, strengthen energy security, develop infrastructure, and create jobs. The United States welcomes the agreement for the Americas Business Dialogue to establish a working group to address these issues in the Northern Triangle countries.

### **Enhancing Regional Security**

The United States agreed to support regional governments in combatting organized crime, enhancing citizen security, improving the secure flow of goods and people, increasing transparency, and promoting regional security cooperation. These steps will contribute to the safety and security of the United States and the region by addressing transnational criminal organizations responsible for illegal migration and illicit trafficking, as well as improving conditions for investment and economic growth.

The Northern Triangle countries and the United States agreed to improve information sharing and local capacity building to advance the region's ability to combat these organizations. Specific efforts to share biometric data and investigative files will improve the governments' ability to dismantle transnational criminal organizations and eliminate the cross-border networks that contribute to violence in Central America, Mexico, and the United States. Regional governments also agreed to training programs and

equipment delivery for targeting transnational criminal organizations.

Northern Triangle leaders committed to support a migration observatory supported by the United States to study and share information on regional migration flows. They also committed to explore the creation of early warning protocols regarding the movement of drugs, weapons, money, and other illicit goods.

The United States will continue to work with the Northern Triangle governments to support the commitments made through the U.S.-Northern Triangle Transnational Crime Roundtable. These commitments include: recognizing that transnational criminal organizations and their illicit activities pose a common threat to the region; implementing policies and domestic legislation to increase the effectiveness and capacity of law enforcement and prosecuting agencies; and improving coordination and information sharing to more effectively dismantle transnational criminal organizations and their financial networks.

Regional governments agreed to explore enhancements to border security – both maritime and terrestrial – through cross-border cooperation, and to target drug trafficking organizations and human smuggling networks working in Central America. Northern Triangle governments also agreed to increase internal coordination between national institutions at key ports of entry to improve efforts to detect and seize contraband, deter human smuggling and trafficking, and improve regional security.

In partnership with the United States, the Northern Triangle governments agreed to expand support for comprehensive violence reduction, focus on creating opportunities for youth, at the local level and identify the priority areas that require additional strengthening. Collaboration between the United States and Northern Triangle countries to address violence on a local level has already reduced violent crime rates in some of the most vulnerable communities in the region.

### **Continued Engagement**

The United States, Mexican, and Northern Triangle governments agreed to use existing mechanisms to review and follow up on the conference commitments.

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

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
June 16, 2017

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On behalf of the United States of America, congratulations to the people of Iceland on the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of your independence.

The United States and Iceland enjoy a close relationship based on mutual values and shared interests. As a founding member of NATO and bilateral defense partner with the United States, Iceland has demonstrated steadfast commitment to regional stability. We are friends and partners with growing and deepening ties in trade, education, and conservation. We look forward to working with Iceland to build a future of shared prosperity for our families, businesses, and communities.

We are proud to call Iceland an ally and friend. Best wishes to all Icelanders, from Reykjavík to Egilsstaðir.

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## [Press Releases: Acting Assistant](#)

# Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Ambassador Tina Kaidanow Travels to Belgium, Israel, and the United Kingdom

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 16, 2017

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Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Ambassador Tina Kaidanow will travel to Belgium, Israel, and the United Kingdom June 18-27, for discussions on a variety of international security issues.

In Belgium, Ambassador Kaidanow will meet with NATO and European Union officials regarding ongoing U.S. efforts on security cooperation and defense trade. She will also discuss security assistance programs overseen by the Department of State that strengthen the capabilities of ally and partner nations in Europe, as well as cooperation on coalition operations to defeat ISIS and promote security in Afghanistan.

In Israel, Ambassador Kaidanow will meet with Israeli officials and deliver remarks on U.S.-Israel security relations at the 2017 Herzliya Conference.

In the United Kingdom, she will meet with civilian and defense officials to discuss regional strategic priorities, defense trade, military-to-military cooperation, and related issues.

For further information, please contact the [Bureau of Political-Military Affairs](#), Office of Congressional and Public Affairs at [PM-CPA@state.gov](mailto:PM-CPA@state.gov), and follow the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs on Twitter, [@StateDeptPM](#).

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