

Press Releases: Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration Simon Henshaw Leads a Delegation to Burma and Bangladesh

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
October 29, 2017

Simon Henshaw, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, will lead a delegation to Burma and Bangladesh October 29-November 4 to discuss ways to address the humanitarian and human rights concerns stemming from the Rakhine State crisis and improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance to displaced persons in Burma, Bangladesh, and the region. Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Busby of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary Tom Vajda of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, and Office Director Patricia Mahoney of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs will accompany the Acting Assistant Secretary.

The delegation will meet with various stakeholders to discuss the U.S. and international responses to the ongoing crisis and to explore durable solutions.

In Burma, Acting Assistant Secretary Simon Henshaw and the delegation will meet with the diplomatic community, senior government officials, and UN, international, and NGO partners to discuss the current state of the crisis, promote protection for persons affected by the violence and accountability for reported human rights abuses, urge unhindered humanitarian access to affected communities in Rakhine State, and press for the establishment of protection mechanisms to enable individuals to voluntarily return in safety and with dignity.

In Bangladesh, Acting Assistant Secretary Simon Henshaw and the delegation will meet with senior government officials, donors, and humanitarian agencies to discuss efforts to improve conditions for the significant influx of refugees into Bangladesh to effectively meet life-saving needs. The

delegation will also visit affected communities in Cox's Bazar District in southeastern Bangladesh to hear the stories of the people who have fled, assess the impact of the emergency humanitarian response, identify gaps in assistance, and advise on ways to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

For additional information, please contact the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Press Office at PRMPress@state.gov.

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Press Releases: Lima Group's Declaration on Venezuela

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
October 27, 2017

The United States welcomes the Lima Group's leadership in addressing the deteriorating situation in Venezuela. The Lima Group's recent declaration in Toronto – including its support for the provision of humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people, condemnation of electoral abuses and call for electoral reform including a new National Electoral Council, call for the release of political prisoners, and support for the democratically-elected National Assembly – reflects the same principles and concerns underpinning the unwavering position of the United States. We welcome all efforts in support of the Venezuelan people as they struggle to secure a more democratic, peaceful, and prosperous future.

We urge others in the international community to join the Lima Group and the United States in opposing the Maduro regime's authoritarian actions, which are responsible for the worsening political, economic, and social crises facing the country and the Venezuelan people. As long as the Maduro regime conducts itself as a dictatorship, we will continue to bring the full weight of American economic and diplomatic power to bear in support of the Venezuelan people as they seek to restore their democracy.

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Press Releases: Cremation of His Late Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand

Press Statement
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
October 27, 2017

This week my thoughts are with the people of Thailand as we witness the cremation of His Late Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej – a true humanitarian, visionary, and friend to the United States.

Next year we will celebrate the bicentennial of the first official contact between our two great nations. His Late Majesty championed our strong, enduring friendship throughout his reign. His commitment to our alliance helped ensure regional security and created the conditions for Thailand's miraculous economic development.

As I expressed during my recent visit to Bangkok, I join Americans throughout the United States in extending our deepest respect to His Late Majesty. From communities along the Pacific in California to those marking this occasion at King Bhumibol Square near the Late King's birthplace in Massachusetts, we remember a leader who shaped the course of history and strengthened the bonds of friendship that unite us.

Building on His Late Majesty's legacy, I am confident this alliance will thrive in a new century, to the continued benefit of the Thai and American people.

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Press Releases: Joint Investigative Mechanism Report on Khan Shaykhun and Um Housh

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
October 27, 2017

On October 26, 2017, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) issued its latest report which concluded that the Assad regime used the chemical weapon sarin in the horrific April 4, 2017 attack that killed scores of people in Khan Shaykhun, Syria. The report also determined that the Islamic State extremist group was responsible for using the chemical weapon sulfur mustard on September 15 and 16, 2016 in Um-Housh, Syria.

This new report confirms unequivocally what the United States and many in the international community have stated publicly for many months – that the Assad regime carried out the heinous April 4 attack killing approximately 100 innocent Syrian civilians, including many children, and injuring hundreds more.

The Security Council must send a clear message that the use of chemical weapons by anyone will not be tolerated, and must fully support the work of the impartial investigators. As Ambassador Haley has emphasized, countries that fail to do so are no better than the dictators or terrorists who use these terrible weapons. By attempting to undermine and eliminate the JIM, Russia has demonstrated once again that it values protecting its ally the Assad regime over stopping the monstrous use of chemical weapons. Syria's blatant disregard for international norms and standards should be met with condemnation and accountability by all members of the international community.

Syria's continued use of chemical weapons and failure to destroy its chemical weapons program in its entirety are clear violations of Syria's obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and UN Security Council Resolution 2118. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances and reiterate our commitment that those responsible will be held to account.

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[Press Releases: U.S.-EU Joint Consultative Group Meeting on Science and Technology Cooperation](#)

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On October 23, 2017, in Washington, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Judith G. Garber and E.U. Director-General for Research and Innovation Robert-Jan Smits, convened the United States-European Union Joint Consultative Group Meeting on Science and Technology Cooperation (JCG). The JCG provides an opportunity to exchange views on some of the most important transatlantic science and technology endeavors and to align American and European research and innovation efforts for mutual benefit. Both sides recognized the role of research and innovation as key drivers of jobs and economic growth, and that transatlantic research cooperation has been a primary source of new technologies and scientific discoveries for over a century. The Department of State also thanked the European Commission for the valuable assistance provided by the [Copernicus satellite program](#) during the recent hurricanes.

Efforts to further facilitate transatlantic cooperation between scientists under Horizon 2020, the European Union's \$80 billion research program (and its successor), and American research programs were featured prominently. Both sides discussed achievements and potential future strategic areas of cooperation and program alignment including: the Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance, which extends into the Arctic region; Mission Innovation; other advanced energy research cooperation; and major health initiatives, such as brain research. Both sides agreed to continue and expand cooperation, building on the ongoing success of program alignment and to work together to renew the U.S.-EU Science and Technology Agreement for an additional five years.

The JCG brought together representatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation with representatives from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the Departments of State, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Interior, the National Science Foundation, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The United States and European Union look forward to strengthening our cooperation and the EU's 2018-2020 Work Programme for Horizon 2020, launched on October 27, 2017.

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