

# Press Releases: Remarks on the Middle East

Remarks

Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Treaty Room

Washington, DC

June 9, 2017

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Good afternoon, and I thank all of you for your patience. I know you've been waiting a little while.

Three weeks ago, the President joined members of the Gulf Cooperation Council in a strong show of partnership, repudiation of extremism, and a plan to defeat terrorism of all kinds in the region and around the world.

Now, the situation in the Arabian Gulf over the last few days is troubling to the United States, the region, and to many people who are directly affected. The United States wishes to reaffirm our commitment to the spirit of the summit. As we combine efforts to defeat the military, financial, and ideological support of terrorists, we expect to see progress in the Arab world toward greater political expression. An important pathway to attack Islamic extremism and to prevent political activism from escalating into violence is to allow marginalized voices opportunities for political expression.

But this process requires regional and global consensus and mutual understanding. The GCC summit creates a platform to achieve this consensus and understanding. We call for calm and thoughtful dialogue with clear expectations and accountability among the parties in order to strengthen relationships. We ask that there be no further escalation by the parties in the region. We call on Qatar to be responsive to the concerns of its neighbors. Qatar has a history of supporting groups that have spanned the spectrum of political expression, from activism to violence. The emir of Qatar has made progress in halting financial support and expelling terrorist elements from his country, but he must do more and he must do it more quickly.

Others must also continue to eliminate factions of support for violent organizations within their own borders. Again, that was a commitment made by

all at the summit. We call on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt to ease the blockade against Qatar. There are humanitarian consequences to this blockade. We are seeing shortages of food, families are being forcibly separated, and children pulled out of school. We believe these are unintended consequences, especially during this Holy Month of Ramadan, but they can be addressed immediately.

The blockade is also impairing U.S. and other international business activities in the region and has created a hardship on the people of Qatar and the people whose livelihoods depend on commerce with Qatar. The blockade is hindering U.S. military actions in the region and the campaign against ISIS.

We support the emir of Kuwait's efforts to bring about a peaceful resolution to this agreement and progress toward eliminating all forms of support for terrorism – military, financial, moral, or ideological. The U.S. will support these mediation efforts along with the emir of Kuwait.

In the last few days, I have spoken to many leaders in the region. And as I said to all of them, we know you are stronger together. It is clear to me, based on these conversations, that the elements of a solution are available. The GCC must emerge united and stronger to show the world the GCC's resolve in its fight against violence and terrorism, and its commitment to countering the threat from extremism.

Our expectation is that these countries will immediately take steps to de-escalate the situation and put forth a good-faith effort to resolve their grievances they have with each other. Thank you very much.

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## **[Press Releases: Acting Assistant Secretary Anita Friedt To Travel to the Republic of Korea and Japan](#)**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 9, 2017

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Acting Assistant Secretary for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Anita Friedt will travel to Seoul and Tokyo from June 12-16 for meetings and events focused on U.S. nuclear policy and extended deterrence.

For more information on the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, visit [www.state.gov/t/avc](http://www.state.gov/t/avc) and follow @StateAVC on Twitter.

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## **Press Releases: Lesotho's National Elections**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 8, 2017

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The United States congratulates the people of Lesotho for participating peacefully in national elections on June 3, 2017. The United States looks forward to working productively with a new Lesotho government as soon as a coalition is finalized and a new Prime Minister is sworn in. We also commend Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission for leading a well-managed and credible electoral process and all major political parties for accepting the

outcome.

We welcome the robust engagement of international observer missions from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union, the Commonwealth, and other well-regarded organizations. SADC, in particular, has been a strong partner to Lesotho during a difficult period over the past three years. With its observer mission, SADC demonstrated once again that it holds Lesotho's governing institutions to a high standard and that SADC itself has a valuable role to play in promoting democracy and good governance in the region.

Political parties in Lesotho signed a pledge to engage seriously after the election in a process of reform, including of the security sector, the constitution, and the public sector. We urge those parties – and the new government – to engage seriously in a reform process that is independent, transparent, and inclusive of all key stakeholders. Implementation of these reforms is critically important to Lesotho's sustained political stability and consolidation of its democratic institutions.

The United States looks forward to working with Lesotho's new government and the Basotho people to advance our longstanding mutual interests in economic development, trade, health care, and the strengthening of democratic institutions.

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## [Press Releases: First LNG Delivery to Poland](#)

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 8, 2017

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The United States welcomes the arrival of the first U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipment to Central Europe, which arrived in Poland on June 7. U.S. LNG exports support American jobs, lower energy prices for our partners abroad, and contribute to Europe's energy security goals using a reliable, market based supplier.

The Department of State has worked closely with European partners to diversify European energy supplies through new sources of natural gas, vital interconnectors and new facilities to import LNG. The United States congratulates Poland on this significant step to diversify its own sources of energy and to strengthen Europe's energy security.

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## **Press Releases: Terrorist Attacks in Tehran**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
June 7, 2017

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The United States condemns the terrorist attacks in Tehran today. We express our condolences to the victims and their families, and send our thoughts and prayers to the people of Iran. The depravity of terrorism has no place in a peaceful, civilized world.

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